

Keeping the House

Coping Strategies of Child-Headed Households in Botswana.

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SUMMARY:

This thesis started with the reading of international orphan care strategies presented by two of the world's biggest stakeholders and policy makers namely UNICEF and the World Bank. As I read along the thinking behind their policies and the aim to achieve became something that I could not stop thinking about. The means to help Africa's orphans was to strengthen family ties to make them take care of additional members and the aim by doing this is to prevent children from living alone. But the numbers of child-headed households does not decline. If it was as easy to have children live with their family members by providing them with some food, it would have been done and actually worked a long time ago. I started to think about what was behind the fact that child-headed households still exist. This became the inspiration to dig deeper into the matter.

UNICEF and the World Bank start with the premises that blood relatives will take care of children with just a little economical help. Blood becomes in this sense a word synonym to solidarity. What this thesis does is that it separates the word blood from solidarity and kinship. I rather start with the child-headed household and see what determines actions of solidarity. What this thesis suggests is that blood is not all that must be taken into account when developing an understanding of the child-headed household and their close kin. I suggest that the house must be acknowledged as a factor that determines the actions around the household. The actions are mainly triggered by the importance of keeping the house. When understanding that the house is important for the sustainability of the household as such, but also becomes intertwined as an important structure within kinship, the animation of the house becomes clear. The house and what it protects, stands for and symbolises becomes a structure that is important to keep for the orphans who lost their parents. The keeping of the house is what in many cases determines actions from relatives. Many of these actions may on the surface seem careless and ignorant, but when one understands the importance of the house, one understands that the actions were motivated by a care for the children's future.

What I suggest with this thesis is that to view blood as the determinate upon which kinship is constituted is inadequate in international orphan care. To secure their right to land and a house is an important step in securing the children's future and not only their primary years.

PREFACE:

Your life as you know it today may not be the life you wake up to tomorrow. The unanticipated may occur and change your life for ever. Choices will influence not only yourself, but also the people around you. Life as we know it is unpredictable, but only to a certain extent. There is one thing that we do know will strike us all – namely death. Death has it that it comes when you are the least prepared for it. To lose someone you love, who reciprocated your love through care and protection, is a tough burden to carry. All of the children you meet in this thesis have gone through that phase twice. Their lives changed from one day to the other. The unanticipated situation of becoming a child without parents hit hard at an early age. Death stroke when least prepared emotionally, mentally and physically. The reciprocated love from a parent faded, and life became even more uncertain.

It is not an easy task to do research on youths that have been through what I have described above. And it is certainly not easy to be around someone like me who asks questions and observe and is interested in how life without parents is. I am indebted to those who opened up their doors for me and let me in and told their stories to me. Without the insight and knowledge that I have gained through these friendships this thesis would have been impossible to write.

One person that would have been inevitable for my research is Mrs. Kebakile representing the Ministry of Local Government in Botswana. I also have to thank Mr. Moremong and his family who accommodated me and shared with me their endless knowledge about Botswana that gave me vital insight into my own research. There are a vast number of individuals that I would like to thank in the village where I conducted my fieldwork. To avoid the mistake of just naming some and leave out others, I would like to thank all who in one or the other way helped me. I would like to thank the schools in the village that opened up their doors and gave me the opportunity to listen to the children and get their point of view about HIV/AIDS. I must also thank the group of women who work for the village Community Home

Based Care who took me around the village and gave me a glimpse into who many families who suffer due to HIV/AIDS. Thank you to the village clinic and the clinic staff.

I also have to thank my family who without a doubts hesitation agreed to that a trip to Africa for 7 months seemed like a very good idea. Thank you for never stopping believing in all my projects, and thank you for the encouragement! I also have to thank my academical supervisor, Sidsel Roalkvam, who managed to mould my mind into seeing the relations between my own fieldwork and relevant theories. This opened up my mind into a whole new understanding of the usefulness of anthropology as a social science, and also the topic I studied.

The day I left Botswana a lady in the village came up to me and asked: “When is the help coming?” I asked what she meant by help. She answered: “When will you give back anything to us?” I remember I answered something in the lines of that I had nothing to give. The encounter ended in disappointment. As I think of it now I hope that I will be able to give back something in the sense of a thesis that may give new insight into how to look at the orphan situation. That is what I return in gratitude.

Oslo, Norway

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1 INTRODUCTION:

All academic research is inspired by the researcher's interest or fascination of a topic. My topic of interest is the social issues related to the HIV/AIDS pandemic. I focus on the social impact of the virus on individuals and communities, and how this triggers a chain of reaction in both a political and a non-political manner in order to try to control the virus and minimise its economical and social impact. The aim of HIV/AIDS policies seems to be that stakeholders should allocate their energy and knowledge to creating policies so that the impact of AIDS on all levels of society will become as small as possible. It is the knowledge that leads up to the HIV/AIDS policies we have today that I will investigate in this thesis. More specifically my centre of attention is the knowledge behind orphan care policies formulated by two of the world's leading stakeholders as regards to orphan care in the world today, namely UNICEF and The World Bank. I have tried to get hold of the knowledge on which they base their current policies and I will question if their strategies are transferable into a semi-urban landscape in Botswana, to adolescents who have lived most of their lives in a child-headed household and soon will be regarded as adults. Furthermore I will explore if anthropological insight and knowledge can improve the understanding of the situation these children are in.

To introduce what I have set out to do the rest of this introduction is divided into four parts. The first part deals with orphan care in current development literature. The second part explores the premises these policies are based on. This leads up to my research question. The third part deal with the production of knowledge in general that international development is based on. And finally the fourth section is presenting the AIDS pandemic that is the main contributing factor to why the study of children without parents has become urgent and important.

1.1 Orphan hood in the development literature, UNICEF and the World Bank (WB):

Two of the most recognised stakeholders in global development have outlined their policies in how to reach out and help Africa's orphans. UNICEF in their report '*Children on the Brink 2004*' and the World Bank in their book '*Reaching out to Africa's Orphans, A Framework for Public Action*' (2004) are both concerned with protecting orphans.

UNICEF's report has recognised and acknowledged the fact that children without parents are more vulnerable to external damage than other children. UNICEF uses a considerable proportion of this paper to acknowledge the various needs of children depending on how old they are and what environment they live in. When it comes to their strategy to provide care and support for orphans UNICEF introduces a five-step intervention. This is not a pyramid where you move from one level to another, but five strategies that must be applied simultaneously.

