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VISUAL AND TEXTUAL REPRESENTATIONS OF
CHILDHOOD BY THE UNITED NATIONS
CHILDREN'S FUND (UNICEF),
1999 TO 2003

by

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A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty of Humanities
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Development Studies and Social Transformation

Declaration

This work has not been previously submitted in whole, or in part, for the award of any degree. It is my own work. Each significant contribution to, and quotation in, this dissertation from the work, or works of other people has been attributed, and has been cited and referenced.

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Abstract

The objective of this paper is to investigate how UNICEF (the United Nations Children's Fund) represents the notion of childhood. A content analysis of 690 photographs as well as an in-depth textual analysis of the most authoritative publications is conducted to decode childhood representations. The methodological approaches are both quantitative (content analysis) and qualitative (textual analysis). The photographic and publications data are obtained from the UNICEF website for the period 1999 to 2003. Inscribed in the visual images are historical western notions of childhood as a blissful stage of life in which passivity and vulnerability are featured. These inscriptions are rooted in technologies of scientific knowledge and myths, which explains therefore their persuasiveness. As regards arguments that development institutions export ideal notions of childhood specific only to western societies, the paper finds that while such ideals certainly are present in the representations, the proper ideal is by no means the sole embodiment of exported notions. Over the last five years, UNICEF has begun to incorporate new views of children as socially competent, valuable social actors in their own right (a school of thought that has begun to be theorised, most notably, by the 'New Sociology of Childhood'). However, the ideas of children as social actors attains a particular meaning in UNICEF texts. Many instances of children's strength and resiliency in third worlds are not represented as constitutive of what the idea of child agency means.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Conceived notions affect the treatment of human beings (Shaffer 1985). It is this premise that provided the impetus to investigate how the notion of ‘childhood’ is conceived as such conceptions directly affect how human beings, particularly those categorised as children, are treated. In this paper, the concept of ‘childhood’ refers to a “life phase as well as the age group defined as children” (the official definition used by the ‘Childhood’¹ journal) and children are defined as any person aged between 0 and 18 (UN 2003). It is important to note the difference between *childhood* (which is a concept) and *children* (who are people) because “[t]he former often assumes the latter without our knowing how or why” (Hendrick 2000:37).

Childhood is the subject of this paper. As a concept, the idea of childhood affects the treatment of children. For instance, Jo Boyden notes, in a paper about war-affected and displaced children, that the protection of children is not a certain art, it is unpredictable and can even produce negative results. Programmes designed to help and protect children may fall short when implemented due to a lack of expertise or poor management, but often occurs due to notions of childhood that are flawed (Boyden undated). One of the ways in which conceived notions are conveyed is through texts:

“As with any set of media texts, they achieve discursive work – they delineate a field of possible actions which are normalised, sanitised and romanticised in their repetition. It is therefore necessary that we examine what model is inscribed there and identify the ‘reality’ which is being proposed” (Prinsloo 2003:30).

As texts are one of the mediums of representing conceived notions, it is informative to identify the ‘models’ of childhood ‘inscribed’ therein. This paper aims to identify representations of childhood in the texts of the *United Nations Children’s Fund* (UNICEF). While an explanation of UNICEF’s mandate and operations follows, it is instructive to summarise why UNICEF, in particular, were chosen for this analysis:

1. UNICEF, as an institution mandated to improve children’s well-being, has conceptualised notions of ‘childhood’.
2. UNICEF works in most areas of the world; it’s notions are therefore circulated world-wide.

¹ This definition is printed on the inside cover of every issue of *Childhood: A Global Journal of Child Research* by SAGE publications.

3. Strong links with globally powerful institutions provide UNICEF with the resources required to put notions into action.

UNICEF works towards the survival, protection and development of children. It is a core component of the programmes and funds of the General Assembly, which is in turn the principal organ of the United Nations (UN) system. The UN attempts to maintain international security, to develop friendly relations among nations, to promote respect for human rights and to solve international cultural and humanitarian problems. Organisations strongly related with UNICEF include the UN Economic and Social Council specialised agencies such as the ILO (International Labour Organisation), the WHO (World Health Organisation), the World Bank Group and the International Monetary Fund (UN 2003).

UNICEF was created in 1946 after World War II to provide food, clothing and health care to children facing famine and disease in Europe. In 1953, UNICEF began a global campaign against a disease called 'yaws' affecting millions of children. After a decade of operation, the UN General Assembly adopted the *Declaration of the Rights of the Child*. During the 1960s, UNICEF expanded its mandate, from focusing on child health to increasing education and, in 1965, received the Nobel Peace Prize for promoting brotherhood throughout the world. The year 1979 marked the celebration of the *International Year of the Child* – a reaffirmation of commitment to the rights of children. Exactly one decade later, in 1989, the *Convention on the Rights of the Child* was adopted by the UN General Assembly. The following year, at the World Summit for Children, Heads of State and Government met to set 10-year goals for children's needs. Towards the end of the 20th century, UNICEF gave more attention to how war and conflicts affected children. By the beginning of the 21st century, in 2002, UNICEF had included children as official delegates at the Special Session on Children (UNICEF 2003a).

To gauge an understanding of the power and influence of UNICEF, consider the operations of its principal organ, the UN. Nearly every nation of the world is a member of the UN (191 countries are members). UN affiliations make UNICEF a highly visible and easily recognisable institution. It could even be argued that the United Nations occupies a unique cultural niche² in the world. UNICEF, as an arm of the United Nations, shares this cultural

2 While not referring to the UN or UNICEF, Lutz and Collins (1993:7) discuss the unique "cultural niche" occupied by the *National Geographic*. It is from this source that the idea of UNICEF's cultural placing originated.

niche - it is the institutional component of the United Nations that provides assistance for children in distress.

While the UN is not a world government nor does it make laws, it does provide the means to resolve international conflicts and contributes to the formation of policies that affect us all. Herein lies a reason to reflect on how they construe different notions, in this case, how UNICEF, an arm of the UN, views the notion of childhood. Such views will affect children through policy and other programme interventions. UNICEF works in 160 countries, territories and areas with programmes focusing on basic education, nutrition, primary health care and immunisation. Information about these programmes are produced and disseminated in UNICEF publications. Box 1 highlights the role of publications in assisting UNICEF to fulfil its global mandate (UNICEF 2003a).

Box 1: UNICEF publications

“UNICEF publications are vital for:

- Advocating with governments, the public and civil society on behalf of children.
- Understanding how investing in children benefits all of us.
- Sharing knowledge about the most effective means of fulfilling children’s rights.
- Informing the media about the situation of children and young people around the world.
- Mobilising material resources on behalf of children”

Source: www.unicef.org

UNICEF publications are published in different languages, including English, French and Spanish. In addition, country offices in different parts of the world often translate publications into other important languages. UNICEF produces publications with leading publishers including *HarperCollins*, *Dorling Kindersley* and *Zed Books*. Many of the publications are available in different formats, including hardcopy, microfiche and electronic formats (UNICEF 2003a).

It is clear therefore that texts produced in UNICEF publications contain ‘inscriptions’ of childhood notions that have far-reaching implications for many individuals, in disparate areas of the world. The manner in which this paper proceeds in regard to examining these representations of childhood is outlined below.

1.1 NOTE ON STRUCTURE

The paper is structured as follows. The first major chapter (chapter 2), provides a literature review. This serves as a background in which to contextualise this study, to set out the foundational philosophical and empirical works on which (some of) the views of this paper are based and from which the substance of the ultimate conclusions draw on. It is important to work from this literature base because this paper is guided, in particular, by the Sociology of Childhood, which is a new sub-discipline, and also one which I found to be far from complete as regards the process of crystallising theory. In addition, much empirical work on various related issues still needs to be undertaken. The chapter critically reviews the most seminal works on the history of childhood, that of Philippe Ariès and argues, that despite major methodological flaws, has succeeded in one important area - showing that the notion of childhood is a social construction. This point is explored further in the literature review with particular reference to modern western notions of childhood. The need to reconstruct ideas of childhood given the progressive views of children as social actors, not passive persons gives way to the final part of the literature review where it is argued that western social constructions of childhood are not necessarily representative of third world notions of childhood. Methodology is the subject of chapter 3. The paper uses two methods, namely content analysis and text analysis, explanations and justifications for both are explained in chapter 3. In chapter 4, both methods are employed to analyse UNICEF photographs and texts of children. Just how exactly image and text function together to explicate representations of childhood by UNICEF are discussed in chapter 5. Finally, the paper reflects on implications of these representations and suggests related topics for future research.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 HISTORICAL VIEWS OF CHILDHOOD

“[I]n medieval society the idea of childhood did not exist.” (Ariès 1973:125)

Philippe Ariès's *Centuries of Childhood* is the best-known book on the history of childhood in the west³ and, as noted by one historian, the work of Ariès is “cited as Holy Writ” (Manuel 1971 in deMause 1974: 5).

In essence, Ariès argues that the modern conception of childhood did not exist until the 13th century, because this stage of children's lives was not perceived as particularly innocent or weak, it was not characterised by a special nature. While Ariès has been commended for producing “impressive scholarly documentation” (Stephens 1995: 5), his work has received intensive (and extensive) criticisms. But even an extreme critic such as Wilson (1980: 152) who claims that the Ariès argument is “not merely false, but falsely conceived” is quick to point out that the Ariès's argument remains widely influential.

Despite the shortfalls of the works of Ariès (as argued by critics and highlighted later in this chapter), I think the real value of Ariès is that it has succeeded in prompting various disciplines to recognise that notions of childhood are variable. For, as pointed out by Corsaro, the most important contribution made by Ariès was the argument that childhood was a social construction⁴ and that the lives of children should be taken seriously (Corsaro 1997).

There are many individuals/institutions who have similar views to Ariès. In fact, this is evident in the findings of this very paper. Findings in later chapters will show that UNICEF holds the view that the special nature of childhood was not recognised until the 13th century - a view also held by Ariès. The wide influence of his work therefore necessitates a closer examination of his argument. Before this occurs, it is important to note that the literature outlined in this chapter draws on historical evidence from western countries. This raises important political-economy implications, which are noted below:

3 In this paper, the terms west or western are used to refer to the nations of Europe and North America. These nations are also known as industrialised or capitalist developed countries (Seymour-Smith 1992).

4 Section 2.2.2 discusses childhood as a social construction.

- The evidence is not sourced from underdeveloped countries⁵ such that the discussion in this chapter cannot be assumed to represent universal historical notions of childhood.
- Due to the geographic specificity of the historical evidence, most of the views pertain to individuals that are racially labelled as ‘white’⁶.
- Historical views of childhood were shaped by prevailing socio-economic contexts of a particular time period. Thus, a child categorised as lower-class is unlikely to have experienced the same childhood as a child categorised as upper-class⁷. Thus, theorist’s assertions of how (western) individuals in the past viewed childhood do not represent how all classes of persons viewed childhood.

This section reviews the work of Philippe Ariès as well as the work of his supporters and critics.

2.1.1 THE THESIS OF PHILIPPE ARIÈS

According to Ariès, life in the medieval world did not have a place for childhood up until the twelfth century. People ignored childhood, it was a transitional period that rapidly finished and was not very important. Thus, the child belonged to adult society as soon as he/she could live without the constant attention of the caretaker. While in the constant care of the caretaker, the ‘fragile’ infant “did not count” because he/she could not yet partake in adult life (Ariès 1973).

A large amount of Ariès’s claims was based on his interpretations of how children were represented in art. Medieval artists almost never depicted children and when they did, the children were portrayed as mini adults. For example, an Ottonian miniature of a Gospels scene (where Jesus Christ asks that little children come to Him), represented children without

5 The term ‘underdeveloped countries’ refers to nations of Asia, Africa and Latin America. These nations are also known as Third World countries or developing countries (Seymour-Smith 1992).

6 The term ‘white’ is a racial category, like ‘black’, ‘Indian’ etc. The UN defines race according to physical differences of skin tone, hair texture and facial features, but views race as an artificial category. People can be categorised in a multitude of other ways, for example, height, resistance to disease etc. Due to the socio-political issues resulting from categorising people according to race, the concept of race is important to consider in studies of humanity (UN 2003). Thus, as the concept of race has very real, everyday consequences for people all over the world, it is necessary to comment on racial issues in this paper.

7 Class denotes socio-economic status (UN 2003). This paper refers to three divisions of class: Upper-class, middle-class and lower-class.

any characteristics of childhood. They are simply portrayed as men, except on a smaller scale, that is, as mini adult males. (Ariès 1973).

The style of dress of this period also indicated that dress did not distinguish the child from an adult. The child was dressed in exactly the same way as men and women of his/her class as soon as the child abandoned the swaddling-band⁸ of babyhood. The modern concept of childhood originated in the thirteenth century during which some artists no longer portrayed children as 'mini adults'. Children began being depicted in more sentimental ways. Ariès argues that the concepts of 'coddling' and 'discipline' were some of the major concepts underpinning the evolution of childhood notions (Ariès 1973).

According to Ariès, the fear of child death caused many parents to avoid becoming too attached to young children⁹. This view created a type of anonymity among children. However, in the fifteenth century, the two new ways of portraying children that emerged, namely the portrait and the '*putto*'¹⁰ indicated that children were rising out of this anonymity. Ariès asserts that these portraits proved that individuals no longer viewed children "as an inevitable loss" (Ariès 1973:40). There was a change in feeling towards children. Common conscience discovered that the child's soul was immortal, that the child had a definitive personality. The personality that children were believed to possess, their special nature (characterised by simplicity and sweetness) was expressed through art, religion and iconography. Adults were amused by children's antics and took pleasure in coddling¹¹ them. During the seventeenth century, individuals used phrases (for example, 'little ones') and proverbs (for example, 'as innocent as a new born child') that remain in use today (Ariès 1973).

The seventeenth century is of utmost importance in the evolution of childhood for it is this century that marked the occurrence of portraits of children on their own, the giving of children a place of honour in subject paintings. This century also represented a period in

8 The term 'swaddling' refers to nursing practises in which babies were bound in bandages so that they could not move either their limbs or their head and were thus completely immobilised. After approximately four months, they regained the use of their arms, but not their legs (Stone 1979).

9 Contemporary theorists share similar views to Ariès – specifically with regard to how harsh socio-economic conditions cause mothers to avoid becoming too attached to young children. Nancy Scheper-Hughes argues, through her seminal work in Brazil, that maternal thinking and practise (in some poverty-stricken areas of Brazil) is shaped by the high expectancy of child death and results in "delayed attachment to infants" (Scheper-Hughes 1992: 340).

10 The term "*putto*" refers to a type of child portraiture where the child is drawn in a naked form. This theme persists in the modern era with family album photographs depicting little children running around the garden without any clothes (Ariès 1973).

11 The term 'coddling' means pampering (Hugo English Dictionary 1992).

history where children began to wear clothes specific to that age group, and thus no longer dressed like adults¹². The custom of distinguishing children's dress style from adult's dress style revealed a new desire to separate children from adults through uniform. The dress style or costume that was reserved for children was a style that everyone used to wear a century before (but no longer wore anymore). Children thus started wearing special childhood costumes. What is equally revealing is that this attempt to differentiate children from adults through costumes mostly pertained to boys, not girls. So, it was as if the idea of childhood separated girls from adult life less than boys. Girls were thus often confused with adults (Ariès 1973).

The year 1600 was a time when toys became the speciality of young children. Games, amusements, pastimes, festivals took up a lot of time in the society of old and occupied much importance in the public mind, it was a way of feeling united. Meanwhile, a small group of elites denounced the games as immoral. It was the seventeenth century that a compromise was reached between public acceptance and minority rejection of games. The compromise shaped modern attitude to games, but more importantly, modern attitudes to childhood. Games classified as evil were forbidden while games classified as good were encouraged. For childhood, this meant a desire to protect and treasure morality. The 'coddling' attitude towards children received much criticism in the seventeenth century. It was argued that too much attention was being devoted to children, that they were being spoilt and should be separated from adults, for example, at the dinner table because they lacked manners. The claim that children did not have manners implied the need therefore to discipline children (Ariès 1973).

During the course of the seventeenth century, a movement wider than the small group of moralists, caused a large change in manners to take place and there was an insistence on proper decency, educational games and modesty. For moralists, the special nature of childhood was represented by psychological interest, and no longer amusement and 'coddling' (wherein lies the origins of child psychology). People were cautioned against leaving their children in the care of servants in case they were subject to immoral conversation and vanity. Thus, as stated by Ariès (1973:108) "[a]n essential concept had won acceptance: that of the innocence of childhood". During this period, the idea of childhood was also associated with notions of ignorance and weakness (Ariès 1973).

12 These were children of noble or middle-class parents. From a political-economy perspective, the argument raised here by Ariès does not therefore pertain to children classified as lower-class.

2.1.2 SIMILAR HISTORICAL VIEWS TO ARIÈS

There are many theorists whose views are similar to Ariès, some of which will be highlighted in this section.

One such view pertains to the alleged manner in which parents avoided becoming too attached to children. Ariès argues that this practise occurred until the fifteenth century (Ariès 1973). One theorist who shares this particular view is deMause¹³. The main argument of deMause's thesis is that conceptions of childhood have changed historically as a result of personality changes occurring between successive generations of interactions between parents and children¹⁴. For example, it took hundreds of generations for mothers to stop the practise of tying up their infants in swaddling bands. Mothers used to watch impassively as their infants screamed in protest because they lacked the psychic mechanism to empathise with them¹⁵. The historical process of parent-child evolution established a faculty in which parents came to understand that swaddling was totally unnecessary. deMause contends that from the fourth to the thirteenth century, parents abandoned children to places like the monastery, homes of other nobles or abandoned their children emotionally (deMause 1974).

Shorter (1975: 170) also shares the view that traditional societies were indifferent to infants and states that “[g]ood mothering is an invention of modernization”. Shorter explicitly notes that the subjects of his thesis are babies rather than children and it is towards the former category of individuals that Shorter refers to when he argues that mothers viewed the happiness and development of infants younger than two with indifference. In contrast, (some) mothers in modern society place the welfare of infants above everything else. Shorter explains that the lack of maternal love was the result of “material circumstances and community attitudes to subordinate infant welfare to other objectives, such as keeping the farm going or helping their husbands weave cloth” (Shorter 1975: 171).

13 Not all of deMause's views are agreeable with those of Ariès, for instance deMause criticised Ariès for ignoring evidence that medieval artists could paint realistic children. According to deMause, Victor Lasareff provided examples of paintings of the child in early medieval art and published the findings in a journal titled *Art Bulletin* in 1938 (deMause 1974).

14 deMause refers to this idea as the “psychogenic theory of history” (deMause 1974: 3).

15 Hanawalt argues that swaddling actually protected children from cold weather and kept children from crawling in the debris (Hanawalt 1993). In addition, validating an argument in which it is alleged that mothers unemotionally watched their infants scream in protest to swaddling bands, is difficult if not impossible. To gather valid and reliable evidence for such a claim would surely involve ethnographic research, in which a researcher could have in some way observed such impassive behaviour by mothers.