The first strategy is to strengthen the capacity of families to take care of orphans by prolonging the lives of parents and providing economical, psychosocial and other types of support. This strategy is seen in the light of the family being the best place to raise a child. Strengthening of families is necessary to compensate for the loss of family members (UNICEF 2004:22). The second strategy is to mobilise and support community-based responses to provide both immediate and long term support. This is the second strategy since the community is viewed as the second best safety net for the orphaned children. The forces of the community to provide social support and protection must function for this strategy to operate (UNICEF 2004:22). The third strategy is to ensure the access for orphans to essential services like education and healthcare. This is to ensure the physical and psychological socialisation of the orphans (UNICEF 2004:23). The fourth and fifth strategies overlap to a great extent. The fourth strategy is about the recognition of orphans by a nation's government so that help and provisions can be allocated through the right and most effective channels to the orphans and their families. The fifth goal is to raise an awareness of

the need for protection of orphans on a community and national level. This is to reduce the hostile and sometimes naïve attitudes towards orphans and to prevent abuse, stigma and other forms of discrimination (UNICEF 2004:23).

Moving from UNICEF to the World Bank the strategies to help Africa's orphans are quite similar. However, the World Bank includes in their report a section about cost which is not that clear in the paper from UNICEF. From the World Bank's point of view orphans are supposed to stay amongst the remaining family. This is not only due to psychological factors but also due to cost. In comparison with children's villages or orphanages it is much more cost effective to have children live with relatives.

From these stakeholders' point of view the best way to take care of orphans is to have them live with remaining members of the family. This is also the strategy of the Botswana Government. They realised early the importance of addressing the needs of orphans. However, at that time the number of orphans was almost five times less than it is today. The document written by the Ministry of Local Government is called '*Short Term Plan of Action on Care of Orphans in Botswana*' (1999). This document addresses the issues that have already been mentioned above: Who should get support from the government and who is responsible for providing the support. This document was supposed to be the introduction of a national policy aiming at securing and covering all the necessary rights and demands of the growing number of orphans. It was supposed to be assessed after two years and be the basis of the making of a national orphan policy. But to this day no orphan policy has been made in Botswana. The '*Short Term Plan of Action*' is still the document that the social welfare system in Botswana must depend on in meeting the needs and demands from the orphans and their caretakers. It must be added that UNICEF has criticised Botswana for being too uncoordinated in both the AIDS related issues and accordingly matters concerning orphans because both the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Local Government deal with the issues simultaneously (UNICEF 1999:10).

1.2 Is blood thicker than water?

At the beginning of this chapter I stated that I would try and find the knowledge current orphan policies are based on. Looking at what UNICEF and The World Bank write about orphan care I argue that they see the family and blood relations in a community as the base for care and support of children without parents. I believe that the reason for this consensus about the family as the only and best way to take care of these children is the legacy of thinking about kin alongside blood relations. A child must belong to someone, and this someone is found through blood relations.

This topic becomes relevant to explore since orphan policies are embedded in this premise. This is a very western way of thinking about blood, kinship and solidarity. The role of biology in practices of relatedness has within anthropological circles been debated for quite a while. Both Janet Carsten (2000) and Olaf Smedal (2001) recognise David Schneider as the man behind the breakthrough of distinguishing 'blood' from kinship and advocating a re-thinking within the discipline as regards the emphasis on blood as the only or strongest determinant of kinship.

In his book *'American Kinship, A Cultural Account'* (1980) David Schneider explores what determines American kinship and how Americans relate to each other. Blood becomes the substance that American kinship is thought through. The creation of a child by a father (genitor) and a mother (genetrix) shares their substances, and at birth the child shares 50/50 of the father's and the mother's substances. In this sense kinship in America is defined as biogenetic (Schneider 1980:23). The whole complexity around American kinship is embedded in the thinking that blood constitutes the ties that bind us together.

It is important to recognise Schneider's intention with this book. It was not as much to point out how American kinship works on a daily basis, as to reveal the foundation which it is created upon. The thinking of blood in American kinship is so strong that it is taken for granted. It is this blinding strength in the thinking of American kinship that is reflected upon in Schneider's book *'A Critique of the Study of Kinship'* (1984).

With his recognition of blood as the constitutor of American kinship, Schneider made it easier for himself when writing the critique. Because he had managed to single out one determining factor he came to realise that there is more behind the creation of kinship than just blood.

At the beginning of the book he presents to the reader two descriptions from his own empirical material from the Yap people. Both descriptions are concerned with Yap kinship, but the second is slightly different from the first. Schneider points out that the two descriptions of Yap kinship made by himself do in fact differentiate from each other and he sets out to explore the reason why. On his quest to come closer to an answer on how to best use kinship theory he stops up and asks himself:

'What is problematic in the definitions of kinship whether the sociocultural aspects can be set apart entirely from the biological aspects or whether any concern for the sociocultural aspect necessarily implicates the biological aspects. If so, just how?' (Schneider 1984:97).

This quote deals with the notion of kinship and is the lead up question, as I see it, in the book about the determinants of kinship. The notion is henceforth discussed by Schneider and he more or less concludes that kinship is manageable without the biological factor. He points to the fact that with adoption parents and children are kin and acts like kin and the roles as parents and children are fulfilled (Schneider 1984:99).

What this leads to is the discussion of whether blood is the only determinant factor in kinship theory. According to Schneider, blood is a factor in the physical relationship of a man and a woman and the bearing forth of a child, but it is not everything. He says that if blood relations and the notion that blood is thicker than water was taken out of much of anthropological literature it would make sense and be a more detailed and relativistic descriptions of the respective cultures (Schneider 1984:177).

Considered the first anthropological thinker to actually discuss taking out the notion of blood in kinship theories, Schneider has opened several doors it is possible to view

kinship through. Other determinants like work, care respect or food can determine 'relatedness' as much as blood can. To sum up this section I would like to quote Janet Carsten:

'If "kinship" was not the same thing in different cultures, then the comparative endeavour of anthropology failed, because like was quite not being compared with like' (Carsten 2000:8).

1.3 Research Problem:

If it was as easy as to give support to relatives to make them take care of their orphaned relatives, this would have been done already. I argue that we can not assume that policies that rely on blood relatives to take care of children who have lost their parents are policies that capture the entire picture of orphan hood. I am not saying that this thesis captures the whole picture either, but I hope that my writing adds another dimension to the complexity around the issue of orphan hood in Africa today. The matter must be investigated further and through anthropological theories along with my own data I will try and paint a picture of why, despite the existing policies, there are children still living in child-headed households. With this as my view of the matter, my research problem is formulated as follows:

How can anthropological insight on house and kinship open up our understanding to why there are still many children living in child-headed households?

1.4 A wider understanding of development and the production of knowledge:

Goran Hyden writes more in-depth about what I in this thesis call 'knowledge'. His book '*African Policies in Comparative Perspective*' is a direct response to the knowledge that political scientists have aggregated about politics in Africa (Hyden

2006). Hyden targets the political sciences which claim to possess “a lawlike knowledge of reality” (Hyden 2006:2). It is the engaging in generalisations and comparisons that have made political science overlook the wealth of knowledge that scholars from other disciplines produce. He argues that Africa is not entirely to blame for the frustration from development agencies that their models do not have any impact (Hyden 2006:6). Much of the blame must also be put on the development agencies themselves for not recognising the complexity of what they are producing knowledge about and that the generalisations that have been made about African policies exclude to a great extent what Hyden calls the informal sector. Thus the blame for slow and failed development in Africa can not be placed solely on corruption, bad leadership or ethnicity.

It is easy to criticise development that fails. Hyden does that but he also offers an explanation to why so many incentives have failed or only worked half-way. He points in the direction of the relationship between the formal and informal sectors of society. The reason why this has been ignored in the past is the fact that main stream political sciences ignore the private realm (Hyden 2006:7). But one can not simply ignore the power and influence informal institutions have on society.

What is informal vs. formal institutions in this sense? Hyden uses a good illustration. A contractor is paid under the table to avoid the tax regulations from the Government. To act like this is wrong according to the regulations, but the employer and even the contractor does it because there is no one there to punish them (Hyden 2006:7). The line between institution and culture, public and private is less clear-cut than our mainstream theories assume. Hyden argues that culture can not be viewed as irrelevant in any political science, because it is the foundation of both formal but also informal institutions (ibid.). This suggests that we should not take for granted that policies implemented are synonym to quality. The quality of the knowledge produced, as suggested here, lies in the recognition of the interfering of informal institutions with formal institutions and vice versa.

The main point of Hyden's book is that when you in social theories ignore the fine line between institutions and culture or the public and the private and that they are connected, the knowledge produced loses out on important aspects of the case studied. That anthropologists target what Hyden sums up in his book is not new. In the book '*The Anti-Politics Machine*' (1990) James Ferguson takes a closer look at the development in Lesotho. In short Ferguson describes how international development agencies presented Lesotho as an 'underdeveloped' country that needed to get better infrastructure and improve the access to markets and market economy in rural areas. This knowledge was based on sociological and historical analyses. Through cattle transaction the rural farmers would increase their income and start trading. But Ferguson points out that the ownership of cattle has a different, non-capitalist economical logic involved with community security and prestige, and to sell cattle is a sign of desperation for money. The marked exchange with cattle is therefore not socially acceptable amongst rural farmers in Lesotho (Ferguson 1990:179). Had one only known the status and the social significance of the cattle, one might have taken a different approach to the project. This demonstrates that *where* you look for the knowledge to base politics on is crucial for the outcome and impact of the project.

Almost a decade later, anthropologists Emma Crewe and Elizabeth Harrison contribute to the debate about development and the ethnographer's role in this field. They are preoccupied with the question of the contrast between success and failure and how to get development right (Crewe & Harrison 1998:4-5). They state clearly that Western-generated ideas or knowledge has only served to portrait the 'Third World' as the underdeveloped 'other' who is in desperate need of improvement in many sectors. The development discourse has then been circling around the words 'us' and 'them' in trying to contextualise development and get it right. What Crewe and Harrison argue, along with Hyden and Ferguson, is that the methodological tools you use and most importantly how and where you look for the knowledge to use as a basis for development are crucial to get the development right (Crewe & Harrison 1998). This means that recognition of the intertwined relation between institution and

culture, private and public (Hyden 2006), becomes an important methodological tool too.

Ferguson argues that it is this failure to recognise Africa as a continent of multiplicity which is founded on other social values and systems than in the West that is the contributing factor to the fact that development in Africa seems to fail (Ferguson 2006:10). Furthermore he argues that to be recognised as a place of diseases, wars and dictators has to do with global connections. Recognition bears in it a sense of relation even on a global scale. The challenge goes beyond the claims of political independence but instead demands an understanding of connections and relationships. A discussion about Africa's global position today must take into account the social relations of membership, as well as responsibility and inequality on a planetary scale (Ferguson 2006).

Everything outlined above goes directly into what Paul Farmer would call structural violence. Despite that Farmer looks at history to explain the distribution of suffering, I argue that this distribution is still a process going on today. Farmer's theory has to do with the distribution of suffering, violence and misery (Farmer 2005:29). The term 'structural' is used to describe the suffering as historically given processes that conspire to constrain agency. Farmer also argues that these processes are economically driven. But the core of his argument is that the distribution of injustice does not just happen. It is a consequence, directly or indirectly, of human agency (Farmer 2005:40). Many of the suffering and unfortunate people in the world today have limited choices due to the structured poverty they are in. Exploring structural violence is dour and academically very challenging, but as an ethnographer your role is to point towards inequalities whenever detected (Farmer 2004:317). To have the power to outline what sort of development to carry out and still see that people's needs are not met, I argue that that behaviour is a set of structural violence. The acquiring of the knowledge base for development intervention that I mentioned earlier is structured in such a manner that it fails to see the full reality; hence the eradication of poverty and suffering is not achieved.

When we look at a map that outlines the distribution of people living with HIV/AIDS one might wonder why Africa, Asia and Latin America is overrepresented and carries most of the burden. What this is due to will only be speculations here, but many social scientists (Heald 2005, Farmer 2005, Farmer 2006) suggest that this is the consequence of failed policies and structural violence.

Leaving this for a while there is a need for a consistent introduction to the causes of the orphan crisis. The rest of this chapter will focus on the AIDS pandemic, its impact on societies and the orphan situation it is an escalating contributor to.