Stone (1979) also comments on the remote relations that existed between parent and child (during the sixteenth century in England). High child mortality rates made parents hesitant to invest too much emotion in their children. The following quote by a father living in that period, cited in Stone (1979: 82) summarises the nature of parent-child relations and lack of affection: “I have lost two or three children in infancy, not without regret, but without great sorrow”. In the seventeenth century, children were subjected to adult desires to break their will and accept authority. In addition, the frequency with which children were beaten increased during the sixteenth and seventeenth century. Severe flogging became a normal occurrence at schools (Stone 1975).

So, there are theorists who share some of Ariès’s views. The next section is concerned to show the wide extent to which Ariès has been criticised. I focus only on criticisms of Ariès’s work, as it is this work that is the most influential of all historical accounts of childhood.

2.1.3 CRITICISMS OF ARIÈS’S THESIS

Some theorists have invalidated Ariès’s claims by conducting their own research to substantiate their argument that parents were not indifferent to the special needs of children (Pollock 1983; Shahar 1990; Cunningham 1990). For instance, Pollock (1983) questions Ariès’s reliance on indirect evidence (paintings, advice literature, religious tracts etc) and is of the view that the history of childhood can be traced in a more reliable way through the use of direct evidence such as diaries, newspaper reports of child abuse court cases and autobiographies. Pollock analysed five hundred Anglo-American diaries and related sources and found little support for Ariès’s view of the existence of indifference to children. Pollock argues that (contrary to the beliefs of Ariès), there was a concept of childhood in the 16th century. Evidence used to support her view is based on studies of 16th century writers who indicated an appreciation that children were different from adults (Pollock 1983).

A recurring criticism is that Ariès should have placed the evidence used to trace the history of childhood within a social and cultural context (Pollock 1983; Shahar 1990; Cunningham 1990, Wilson 1980; Jordanova 1990). In contrast to Ariès, Cunningham (1990: 3) is concerned directly with the broader context, that is, with investigating how public action influenced the lives of innumerable children and thereto ideas of childhood through history.

Then there are the theorists who do not view art as a reliable source for inferring representations of childhood (Wilson 1980, O’Brien 2003). Wilson criticises Ariès for

treating art “as objective documentation instead of the subjective and determinate artefacts which in fact they were” (Wilson 1980: 140). Others claim that it is impossible to access the real intentions of artists and undesirable to assume that particular artworks reflect social reality when in fact they may not be (O’Brien 2003).

With regard to writing the history of childhood, Jordanova highlights several difficulties, most of which are valid points, except for the following. Jordanova argues that childhood, the subject of enquiry, is not stable because “it is a temporary state, with no natural boundaries”. I find this criticism rather bland. Its like saying (for example) the duration of transient poverty varies from 6 months to 10 years and this uncertain time span is the major problem facing any endeavour to study spells of poverty. Firstly, while it certainly poses challenges, theorists develop methods of tracking changes over time (to overcome these challenges). Secondly, the uncertain time span makes the study of transient poverty of utmost importance so that, for instance, policy-makers design effective policies that take account of such variance. With regard to the study of childhood in past societies, is not the research objective of theorists like Ariès to render this temporary state visible? Thus, is not the temporality of childhood the very reason why Ariès undertook the research? Further, while childhood is certainly temporary, traces of children and childhood are inscribed in text and imagery thereby making it possible to conduct research. Jordanova does, however, raise valid points with regard to the tendency of childhood historians to focus on moral judgements instead of historical processes in historical accounts of childhood. In this regard, I looked through Ariès’s work to find moral underpinnings:

Education scarcely began before the age of seven; moreover, these tardy scruples of decency are to be attributed to the beginnings of a reformation of manners, a sign of the religious and moral restoration which took place in the seventeenth century (Ariès 1962: 102).

The adjective, ‘tardy’ describes actions that are belated and overdue connoting therefore that the particular forms of decency to which Ariès refers should have developed much earlier. It is interesting that Ariès uses the word ‘reformation’ instead of a word such as ‘establishment’. ‘Reformation’ indicates that a *better* change has occurred whereas a word such as ‘establishment’ would simply indicate that a change has occurred without attaching a moral view. The result is that these particular findings were interpreted by judging *what* should have been happening instead of investigating *why* occurrences were taking place. So, we know that Ariès ascribes to a particular set of manners, but we don’t know why these

particular manners began developing at this particular time and their relatedness to the concept of childhood.

Finally, I think one of the most relevant and innovative criticiser of childhood studies is Hanawalt (1993). Many historical accounts of childhood focus on adult conceptions of childhood (such as Ariès, deMause and Pollock). The new history of childhood refers to historians that focus on the consideration of children as influential actors in past societies (Corsaro 1997). Hanawalt challenges historical views that children were treated harshly in the medieval period with little opportunity to enjoy their childhood. Hanawalt reconstructs the lives of children in medieval London during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. She bases her findings on court records, literary sources and books of advice. According to Hanawalt, children negotiated social relations, participated in their immediate peer cultures, played games, and were involved in public rituals and celebrations.

The intensity with which Ariès's work is cited in the literature, the impressiveness of his documentation efforts and the existence of evidence that supports his work stands firm in the storm of criticisms yet some of these criticisms do show many cracks in his argument and it is from these criticisms that doubt is cast as to the truthfulness of Ariès's claim that the modern idea of childhood never existed in the Middle Ages.

I conclude that while Ariès has not unequivocally succeeded in convincing us that the idea of childhood only began to develop after the middle ages, he has succeeded in creating (and holding) the attention of scholars to the social constructionist nature of childhood (a theme we turn to in the next section) for as stated by Stephens (1995):

Ariès's challenge to naturalistic orthodoxies had a major impact on the social sciences (Stephens 1995: 4).

2.2 CURRENT VIEWS OF CHILDHOOD

"We are faced with two competing ways of viewing childhood. On the one hand, childhood is seen as a sort of unchanging, universal social order experienced in a similar fashion by children around the world and over time. On the other hand, social anthropologists, historians, and others have increasingly come to accept that childhood is socially constructed and hence variable according to the context in which it is lived" (Hecht 1998: 70).

Having outlined the histories of childhood, it is the objective of this section to examine how western theorists in the 20th and early 21st century conceptualise notions of childhood. It is argued that the disciplines of Sociology and Psychology in particular have shaped many

modern views of childhood. As Social Anthropologists have long recognised (followed by theorists of the 'New Sociology of Childhood'), children have interpretive abilities and they can negotiate complex social interactions. This gives new meaning to notions of childhood. Thus, while it was highlighted in the previous section that children (in the west) were viewed (by mostly white middle- and upper-classes) as passive and weak, concepts associated with childhood have evolved in recent times to include views that assert that children are strong and competent.

A discussion of notions of childhood in the 20th and 21st century is particularly relevant as it is the objective of this paper to examine recent UNICEF representations of childhood. It is thus useful to be informed of modern ideas of childhood that may or may not inform UNICEF ideas of childhood. It is noted that the sources (used in this section) from which modern ideas of childhood are drawn originate in western countries, not underdeveloped countries.

2.2.1 The naturalism of childhood

Many ideas of western notions of childhood are grounded in the disciplines of Psychology and Sociology. As much of the work of these disciplines claims to be based on scientific truths, their theories have attained a high degree of naturalism. Piaget's work influences not only child-rearing practices, but also educational thinking and practice as well as everyday understanding of children. For example, parents often lament that "it's just a phase s/he's going through". In doing so, a biological explanation is provided for a breakdown in social relationships (Prout and James 1990: 12).

Another important influence of Psychology on the notion of childhood is the priority placed on the individual when explaining human nature. What is downplayed then is the impact of wider social, cultural, economic and political conditions such that individual solutions are relied upon when addressing social problems. When confronting a problem, such as delinquency, individual psycho-pathology is used to explain the problem, as opposed to the constraints of social conditions (Younghusband 1981 cited in Boyden 1990). Further, as pointed out by Polakow, ordinary events like a child simply playing, developing a grudge or getting into a fight is interpreted through a psychological lens that distorts the social context. The result is the alienation of the original life-world of the children (as social actors) through the construction of theoretical data and generalisations (Polakow 1982).

Sociology has absorbed psychological discourses such as ‘universality’ and ‘irrationality’ in the theory of socialisation (which occurred in the 1950s). Socialisation posits that children learn to participate in society through acquiring knowledge of social roles from adults. The nature of children is thus visualised as fundamentally different from the nature of adults. Any child that falters in the socialisation process is excluded from the category of ‘child’ and included in new categories such as ‘school failure’ or ‘deviant’ (Prout and James 1990).

2.2.2 Childhood as a social construction

“[The social constructionist view] rejects any idea that childhood rests on some pre-given essential nature and contends that notions of childhood, indeed the very term and concept itself, are a way of looking, a category of thought, a representation. The idea of childhood, in this view, came into being through discourses that created their own objects. The plural is important here because it also held that childhood can be constructed in diverse and shifting ways” (James, Jenks and Prout 1998: 139-140).

Contemporary studies of childhood challenge the notion that childhood is a purely natural phenomenon that is universal to all children in different areas. Jenks argues that childhood also relates to particular cultural settings and refers to a social status based within boundaries that vary over time. The facts of culture vary and therefore make childhood a social institution (Jenks 1996).

Models of child development and socialisation have been criticised for not taking enough account of the cultural components of childhood. A major challenge to traditional models of child development and socialisation originated from interpretive perspectives in the social science (Prout and James 1990). Robert Mackay was an interpretive sociologist who held the view that the theory of socialisation leads to deductions similar to the adult view of children as incomplete beings. Mackay (1975) argues that all adult-child interaction is based on interpretive competence. Moreover, children do have the ability to acquire knowledge, to reason and to invent (that is, children do have interpretive competencies). For instance, traditions are passed on from the 12-year-old child to the 10-year-old child, and not just from the adult to the 10 year old (Frønes 1994).

Socio-cultural considerations of childhood have contributed to the emergence of a new paradigm in the study of childhood and has created the need to rethink childhood sociology (James and Prout 1990). Pioneers of childhood research in the late 20th century, such as

James, Prout and Jenks base a lot of their ideas on the work of the French historian, Philippe Ariès¹⁶.

The need to rethink childhood sociology is based on the theoretical perspectives of constructive and interpretive origins. These perspectives are concerned with examining social constructions¹⁷. All social objects (such as class, gender, race as well as childhood) are considered to be interpreted, debated and defined in social action processes. In this sense, childhood is a category (like social class or race), a structural concept as well as a period in which children live their lives (Corsaro 1997; Qvortrup 1994:).

Despite the interest in the study of children, researchers have traditionally denied children the right to speak up for themselves because they are viewed as incompetent in making judgements or are viewed as unreliable witnesses about their own lives¹⁸. Such views are echoed in statements like children must ‘grow into a modern world’ or must be ‘integrated into society. The message, which is perhaps unintended, is that children, as not yet fully integrated members of society are therefore not members of society. This is an attitude that confirms ideas that children are ‘naturally’ incapable and incompetent (Qvortrup 1994). In holding such views, adults push children to the “margins of the social structure” (Corsaro 1997: 7).

In an attempt to explain why children are overlooked in social research, Qvortrup notes that this occurs because children are marginalised, as opposed to children being ignored. Children are marginalised because they have subordinate positions in societies and thereto, in social theorisation and research. Adults often view children in a forward-looking manner, that is, as future adults that will need to make a contribution and take a place in the social order. Rarely

16 Ariès demonstrated how the concept of childhood evolved from the thirteenth century onwards (see section 2.1.1). I would argue that while Sociologists specialising in childhood studies such as James, Prout and Jenks have certainly integrated Ariès’s argument that notions of childhood evolve over time and are therefore social constructs into their own angle of thought, one cannot ascertain the extent to which these theorists agree or disagree with other aspects of Ariès’s work in this regard. One example is the very contentious assertion by Ariès that mothers avoided becoming too attached to children due to fear of early death (of the child).

17 The notion of social construction originates in the philosophical and political reaction against Enlightenment notions that took place during the end of the 18th century. The concept underpinning the Enlightenment is in turn based on Descartes articulation of the primacy of the individual. In contrast, theorists (such as German philosophers Herder and Humboldt) understood language as a collective invention and consciousness as embodied in language. It was this thinking that led theorists to view individuals as constituted *by* society; thinking that has contributed to the formation of social constructionism (Charles Taylor 1985 in Ingleby 1986).

18 It was researchers like Edwin Ardener (1972) and Charlotte Hardman (1973) who first drew attention to how children and women formed a ‘muted group’ in society – elusive, unperceived and overlooked in social research (cited in Burman 1986; Hecht 1998).

are they viewed for what they are, in the present, as children with needs, desires and ongoing lives (Qvortrup 1994).

2.2.3 Reconstructing childhood¹⁹

When James and Prout (1990) call for the need to reconstruct childhood, they are implicitly seeking an understanding of the child as a social actor²⁰. Viewing children as social actors involves regarding children as constructive, value-producing individuals with their own agenda (Qvortrup 1994).

Children are actively involved in the construction of social lives, including their own lives, the lives of those around them as well as the societies in which they live. To this end, children should be studied in their *own right*, independent of adult perspectives (James and Prout 1990). However, persons conducting studies in Anthropology, Sociology, Psychology, Biomedicine and other disciplines are adults, not children. It is thus difficult to understand exactly how children can be studied in a way that is ‘independent of adult perspectives’.

Hendrick (2000) provides insight as to how to study children as social actors, in their own right, free of adult perspectives. Children are the ‘other’ to adults in much the same way as women are the ‘other’ to men as regard physical bodily differences. The ‘otherness’ of children is based on the age difference between adults and children (Hendrick 2000).

It is argued that any ‘otherness’ assigned to children by adults is contradictory, because all adults were once children. Thus, to make a child the ‘other’, an adult would have to split off a part of their past, a piece of themselves (Jordanova 1989 cited in Hendrick 2000). Hendrick (2000), however, argues that an inability to assign ‘otherness’ to a child locks children into *our* experience, denying them an independent self. By viewing a child as the ‘other’, the researcher can attempt to look for the child’s voice, to be sensitive to his/her viewpoint, instead of the adult’s viewpoint, which is deemed to represent that of the child’s. When adults interpret what children are saying or doing, it is important to make children the focus of inquiry, the subject of the story and the agent in the narrative (Hendrick 2000).

19 The heading originates from the title of James and Prout’s 1990 book titled *Constructing and reconstructing childhood. Contemporary issues in the sociological study of childhood* (See James & Prout 1990).

20 Anthropology also has a tradition of seeing children as social actors, for example, anthropologists such as Margaret Mead and Ruth Benedict (Hecht 1998).

While the social construction perspective has resulted in the emergence of a new paradigm in the study of childhood, the new sociology of childhood is not complete. The theoretical postulates that form its basis are still being brought together (James and Prout 1990). Thus, there are no concrete answers yet relating to how best we, as adults, can study children in their own right without being influenced by our own experiences of being a child, or our current views of children and childhood.

While efforts are underway to include and listen to children, concepts of socialisation and psychological child development continue to dominate theory and research about children. There is considerable resistance to the reconceptualising of childhood within sociology (and indeed other social sciences as well). Bray (2002) analysed the extent to which surveys contributed to an understanding of child well being in South Africa. The study revealed that while national surveys do provide pertinent information on child well being, other forms of social science research, such as ethnographic research were required to complement the statistical study. This would provide more insightful explanatory factors. However, such methodologies, especially those that directly engage with children during research such as role-play or visual techniques, have not (relative to global standards) been widely explored in South Africa. Further, there is widespread "reticence to engage with children directly in surveys" because of the view that children are incompetent (Bray 2002: 49). The discourse of childhood continues to represent the child as innocent, passive, dependent and as a member of a social group that is disempowered (Jenks 1996).

But the persistence of naturalistic views of childhood not only have implications for new sociological childhood theorisation, it also affects efforts to take account of cross-cultural differences in childhood experiences. UNICEF works with diverse complex cultures worldwide, it is insightful then to investigate children and childhoods in non-western cultures, in the next section.

2.3 THE GLOBALISATION OF CHILDHOOD

Now that we have moved into a postmodern era, roughly dating from the mid-twentieth century, we can no longer accept the modern conception of a universal child nature. As Michael Foucault (1973), a leading figure in the postmodern critique of social science, put it, we "never study human nature but only individual human beings". David Elkind (1998).

The way in which we conceive of childhood...is central to the way, psychologically, we understand the situation in South Africa. People interested in

the question of what is best for South Africa's children cannot afford uncritically to reproduce just one image of childhood. (Swartz and Levett 1989: 748).

Many children in underdeveloped countries live their lives in the context of widespread socio-economic uncertainty, for example, unemployment, abject poverty, AIDS and ethnic conflict. As chapter 1 highlighted, such uncertainty facing children was the very reason why UNICEF originated and, has since continued to exist for more than half a century.

Stephens (1995) argues that many individuals from western areas of the world interpret the socio-economic uncertainty facing children as instances of backwardness, local particularities and examples of underdevelopment. These views justify efforts to export modern western notions of childhood around the world (Stephens 1995) - notions that childhood should be a safe and happy time of life when children are innocent and vulnerable (Boyden 1990). Such ideals of childhood are historically and culturally bound to the capitalist countries of the United States and Europe. An issue then arises that pertains to historical and cultural relevance of exported notions of childhood from the west to the non-west and constitutes the subject of this section. This is especially important as UNICEF is a major social force in the globalisation of childhood. Their ideas on childhood are transmitted to underdeveloped countries, through inscription in texts and programme priority and implementation, wherein lies the importance of reviewing issues pertaining to non-western ideas of childhood. In doing so, attention will be drawn to the international diversity of childhoods.

There is a lack of research pertaining to non-western notions of childhood in historical and cultural contexts. The little research on this subject that does exist (for instance, Friedl 1997; Morton 1996; Hollos 2002) points to the extent to which childhood is indeed a social construction. For example, even in relatively small and isolated communities in northern Tanzania, individuals develop complex concepts of childhood that do not necessarily fit a unitary and universal view of childhood (Hollos 2002). Further, Balagopalan (2002: 19) argues that it is impossible to understand "local cultural constructions of childhood as isolated from history". Balagopalan (2002) argues that indigenous non-western childhood cultures have been transformed by colonialism and modernisation.

Flores-Bórquez (2000) conducted research with forty-six children who left Chile, and fled to the UK with their families as political refugees in the 1970s. The quote below extracted from this research brings to light the complexity of delineating cultural identities:

"I have been thinking a lot about my identity: which culture do I belong to? I am neither Chilean nor British. Actually, what does it mean to be either of these? Where do I belong? What is my culture, and whose society am I in? Just because I have a British passport, does it mean that I must adopt its attitudes, customs, and beliefs?" (Female, 17 years old, cited in Flores-Bórquez 2000:213).

As this paper argues that childhood is not universal, this section purposively sets out to show how the exported idea of a proper childhood is, at times, ill-suited to the contexts in which most children live in underdeveloped countries. In describing the antithesis of what many westerners view as the proper childhood, the chapter does not intend to make moral judgements pertaining to what a child should or should not be doing.