1.5 HIV/AIDS, Impact & Orphans:

Since the HIV/AIDS virus was detected in 1981 it has become a threat to the entire globe. Scholars from different backgrounds have given HIV/AIDS a lot of attention. Everything from doctors, microbiologists, economists, epidemiologists to anthropologists have used their knowledge to contribute to a wider understanding of the different aspects of the HIV/AIDS pandemic. Due to this vast interest in the pandemic there is a considerable amount of literature about different aspects of HIV/AIDS. To go through all these aspects here is neither desirable nor necessary. It is not the HIV/AIDS pandemic as such I am concerned with, but its impact on societies and specifically on children. It has become more and more apparent that alongside the dramatic consequence of AIDS, namely a premature death, new social issues arise. One of these consequences is orphan hood.

1.5.1 What HIV/AIDS is:

A new virus was recorded in America in 1981. A research team of scientists had discovered what would be known as the HIV virus. More research revealed that this virus systematically weakened the body's immune system and led to the medical condition today known as AIDS. The abbreviations stand for Human Immunodeficiency Virus and Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome. Breaking the

definitions into smaller pieces is a useful tool to understand what HIV/AIDS is.

“Human” means that this virus has the ability to enter a human body.

“Immunodeficiency” means that the virus targets the immune system and weakens it.

“Acquired” means that the virus does not spread through casual contact like flu, but in order to be infected a person needs to expose him or herself to any of the ways the virus transmits. To acquire the virus body fluids like blood, semen or breast milk have to travel from the infected to a new body. Modes of transmissions are then unsafe sex, mother to child transmission via blood in the womb or breastfeeding, use of infected blood and contact with blood in general via sharing of medical needles or open bleeding wounds. “Syndrome” means that the AIDS is not one single disease but presents itself as many diseases alongside the weakening of the immune system (Barnett and Whiteside 2002:31). HIV is now understood as a virus that targets the immune system within a person. AIDS is understood as the situation you are in after being exposed to the HIV virus and hints of the immune system being dramatically weakened is shown through the appearance of other deceases and a worsening of a person’s medical condition. The incubation time between HIV and AIDS is set to be about 8 to 9 years, and the fatal consequence, death, strikes statistically in after about a year or two after the individual is diagnosed with AIDS (Hutchinson 2003). These predictions are based on infection without any life-extending treatment.

The issues stated above have two implications. The first is that due to the long incubation time between HIV and AIDS people do not feel sick and become distributors of the virus themselves. The second implication is that the access to treatment causes HIV/AIDS to look different in certain parts of the world. In wealthier communities HIV-positive persons manage to a greater extent to prolong their lives due to access to treatment and right nourishment. The virus becomes more and more a poor man’s burden. And it is in poorer communities that the impact of AIDS is felt the most.

1.5.2 Vulnerability and Impact:

'Epidemic impacts are history-changing events' (Barnett & Whiteside 2002:171).

A sufficient numbers of deaths make a society take a path other than that which it would previously have followed (Barnett & Whiteside 2002:171-172). In short this is a concise definition of what impact in this sense is. It reflects the uncertainty about the full effect of the pandemic and what paths societies will follow to cope with the death-wave that is slowly building its way up in hard-hit societies.

Despite these uncertainties about the impact of AIDS, it is a known fact that AIDS kills and it makes people die prematurely. In hard-hit societies AIDS do have an enormous demographical impact. It stems from the fact that premature deaths leads to an increase in mortality rates, a decrease in life expectancy rates and again an increase in infant mortality rates (Barnett & Whiteside 2002:183). Due to this the population will grow slowly and the overall structure of the society will change. There is little doubt that an abnormally high number of deaths have consequences for the ones remaining. Demographical changes caused by AIDS are important contributing factors to the social, economical and political changes we see in the Sub-Saharan Africa today.

1.5.3 Where the impact is felt the most:

A key question to ask in this setting is whether we believe health is a public good rather than a purely individual responsibility. This is important in the way we look at AIDS as a disease. Is it purely an individual responsibility, or is it a communal public health issue? Does AIDS purely affect the individual alone, or does it affect the public in general in addition? Barnett and Whiteside argue that AIDS do influence individuals, but not only the individuals. They say that where the impact is felt first and worst is in addition to the individual level also the household and community

levels. The pandemic clusters itself around individuals in their immediate family, the houses they live in and the community they are a part of.

I will continue with a description of the impact of AIDS on all the three levels mentioned above. But the range of impact does not stop there. It plants itself into areas like sustainability of rural livelihoods and agriculture. Even in the economical development of a nation's private and public sector has the impact of AIDS become evident and thus also a source of debate. But for now I will concentrate on individual, household and community level impact of AIDS.

1.5.3.1 Individual impact:

The individual impact of AIDS is understood as the suffering every individual must go through or will experience in being a bearer of the disease. In this context it is important to bear in mind that to become a bearer of any disease includes a social process that involves others than just the infected (Helman 2000:85). A disease must be placed into a context and made sense of by the infected and affected. The individual impact correlates strongly with the connotations or metaphors an illness has been given through its place in a society (Good 1994). Susan Sontag gives us a picture of what metaphors have been given to AIDS. AIDS has to do with something that is unclean or morally wrong and that in the end will kill you. There is a danger attached to it. You rather keep your distance and play safe to avoid getting infected (Sontag 1991:101). In sum, the individual impact is felt both in your body as the immune system weakens, and psychologically as people around you might withdraw. This is what Erving Goffman describes as stigma and discrimination (Goffman 1963).

Individual impact also differs with the resources the individuals have available. Barnett and Whiteside argue that persons living in societies or environments where help and support is provided may not feel the individual impact as badly as persons living in societies where medical treatment and other forms of support are not that common. This shows how societies and the resources available can determine the individual impact of AIDS.

Individuals exist in a network of relationships (Barnett & Whiteside 2002:198). One or more deaths will have an effect on others. This impact will depend on factors like who the deceased was, his or her place in society and how replaceable he or she is. The key idea to understand here is what is called 'social reproduction' (ibid 2002:198). Every individual goes into the reproduction of households, communities and other forms of social institutions. The indicator that the rising numbers of premature deaths due to AIDS will have an effect on society at large is becoming clearer now.

1.5.3.2 Household impact:

Because the main source of transmission for HIV is sexual intercourse, the household is the place where HIV clusters (Kaleeba 2004). The effects of illness and death in a household depend on several factors. First, it is the number of deaths a household experiences. Second, it is the characteristics of the deceased, like age, gender, income and cause of death. How the composition of the house is organised is the third factor. The fourth and final factor is how the community around a household responds to its needs and is willing to help and assist.