The research findings of other theorists relating to children and childhood in underdeveloped countries are presented below and are discussed in the context of dominant themes that inform modern western conceptions of childhood

It is difficult to place the western idea of childhood as safe and protected within the context of statements such as "[n]o child alive in Lebanon has ever experienced peace. Since the Arab-Israeli War in 1967, the whole area has been volatile and, during the past 13 years, Lebanon has been a patchwork of varied and often overlapping violence" (Ennew and Milne 1989: 155). With reference to the lack of safety and protection for children, discourses on children and childhood (in South Africa) refer to the assault on childhood (Jones 1993) and the erosion of childhood (Ndebele 1995). This does not signify childhood as a time of safety and protection.

In a study by Pamela Reynolds that documented the life experiences of fourteen 7-year old Xhosa children in Crossroads outside Cape Town (South Africa), the study showed how the political regime negatively impacted their lives. Children commented how they were accustomed to seeing armoured vehicles in their streets, armed troops, as well as death and danger (Reynolds 1989). Far from being passive victims of an inequitable political regime, children in South Africa demonstrated that they had the ability to stand up for their rights. Racial inequality in education resulted in many black South African children taking a stand in the struggle against apartheid (Ennew and Milne 1989).

Based on research conducted in the wine lands of the Western Cape, Levine (1999) questions the universal applicability of the anti-child labour campaign that is represented by international human rights standards. Children describe work as "...bad because we are hurried up when we work, if your arm is tired you cannot rest you must carry on with your work" (Lindelwa quoted in Levine 1999:141). Lindelwa revealed that she made between R60

and R80 per week. In addition, while she felt it was not right that children work on farms, she nevertheless defended her right to work due to circumstances at home, the needs of her family and the reality of poverty. As Levine (1999) points out, in the face of adversity, Lindelwa demonstrated tenacity and agency. Other work by Baker (1998) investigated the extent to which children on the streets of Nepal were socially competent. After observing one boy for several months, it is concluded that the social competence of the boy was no less sophisticated than that of adults (Baker 1998).

When children do not conform to western stereotypes of childhood innocence, inferences are then often made about their supposed deviancy or delinquency. Children and youth during the apartheid era in South Africa were portrayed by the media as "Lord of the Flies" boys; a brutal and broken mass. This image was also promoted by the state. Gill Straker (1992) conducted research to analyse the psychological effects of violence on township youth. She worked with sixty Leandra activists aged twelve to twenty-two years. From the viewpoint of the media and the state, all the participants in this research could be considered as high-risk candidates for psychological disturbance. However, Straker's findings showed that one in every two persons were coping with the trauma they had experienced. Thus, half of the research participants did not conform to media images and state projections of deviant, hostile individuals. Instead, they "projected themselves as freedom fighters and heroes" (Straker cited in Reynolds 1995:146-147).

Exported notions of childhood imply that parent-child relations that are biologically based are more fundamental and natural than other sorts of family relations (Stephens 1995). Modern western conceptions of motherhood include terms such as "bonding", "maternal thinking" and "maternal instincts"; terms that Scheper-Hughes (1987:202) argues have become innate maternal scripts that are not, however, a universal human script. Scheper-Hughes argues that this does not reflect maternal thinking patterns of many women living in underdeveloped countries. Instead, their strategy is to give birth to many children, to invest selectively and hope that a few will survive. In response to the conditions of shantytown life, some women in Brazil are maternally detached from their young children. This indifference does not signal the demise of affective ties within nuclear families, rather it is an adaptive pattern of behaviour developed in response to the contexts in which people live. Mothers maternally neglect babies that are judged to be weak or too vulnerable to survive, because they feel they will be unable to care, over the long-term, for overly dependent offspring, due to socio-economic conditions (Scheper-Hughes 1987). Many westerners would view the

nature of this type of mother-child interaction as an instance of family breakdown (CEPAL 1983 cited in Boyden 1990).

2.4 CONCLUDING REMARKS

This chapter has outlined how historians have alerted to us the social constructionist nature of the idea of childhood, how sociologists and anthropologists have, in turn, challenged mainstream ideas of childhood which continue to pervade western modern thought and, as bodies of knowledge (and 'truth'), are projected onto disparate parts of the world where cultures are different and circumstances vary. Against this backdrop of historical, traditional and progressive thinking on childhood, this paper will now outline the methods used to analyse UNICEF representations of childhood.

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3. METHODOLOGY

This paper uses two methodological approaches to analyse UNICEF representations of childhood. First, a quantitative approach is used (the content analysis) followed by a qualitative approach (the textual analysis). Whereas content analysis is concerned with "aggregated meaning-making" across texts, textual analysis is concerned with meanings within texts (Deacon *et al.* 1999).

The use of just one documentary source to reveal the nature of childhood is questionable. O'Brien argues that "visual images alone as a potential source of psychohistorical inference are relatively worthless" and that "[a]n obvious solution is to use as wide a range of evidence as possible" (O'Brien 2003:372). The methodological combination of quantitative and qualitative approaches produce an analysis that is stronger than results obtained from just one approach (Deacon *et al.* 1999).

3.1 CONTENT ANALYSIS

The focus of the content analysis is UNICEF photographs of children. The content analysis is therefore the method used to explore UNICEF visual representations of childhood.

"...content analysis allows us to produce systematic descriptions of what documentary sources contain. By counting how often particular topics, themes or actors are mentioned, how much space and prominence they command, and in what contexts they are presented, content analysis provides an overview of patterns of attention. It tells us what is highlighted and what is ignored." (Deacon *et al.* 1999:17)

Content analysis is a method used to quantify manifest features of communication and utilises statistics to make inferences about the process of representation. The methodological nature of conducting content analysis ensures a reasonable degree of reliability in research. It prevents one from selecting items that fit a particular case or pre-existing ideas and assumptions. It is a rigorous approach that ensures that all data in the chosen sample are submitted to the same set of categories. The employment of content analysis is not confined to text; it can also be used in the analysis of images, photographs, art, and film (Deacon *et al.* 1999).

Content analysis is a method that has readily been employed in child-related studies. For example, Sigel and Kim (1996) utilised content analysis to examine how articles in

professional Psychology journals portrayed children and childhood²¹. It is noted that Sigel and Kim's 1996 content analysis was applied to texts, not visuals. In contrast, my study uses the method of content analysis to examine photographs and what they denote²² about childhood.

Cronin (1998) argues that there are two types of photographs. First, there are photographs that invoke an emotional reaction and second, there are photographs that reveal and contain information. While the informational value of a photograph is available to anyone, an emotional reaction triggered by a photograph is specific to an individual. The emotional reaction may be a small detail in the photograph that triggers personal memories and unconscious associations. Such emotional reactions often remain indescribable by the individual (Barthes 1980 cited in Cronin 1998). It is Cronin's second argument that informs my choice to analyse photographs. A key assumption underpinning my analysis therefore is that photographs can reveal particular types of information. Indeed, Cronin (1998) argues that information that can be obtained from photographs include (for example) the inference of socio-economic status and the type of home environment. My analysis looks at how information pertaining to children in photographs (such as socio-economic status) transmit information about representations of childhood.

Extracting these representations occurs by noticing a detail (or in the case of this paper), details in photographs. We are able to reach the representations, because we are drawn to details and we become animated in the 'adventure' of the photograph (Barthes 1984).

It was Sontag (1977: 5) who stated that "[t]he photograph in a book is, obviously, the image of an image". A photograph, in the words of Worth (1981: 196) as quoted in Tomaselli (1996:61), is "**not a copy of the world out there, but someone's statement about the world**". Thus, while many theorists argue that photographs do not depict reality, my analysis is not attempting to establish the reality of children's lives, rather it seeks to decode UNICEF's statement about childhood, to analyse how the imagery of children portray an image of childhood.

The analysis involved identifying certain themes in the photographs and then allocating them to predetermined categories (as suggested by Deacon *et al.* 1999). In this regard, a

21 Findings show that journals (for the 1985 to 1992 period) do not provide a coherent image of childhood, rather they represent diversity of childhoods (Sigel and Kim 1996).

22 Denotation is "the *manifest* content of a sign or set of signs – that which can be said to be objectively there" (Deacon *et al.* 1999:138).

coding sheet was designed. The codes were selected for their potential to detect informational cues about childhood representations; the reasons why they were chosen as well as operational definitions are provided in section 3.1.2 (the coding sheet used is provided in Appendix 1).

3.1.1 Data sources

The content analysis is based on a sample of UNICEF publications published over a five-year period, from 1999 to 2003. The sample was purposively chosen within this time frame to provide insight into how UNICEF is representing the idea of childhood in the 21st century. The sample consists of 51 UNICEF publications (see Appendix 2).

The sample was selected by referring to the website of UNICEF (<http://www.unicef.org>) and clicking on the “publications” link. In total, 55 publications were cited on the website for the period 1999 to 2003. To ensure that the findings would be based on representative data, all of the publications were initially selected for analysis, but 4 were subsequently omitted from the analysis due to accessibility problems or publications containing no photographs.

In total, 690 photographs containing images of children were analysed from the sample. Only photographs that did not include children were excluded from the analysis. Photographs that were repeated within documents were not double-counted (unless the camera angle changed - for example, from a mid shot to a close up in later pages).

3.1.2 Research limitations

My coding was not cross-checked (by other individuals) due to a lack of funds at the time this research was carried out. Had I had the funds, I would have also included children in the coding team, because they represent the category of persons to which this research relates.

3.1.3 Definitions of and rational for the codes

The broad approach used to arrive at the final list of codes involved 3 steps:

- A review of the literature on childhood in western and underdeveloped countries was undertaken to locate recurring and related themes.

- A review of specific studies that had utilised similar methodologies in image analysis was completed. The work specifically of Prinsloo (2003), Lutz and Collins (1993) as well as Burke (2001) assisted in the initial designing of the coding sheet.
- The categories used to code the photographs were chosen for their potential to reveal 'observable and objective' dimensions of childhood (Deacon *et al.* 1999).

CATEGORY 1: BASIC CHARACTERISTICS

The first broad category of codes²³ covers basic characteristics of children. To deconstruct UNICEF's notion of childhood, these categories assist in answering the question, *who* do these ideas pertain to? Are they mostly girls? Are they rich or poor? And so on.

Codes 1-5 (Gender, race, class, age and area)

Included in the gender category are coding options for male, female and 'equally male and female' whereby the latter refers to photographs in which there appears to be an equal proportion of both girls and boys. The race category includes coding options for Black, Asian/Indian, White and mixed races. The class category consists of upper-, middle- and lower-class. Age groups vary from 0-2 (baby), 2-4 (toddler), 4-12 (child) and between 12 years and 18 years (adolescent). The area category refers to urban or rural areas.

CATEGORY 2: CHILDHOOD DIMENSIONS

The second category of codes covers childhood dimensions, which capture *how* experiences of children are portrayed in the photographs.

Code 6 (Location)

Rasmussen (2004: 171) notes that "the concept of place should not be underestimated in theorizing children's everyday life and the empirical sociology of childhood". It is argued, in

23 Some options provided for the codes in the categories include, 'Indeterminate' and 'Pose'. The coding option, '*pose*' simply refers to posed photographs in which it is not possible to ascertain certain codes, for example, whether children are photographed in urban or rural areas. The coding option, '*indeterminate*' means that the photograph provided no obvious, indisputable cues as to exactly how a particular coding option should be categorised, for example, whether children were middle-class or lower-class.

particular, that adults create ‘places for children’; these places denote ideas adults have about children. Unfortunately, Rasmussen does not expand on exactly how places represent adult ideas of children, but Harden (2000) does. She points out that, in western modernity, childhood is segregated into private places, in particular, “the home is seen as the appropriate place for children to be raised, facilitating their physical and moral protection from the outside world” (Harden 2000: 44). Public places are seen to be dangerous for children, and therefore not suitable for childhood experiences. Here then, is a distinct private/public location in the theorisation of childhood. I thus include codes for these distinctions, namely ‘domestic’ location (private) and ‘public’ location.

Code 7 (Role)

Role indicates the types of activities children are involved with. Panter-Brick (2000) draws attention to the low frequency with which children’s economic role is emphasised in western countries. In these instances, childhood is not associated with children working for remuneration. Ascertaining what role children are playing in photography provides clues as to notions in childhood, for example, the role of worker connotes independence and strength. By not portraying children in the role of worker, childhood then becomes equated with dependence and passivity because these traits are not portrayed.

As far back as 1940s, there exists research that shows the important role children have in taking care of others. I refer to the work of Bateson and Mead (1942: 212) who highlighted “[t]he major role which small girls play in social life as nurses” (they were Balinese girls). Caregiving then becomes a defining component of their childhoods.

There are five role options, either playing, resting, taking care of others, working or involved with school-related activities. The role of *player* involves playing, for example, children running around a field laughing, children engaged with toys etc. The *rester* role includes activities such as sleeping and relaxing. The role of the *school pupil* refers to activities such as completing homework, sitting in a classroom desk while being taught etc. The *care-taker* role is one in which children are visibly taking care of others, for example, feeding a baby. The *worker* role involves children engaged with work tasks associated with paid employment, as well as domestic tasks and working as soldiers.

Code 8 (Family)

Modern western notions view the family “as a haven in a heartless world” (Scheper-Hughes and Sargent 1998: 22). There are many related debates about the role of family in childhood. For example, Boyden (1990) discusses how child-rearing is the responsibility of the extended family, not just the nuclear family among some communities. The role that family plays in children’s lives is thus an important component of how childhood is understood and portrayed. To capture the presence of family members, the following family codes were provided: mother, father, both parents, siblings, grandmother, grandfather and both grandparents.

Ennew and Milne (1989) point out that in certain parts of Sierra Leon, some children are often sent away to live with an urban patron as well as in areas where they can learn traditional systems of apprenticeship and domestic work. Some would argue that children who have not been sent away from home are very unfortunate, even unworthy and dull (Bledsoe 1990 as cited in Panter-Brick 2000). To capture the presence of non-related adults, the code ‘other’ was provided. To capture the absence of family and non-family members, the code ‘alone’ was provided.

Code 9 (Camera gaze)

The gaze of the subject in photographs determines "the differences in the message a photograph can give about intercultural relations" (Lutz and Collins 1993:197). The gaze of the children was classified into two major types, namely gazing directly at the camera and gazing elsewhere. In terms of intercultural relations, a child looking away signifies a sense of separateness while a child looking straight at the camera signifies a sense of connectedness. Lutz and Collins also discuss how subjects in photos that do not return the gaze produce more candid images and avoid the potential influence of the photographer as well as a type of "fake intimacy" (1999:197-8). Particular experiences of childhood pictured in the photographs thus attain a realistic effect.

Code 10 (Facial expression)

The modern western notion of childhood is epitomised by Rousseau’s work titled *Emile*, whereby ideas of childhood as a happy stage of life are communicated. Rousseau argues that children are born good and are subsequently corrupted by life (Rousseau 1930). However,

many children endure harsh realities, including malnourishment, poverty-related illnesses, etc. This is a distressing experience and while such realities relate to lower-class groups, children in upper-class groups also experience distress in other ranges of intensity and forms (for example, eating disorders, anxiety due to peer pressure etc). All in all, some childhoods can be very distressing, for different reasons.

It becomes relevant then to include codes for these understandings of childhood. What I wanted to determine was the frequency with which children were photographed in a happy or distressed state. And, as Collier (1957: 844) argues, photographs “catch many elements of the emotional currents within situations that are involved in a man’s reactions to his cultural circumstance”. As emotions then, happiness and distress can be detected in photographs. I did this by making a code for facial expressions. To determine the facial expression of the children, only two categories were used, that is, "content" or "distressed". Any other types of facial expressions (such as indifferent, confused, ambiguous, indeterminate etc) were categorised as "other". The aim here was to establish if childhood was portrayed as a happy or distressing stage of life by UNICEF.

Code 11 (Dress style)

Lutz and Collins (1993) draw attention to how anthropologists look for cultural difference and are drawn to "different" dress. The decision to include a code for dress style was actually borne out of a reading of works by Ariès (1973) where he argues that children were dressed like mini adults in the middle ages. Whether or not Ariès was right in concluding that this then signified the non-existence of a particular notion of childhood is not the issue here, rather it is the possibility that dress styles can convey certain ideas about life. There are two coding options for dress style, namely traditional and modern. The meaning of modern clothing in the context of this analysis refers to clothes originating in the west while traditional clothing refers to styles of clothing not traditionally worn in the west; a style that is part of the tradition of non-western cultures.

Code 12 (Participation)

Current literature on the subject of childhood social constructions in modernity, draw attention to a stark paradox. Whereas on the one hand society wants to protect and control children, on the other, they want to give autonomy to children (Frønes 1994; Boyden 1994;

Qvortrup 1994). This paradox was thus accounted for by providing codes for 'active' and 'passive' under the guise of 'participation' to explore how these ideas are portrayed in UNICEF representations of childhood. Including this code is particularly relevant given the arguments of theorists in the New Sociology of Childhood such as Prout and James (1990) and Jenks (1996) who point to children's role as social actors in their own right.

Code 13 (Myth)

Myths are immensely powerful. They constitute discourses on persons and affect how persons are treated (Ennew 2000). Conceptions about children are infused with myths (Archard 1993). The two main images of childhood that arise from mythology are referred to by Jenks (1996) as 'Dionysian' and 'Apollonian' views of childhood. In Roman mythology, Dionysus was the god of wine. In Greek mythology, Apollo was the god of music, healing art, archery, poetry and prophecy (Cooper 1992). Dionysus conjures up an image of the child as being corrupt. Children in this image are disciplined into submission. In contrast, the Apollonian view of childhood regards the child as angelic, innocent and good. Children in this image are encouraged and enabled. The two images are used within cultures to understand children through history and are used in parallel.

While the inclusion of 'myth' as a category is seemingly not objective, the mythological types were reduced to identifiable signs of innocence (the Apollo myth) and deviancy (the Dionysus myth) - traits that can be objectively identified through facial expressions, body language, type of activity etc

CATEGORY 3: PHOTOGRAPHIC TECHNIQUE

The third category of codes used covers photographic techniques. Sontag (1977) points out how different techniques are used to convey specific messages or create different images.

Code 14 (Type of shot)

According to Deacon *et al.*, mid shots indicate authority and familiarity. Close-up shots indicate trust and intimacy while full shots connote distance between the camera and the subject (Deacon *et al.* 1999). These three options (full, mid, close-up shots) were used as coding options.

Code 15 (Colour)

The use or absence of colour in photography affects the nature of representation and the mood of the image (Lutz and Collins 1999). According to Deacon *et al.* (1999), black-and-white photos carry connotations of nostalgia, of an age now passed. Black-and-white photos are equated with realism and the authentic. Colour photography has become associated with glamour, luxury, leisure rather than the mundane world of everyday lives. The associations thus make the use of colour inappropriate for the depiction of distress, disaster and poverty (Deacon *et al.* 1999). Three coding options were used: Full colour, selected colour (i.e the omission of one or more colours) and black & white.

Code 16 (Lighting)

Deacon *et al.* (1999) argue that lighting is an integral part of understanding the meanings of photographic shots. For Deacon *et al.* the use of shadows in photos evokes risk, danger, uncertainty and the harsher edges of everyday life (Deacon *et al.* 1999). Two coding options were used for lighting, namely illuminated (brightly lit photographs) and shadowed (lighting that was significantly reduced in photographs, especially in colour photographs).

3.1.4 Coding process

The publications were saved from the UNICEF website (www.unicef.org) in *Adobe Acrobat Reader* format (.pdf file extensions) and opened on screen during the coding. The variables and codes were recorded using *Excel* spreadsheets. The screen copy of the actual spreadsheet used to capture the codes is reproduced in figure 1.

Figure 1: Excel spreadsheet used to record codes of photographs

Unicef Title	We the Children									
	2001					2001				
Year	312	313	314	315	316	317	318	319	320	321
Photograph No.	1	2	3	01	05	01	05	12	04	10
Page	1	4	2	2	2	1	2	1	2	2
Gender	3	1	3	1	4	3	3	3	1	3
Race	2	4	3	4	4	4	4	3	3	4
Class	2	3	3	3	3	3	2	2	2	1
Age group	3	4	2	3	2	4	4	2	2	3
Area	3	2	2	3	3	3	1	2	2	3
Location	6	2	2	8	8	6	1	3	1	2
Rate	2	9	9	1	1	1	1	1	9	2
Family	2	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	2	2
Camera gaze	1	3	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Facial expression	2	2	2	2	2	1	2	1	2	2
Dress style	1	2	2	2	2	2	1	2	1	2
Participation	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Misch	2	2	2	3	3	3	2	2	1	3
Type of shot	1	1	2	1	1	1	3	3	3	1
Colour	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Lighting										

As show in figure 1, five main Excel spreadsheets (one for every year from 1999 to 2003) were used to capture the codes. Data capturing occurred in a sequential way, beginning with the 1999 publications, whereby each photograph was numbered and all source details recorded (i.e. the publication title, publication year, page number and photograph number). In column 1 of the above spreadsheet, 'photograph no' shows the 2001 photographs beginning at the number 312, thus following from the last numbered photograph in the 2000 publication, that is, 311 (which would be found in the spreadsheet titled '2000'). It was important to be pedantic about such details in order to maintain precision during the coding process.

As regards how the specific codes show in the above screen were chosen, obviously 11 040 coding decisions (that is 16 codes each for 690 photographs) cannot be individually explained, however, what can be illustrated is a few coding process examples. Thus, faced with a coding sheet and a photograph, what made me choose a particular code as opposed to another one? This can be best illustrated by pointing out in the image exactly what it was that affected my particular coding choice. Thus, the coding process explanation is structured as follows:

Example A

- A random photograph (from the actual sample of photographs used for the content analysis) is reproduced.
- Precise cues used to infer particular codes from the photograph are visually highlighted.
- Text boxes are inserted to explain why the photographic cue is equated with the code.

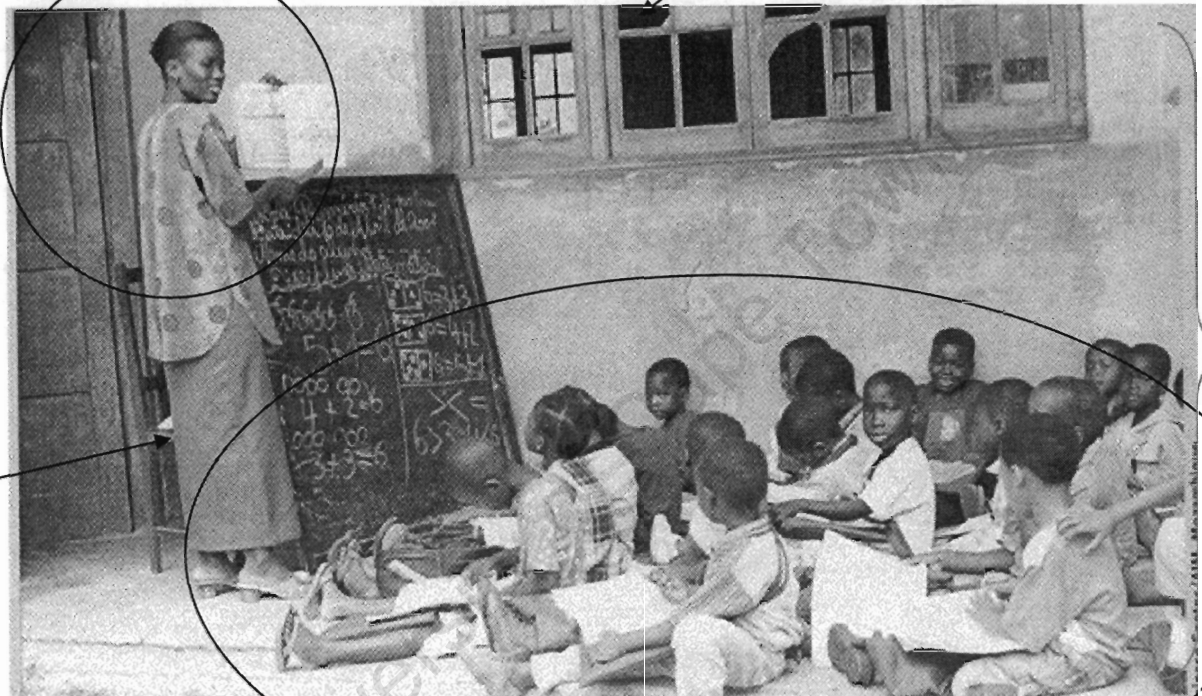
Example B

- The final codes chosen are then reproduced from the original coding sheets in tabular form, supplemented by the photograph to which they refer for ease of reference.

CODING PROCESS EXAMPLE A1²⁴

Broken windows indicating very poor socioeconomic conditions pointing to lower categories of class. Area is difficult to ascertain as surroundings not indicated therefore an inference was made from the class code (i.e. lower-class) that it was a rural area because schools are most especially battered and run-down in *poor* areas that are rural.
Class. Area

The teacher and the chalkboard create the school setting providing information that the children are in a public place and are school pupils.
Location, Role



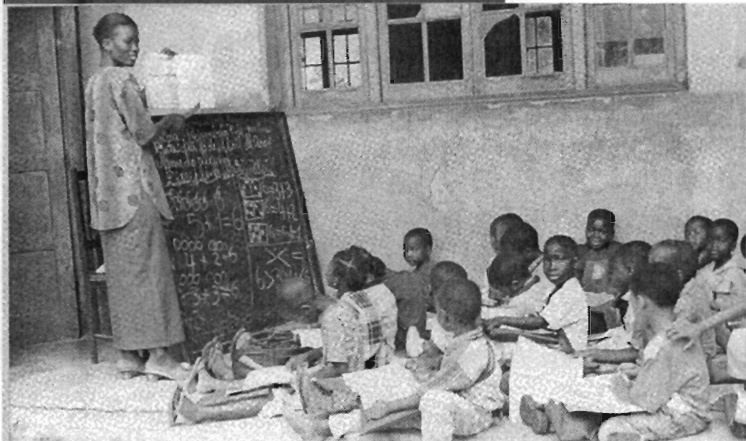
Black & white photograph, not illuminated.
Colour, lighting

Most stark role of this woman is that of a teacher, whether or not she is in fact the mother of one (or more of the boys) cannot be verified.
Family

Children have short hair, are dressed like boys, and have male facial features showing that they are boys. Skin colour is black. There are no classroom desks or chairs indicating very poor socioeconomic conditions and point to the lower-class grouping. Body physique is slight, children appear short therefore age estimated to be in the 4-12 category. *Most* of the boys are not looking directly at the camera, making it hard to tell what the majority of their facial expressions are, however their placid behaviour is not reflective of deviance, rather it is reflective of the Apollonian innocent myth. No traditional clothes detected. The boys are sitting down, listening to the teacher and therefore appear passive. The majority of the boys are photographed full-length (not close up etc).
Gender, Race, Class, Age, Camera gaze, Facial expression, Dress style, Participation, Myth, Type of shot

24 Note: **Bold** indicates coding options.

CODING PROCESS EXAMPLE A2



Unicef Title	The State of the World's Children	Code reference
Year	2002	
Photograph No.	356	
Page	60	
1. Gender	1	Male
2. Race	1	Black
3. Class	3	Lower
4. Age group	3	4-12 (child)
5. Area	2	Rural
6. Location	2	Public
7. Role	3	School pupil
8. Family	9	Other
9. Camera gaze	2	Looking elsewhere
10. Facial expression	3	indeterminate
11. Dress style	2	Modern
12. Participation	2	Passive
13. Myth	2	Apollo - innocent
14. Type of shot	1	Full
15. Colour	3	Black & white
16. Lighting	2	Shadowed

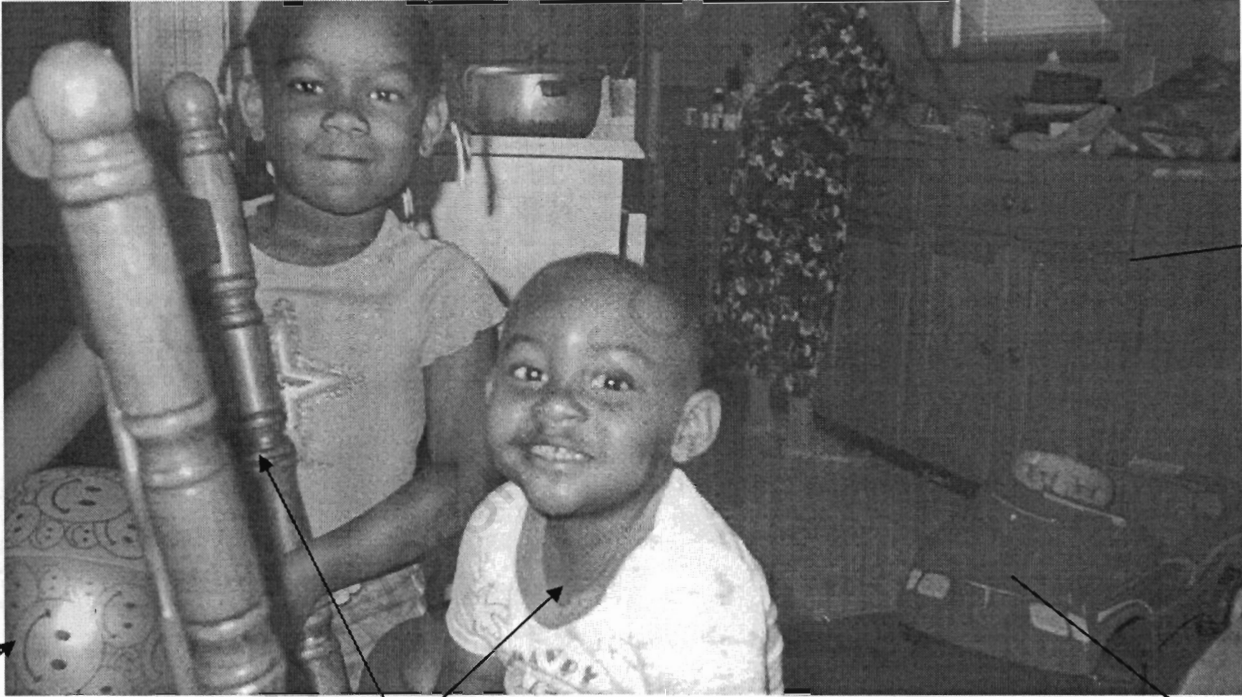
Notes:

Shaded columns refer to the data extracted directly from the Excel spreadsheet where coding occurred.

The unshaded column was inserted to show the reader what the codes refer to.

CODING PROCESS EXAMPLE B2²⁵

Woman washing dishes in the kitchen shows that this is a domestic setting (could be the children's mother).
Location, Family



Black & white photograph, not illuminated.
Colour, lighting

Expensive kitchen finish does not depict poverty, rather it provides a socioeconomic cue that this family is possibly middle-class.
Class

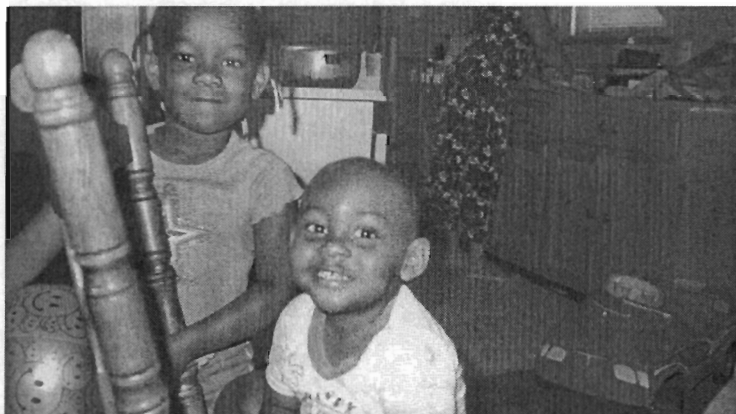
Boy holding a ball indicates playful role.
Role

The two children are black boys, in the 2-4 age group (they are physically very small) looking innocently, contently and directly at the camera. They are wearing modern teashirts. They are not participating in the kitchen activities of washing up. The boys are pictured mid-shot.
Gender, Race, Age, Camera gaze, Facial expression, Dress style, Participation, Myth, Type of shot

Rather 'new-looking', modern toy indicative of possible close spacing to urban shopping outlets.
Area

25 Note: **Bold** indicates coding options.

CODING PROCESS EXAMPLE B2



Unicef Title	State of the World's Children	Code reference
Year	2003	
Photograph No.	511	
Page	25	
1. Gender	1	Male
2. Race	1	Black
3. Class	2	Middle
4. Age group	2	2-4 Toddler
5. Area	1	Urban
6. Location	1	Domestic
7. Role	1	Player
8. Family	2	Mother
9. Camera gaze	1	Direct
10. Facial expression	1	Content
11. Dress style	2	Modern
12. Participation	2	Passive
13. Myth	2	Apollo – innocent
14. Type of shot	2	Mid
15. Colour	3	B&W
16. Lighting	2	Shadowed

Notes:

Shaded columns refer to the data extracted directly from the Excel spreadsheet where coding occurred. The unshaded column was inserted to show the reader what the codes refer to.

3.2 TEXT ANALYSIS

This method involves a close textual reading of UNICEF publications. The nature of the research for this section is qualitative and drew on the principles of semiotics. According to Tomaselli (1996:29), "semiotics is the study of how meaning occurs in language, pictures, performance, and other forms of expression". Semiological research focuses on the signification of the specific objects of analysis which are analysed relative to their own meaning (Barthes 1964).

Within this paradigm, the text analysis focuses on the fundamental component of semiotics, that is, the sign. The sign stands for the thing or idea to which it refers; signs signify meaning, they represent something else (Tomaselli 1996). To this end, the main question guiding the deconstruction of UNICEF text throughout this analysis is: 'what is the text signifying about childhood'?

This analysis is mainly concerned with the latent²⁶ content of the text. It is thus necessary to pay attention to different levels of signification, such as instances where the text signifies tradition or myth. Semiotic analysis also draws attention to connotational meanings signified by word and sentence structure such as metaphors and adjectives (Deacon et al. 1999). Meanings are also signified through associations. For example, through meaning, the term education can be associated with training and upbringing (Barthes 1964)

The importance and value of textual interpretation is implicitly recognised by UNICEF itself. Within a textual discussion of the child's right to participate, UNICEF points out that this right is not explicitly set out in the *Convention on the Rights of the Child* except for children with disabilities. However, when "a cluster of participation articles" are *interpreted* together, they "provide the argument for the child's right to participate" (UNICEF 2002:34).

26 The latent content of text works at a subjective level of perception; it is the connotations of the text (Deacon et al. 1999).

Researchers that have used textual analysis have produced findings that have been published in internationally acclaimed journals. For example, Saunders and Goddard (2001) employ the method of textual analysis to examine the impact of language used to describe children and children's experiences in the print media and other texts. Amongst other findings, their research shows that texts, even in academia, often objectify the child by neglecting their gender and referring to a child as "it" (Saunders and Goddard 2001:450).

3.2.1 Data sources

The nature of textual analysis is an inherently in-depth approach and, as such, further refining of the sample publications (used for the photographic analysis) was needed. Two considerations influenced the final sample choice:

- The publications had to be extracted from the same documents used to analyse UNICEF photographs (as well as the same time period).
- The publications had to be validated by UNICEF itself as the most influential of UNICEF manuscripts.

The State of the World's Children was selected for the text analysis. It is an annual publication and, as the analysis sought data for a five-year period, the final sample for the textual analysis contained 5 UNICEF publications. A complete listing of the publications analysed is presented in Appendix 3 (including a short blurb of the content of the publications, extracted directly from the UNICEF website). "This influential report combines in-depth analysis with comprehensive country profiles, maps and statistical data for 193 countries" (UNICEF 2003a). Inscriptions of childhood found in these particular publications are, therefore, making the boldest representations of childhood.

3.2.2 Research limitations

Critiques of drawing conclusions from textual analysis based on interpretations argue that the validity is undermined due to "interpretive plurality" (O'Brien 2003:363). The research has attempted to take account of such criticism by also conducting a content

analysis, a technique that is deemed to be objective since it is based on statistical and quantitative approaches. Further, many parts of the analysis has extracted parts of the text on which interpretation rests. Obviously, I could not reproduce each part of the text that influenced my textual interpretation. Besides, this would then become a content analysis in which themes are methodically accounted for thus detracting from the original objective of the text method, which is in my case, to open the mind, to reflect on the manuscripts as a whole. The nature of this method prevents me from presenting clearly delineated processes used (as for example was shown by the coding processes in the content analysis section), suffice to say that the analysis, where appropriate does replicate specific parts of the text to which analytical findings correspond.

It could be argued that by not selecting other UNICEF publications (and therefore only the *State of the World Children* series), that the analysis may lack evidence that these other sources may provide. However, it is the explicit intention of this paper to specifically analyse texts that UNICEF itself markets as the most influential of its work as these contain therefore pivotal representations of childhood. In the words of UNICEF, the annual publication titled *The State of the World's Children* is "the most authoritative assessment of children's well-being" (UNICEF 2003a).

The results from both methods are discussed in the following chapter.

4. RESULTS

This chapter discusses separately the results of the content analysis of photographs and text analysis. The results are discussed in isolation from each other. In other words, the results provided in section 3.1, for visual representations, are discussed independently of those provided for section 3.2, for textual representations, and vice versa. The next chapter will, however, merge the results from both forms of analysis. Had this paper skipped the present chapter and instead launched straight into a critical discussion of how text and imagery weave together to create representations (as is done in the following chapter), the reader would have been left without an initial mapping of the separate results. Collier J. and Collier M. (1986) argue that codified information needs to be contextualised. Before the contextualisation can occur, however, the details need to be set out clearly.