The impact described above targets the household. The household in this sense is the production and reproduction of the household's sustainability. Sustainability in this context is first and foremost the formation of the house. This takes place when people come together to reproduce. The household matures as children mature and grow. It dissolves as the children leave home, and fall apart when the parents die. This is a very simplified version of the household, and of course it has cultural variations, but many households start, prosper and end along this description.

In the advent of AIDS it was said that the 'extended family' was robust enough to be able to stand against the impact of many premature deaths. As time has passed and as the pandemic has shown its full potential, it has become more and more apparent that even the extended family has taken its toll. The family has reached a point where it can not longer cope (Barnett & Whiteside 2002:201). The demographic impact of

AIDS does have a huge effect on the reproduction of families and households. The deaths of individuals do make changes in the nature of the households.

The HIV/AIDS pandemic have created new forms of household compositions. One of these is the 'grandparental households'. In these households it is the elderly that is the respected adult person, with the responsibility for one or more blood-related children. Another form is large households with an elderly and other unrelated children attached. A third form is the child-headed household. Fourthly, we have the single-parent household. A fifth form of household composition is what is called 'cluster foster care', where children are cared for in groups either formally or informally by other members of the society. The sixth version is children living in an abusive environment. Furthermore there are also reports of a growing number of homeless children, and homeless children who join in gangs (Barnett & Whiteside 2002:203).

At this stage it is natural to draw the attention to the analytical difference between the household and the house, which will become clearer later in the thesis. The impact of AIDS does also go along other lines within a household. This argument goes hand in hand with the individual impact in the sense that the house as a physical structure also includes a sense of identity and belonging and something that has an identity that needs to be maintained. In addition to this the house binds people's wealth and property. When the members of a house die, the social relations to other houses and the wealth attached to the house become more fragile and even more important to maintain. This maintenance of social relations requires that someone is there to walk the paths of relations that are important in being recognised as an autonomous house. When there are fewer to take care and to secure this form of identity, the impact of AIDS is severe in the sense that relations become less defined. The burden of keeping the house becomes a burden the orphaned children must bear.

1.5.3.3 Community level impact:

We saw above that individual impact have impact on the household level.

Furthermore it is clear that as individuals create households, so do households create

communities. What will be crucial for a community in connection with trying to stop the spread of AIDS is whether this matter is something that unites or divides a society (Barnett & Whiteside 2002:208). But what is clear is that different societies cope differently. This is also the reality with AIDS. The word 'society' or 'community' can not be seen as the solution. It is a word of great comfort, but only to those who wish to seek easy solutions. The fact is that there is no easy answer to how a community can or will cope with a rising prevalence rate and death rate (Barnett & Whiteside 2002:209).

1.5.4 HIV/AIDS in an international perspective:

To estimate how many people are infected with HIV/AIDS in the world today is both a methodological and logistical challenge. UNAIDS is one of the most used data sources concerning HIV/AIDS data. Despite criticism aimed at whether the data from UNAIDS are accurate in actual numbers or highly political, UNAIDS has when faced with critics or challenges improved their ways of collecting data. This has given results in the accuracy of their statistics (Barnett & Whiteside 2002:57). With not further discussion around this matter I will use statistics from UNAIDS. UNAIDS (2006), in their latest statistical publication using data from 2005, estimates that there are 38.6 million people worldwide that are infected with the HIV virus. This means that of the world's 6.6 billion people, 0.6 % is infected. In addition to this the estimated AIDS deaths from the same year is set to 2.8 million deaths.

The question of whether health-related issues of this magnitude is an individual matter or has become a global matter is vividly discussed alongside the spread of HIV/AIDS. Many argue that global networks are required, instead of just national solutions, since the world has become smaller and people are more mobile today than before. In addition to this, migration across borders due to both war and unrest and work migration have contributed to a destabilisation of social networks (Barnett & Whiteside 2002:374).

Amartya Sen, who received the Nobel Prize in economics in 1998, has for decades been a major contributor to the debates about international economical development. His arguments does also span over other areas. In relation to the global challenge to halt the spread of HIV/AIDS his arguments are important to acknowledge. In his book '*Development as Freedom*' (1999) he argues mainly through what he calls the "capability" approach. This approach deals with people's chances for realising their potential choice. What navigates people's way of choosing one thing instead of another is according to Sen embedded in an inequality between people and regions. To be able to understand people's choices we must be able to see this in the light of people's economical and social situation (Sen 1999). This again highlights the fact that inequality and the spread of AIDS are interlinked and that it is a collective challenge instead of an individual matter.

Sen and Farmer both argue for the interconnections between people's capabilities and the structured inequalities that limit people's choices. Anthropologist Brooke G. Schoepf states that the global connections that leave more and more people in poverty also contributes to the spread of AIDS. The Structural Adjustment Plans (SAP) and its conditions for further borrowing of money came as a result of the economical crisis in the South. The SAP's conditions of devaluation, debt repayment, privatisation and compression of government budgets led to a sacrifice in the budget posts which the poor depended on. This led more people into poverty. Many left their lands and migrated in search for new jobs. The growth of social violence stemming from poverty, hopelessness and illegal trafficking is a major contributor to HIV/AIDS transition. For this reason the issue of the spread of HIV/AIDS is not entirely a private matter but very much a global responsibility (Schoepf 2001).

1.5.5 Orphan hood - General overview from a global perspective:

Orphans have existed in all societies at all times. The only thing that is different today is the share size of the situation (Roalkvam 2005). Due to the very important fact that AIDS-related deaths kill mostly people between 20 and 40 years of age, the

dependants left alone are the elderly and the orphaned children. The growing number of orphans on a global scale is due to AIDS. Globally there is an estimate of 15.2 million AIDS orphans (UNAIDS 2006).

In UNICEF's report '*Children on the Brink 2004*' a definition of what an orphan is has been phrased. It is a very schematic presentation, but still a useful tool to get around what is meant by orphan hood. The most obvious observation is that if a child has both its parents it is not an orphan. Then if the mother dies of other causes than AIDS the child is considered an orphan even though the father is alive. A child is also considered an orphan if the father dies of other causes than AIDS and the mother is alive. If a child loses both parents, but still not due to AIDS, the child becomes a double orphan. But if the mother dies of AIDS with the father still remaining, the child is considered a maternal AIDS orphan. The same applies if the father dies of AIDS with the mother remaining; then the child is termed a paternal AIDS orphan. Still to go we have the maternal double orphan. That is if the father is dead from other causes than AIDS, but the mother is known to have passed away of AIDS. It is still the same if we turn the scenario around. The only things that differ are the label 'maternal orphan' to 'paternal orphan'. Finally, a child without any parents is called a double paternal AIDS orphan if both parents passed away due to AIDS (UNICEF 2004). In addition to this childhood is by UNICEF also defined to people between 0 and 18 years of age. This also indicates that childhood not only includes the very most vulnerable, but also extends into early adulthood.