4.1 VISUAL REPRESENTATIONS OF CHILDHOOD

Of all the photographs in which the gender of the children could be identified for the five-year period, 39% are females and 33% are males while 13% of the photographs contained an equal number of males and females. Considering gender dynamics, girls are not being under-represented in photographs. However, as girls are the most representative gender group, whatever ideas of childhood are being conveyed in the photographs seem therefore to be pertaining mostly to girls, not boys.

Table 1: Gender profile

	Male	Female	Equally male and female	Indeterminate	Total
No.	226	268	84	112	690
%	32.5	39.3	12.7	15.5	100.0

Girls feature more often than boys



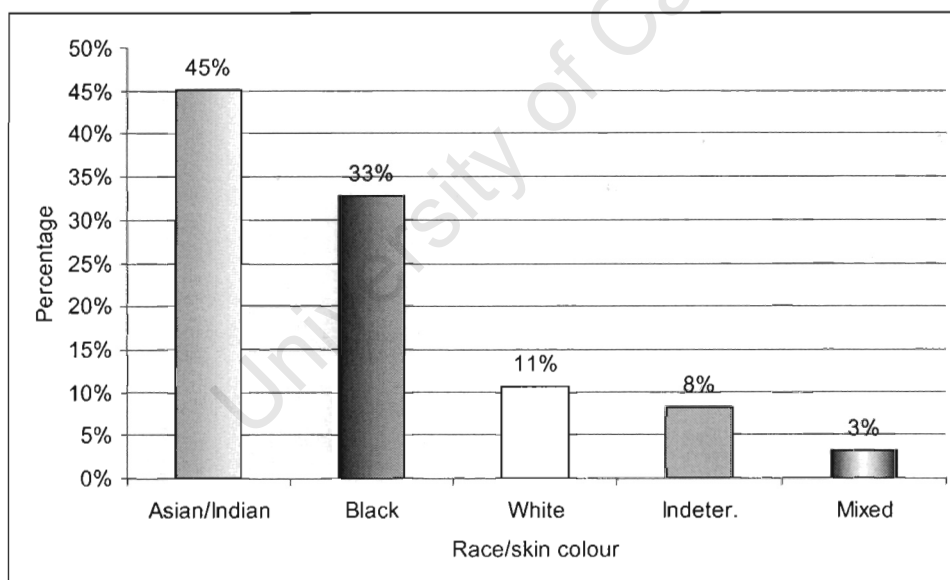
(Source: UNICEF *Quality Education For All*, 2002: 4).

Racial divisions in the photographs are apparent. In other words, children as distinct groups of persons according to the colour of their skin, are evident. This is shown in Figure 2. Only 3% of the photographs contained images of children of mixed races therefore most of the photographs separated the races. So, on one page is, for example, a photograph of only Indian children from South America while on the next page is a photograph of only Black children from Africa; a photograph of both Black and Indian children, i.e. mixed races, hardly occurs. What we know is that UNICEF regards race as an artificial category (see footnote 6) so they are obviously not segregating races due to some prejudice or attempts to prevent racial mixing. I think the racial distinctiveness of the photographs is more likely to be reflecting disparate countries – India through the Asian race etc.

The racial categories that recur the most are Asian/Indian (45%) followed by Black (33%). In other racial terms, the majority of children are non-white (white children constitute only about one tenth of the imagery). From the discussion of historical notions of childhood in chapter 1, researchers have shown how western parts of the world

represent the idea of childhood in a particular way and that these ideas of childhood are globalised, in other words, the ideas, knowledge and information about childhood are transmitted to non-western parts of the world. The analysis has yet to provide conclusions as to exactly what UNICEF notions of childhood are, but UNICEF is a historically western institution that has global connections. What is evident then is that children from predominantly non-western countries are portraying UNICEF ideas of childhood. But why are white children so under-represented? Non-western countries are categorised as underdeveloped, the various problems associated with under development create sympathy. This sympathy spurs persons to prioritise assistance programmes particular to underdeveloped countries and thus persons from these countries receive coverage in documents that set out their priorities. So, as the purpose of UNICEF is to help children in need, and those most in need are deemed to reside in underdeveloped countries (non-white children), white children from the west are absent from the imagery.

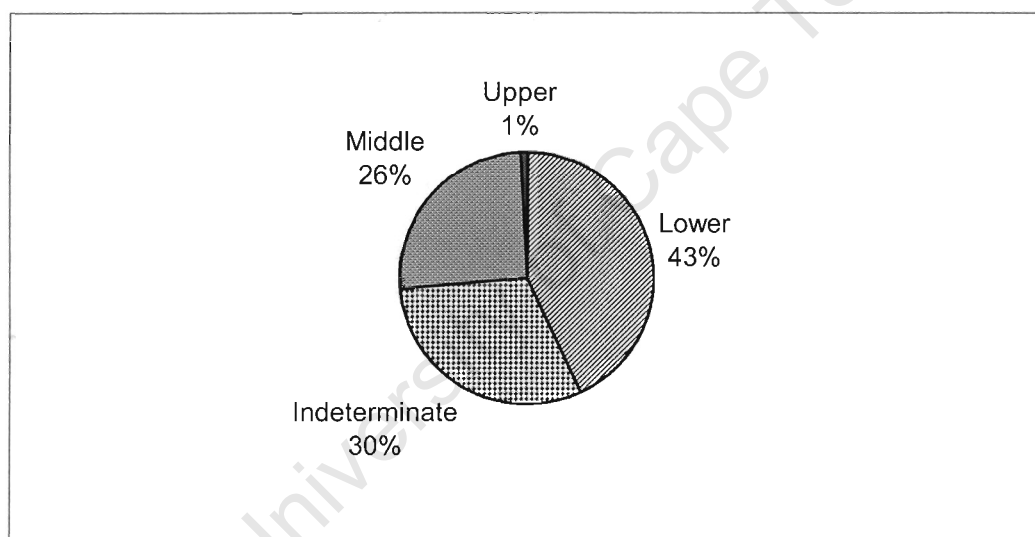
Figure 2: Race



Most of the children (43%) portrayed in the images are lower-class, 26% are middle-class and approximately 1% are upper-class. What is apparent here is additional evidence that particular characteristics of children portray UNICEF priorities. Thus, UNICEF sets out to help poor children.

What we know, so far (from the results of the racial and class coding), is that white, rich children are absent from photographs. Due to the mandate of UNICEF, this makes sense because UNICEF does not exist to focus resources on children who are already well-off. But this does raise the question of whether ideals associated with childhoods of middle- to upper-class white children from the west are being projected onto poor children from the non-west through representing Black and Indian/Asian children in a manner that signifies ideals of the proper childhood. As highlighted in chapter 1, there is a lack of research into how non-western persons conceptualise childhood. Thus, how relevant how these projections, if they are occurring? A more relevant question to ask is, do children themselves identify with these notions?

Figure 3: Class



The life stage of childhood is most apparently portrayed by children aged between 4 and 12 years in the images. This age group constituted 48% of the photographs followed by toddlers (32%) and babies (13%). While persons aged between 12 and 18 are categorised as children by UNICEF, this age group, also known as "adolescents" constituted only 7% of the photographs. The low frequency with which adolescents appear in photographs could possibly be interpreted as follows. Persons categorised as adolescents are generally physically larger than children younger than them and they closer to adulthood than younger children. In contrast, children younger than adolescents are physically smaller (and therefore often engender a need to protect) and are further

from adulthood, relative to adolescents. The concepts of adulthood and childhood are quite different, where the former is associated with responsibility and competence, the latter is associated with dependence and incompetence (at least by some persons). Children younger than adolescence could then be perceived of as more representative of what childhood means, namely vulnerability (from the need to protect) and helpless dependence.

Table 2: Age group

	Baby (0-2)	Toddler (2-4)	Child (4-12)	Adolescent (12-18)	Total
No.	91	218	336	45	690
%	12.8	31.8	48.3	7.0	100.0

As regards area, just under half (43%) of the images depicted children in a "pose". It was not possible to establish whether the children in photographed poses were in an urban area or a rural area. For example, it was unclear whether a child photographed in the location of a public school building was in an urban area or a rural area. Of the photographs where it was possible to ascertain the area, the children were almost equally distributed in urban (29%) and rural areas (28%).

Significations of urban/rural areas also show the extent to which notions are universal. Urban areas are associated with relatively more wealth than rural areas. More importantly, urban areas are endowed with not only more amenities, but better quality amenities, than rural areas. These demographic differences in urban/rural areas may well produce different childhood experiences, the notion of which is not accounted for in UNICEF representations, at least in the photographs they produce in the manuscripts analysed here. It is unlikely that all experiences of childhood would be the same in both rural and urban areas. Even within urban areas, there are different notions of childhood. For instance in Brazil, there are middle-class notions of children as innocent and vulnerable and there are shantytown notions of children as tough and independent (Scheper-Hughes and Hoffman 1998). It has been documented that children in rural areas of Sudan have more freedom of space than children in urban areas of the United States.

Access to space in US urban areas is constrained more for girls than for boys due to parental fear of hazardous spaces such as crime (Katz 1993).

Table 3: Area

	Urban	Rural	Pose/Indeterm.	Total
No.	197	201	292	690
%	28.8	28.3	43.0	100.0

In UNICEF photographs, the location context in which children were portrayed was mostly public places (61%) with a minority of the images capturing children in domestic places (11%). Katz (1993: 104) argues that "...autonomous exploration and manipulation of the outdoor environment..." contribute to children's development of spatial and analytic abilities, but notes that when access to spaces are limited that this may deprive children of developing these skills. In Rasmussen's (2004) terminology, what we find in UNICEF imagery are many instances in which 'places for children' are public, not private home places creating a picture of enlarged spaces for children.

Rasmussen (2004) theorises further about the meaning of the public/private distinction (which, for purposes of this paper, have been called the public/domestic distinction). Quite simply, public places are risky and private/domestic places are safe. It is surprising therefore that UNICEF portrays children in public places, given western modern thought that views children as vulnerable, especially in public domains that are risky. Also, children in the photographs are clearly from third world countries (the race code results showed that the majority of children appeared to be from Africa, Asia and South America) where risks are perceived by many to be especially dangerous (relative to the risks posed by developed nations). It is these views that might lead one to expect an organisation dedicated to addressing child wellbeing to represent childhood in safe places, construed by many as domestic private places. The results show the opposite. What this could be indicating is UNICEF attempts to show children participating and having access to a greater range of spaces in which to experience their lifeworlds, to use and develop spatial and cognitive skills. For, if they were pictured in homes, this would signify more insular experiences of childhood. What we see, however, are not insular, isolated experiences of childhood. Children are photographed apart from home life, they

are at school, in the community, in public recreational places. They are ‘out and about’ in public places.

Table 4: Location

	Domestic	Public	Pose	Total
No.	74	424	192	690
%	10.4	61.0	28.6	100.0

The dominant role of children in the photograph is rest (27%). Panter-Brick’s (2000) assertion that children’s economic role is not emphasised in many childhood notions is played out here. Children in the role of workers features minimally (12%). They are thus not represented as engaged in household or remunerated activities. What is being signified by this resting role? Scheper-Hughes and Sargent (1998: 11) argue that “[i]n gaining their ‘rights’ in the form of protection from family work, apprenticeship, and wage labor, modern children may have gained their childhoods but lost considerable power and status”. The absence of worker roles in the photographs points to UNICEF efforts to protect children from different types of work and labour. The children thereby gain their childhoods by not having to work and being afforded the time in which to rest and be carefree.

To some extent the rest role of children could be pointing to the romantic view of childhood. “Over-romanticism adds to the view of children existing in a world without responsibilities” (Burr 2002: 52). Children are mostly not portrayed as engaged in responsible work tasks and negotiations. Hung and Frankenberg point to the extent to which adults yearn for the ideals of childhood, of fun and innocence. They conducted research in the Disneyland theme park of the United States. It is their contention that Disneyland represents nostalgia for the childish past by children and adults (or what Winn 1983 refers to as old-era childhoods). When Warner (1994) discusses how the mythological figures produced in the literature such as Peter Pan “reveal the depth of adult investment in a utopian childhood state”, it is Disneyland that provides a direct example of such investment (Warner 1994: 34-35).

Winn (1983: 4) notes how "something has happened to the image of childhood". Winn contrasts the activities of children living in the 1930s with the activities of children living in the 1980s. For example, the former involved climbing sites, mowing the lawn, playing with dolls while the latter involves watching TV and going to the shopping mall. Winn's argument suggests that not the nature of childhood play has changed. Only 10% of the photographs portray children playing.

Boyden (1990) highlights how childhood in the west is associated with school and education. A total of 20% of the photographs portrayed children in the role of school pupil. This result can also be linked to the public/domestic location/place result above. Scheper-Hughes and Sargent (1998: 1) highlight that childhood, outside the home, "is the primary site of pedagogy and cultural learning". We have established that most of the children are photographed by UNICEF in public places, outside of the home. We now also know that a fair proportion of the children are pictured in the role of the school pupil. Thus, children photographed in public places acquires a particular meaning. These public places are a 'site' of learning. The extent to which this is represented in the photographs is not particularly high, but it does go, at least some way, in explaining why public places are encoded in photographs and thus how this related to UNICEF notions of childhood.

Playing constitutes a very small theme in the photographs of children's experiences



(Source: UNICEF Annual Report 2001: 36).

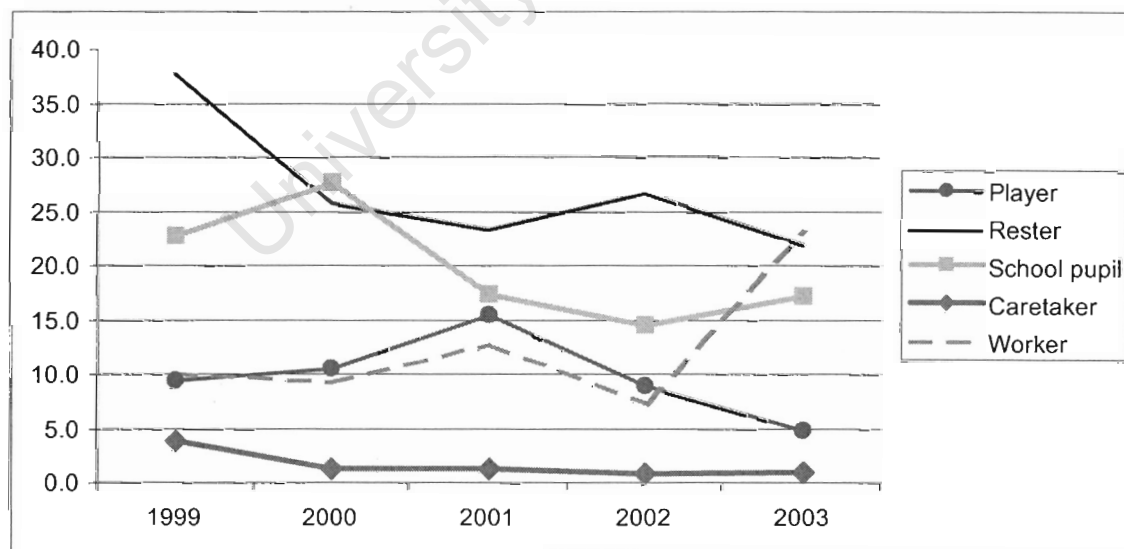
Consider also that Burr (2002: 52) highlights how the perception of childhood as a stage of life in which persons are in the process of becoming adults, are immature “renders children with their own experiences and concerns, invisible”. Being a school pupil involves learning to become something, a space in which to mature.

Many children have important caregiving roles in communities. Thus, for example, research conducted among Bhutanese refugee children by Hinton (2000) reveals the significant impact children had on the emotional and psychological worlds of adults and the ways in which children would often be the ones who provided the social support. These children, through the taking of action with regard to helping their parents cope, assume a protective capacity (Hinton 2000). However, children in the role of caregiver constitute only 2% of the UNICEF imagery.

Table 5: Role

	Player	Rester	School pupil	Caregiver	Worker	Indeterminate	Total
No.	70	190	140	12	82	196	690
%	9.8	27.0	19.9	1.6	12.4	29.3	100.0

Figure 4: Role



While children resting is, on average, the most dominant role of childhood depicted in the UNICEF imagery, figure 4 shows that this trend has been actually falling between

1999 and 2003. There has been a sharp upward trend in portraying children as workers. For the year 2003, the percentage of children in the role of worker exceeded the percentage of children in the role of rester by 0.95% (and the role of school pupil by 5.7%). The graph also reveals that the tendency to depict children playing has been following a downward trend since 2001. The extremely low frequency of portraying children as caregivers has been following a somewhat static trend for the period under review, peaking in 2001 at 15.3% and then reaching an all time low of 4.8% in 2003 (for the five-year period).

There has been a recent sharp increase in the portrayal of children working



(Source: UNICEF State of the World's Children 2002: 6).

In most of the photographs (74%), children were not pictured with family members. Linked to the results above, what we have then are children mostly resting or engaged in school activities either alone (29%) or with non-family members (45%). Given the western view of families as safe and nurturing, what could be explaining the lack of their presence in the photographs? Based on results discussed previously, we know that most of the children are photographed in public places, apart from domestic family settings. Thus, it is more likely that they would be among non-family members, such as teachers at

school, fellow students in playgrounds, being taken care of by development personnel, receiving medical treatment from nurses etc.

The prominent restler/school pupil role represents childhood as a nurturing and protective stage of life (contrast this prominent role to, for example, a worker/caregiver role where the latter would be – if it was being portrayed in photographs - more indicative of notions that represent childhood in more autonomous ways). Thus, while families have traditionally conveyed the idea of child protection and nurturing, the fact that the photographs lack a family presence does not detract from this idea.

The extent to which mothers are featured in the photographs with children is very low



(Source: UNICEF Africa Malaria Report 2003: 11)

Of the photographs in which children were pictured with family (26%), the family member that featured most prominently was the mother (15%) followed by siblings (6%) and the father (3%). Given the psychological discourse on the importance of a mother in childhood, it is not surprising that the mother is the family member that features the most. What is intriguing is that UNICEF representations of childhood lack fatherhood images. As the coding results above show, these photographs are portraying children of the third

world. Various challenges of living in third world countries can lead to “[a]ngry, resentful, overburdened, and sometimes fatally inattentive mothers in deadly combination with absent fathers [which] is obviously not a script for child survival” (Scheper-Hughes and Sargent 1998: 22). However, Gillis (2000: 225) argues that the “panic over absent fathers.....is a repeated theme in western civilization”. Gillis claims that fatherless families are largely the result of globalisation pressures that have hampered men’s ability to fulfil the breadwinner role, but that the absence of fathers is not a new phenomenon.