Becoming an orphan robs many children of their social roles, rights and obligations (Barnett & Whiteside 2002:223). When a child has to go from being a child to suddenly growing up because he or she has to either care of other siblings or just him or herself, the social roles are changed dramatically. This change of roles may also appear in a relationship where the child is being taken care of by an elderly. Many orphans today are taken care of by an elder member of the family. But an important question to ask is: Who is taking care of whom? Many children who take care of adults and elderly may experience a world gone seriously awry (Barnett & Whiteside

2002:223). Another factor that may also contribute to the feeling of a world turned upside-down is that many of these children have encountered death so many times that it has become uncommonly familiar to them.

1.5.6 HIV/AIDS in an African perspective:

As noted above the current estimate of people living with HIV/AIDS in the world today is set to 38.6 million people. What is more horrifying is that 24.5 million of these people live in Sub-Saharan Africa. This means that 60 out of 100 infected individuals are found somewhere on the African continent. Looking at the map of the southern region of Africa, all the countries (Namibia, South Africa, Lesotho, Swaziland, Mozambique, Botswana, Zimbabwe and Zambia) except from Malawi, have a prevalence rate between 15 % and 35 %. Malawi has a prevalence between 5 % and 15 % (UNAIDS 2006). I also mentioned above that 2.8 million people died of AIDS in 2005. 2 million of these deaths were in Sub-Saharan Africa.

The statistics reveal an unpleasant truth for the African continent. Barnett and Whiteside discuss in their book if Africa is exceptional in a global setting when it comes to the distribution of infected of the HIV/AIDS pandemic. They discuss tendencies that may have contributed to the fact that Africa bears most of the burden of the pandemic. Briefly they land at four different contributing factors. These factors are geographical disadvantage and relative deprivation, disorder, inequality and poverty.

The geographical factor mentioned above has to do with the mere size of the African continent. This has spread the population over a vast area making it difficult and expensive now to build an infrastructure to reach all the remote corners. This again reflects the difficulties in reaching everyone with adequate information about HIV/AIDS and also to reach each and everyone with medical care. Relative deprivation is linked to the geographical factors in the way that medical supply and equipment needed for general health care may not be available in some areas.

Furthermore, it is not only a lack of equipment but also a lack of skills to handle the equipment and make it useful.

The second factor, disorder, is closely linked to the imperial era that the African continent experienced. To make Barnett and Whiteside's argument short, disorder is meant here in a wide sense. Disorder is firstly meant in the most obvious way of conflict and unrest. It can also mean economical disorder (Schoepf 2001). This has led to many flows of immigrants seeking refuge in other countries. This has health consequences since the patterns of sexual behaviour suddenly changes and the risk is much higher to obtain an infectious disease in a risky environment. It is also a known fact that during times of conflict systematic rape of women is a method commonly used. This correlates with Sen's (1999) capability approach, which shows that unrest deprives individuals of their potential choice to control their own lives.

Disorder can also mean the divide and rule regimes that the apartheid regime in South Africa enforced upon the indigenous population. Vast proportions of South African tribes were allocated around according to the finding of minerals or a newly established farm settlement that needed cheap labour. In later times industry has also attracted many to seek employment outside their village or even outside their own country. When people move they may infect the village and family they leave behind, but also the new place in which they arrive. These movements also have implications for social patterns and sexual behaviour.

The factors above have contributed to the inequality and poverty in Africa today. As should now be clear, Africa's AIDS situation has to do with global connections. Poverty in Africa and how it contributes to the spread of the HIV virus is perhaps one of the darkest shadows of global issues of inequality in modern times (Farmer 2005, Schoepf 2001).

1.5.7 Africa's orphans:

Above we learned that UNAIDS estimates that there are 15.2 million AIDS orphans in the world. Parallel with the uneven distribution of AIDS it is no surprise that there is an uneven distribution of AIDS orphans as well. Out of the 15.2 million orphans world wide, 12 millions are found in Sub-Saharan Africa (UNAIDS 2006).

A factor that threatens the valued personal security is pointed out by Marda Mustapha and Aiah A. Gbakima. They make us realise that in a continent like Africa, civil conflicts do create a risk environment for the most vulnerable in a society. It is a known fact that the sexual abuse of orphans is an axiom with civil unrest (Mustapha & Gbakima 2003:40-51). Again I refer to Sen (1999) and point to his argument that external factors do influence each and every one of us. It must be said that the environment around the orphans plays a vital part in how the orphans are treated and the impact it will have on the children. Africa is a huge continent with a lot of variation. How orphan hood looks like is different from region to region, country to country and household to household.

1.5.8 HIV/AIDS in Botswana:

Still leaning on UNAIDS statistics, it is now time to unleash the statistical truth about Botswana. The total population in 2005 was estimated to 1.7 million people. Out of these 270,000 people are infected with HIV/AIDS. This means that 24 % of the population is infected, or that 1 in 4 is a bearer of the virus. 18,000 deaths in 2005 was the consequence Botswana had to face. This is an average of 50 deaths a day. Botswana's National AIDS Coordinating Agency and UNDP have in their report about the demographic impact of AIDS in Botswana estimated that the death rates due to AIDS are still going to rise in the future (Dorrington et.al 2006: 42-70).

The level of impact of the AIDS pandemic has been so huge in Botswana that independent demographic studies suggest that the country has almost reached the threshold where it is unable to reproduce itself. In a demographic study conducted by

economist Warren C. Sanderson (1999), the predictions are that if nothing is done about the spreading of the HIV/AIDS virus in Botswana, which is contributing strongly to the lowering in the life expectancy and birth rate and to the expansion of infant mortality and mortality in general, there will be fewer Batswana¹ in the year 2020 than today. This is of course a dismal picture, but still this prediction paints a very strong picture of the impact that HIV/AIDS do can have on societies and nations.