While it could be argued that fathers are lacking in the photographs because of the heavy public place context (in other words, if photographs were contextualised in domestic places, one may have seen a stronger presence of fathers). However, when we consider the work of Gillis (2000), it has to be recognised that UNICEF may be representing the extent to which definitions of fatherhood are being placed under pressure in the western world. Further, with regard to programme design and implementation, it has been documented that not much information exists in the family literature about the role of fathers in family-based interventions (Schock 2002: 231; Parke & Stearns 1993). So the absence of fatherhood roles is not a feature peculiar only of UNICEF – it seems to be part of a more general trend.

Research that stresses the importance of the extended family in children’s lives (e.g. Ennew and Milne 1989) is not borne out in the photographs, that is, childhood as a time in which the extended family plays a role in children’s lives is basically not represented at all in the photographs. Table 6 shows that photographs depicting children with a grandmother or grandfather occupied very small percentages of the imagery; 0.9% and 0.5% respectively.

Table 6: Family

	Alone	Mother	Father	Both parents	Siblings	Grand-mother	Grand-father	Both Grand-parents	Non-family	Total
No.	195	105	18	6	48	6	3	0	309	690
%	28.5	14.8	2.6	0.8	6.5	0.9	0.5	0.0	45.5	100

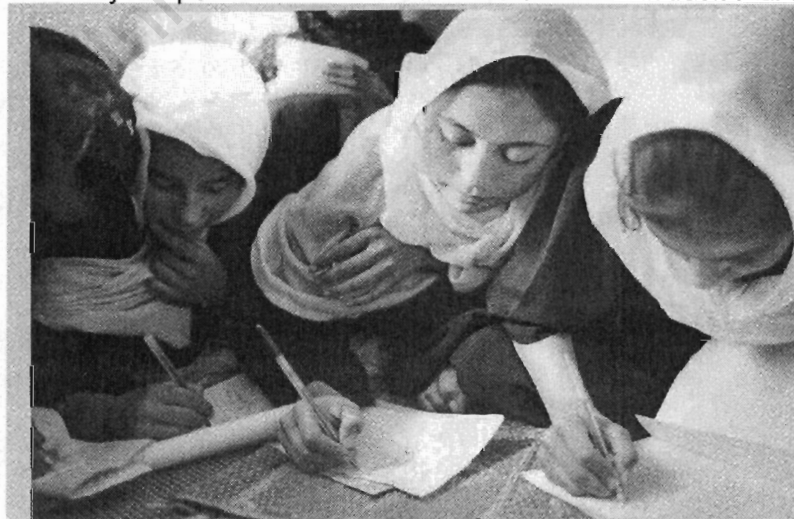
Results from the ‘facial expression’ codes shows no *substantial* evidence for claims that western bodies export notions that childhood is happy. While there is some evidence for Rousseau’s depiction of childhood as a happy time, 69% of the children were not irrefutably content-looking. More than a third of the children had a content facial expression and 12.3% had a distressed expression.

Table 7: Facial expression

	Content	Distressed	Other	Total
No.	259	85	391	690
%	37.5	12.3	56.7	100.0

The analysis reveals that cultural differences between children of disparate parts of the world with regard to clothing style are not large. The majority of the children in the photos had a modern clothing style (69.6%). Children dressed in traditional styles comprised 22.6% of the images. What we see here is how difficult it is to separate local from global effects (Stephens 1995). For children in local cultures of non-western cultures are wearing western modern clothes. Extracting notions of childhood is not a simple matter of walking into a local community and mapping out specific ideas. Rather, there is a high degree of overlap in regards cues of cultural thinking as illustrated here by how similar persons dress across the world.

There were very few pictures in which children were dressed in traditional clothing



(Source: UNICEF Annual Report 2001: Front cover).

Table 8: Dress style

	Traditional	Modern	Indeterminate	Total
No.	156	480	54	690
%	22.6	69.6	7.8	100.0

Theorists of the New Sociology of Childhood call for the reconstruction of childhood such that children are recognised as social actors and encouraged to participate and voice their opinions. Yet, what is starkly apparent in the photographs, is that children continuously appear passive, receiving instead of contributing, listening instead of voicing their opinion. For the most part, children in the photos were not depicted as active participators; 64.4% were represented as passive while 35.6% were represented as active.

Children portrayed as social actors constituted a third of the imagery. This photograph shows a 13-year-old girl from Bolivia addressing the United Nations General Assembly Special Session on Children (8 May 2002). She was reporting on a meeting initiated by the UN in which children discussed ways to improve their lives



(Source: UNICEF Annual Report 2002: 26)

Generally, the nature of children's participation in public life is represented in quite weak ways. The children are not portrayed engaging matters in a dynamic way. The

passivity portrayal of childhood then links back to the public/domestic location codes in which it was highlighted that places for children in the photographs are mostly public. Rasmussen (2004) argues that, due to the risks of public places, adults regulate children's participation therein, a form of protection. Thus, we have children in public participating, the nature of their participation is however monitored by adults thus creating a picture of children as passive/vulnerable because they need to be regulated. Desmond (2004) suggests that the representation of children as victims may occur in order to gain sympathy. While the meaning of 'passivity' in the codes used for this study cannot be defined narrowly in terms of 'victims', the two terms nonetheless do have similar connotations. Being passive can make one rather vulnerable which in turn may lead to someone becoming a victim. Thus, the passivity theme in childhood representations also creates ideas of children as vulnerable, in need of protection. Vulnerability through passivity then acts as a medium in which UNICEF represents their mandate – to protect the vulnerable. What this ignores, however, is some children's reliance on adversity in third worlds.

Table 9: Participation

	Active	Passive	Total
No.	248	442	690
%	35.6	64.4	100.0

The mythological image of children portrayed in the photos is Apollonian, that of innocence (96.7%). Children as corrupt barely feature at all (3.3%). This aspect of the photographs reveals childhood to be thought of as essentially good and pure, not deviant and corrupt. Any representation that is Apollonian creates a positive image of the subject being portrayed. Had the participation coding results (above) shown that children were represented as active (instead of passive), then this Apollonian aspect would have created imagery of children *doing* good and positive things. This would, in turn, be representing the value that children contribute to society, their competency and ability. However, the passivity of the children merely results in the Apollonian aspect showing children *being* good.

A recent study investigating how children are represented in the South African media, (and one that included children in the research process) found that half the articles

reported on children in a negative way (Desmond 2004). A child in the research study commented that “I feel sad because nothing is said about the good children *do*” [emphasis added]. This statement aided my interpretation of the mythological representations in UNICEF photographs. In particular, children are *being* good, but are they *doing* good things?

Imagery contains strong Apollonian mythology,
that of the innocent, pure child



(Source: UNICEF Annual Report 2001, front cover)

Table 10: Myth

	Dionysus (corrupt)	Apollo (innocent)	Total
No.	23	667	690
%	3.3	96.7	100.0

The gaze confronting the reader comprised 38.9% of the images while the gaze looking elsewhere comprised 61.1% of the images. Most of the children were not gazing directly into the camera pointing to the manner in which the children are distanced from the reader.

More than half of the photographs (55.3%) were mid-shots -showing children from the waist up. The percentage of camera shots that were taken as full shots (showing the whole of the subject's body) and close-up shots (focusing solely on the face) were very

similar, at 21.7% and 23% respectively. As a whole, the type of camera shots used connotes familiarity and trust between the camera and the children: 78.3% of the photos were mid and close-up shots. However, the indirect gaze (discussed above) of the children connotes distance. I interpret this contradiction as follows. By photographing children who do not gaze directly at the camera, a sense of realness is created in that it appears that the children are being photographed in a natural state. This normalises the particular image of childhood being conveyed through the photographs, in other words creates a sense of authenticity. The close-up and mid shots convey a sense of trust and familiarity, which in turn represents the idea that children are innocent (trusting).

More than half of the photographs (58.9%) were black-and-white. Just over a third of the photographs were full colour (34.8%) with 6.3% using only selected colour, such as only blues, or only greens. Twenty percent of the photos were illuminated and 80.1% of the photos were shadowed. Traces of illumination and shadows were evidenced both in black-and-white photos and colour photos. The majority of children are photographed in images displaying shadowed lighting.

While noting that black-and-white images could just be indicating printing cost constraints, they do nonetheless create an atmosphere. From the class/race codes, we know that the children are poor from third world countries and the sense of hardship they face are heightened by the lack of colour in the photography. Or, to borrow the terminology of Sontag (1977), the reader becomes 'animated' by the use of black-and-white imagery in which the adversities and poverty of third world conditions is communicated. However, within this animation are children and their childhoods, both of whom are, on the whole, not depicted as sad, struggling or deviant.

4.2 TEXTUAL REPRESENTATIONS OF CHILDHOOD

What first struck me, when I began analysing the texts, was that UNICEF holds the view that the idea of childhood as a safe and protected space that did not exist in the Middle Ages. This is exactly what historians of childhood claim, as discussed in chapter 2 (Ariès 1962; Shorter 1975; Stone 1979)

"One thousand years ago, children were all but invisible as individuals, regarded as property and made to work as soon as they were physically able to. Adults paid little attention to their special needs. By the turn of this Century, when the deadly scourges of cholera, typhoid and influenza were rampant throughout the world, children were no closer to gaining their basic rights than they were during that earlier period. It took the world's horror at the First World War and the commitment of the newly formed League of Nations to peace and rehabilitation to transform charitable approaches on behalf of children into the recognition that children had rights as well as needs." (UNICEF 1999:14)

UNICEF is referring to similar time periods in which the above historians argue that children were perceived as unimportant individuals, of little worth, often viewed with indifference. Further, UNICEF has a social constructionist perspective of childhood as directly reflected in the following: "[w]hat has happened is that childhood as a social construct has evolved with changing societies and changing values..." (UNICEF 2002:14).

In the 21st century, UNICEF represents childhood as a space in which children have a relatively low social status. This is interesting in light of criticisms from, for example, Mackay (1975) who draws attention to the manner in which adults view children as incomplete beings, incompetent and therefore inferior. The text of UNICEF frequently groups children with women (who have traditionally been accorded an inferior social status relative to men in many parts of the world for many centuries). Using "pictorial representations of indices of elements that affect the survival, growth and development of infants around the world", UNICEF provides a map with an enlarged, bold heading as follows: "Women's status = children's status" (2000:71). The textual heading is a clear indication of how UNICEF literally equates the social standing of children with that of women.

For UNICEF, a major signification of childhood is happiness and fun. Activities associated with happiness, such as playing is viewed as part of a normal childhood. The

idea of children playing (in playgrounds) is part of the regular life of childhood "the world over".

"Soon the play equipment is swarming with giddy children, while their caregivers chat on a nearby bench. The scene looks utterly normal, like many playgrounds the world over." (UNICEF 1999:9)

UNICEF stipulates the world's duty to protect children's right to live in peace, and without fear, which portrays childhood as a space and time of a child's life that should be safe and protected.

UNICEF also has very specific views of how children should be reared and cared for. Words such as "care" and "attention" signify that childhood is a stage in which individuals should be nurtured because they have "special needs" (UNICEF 1999:10-14).

Early childhood care for persons aged 0 to 5 is perceived as particularly crucial during childhood, due to scientific findings that emphasise such care. Here we find strong evidence for naturalistic views of childhood. Haraway (1989) points out that some theorists assume that the biological domain of childhood is inherently natural (cited in Griffin 1993). Development Psychology has been the major framework in which the nature of the child is explained and is used to justify the assertion that childhood is natural (Prout and James 1990). Jean Piaget's work, in particular, was a key influence on the constitution of childhood through the development of psychological theories of intelligence and child development. Piaget claimed that all children undergo certain stages of intellectual growth. Sensory-motor intelligence succeeds birth followed by pre-conceptual thought, intuitive thought and concrete operations up the formal operations, occurring in early adolescence. The stages occur in chronological order (Jenks 1996) and are believed by some theorists to result in the eventual attainment of logical competence – the mark of adult rationality (Prout and James 1990).

While UNICEF is supportive of enabling children's views to be spoken and heard, a child's capacity to do so effectively is dependent on what age and stage of development he/she is experiencing:

"States Parties shall assure to the child who is capable of forming his or her own views the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child, the views of the child being given due weight in accordance with the age

and maturity of the child." Article 12 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNICEF 2002:25).

This indicates that not every child's view is perceived as equally competent. So, for example, what a 9-year old child says would not be weighted as high as what a 14-year old child says, unless the 9-year old child demonstrates maturity that is equal to or greater than the 14-year old child. This again points to the effects of Piaget-type thinking in UNICEF conceptions of childhood. In the Piaget line of thought, a 9-year old has not reached the logical competencies that, for instance 14-year old has, hence the accordance of different weighting of views according to age.

"Science now tells us that optimal neural development in a child, which affects physical, mental and cognitive development, depends on the good nutrition and loving stimulation the child receives during the first months and years of life" (UNICEF 1999:45).

Holland (2002) critically analysed British child protection cases and found them to be dominated by development norms of psychology. UNICEF texts also contain deep assumptions espoused by naturalistic disciplines. As pointed out by Holland (2002: 331), this 'checklist' approach to children's growth and development is "a rather simplifying approach" to the study of children and childhood. The views are culturally biased and may not be enlightening when trying to explain a child's behaviour from another culture, but more importantly in trying to intervene in that child's life.

While UNICEF is clear about their belief that every child requires at least one strong adult as a caregiver, it is the role of the mother that is most frequently and constantly cited as vital for a child's development. Herein lies further evidence of naturalistic ideas of childhood. Psychology, as natural science places great emphasis on the mother's role during childhood. Children need to 'bond' with their mothers and mothers should be 'sensitive to their children's 'needs' (Rose 1990). While some mothers do play an important role in their children's lives, hard realities do challenge some women's ability to experience motherhood as envisioned by psychological discourse that informs UNICEF notions of childhood. For example, maternal breast-feeding is equated with good motherhood and healthy child development. However, circumstances may reduce women's ability to do so. In Brazil, women's entrance into new forms of wage labour during the 1980s interrupted breast-feeding (Scheper-Hughes and Sargent 1998). A child

survival campaign promoting maternal breast-feeding is unlikely to be successful, in such a context.

The extremely low frequency with which full page articles and inserts discussing the role of the father or the extended family (or any other family member) in rearing children illuminates the wide extent to which UNICEF emphasises the pivotal role of a mother during a person's childhood.

While certainly, ample space is allocated to the textual discussion of the importance of good mothering and early childhood care, UNICEF also advocates a holistic approach to providing and caring for children. In fact, the persons and institutions needed to effect a happy and healthy childhood span from micro institutions such as schools and NGOs to macro institutions such as governments.

While some traditional (non-western) modes of child-rearing are applauded for positively contributing to a child's development (such as confinement of mother after birth in traditional societies of Africa), such acknowledgement is only given when they resemble modern western practises (granting maternity leave for parents).

UNICEF faces the same paradoxical thinking of childhood that so many child theorists highlight, i.e. children as vulnerable, yet strong. Current literature on the subject of childhood social constructions in modernity, draw attention to this stark paradox. Whereas on the one hand society wants to protect and control children, on the other, they want to give autonomy to children. From a reading of the text, it became apparent that UNICEF's paradox of childhood was more complicated than a simple weak/strong view of childhood. I develop and explain this idea below.

Before I explain the deeper complexities of UNICEF's paradoxical view of childhood, I take note of Jordanova's (1990) critique of childhood studies in order to address some of the problems raised by the author²⁷:

....by a combination of rhetoric and spurious common sense, laziness and cowardice are inculcated amongst historians: laziness because we are not forced to set out either the necessary intermediate steps in the argument or the mediating historical processes, and cowardice because we avoid, once again,

²⁷ Jordanova's (1990) criticisms of childhood historians are noted in chapter 2.

facing the undeniable fact that historians constantly deploy psychological and social theories, whether they wish to admit it or not (Jordanova 1990: 77).

Noting these deficiencies in studies of childhood, I set out the 'intermediate steps' in my claims about UNICEF's paradoxical notions of childhood and would like to acknowledge that I have deployed social theories to arrive at this conclusion. As argued by Frønes (1994), some societies want to protect and control children, yet also provide autonomy to them. This is the paradox of childhood. It is this social theory that became apparent after a reading of UNICEF text. I also make use of Panter-Brick's (2000) work where it is pointed out that 'positive deviance' is a term used to describe children who are resilient in life circumstance deemed inappropriate for children's experiences.

The intermediate steps are as follows:

- Describing the harsh conditions of Nepal, UNICEF alludes to the way in which some children "struggle for survival" and others "flourish despite the socio-economic odds against them" (2000:18). This text alerted me to the paradox of childhood identified in the literature of childhood. Thus, some children are strong enough to withstand tough conditions, while others are not. Hence we have the view that some children are strong, others are weak which then feeds into conceptions of childhood as either a stage of life in which to protect children or enable their resiliency and independence.
- Reading further in the same publication, I came across the following text: "Weak and dependent children and women make for weak and dependent countries. In dramatic contrast, children and women empowered by their rights make for robust and self-sufficient societies" (UNICEF 2000:64). I found this statement riddled with assumptions pertaining to factors that account for human strength. Then I asked myself, if a child was weak and dependent and disempowered in terms of their human rights, must we assume then that he/she will not one day become robust and self-sufficient? It was this question that revealed the complex strands of UNICEF's paradox of childhood. For, if we hypothesise that the weak and dependent child was living on the street and that this very experience, while harsh at the time, became the seeds of future resilience through the development of coping mechanisms, then we can see that weakness and dependence does not

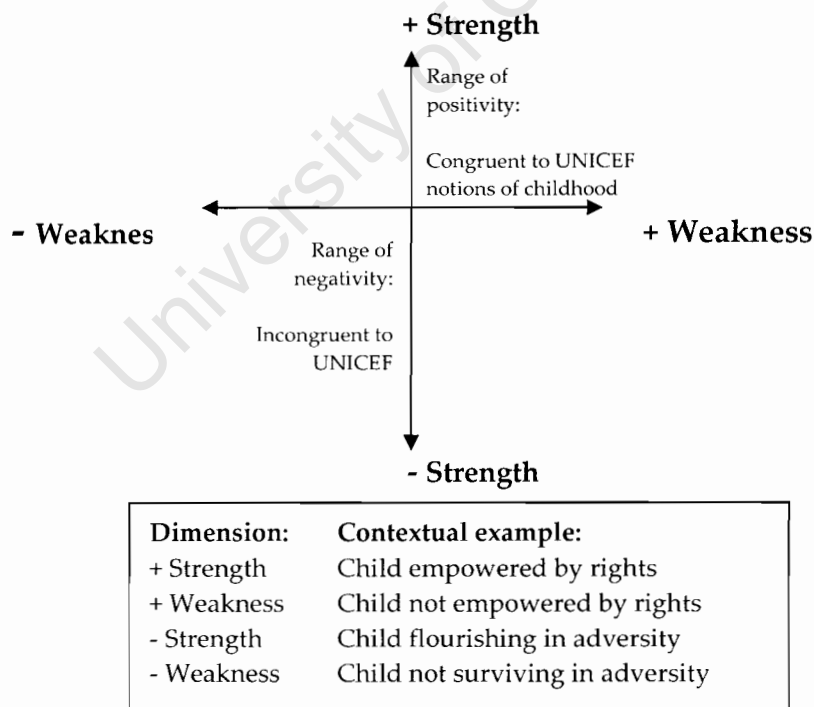
necessarily prevent future self sufficiency. Further, just because a person has been granted their rights, does this act as an assurance of their future robustness and self-sufficiency? What about different personalities, different religions, different cultural priorities?

- What I began to see then was the extent to which ideas of strength and weakness are viewed in very particular ways by UNICEF. Thus, the paradox of the weak/strong child (as it relates to childhood) is not as simple as it seems. UNICEF has very particular ideas of what is weak/strong and what is not.
- The quadrant below is drawn straight from the notes I made while reflecting on this paradox while I was trying to work out what is recognised as strength and weakness in children and how this pertains to childhood.
- The actual explanation of the complexities of the paradox are set out below. To make the explanations more understandable, I assigned negative and positive values to indicate to the reader different notions of strength/weakness. The values are not intended to attach moral judgments to how UNICEF is representing different ideas. The process of assigning values was derived from findings related to literature findings. UNICEF views instances where children are able to withstand such hardships as "positive deviance" (Panter-Brick 2000).

Having outlined the social theories used and the steps that led me to probe deeper into the UNICEF paradox of childhood, I explain the complexities of the paradox as follows: The paradoxical nature of childhood influences UNICEF notions through the recognition of the strength and fragility / weakness of children. However, encoded in UNICEF representations of childhood are only certain strands or dimensions of this paradox, as illustrated in Figure 5. Through the use of two examples, the quadrant illustrates that only strengths and weaknesses that are congruent with notions of what childhood means are encoded into UNICEF representations. Strengths and weaknesses that are labelled "positive" act as dimensional cues to 'encoding congruency' whereas strengths and weaknesses that are labelled "negative" indicate 'encoding incongruency'. The examples associated with each dimension are explained below:

- Strength is positive, when congruent with UNICEF view of childhood (Children's rights are expected to strengthen children through enabling their rights to be active participators)
- Strength is negative, when incongruent with UNICEF view of childhood (Adversity is negative for children because it harms their growth and development and destroys spaces that should be safe and protected. Children are not expected to show strength under such circumstances.)
- Weakness is positive, when congruent with UNICEF view of childhood (The denial of rights for children places them in a marginalised and vulnerable status. Under such conditions, it is expected that children may be weak and dependent).
- Weakness is negative, when incongruent with UNICEF view of childhood (Childhood is not a stage of life in which children are expected to struggle for survival).

Figure 5: Quadrant of the dimensional paradox of childhood (for UNICEF)



Moving on to other insights about how UNICEF textually represents the idea of childhood. Without a doubt, UNICEF equates the notion of childhood with attending school and receiving quality education, most especially for girls. Obtaining an education "offers protection from a multitude of hazards, such as a life consigned to poverty, bonded labour in agriculture or industry, domestic labour, commercial sexual exploitation or recruitment into armed conflict" (1999:46). Rose (1990) points out that 20th century efforts by the state to protect and provide welfare to children were driven by motives to prevent future social disorder by attempting to ensure that children living in hard circumstances did not grow up to be devious, trouble-making adults. The reasons cited by UNICEF for giving children education are that it will basically save them from bad work experiences when they are adults. It is interesting that whereas social service were used as a curber of future criminality that are harmful to society at large by 20th century states (as claimed by Rose 1990), UNICEF's support for social service in the form of education is being presented as a curber of future labour experiences that are harmful to the child personally.

Attached to UNICEF notions of childhood is the temporal importance of becoming a future adult. Childhood is temporally important insofar as it is the time in which a person must prepare for adulthood. From a temporal point of view, care of children is important more for future, than for the present - more for assuring success in later life, than for assuring that they experience life as they are now, at this moment. One implication is the somewhat dehumanising effect such visions have on children as individuals living in the present and negotiating complex relations and interactions.

"As the lives of young children are short-changed, so the fortunes of countries are lost" (UNICEF 2000:40).

Reference to the "fortunes of countries" points to the future earning capacity these children will demonstrate as adults. It says nothing of the manner in which they are currently being denied rights or opportunities to develop.

However, other parts of the text state that children are seen as the "key" to reducing problems such as poverty, violence, disease and discrimination. The nature of this type of responsibility can be interpreted in the following way:

- The removal of responsibility -- from adults and institutions that perpetuate the problem. For example, UNICEF (1999:17) argues that institutional policies that have led countries to reduce expenditure on basic social services are "gross violations" because they have exacerbated many of the problems faced by poor people, particularly poor children. Institutions supporting such expenditure cut-backs are in this regard contributing to the perpetuation (or creation) of poverty. This responsibility gets shifted to children when they (the children) are (explicitly) cited as the key to solving poverty problems (instead of the contributing institutions).
- The theme of temporality is also an important reason for prioritising universal basic education, especially for girls. Girls, as future women, but more importantly as future mothers must receive an education to benefit children.

"Ensuring that a woman is empowered, healthy and well educated - a good unto itself - can have a dramatic effect on the welfare of her children. A mother who is ill, hungry or oppressed is less likely to nurture her children fully." (UNICEF 2003b:11)
- These interpretations of responsibility highlight the mythological credence given to children, their role as the "Apollos" of humanity; their healing potential. The nature of responsibility shifted to them as well as the creation of the role they must fulfil in meeting such a responsibility points most strikingly to the angelic, innocent and good virtues perceived as most constituent of childhood. Creating such responsibility for children also connotes an enabling characteristic, one in which children should be encouraged to gain and develop competencies required to assume such responsibilities. The Apollonian myth that constitutes UNICEF's ideas on childhood is so deeply entrenched that one part of the text refers to the "natural innocence of childhood" - connoting that children are born good and are naturally disposed to innocence (UNICEF 2000:42).

The persuasiveness of children as Apollonian myths runs strongly throughout the text. When the potential opportunity arises to represent children in a Dionysian manner (children as corrupt), the opportunity is not taken. For example, child soldiers are portrayed as victims. Any description of delinquent child behaviour is "downplayed", described in a non-forceful way, without drama. The result is a softening of the image of

a bad and corrupt child as well as sympathy for the child, who after all is in the process of childhood - an innocent and virtuous stage of life. In an article which reported on how child soldiers in Liberia were treated after they had fought, UNICEF is critical of programmes that treated the child soldiers in the same manner as adult soldiers, that is, through detention programmes and is more supportive of courts that provide special consideration of children that are inclusive of juvenile hearing cases.

"Instead of 'bad children', it is 'bad circumstances' that are addressed and helpful solutions sought". (UNICEF 2001:29)

Drawing heavily on psychological theories of child development, UNICEF distinguishes different phases within childhood; a distinction that directly influences their programme priorities. UNICEF assumes that a person will pass through three main (sequential) phases of childhood, from being an infant, to a child to an adolescent. Of all the phases of childhood, UNICEF views adolescence as the phase in which individuals are most vulnerable to the problems they prioritise as most important in the world. Thus, adolescents are particularly vulnerable to "HIV/AIDS, sexual exploitation, exploitative child labour, being caught up in conflict or used as soldiers" (UNICEF 2001:60). However, many of the goals set by UNICEF to improve the wellbeing of children relate to children under-5 years, for example:

- The reduction of infant and under-5 mortality rates
- The reduction of maternal mortality ratios
- The reduction of severe and moderate under-5 malnutrition.

Why, despite having identified adolescence as the time in which individuals are most vulnerable to dangers of the world, does UNICEF prioritise the development and protection of younger children under-5? The first possible reason is that due to the importance attached to the time orientation of younger children aged 0 to 5, returns to investments in this age group are perceived to be highest of all the phases and ages of childhood. Scientists have informed UNICEF that the proper care and development of individuals undergoing early childhood is vital to assure their future success and adaptation as adults. Within a temporal dimension, while UNICEF acknowledges that it is 'never too late' to develop adolescents who perhaps were denied or lacked proper care

in their early years, the probability of ensuring their success as adults is not very high. The second possible reason is that adolescents are not "young enough to inspire adult protectiveness" (UNICEF 2002:47).

The text constantly refers to children's rights, signifying that childhood is a significant stage of life. Highlighting the rights of children points to the respect and dignity owing to individuals experiencing childhood. The assigning of age to a person in conjunction with the psychological theories underpinning child development has implications for the constitution of children's rights. At one point, UNICEF text (2000:16), when describing rights, divides children into "very young children"; "pre-school aged children"; and "children in the early primary grades". The text shows that the older the child is, the more rights he/she has (as compared to younger children). Thus, children in the early primary grades have more rights than very young children (and are also entitled to all the rights allocated to very young children). The rights granted to each sequential division are highly correlated to the development needs identified by Child Psychologists, for example, the right to "appropriate language stimulation" and the right to have "support in acquiring additional motor, language and thinking skills". Rights for children, as an ideal insofar as preventing child exploitation and abuse and enabling children's potential is fundamentally good. Few people would object to this particular way of viewing children's rights, for they surely would not advocate the abuse and exploitation of children and the quelling of human potential. However, it has to be recognised that notions of what a child is entitled to be, to do and to say largely depends on local practices and meanings and that therefore these notions are not universal (Scheper-Hughes and Sargent 1998). However noble the charter of children rights is, parts of it may become meaningless in different local contexts. Allocating rights according to age may not therefore be particularly relevant in a culture where age is accorded a different social meaning, where the associated right is perhaps given or expected of the child at a later or earlier age.

Despite meeting the age criteria of adolescence, any individual aged 14 facing hardships is not labelled with the term, 'adolescent'. Rather he/she is labelled with the term 'child' (UNICEF 1999:26). In other texts, adolescents that are particularly vulnerable, having to face danger are referred to as "older children" (UNICEF 2001:60).

Or, in another instance, persons aged between 15 and 18 who have to be recruited into armed forces are referred to as 'children', not 'adolescents'. What this signifies is that during the stage of adolescence, when a person displays characteristics that directly resemble UNICEF notions of what childhood means, he/she is referred to as a child.

From a reading of the text, it would seem that the way in which UNICEF has reconciled the dual ways of viewing adolescents (i.e. as children or as adults) is to explicitly refer to persons aged 13 to 18 who portray elements of childhood as children and those who do not portray these elements as adolescents. It is interesting to draw on the work of Seekings (1995) in order to show how the exclusion of persons from categories indicates that they do not display some (or all) of the traits associated with that category. Thus, Seekings analysed how South African newspaper articles (between 1989 and 1994) were portraying the lives of young people (specifically black youth). The study found that the media treated black youth as indicators of moral and social disorder – “young wartime looters” (Seekings 1995: 26). When the newspapers reported on achievements by people ‘matching’ this category, they referred to these young people as ‘youngsters’, ‘girls’, ‘boys’ or ‘ordinary’ boys, instead of ‘youth’ (Seekings 1995).

What is clearly reflected through the texts of UNICEF, in which explicit reference is made to making children's voices heard and including children's perspectives, is the relative recency of viewing childhood in such a manner. Whereas previously children were a muted group, UNICEF is now representing children as an audible group with valuable views and opinions. The recency of such representations can be noted through the ways in which UNICEF "advocates" for children's participation, which shows how childhood has not yet fully reached the point where children are "naturally" assumed to participate. It was as recent as 2002 when children, for the first time in history, "were included as official members of delegations, representing governments and non-governmental organizations" at the General Assembly meeting (UNICEF 2002:9). The newness of viewing children as worthy social actors with an ability to participate and contribute is also demonstrated by UNICEF's call for adults to develop competencies that can elicit the views of children. As highlighted by James and Prout (1990), viewing children as active participators involves *reconstructing* notions of childhood. Enabling children the opportunity to be social actors is challenging (Hendrick 2000). Yet, UNICEF

is taking steps to do just this. Children are encouraged to form "child parliaments", "peace movements" and to "address national parliaments" as a way of resolving the world's problems (UNICEF 1999:15-16).

Despite UNICEF's strong disapproval of children actively involved in work, the view does not constitute notions of childhood as a passive stage of life. In contrast:

"Seen through the Convention's lens, the child is an active and contributing member of a family, community and society." (UNICEF 2001:36)

True to theorists' assertions that concepts of childhood are "exported" throughout the world by western institutions (discussed in chapter 2), UNICEF does perceive its conceptualisation of childhood as fitting for countries throughout the world. While readily recognising the disparate contexts in which children live their lives and the fact each child is unique and different, UNICEF is clear that children should, under no circumstance, be engaged in exploitive labour, armed conflict or be subject to abuse, neglect or street life. These activities are unacceptable and unfit for children who should be at school, receiving a "quality" education. While UNICEF does note how some children spend their lives in "domestic servitude" or "labour", they do not include these realities in the construction of what childhood should represent (UNICEF 1999:20). Rather, such harsh realities are taken to represent what childhood is not about. It is only when "children live particular experiences" that they are said to have had a childhood. These characteristics and experiences are rarely defined; they only become evident when absent (Hecht 1998).

To illustrate, during the economic downturn that occurred in Indonesia in the late 1990s, many children dropped out of school. Through living such lives, devoid of essential elements of childhood, such as schooling, UNICEF categorises these Indonesian children as a "lost generation" (UNICEF 1999:22). Unless people live in certain conditions and act in certain ways, it cannot be asserted that they have experienced childhood. "Childhood is especially perishable in war"; a claim made by UNICEF with reference to the brutal atrocities endured by many children in the Rwandan war (1999:26).

Problems of poverty and ill health are discussed mostly within the context of children who live in non-western countries, such as South America, the Middle East, Africa and the east. While some reports do draw attention to, for example, the poverty that exists in the western city of New York, the content is minimal compared to the coverage given to non-western countries.

"In still other countries, deepening pockets of poverty are masked in average national statistics. Only by disaggregating the national averages can the poor who are huddled in the margins be located. In New York City, for example, the percentage of children born into poverty rose from 44 per cent to 52 per cent from 1990 to 1996, a 20 per cent increase, and the number of homeless children rose 21 per cent during the same period" (UNICEF 1999:24).

The page space of one paragraph given to the coverage of poverty in the west is miniscule compared to the pages and pages of text, photographs and graphics given to covering poverty in the non-west countries. What this suggests is that the major problems of humanity, such as poverty and HIV/AIDS (identified by UNICEF), are located in specific continents of the world, and that such problems are less visible in other continents. Comparatively speaking, certain continents may have higher rates of poverty and diseases. However, it is also important to reflect on how children in particular places and areas are living relative to other children in the same area. Thus, while poverty in New York may not be the highest statistic in the world, poverty in New York is nevertheless a problem for the children experiencing that condition. In addition, poverty-stricken children compared to children who are not afflicted with poverty in the New York area may be high, in the context of that particular area.

Major threats to childhood identified by UNICEF include amongst others HIV/AIDS, poverty and lack of an education. International studies reveal that children most susceptible to and vulnerable to these problems are those who live in underdeveloped countries, hence when reading UNICEF publications, the visibility of problems and harsh conditions faced by children in underdeveloped countries is portrayed to a far greater extent than problems faced by children in western countries. This begs the question; what are some of the types of "problems" faced by children living in western countries? Work by Bertollini and Ehrenstein (2003), cite the following areas of concern for European children (with regard to child health and the environment): asthma and allergies, respiratory health, hearing loss, injuries, neurodevelopmental disorders, cancer, birth

defects, water and foodborne diseases and obesity. Further, the World Health Organization reports that "warning signals are emerging" with regard to child health in the European Region -- for example, the return of tuberculosis, a disease previously under control as well as a rise in morbidity resulting from mental disorders and substance abuse (WHO: 2003). While not intending to argue which children in certain areas of the world are worse off or face more problems or potential problems, what is intended is to point out that children of underdeveloped countries are not the only persons who face problems. Children in other parts of the world also have harsh experiences.

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5. CONCLUDING DISCUSSION

As a background to the study of childhood, this paper began with a review of major historical views of how childhood has been perceived by past societies. From a reading of UNICEF text, some clear links with some of these historian views emerge. UNICEF sides with a particular camp of childhood historians, that of Ariès (1962, 1973). As the chapter on historical views of childhood highlighted, Ariès-type views are bound up in western notions of childhood and are indicative of the social constructionist nature of childhood. As UNICEF texts signify Ariès-type views, western notions of childhood are informing their representations. Hecht (1998) links the view that a notion is a social construction with the recognition that such a notion therefore varies according to different contexts. So, UNICEF does not view the notion of childhood as unstatic (because they explicitly note that childhood is a social construction). Do they, therefore, espouse that such representations are not universal? I argue, in this regard, that UNICEF projects representations of childhood as universal. My reasoning is as follows: The majority of children in the photographs are poor African/Asian/Indian, female children aged between 2 and 12 years, who are photographed almost equally in both urban and rural areas. What has already been suggested is that UNICEF representations do, to a large extent, draw on racially specific (white), class specific (middle to upper class), area specific (western) notions of childhood. Yet, the characteristics of the children in the imagery are quite the opposite, indicating therefore, that UNICEF historically specific views are projected onto all categories of children, thereto pointing to the universal nature of their childhood notions.

Earlier, it was highlighted how western notions of childhood are 'exported' to third world parts of the world (Boyden 1990; Stephens 1995). Childhood, as a happy and carefree experience is one of the main western concepts of childhood (Ennew and Milne 1989). The content analysis revealed that while happiness/contentment is the recurs more times than distress, relative to all the other possible emotions it does not have an overwhelming presence in the photographs.

As argued by Jenks (1996), Prout and James (1990), childhood as a passive stage of life is also a major constitution of western notions of childhood. The majority of children in the photographs are depicted as passive. These same progressive thinkers on childhood call for the need to perceive children as valuable contributing people who are social actors. However, referring to the roles children are portraying in the photographs, we see the majority of children resting. This says nothing of their interpretive competencies as we do not see them actively negotiating social relationships (competencies that Mackay (1975) argues children do possess).

It is perplexing that the overwhelming visual representation of childhood in passive terms, is not reflected by portraying children in domestic settings. Rather, most of the children appear in public places (61%). Based on the literature review of modern western conceptions of childhood (Panter-Brick 2000; Rose 1990), it might be expected that the content analysis would have shown that children are mostly photographed in domesticated settings. Children are being included in public life, outside of the home and away from domesticated settings, but in a passive manner. Why would this be the case?

UNICEF recognises the reality that some children are not accorded with a high status, is of the view that some children's views are not as valuable as children of a dissimilar age, and that only certain experiences demonstrate their ideals of participation. The literature on childhood also offers explanations. The social construction of childhood has been structured by the technologies of knowledge in the social sciences, including psychological experiments, psychometric testing, ethnographic descriptions and longitudinal surveys. The findings and terminology of social sciences are absorbed back into and become constitutive of the very societies that they enquire about (Prout and James 1990). Thus, resistance to new ways of thinking about childhood extends beyond the confines of social sciences. For instance, within professions such as teaching and social work, notions like socialisation are inscribed in practices. Explanation for the deep-rooted persistence of these concepts that give meaning to childhood is suggested by what Foucault (1977) refers to as "regimes of truth" (cited in Prout and James 1990: 23). Regimes of truth act as self-fulfilling prophecies, that is, thoughts about childhood merge with institutionalised practices that produce subjects who think and feel about themselves through the terms of these ways of thinking. It thus becomes extremely difficult to break

into this truth with another truth - for example, another way of thinking about children as active social beings creating social relationships, as opposed to passive beings undergoing a process of socialisation (Prout and James 1990).