There is much to be said about the HIV/AIDS pandemic in Botswana. From an anthropological point of view there are quite a lot of contributors to the understanding of HIV/AIDS policy in Botswana. I have chosen here to focus on Suzette Heald (2005) and her detailed description of Botswana's AIDS campaigns since the very beginning. What Heald outlines in her argument, correlates with my own findings of what the orphan situation in the country looks like – campaigns run by western donors, mostly, and therefore also run by a western understanding of Botswana's orphan crisis.

In Heald's article *Abstain or Die: The Development of HIV/AIDS Policy in Botswana* (2005) she gives a detailed description of the way AIDS policy was introduced to the public and describes why the incentives partly have failed all the time. She has divided the AIDS policy into three phases.

The first phase was in the late 1980s. Botswana was one of the first nations in Africa to acknowledge the HIV/AIDS pandemic and take it seriously. Heald sees this in the light of Botswana's politically stable situation – there was both time and money that could be spent on the issue. In addition Botswana has always shown that their political leadership takes action in the best interest of the many instead of the few. International help was brought in from overseas to help and assist Botswana in the work against the spread of AIDS. The first phase was the era of behavioural change and the use of condoms. Radio broadcasts were used as the medium to spread knowledge out to the people. Due to the fact that people in the late 1980s had not yet

¹ A person living in Botswana is a Batswana.

seen any AIDS deaths yet, AIDS was called the “radio disease”. The direct experience with the virus had not yet escalated.

Unfortunately, the promotion of condoms was also interpreted in a way to promote immorality and to encourage promiscuity. Reactions came from the churches, parents and a vast majority of the population and a new disbelief of condom use was born. In addition to this the value of sexual intercourse on a cultural level was ignored. The belief is that sexual intercourse in its power to create new life, but also the creation of a connection through the flow of fluids, is health-giving in itself. Traditional beliefs say that stopping this flow by using a condom is a vector of ill-health and disease (Heald 2005).

The condom campaign in Botswana was declared a fiasco. Due to the fact that the distribution of condoms and had had a health-giving effect in the gay communities world wide, the failure of the condom campaign in Botswana was put on stigma. Donors phased out, and as Heald states, it seemed like there was no political will in Botswana or elsewhere to do something about the situation. The fact that AIDS programmes had to look the same all over the world might have been the contributing factor to its initial failure in Botswana, but instead the entire blame was put on “stigma”.

Then around the turn of the 21st century Botswana entered phase two in their AIDS campaigns. This time an ARV (life-prolonging medical treatment) programme was going to replace the condom programme. In short, few enrolled in the programme still due to resistance, and the poor infrastructure made it difficult to reach out to every one. In April 2004 the goal of reaching 19,000 infected was met, more than a year after the initial timeframe. Another contributing factor to the slow roll-out of this programme was the distance between the users and the clinics. Few clinics and a shortage in staff made the roll-out less effective.

Strategies change at the same speed as the pandemic escalades. Phase three raises the question if the policy in Botswana is now moving from voluntarism to AIDS testing

being a more integrated part of the Botswana society. As the UNAIDS coordinator, Kwame Ampomah stated in a seminar in Gaborone in June 2003:

'Has there been a case in history where a major public health catastrophe was effectively managed and brought under control by placing individual rights above collective rights as public interest?' (Heald 2005:11)

As I stated earlier there is much to say about HIV/AIDS in Botswana but the fact is that Botswana is still known as the AIDS capital of the world.

1.5.9 Botswana's orphan situation:

Knowing that 18,000 people died of AIDS in Botswana contributes to the considerable amount of orphans in the country. The numbers from UNAIDS (2006) are breathtaking: 120,000 orphans. It must also be taken into consideration that Botswana's total population is only 1.7 million people, so in percentage terms Botswana has the highest concentration of orphans in the world (UNAIDS 2006).

What is peculiar about the number of AIDS orphans in Botswana is that the numbers you get from the local authorities do not match at all with the estimation given by the UNAIDS. From my own fieldwork the number I was given was around 53,000 orphans in the entire country. Investigating the matter further I found out that as many as 111,828 children under the age of 17 had lost either their mother or father. Within this age group as many as 14,531 children had lost both their parents (CSO 2003:126-127). Even though this levels out the initial number it is still a considerable and quite serious gap between 120,000 and 53,000 orphans. Why is this so?

The most obvious answers are that these statistics are based on registered orphans only. There are many families where orphans live that are not registered. The reasons for this may be that the families do not want help or do not know that help is provided. Some families do not see the use of investing time and energy in the orphans living with them, and do not care about registration. But the full answer to the gap is not that simple. In addition to the answers mentioned above another reason

might lie in the definition of what an orphan really is. The point of view of the government in Botswana is that a child whose mother and father are married and where one of the parents die, is not considered an orphan. If both die, however, it is of course considered an orphan. In the case where the father and mother are not married and the father dies the child is not considered an orphan. But if the parents are unmarried and the mother dies, the child certainly is considered an orphan. In the UNICEF definitions of orphan hood no parents were favoured, but the Botswana Government definition certainly places more emphasis on the sacrament of marriage and the maternal line in the family. The reason, I believe, lies in the tradition of bride prize. When a man and a woman marry, gifts from the bride takers are given to the bride givers, to show gratitude and respect for the new bride and to compensate for the loss of a daughter. A chain of alliances is built up in the exchange of gifts and favours between the two families, and most importantly with the gifts given from the bride takers to bride givers. The new bride and the couple's offspring belong to the husband's side of the family. On the contrary, if a man impregnates a woman without being married to her, the responsibility falls entirely upon the woman and the woman's relatives to bring up the child.

To complicate matters further, the payment from one family to the other may not be paid all in one go. It is a considerable amount of resources needed to pay for a wife, and not all families can afford to pay all at once. As long as this debt is not fully paid the children exist in a vacuum area where both the families can argue not to take care of the children if anything happens. The father's family can say that the bride prize is in a process and that the children belong to them, but also that the bride prize is not paid for so the children belong to the mother's side of the family. The mother kin of children may say exactly the same: That the bride prize is not yet completed so the children belong to them or that the payment have already started so the children technically in the future would belong to the father's side of the family anyway.