To engineer new technologies of knowledge (thinking of children as social actors) would require breaking the regimes of truth (thinking of children as passive persons). To note that this is difficult is obvious. The recency of such thinking on childhood is only just beginning to filter into UNICEF efforts to think and act on such thoughts. Even strong advocates of such efforts, themselves grapple with exactly how we, as adults, should put children's views across, involve them, and listen to them as social actors (Hendrick 2000).

Education features moderately in photographs, but overwhelmingly in the text, as an idea that should characterise childhood. What features quite strongly is the way in which ideas of education are inscribed in the texts of UNICEF: Education is continuously associated with a time dimension. Thus, educating children is important to:

- Prevent future work experiences that are undesirable.
- Ensure that children do not grow up to be trouble-making adults.
- Provide an assurance of future economic growth.

Initial findings from Inge Tvedten's introduction to his doctoral thesis on poverty in Namibia reveal that, despite many poor children completing schooling, they return to shantytowns hopeless and jobless (Tvedten 2003). Thus, education is not a guarantee of a particular ideal of future adult experiences. Further, nowhere, is it cited that educating children is important for them *now* - a way of eliciting their competencies as people now. It is this line of thinking that prompted Qvortrup (1994: 4) to comment on the need to make an effort "...to deal with children as 'human beings' rather than as 'human becomings'". This detracts from their value as human beings in the present day. The emphasis on education also points to how only certain experiences are deemed 'proper' childhood experiences. The photographic analysis revealed very low instances where children were portrayed as working or as caregivers.

Negating children's experiences as workers and caregivers is a misrepresentation of some children's childhood reality. For instance, in a study that investigated the effects of

children attending boarding schools on condition that they work for tea estates in Zimbabwe, Bourdillon (2000) notes the harsh conditions under which the children have to live. Despite this harsh reality, Bourdillon concludes that the interests of the children would not be served by banning this type of labour (Bourdillon 2000). While obviously no one would want children (or adults for that matter) to have to work under harsh conditions, one has to be cognisant of socio-economic realities that results in these very conditions becoming a very real experience of childhood for some children. In other societies, work is a vital mechanism of inter-generational transfer of skills and knowledge. "Many children welcome the opportunity to work, seeing in it the rite of passage to adulthood" (Fyfe 1989 as quoted in Boyden 1990: 206).

The wide coverage given to the temporal significance of childhood reveals a large gap in UNICEF's representations of childhood. This gap pertains to boys. Boys are not discussed in their capacity as future caregivers (compared to the lengthy discussions of girls as future caregivers). But more importantly there is not much coverage relating to boys as future fathers insofar as they (like mothers) can positively contribute to a child's wellbeing. Of course, there are many children who are not cared for by a mother or father. They live alone, or on the street with other children or are cared for extended family members etc. However, UNICEF places primacy upon the role of the parent in raising a child. Thus, as childhood is represented as stage of life in which a child needs his/her mother, the question of why the other parent (the father) is not also represented is raised.

In order to comment on how children were clothed in modern dress, as opposed to traditional dress, it is useful to reflect on recent work by Lustig (2004). Baby pictures are analysed by Lustig to draw conclusions about representations of childhood (and motherhood). Lustig notes that the children are dressed in expensive clothes and finds out from the mothers that they dress the children in such a way to show that they are good mothers and can provide well for their babies. Lustig concludes that this is evidence of consumerism and that, in particular, ideas of good motherhood are represented by good consumerism. Most of the 'clothes I coded in the imagery looked like modern, western fashion. This could be providing cues of consumerism to the extent that particular ideas

of childhood are being represented by consumerism, but such a claim requires a far more refined analysis.

While the content analysis reveals that only 10% of the children are portrayed in a playing role, the texts explicitly point out that playing is a normal part of childhood. Thus, the low extent to which the playing aspect of childhood is depicted in the photographs cannot be interpreted at face value, i.e. that childhood is not seen as time to play and have fun by UNICEF, for we know, from a reading of the text that this is in fact an implicit assumption in UNICEF representations of childhood. Thus, Hung and Frankenberg's (1990) research in Disneyland that shows adult nostalgia for childhood does have relevance here. The nostalgia derives from manner in which playing and having fun is synonymous with UNICEF ideas of childhood together with the definitive manner in which childhood is not equated with labour, risk and hardship (elements that only adults should experience). This sort of utopian ideal of childhood can definitely lead to nostalgic feelings for an experience devoid of struggle and encompassed by amusement. According to Ennew (2000):

"...myths often hold faster and persist for longer than realities. Unlike reality, myth is infinitely mutable, and can be manipulated to legitimate almost any social and political action or interpretation." (Ennew 2000: Preface: xiii).

This then leads onto the points raised by theorists who argue about the deep influence of myths on society's thinking and action. For these nostalgic ideas of what childhood is are derived from deep-seeded western mythology. Strong evidence for the Apollo myth is shown in the photographs, most children looked very innocent.

Based on an analysis of texts and visuals, there is no unitary representation of childhood for UNICEF. As suggested by James, Jenks and Prout (1998) in chapter 2, the plural is important when discussing childhood because of the many ways it is constructed. As this is true of UNICEF, it is more appropriate to refer to their representations because of the diverse ways in which UNICEF constructs the idea of childhood.

Before the paper concludes by noting areas of future research and implications of ideas of childhood, a final broad and general summary point is made as regards the object of

this paper, that is, what are UNICEF visual and textual representations of childhood in the early 21st century?

What remains inscribed (especially in the visual images) are historical western notions of childhood as a blissful stage of life in which passivity and vulnerability are featured. These inscriptions are rooted in technologies of scientific knowledge and myths, which explains therefore their persuasiveness. As regards arguments that development institutions export ideal notions of childhood specific only to western societies, the paper finds that while such ideals certainly are present in the representations, the proper ideal is by no means the sole embodiment of exported notions. Over the last five years, UNICEF has begun to incorporate new views of children as socially competent, valuable social actors in their own right (a school of thought that has begun to be theorised, most notably, by James and Prout, Jenks, and Stephens). However, the ideas of children as social actors attains a particular meaning in UNICEF texts. Many instances of children's strength and resiliency in third worlds are not represented as constitutive of what the idea of child agency means.

5.1 IMPLICATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

This paper began with the premise that notions affect the way people are treated (Shaffer 1985). If individuals are to purposively set out to change the way people are treated, the logical point of entry is to first reflect on notions. UNICEF is a collection of individuals who are mandated to change the way children are treated, in order to improve children's wellbeing and it has been the sole aim of this paper to deconstruct UNICEF notions of childhood. I treat the texts and images in which these notions are inscribed as reliable sources of information for the nature of the publications, in which they appear, have required UNICEF to consciously select mediums which most closely represent what they stand for, including notions of childhood. Any text or photograph that did otherwise would surely not be published.

I am not implying that the publications analysed in this paper irrefutably shape NGO and research practical programmes (and other target audiences) and thereto the way children are treated nor am I implying that such NGOs and researchers uncritically accept the content of these publications. What I am arguing is that these publications serve as documented records, summaries and indicators of what *UNICEF thinks about childhood*. This line of thinking (represented in photographs and texts) shapes *UNICEF's approach* to intervening in children's lives.

Just how exactly the notions behind UNICEF representations of childhood relate to UNICEF funding and programme priorities can only be established through further research, such as participant observation and interviews. However, I would like to conclude by making a few final comments related to the potential impacts of UNICEF childhood representations.

Childhood is represented as a very passive stage of life in UNICEF *imagery*. This type of representation will affect efforts to treat children as active, participating persons which is exactly what the *texts* highlight UNICEF is attempting to achieve. Richter (2004) reflects on how children at an international AIDS conference were represented as being vulnerable and needy, and she notes that this seriously undermines efforts to enable children to be dynamic actors in the fight against AIDS. More work is needed in the area

of enabling children to be social actors. A related concern of representing children as passive is associated investments in public policy for children.

It is obvious that parents invest quite a lot – in both cash and care – in their children. But what about society? Transfer payments to children or to their parents are comparatively modest; child poverty is therefore remarkably high in most developed industrialized countries (Wintersberger 1994: 244).

Consider South Africa's hesitancy to extend the Child Support Grant to children up to the age of 18. Reasons cited include the claim that "[t]eenage girls are having babies so they can get the CSG" (Martin 2004). Despite the fact that these claims are not supported by credible sources, these myths of children's irrationality and incompetence persist. Then there is the tendency to allocate funds to children according to "category" as opposed to "need". The category of orphans becomes equated with social security provision meanwhile there are thousands of other children who, while not orphaned, live in dire poverty and are very much in need of social security which is not forthcoming (Meintjies *et al.* 2003).

Further theorising is required with regard to the concept of the child as a social actor. Without a better idea of exactly what this notion means, the wellbeing of children may be undermined. Consider, for instance, the cases of child abuse by professional people, entrusted with the care of children (Scheper-Hughes 1998). The idea of social agency is limited when situations are created for adult-child interaction that are harmful to the child. Progressive thinkers often lump such concerns in a category called 'traditional' values. For example, one of the most recently published books on the new sociology of childhood, discussing the theory and practise of child participation and inclusion, mentions how some have pointed to the potential dangers of child participation (see Kirby and Woodhead 2003: 235-6). They view such concerns as part of a 'polarized extreme' view of child social agency and instead of expanding on these concerns, or at least recognising and including them in the bulk of their texts, they opt to rather 'avoid polarizing' their discussion. Theorists should not be afraid that such concerns will undermine their view of children as social actors, that by explicitly recognising and factoring these concerns into their discussions that their views will become debunked. For instance, the excellent works on children's agency by James and Prout (1990) included a chapter that discussed child abuse (written by Kitzinger 1990). This chapter

did not detract from what James and Prout were saying about children as social actors and in fact warned against the constant tendency to represent children as oppressed and vulnerable. What arose then was a need to highlight children's assertive spirit.

When attempting to change the nature of social interactions, accounting for the associated challenges of doing so can only strengthen the position of the persons interactions we are attempting to influence.

Findings in this paper show that UNICEF notions do draw on western ideas of childhood. How do these programmes build in mechanisms to account for socio-cultural disparities between countries and regions? In this regard, consider:

- Western primacy upon individualism versus other cultural primacy upon group solidarity (Tanaka-Matsumi 1989) and responsibility within the family unit as opposed to individual members (Burr 2002).
- Some cultures in Angola believe that persons who have experienced war have contaminated bodies, thus healers use ritual purification ceremonies to cleanse children who have been exposed to wars, which is viewed as essential for reintegration in the communities. How effective would Psychotherapy be in this instance? (Green and Honwana 1999).

These points highlight the importance of factoring in cultural particularities into the design and implementation of programmes. Failing to do so can lead to not only unsuccessful programme interventions, but disastrous effects on children. In fact, the impact of misaligned programmes to cultural context has been experienced by UNICEF. UNICEF distribution of pre-packaged rehydrations salts was misaligned to the cultural context of Brazil, because local perceptions of the salts meant that persons did not think that this medicinal infant food required much other supplementations, resulting in many baby deaths (Scheper-Hughes and Sargent 1998).

Highlighting the need for cross-cultural research is not a novel statement, in fact, this is a key issue raised by theorists working in the field of the childhood sociology. A related point is the "need to accept that most local societies and cultures are at least as much influenced today by what goes on outside their borders as within them" (Scheper-Hughes

and Sargent 1998: 10). And Stephens (1995) has constantly drawn attention to the political influences on childhood conceptions (which incidentally is very similar to the criticisms made against historians of childhood). These points form an ongoing dialogue in the literature on childhood. However, what I think is lacking are discussions that incorporate all these points, as well as other major issues affecting childhood studies.

Thus, an integrated approach to the study of childhood is required, that is, a socio-cultural-political-economy approach. And guidance on how to study childhood should be critically discussing all these aspects, not just touching on two or three. We should not just be noting in the literature an urgent need for culturally specific studies, and appended to that, a need to consider the political-economy effects. We should be noting an urgent need for studies in childhood that investigate cultural notions (e.g. traditions and myths), social notions (e.g. childhood histories, class and gender dynamics), political notions (e.g. policy and children) and economic notions (e.g. globalisation, poverty, wealth) – all of which should be recognised as equally important in attempts to understand notions of childhood. This integrative approach is especially needed in light of the fact that children have been so marginalised across time. Information about children and childhood, including historical information and current multi-disciplinary information, is so deficient (and biased to the extent of constantly portraying children as weak and incompetent), that research about children has to take account of this. Obviously, the approach to this type of integrative research should be one that includes children's views.

To unpack conceived notions of childhood and children, multidimensional approaches are needed in order that any resulting intervention in the lives of children are not only historically and culturally sensitive, but also economically, politically and socially suitable to the realities of local context, globalisation and children's interests.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Coding sheet

Appendix 2: UNICEF visual sources

Appendix 3: UNICEF text sources

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APPENDIX 1

Coding sheet

Basic categories

1. Gender

Male (1)	Female (2)	Equally Male & Female	Indeterminate (3)

2. Race

Black (1)	Asian/Indian(2)	White (3)	Mixed (4)	Indeter.(5)

3. Class

Upper (1)	Middle (2)	Lower (3)	Indeterminate (3)

4. Age group

0-2: Baby (1)	2-4: Toddler (2)	4-12: Child (3)	12-18: Adolescent (4)

5. Area

Urban (1)	Rural (2)	Pose/Indeter.(3)

Childhood dimensions

6. Location

Domestic (1)	Public (2)	Pose (3)

7. Role

Player (1)	Rester (2)	School pupil (3)	Care-taker (4)	Worker (5)	Pose (6)

8. Family

Alone (1)	Mother (2)	Father (3)	Both parents (4)	Siblings (5)
Grandmother (6)	Grandfather (7)	Both Grandparents (8)	Other (9)	

9. Camera gaze

Directly at camera (1)	Looking elsewhere (2)

10. Facial expression

Content (1)	Distressed (2)	Other/Indeter. (3)

11. Dress style

Traditional (1)	Modern (2)	Indeter.(3)

12. Participation

Active (1)	Passive (2)

13. Myth

Dionysus -- corrupt (1)	Apollo -- innocent (2)

Photographic techniques**14. Type of shot**

Full (1)	Mid (2)	Close (3)

15. Colour

Full colour (1)	Selected colour (2)	Black & white (3)

16. Lighting

Illuminated (1)	Shadowed (2)

APPENDIX 2

UNICEF visual sources

1999

Breastfeeding: Foundation for a healthy future

Children in Jeopardy

Children orphaned by AIDS

Human rights for children and women

Progress of Nations 1999

Rolling back malaria

The State of the World's Children 2000

2000

2000 UNICEF Annual Report

Educating girls: Transforming the future

Education for All: No Excuses

Equality, development and peace

Poverty Reduction Begins with Children

Progress of Nations 2000

The State of the World's Children 2001: Early Childhood

2001

2001 UNICEF Annual Report

Beyond Child Labour, Affirming Rights

No Guns, Please: We are Children!

Partnerships to Create Child-Friendly Cities

Poverty and Children: Lessons of the 90s for Least Developed Countries

Profiting from abuse

Progress since the World Summit for Children - A Statistical Review

The State of the World's Children 2002

UNICEF Volunteers: In Step with Children

WHO-UNICEF Joint Statement on Strategies to Reduce Measles Mortality Worldwide

We the Children

2002

2002 UNICEF Annual Report

Children on the Brink 2002: A Joint Report on Orphan Estimates and Program Strategies
Facts for Life
Finance Development: Invest in Children
HIV/AIDS and Children Affected by Armed Conflict
Learning from Experience: Water and Environmental Sanitation in India
Mother-to-Child Transmission of HIV
Orphans and Other Children Affected by HIV/AIDS
Quality Education For All: From A Girl's Point of View
Say Yes for Children - Global Review
State of the World's Vaccines and Immunization
The state of the worlds children 2003
UNICEF's Priorities for Children 2002-2005
Young People and HIV/AIDS
Young People and HIV/AIDS: Opportunity in Crisis

2003

Accelerating Progress in Girls' Education
Africa's Orphaned Generations
Annual Report (2003)
Building a World Fit for Children
Fighting HIV/AIDS: Strategies for success 2002-2005
Girls' Education, Making Investments Count
Rebuilding hope in Afghanistan
The Africa Malaria Report 2003
The Millennium Development Goals: They are about children
The Official Summary of The State of the World's Children 2004
The Situation of Children in Iraq

APPENDIX 3

UNICEF text sources

1. The State of the World's Children 2000

“The State of the World's Children 2000 seeks to fan the flame that burned so brilliantly a decade ago when world leaders adopted the Convention on the Rights of the Child. It summarizes the progress made over the last decade in meeting the goals established at the 1990 World Summit for Children and discusses four daunting obstacles to full human development: HIV/AIDS, armed conflict and violence, poverty and gender discrimination. The State of the World's Children 2000 offers compelling arguments about the power of early care for children, quality education, human rights for women and children and their development”. www.unicef.org

2. The State of the World's Children 2001: Early Childhood

“What happens during the very earliest years of a child's life, from birth to age three, influences how the rest of childhood and adolescence unfolds. Yet, this critical time is usually neglected in the policies, programmes and budgets of countries. Drawing from reports from the world over, The State of the World's Children 2001 details the daily lives of parents and other caregivers who are striving – in the face of war, poverty and the HIV/AIDS epidemic – to protect the rights and meet the needs of these young children”. www.unicef.org

3. The State of the World's Children 2002

“The State of the World's Children 2002 presents models of leadership from individuals, agencies, organizations and alliances that have improved the lives of children and families. The report spotlights the 'Say Yes for Children' campaign and the UN Special Session on Children”. www.unicef.org

4. The State of the World's Children Report 2003 - Child Participation

“The State of the World's Children 2003 reports on child participation - the ‘right’ of every child at every age, the responsibility of governments, organizations and families, and a way to promote tolerance, respect for human rights, an appreciation of diversity and peace. The report showcases examples from every region of the world of how things are different when children’s viewpoints are taken into account. Photos and artwork are by children. The report includes 9 tables, including a new addition on HIV/AIDS, and 3 maps, which together present a comprehensive set of economic and social indicators on the well-being of children worldwide”. www.unicef.org

5. The State of the World's Children 2004 - Girls, Education and Development

“The State of the World’s Children 2004 focuses on the relationship of girls' education and development goals and the promise of Education For All. It presents the education of girls as one of the most crucial issues facing the international development community and presents a multilayered case for investing in girls’ education as a strategic way to ensure the well-being of both boys and girls and to advance development. The report is a call to action on behalf of the millions of children denied their right to an education, most of whom are girls”. www.unicef.org

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