This definition of an orphan described above leaves an open space for interpretation due to the marriage exchange that determines to which side of the family the children

belong. Here it is not 'blood' as such that determines where the children end up, but rather the status of the marriage exchange. A social worker or any other person with authority might not register orphans due to their own interpretation of the definition. The authors know of orphans that are not registered because the system represented by a social worker does not recognise the children as orphaned because there is a father out there somewhere and the late mother and the living father was known to be married. In this case the father did not care for his children. This leaves the children clearly orphaned, but still they are left out of the official statistics and ignored by the social security system. To be able to define an orphan suddenly depends on other factors that just whether a mother, father or both have passed away.

Despite the unevenness in the numbers of orphans, the greatest challenge Botswana faces is how to take care of all its orphans today, and the ones who will be orphaned tomorrow. Let us move to how international stakeholders and the Botswana Government look at orphan care.

1.6 The rest of the thesis:

In chapter 2 I will present my field and my methodology. Here I will describe how I was able to get access to informants, my role in the field and how I produced data and transcribed them. This chapter also includes a section on children as informants within the field of anthropology, but most importantly from this chapter is how I make my informants anonymous.

In chapter 3 I present my case and introduce to the reader the child-headed household consisting of the siblings TJ and Kirsty. The main purpose of this chapter is to understand anthropologically what the household is in order to have an understanding of what a child-headed household is.

The title of chapter 4 is "House as Shelter". What I mean by this is that the house is a shelter in the simplest sense of the word. The physical structure of the house protects us from things that intrude from the outside. In this chapter I add on another layer of

the house as being a shelter for protection. My aim in this chapter is to show that the house also protects other aspects of social life. By doing this I hope to show that the house becomes an integrated part in social life.

In chapter 5 the main focus is to understand why the house becomes a structure that must be kept. With the understanding of the importance of the house from the previous chapters I try and show empirically that for the children left without parents the house becomes their social security.

In chapter 6 the main arguments through the chapters will be summarised and discussed.

2 METHODOLOGY:

'To get access to the necessary data required to do ethnography is a big challenge. This challenge remains with the ethnographer from the initial encounter, and throughout the entire fieldwork' (Hammersly & Atkinson 1998:83).

'Research is a craft that needs to be learned through practice and even more practice' (Bernard 2006:1).

With my research problem as my point of departure I was destined to get in contact with child-headed households. This meant that I had to conduct a household survey. In addition to this I also conducted a network analysis. For this I needed data of interaction. And last but not least I gathered life stories about the children's past, present and future.

In this chapter I will present how I faced the challenge of gathering my data and how I gathered them. I will first present the initial encounters, the village I was in, the families I visited and how a typical day would look like. This is to set the context of how I later worked in gathering data. Further I will distance myself from my field and with a critical methodological eye examine the way I managed to accomplish the task of participant observation. My role in the collection of data must also be discussed; the fact that I was doing research on adolescents, some even under the age of 18 and in addition without any parents. Therefore anonymity is an important part of my methodology. Finally I will write about my data collection: how I collected the data and how I transcribed them.

2.1 The field – finding my space:

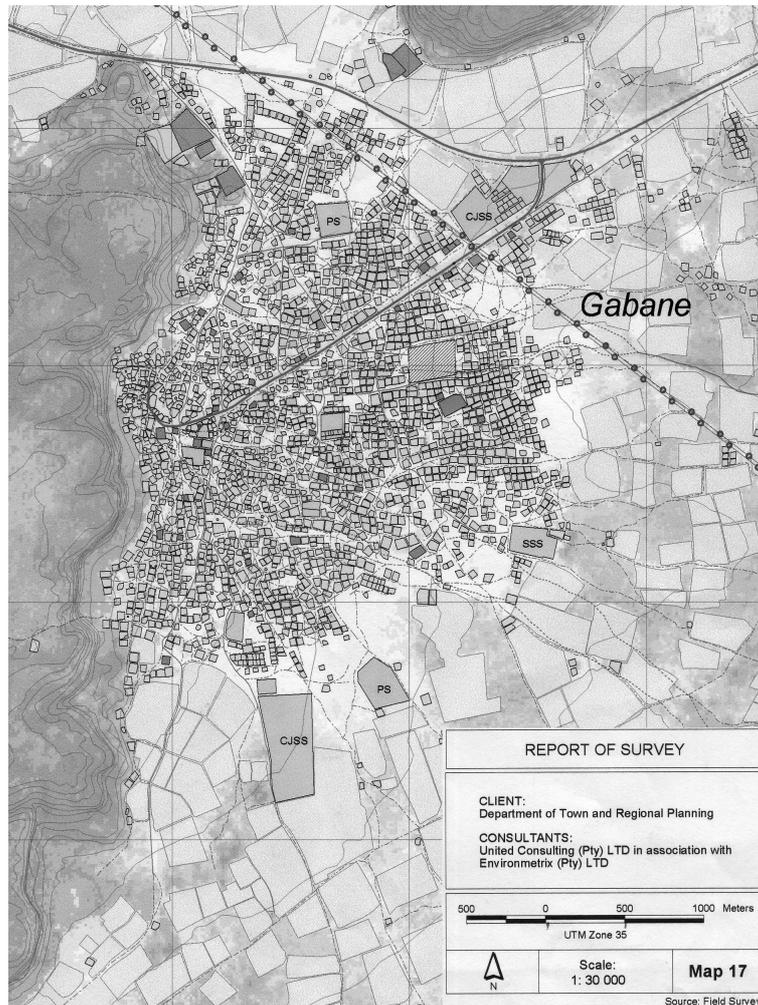
2.1.1 Initial encounters:

When the destination for my research was decided and my research permit accepted, there was much anxiety about how on earth I was going to find a suitable location for my fieldwork. I realised that no more plans could be made before I actually got to Botswana.

I arrived in Botswana on the 30th of December 2007 and came to realise that Gaborone was a city with high fences around most houses. Finding orphans in this ‘landscape’ would require a methodology that I was not prepared for and did not have the resources to put into action. I had to find a more open location, and a smaller one.

Since I was a welcomed researcher by the Botswana Government I had to follow the right protocol, which meant an introduction to the right people within the Ministry of Local Government and a letter written to the village chief in the village I wanted to do research in. I got a pamphlet of all the villages in the entire country and I was very clear in my decision to choose a village that would reflect how most of the Batswana live today. The villages that were close to Gaborone were highlighted with a pen on my pamphlet, and it was up to me to choose one. Without having seen any of the suitable villages, I had to choose one so that the letter of introduction could be written as I was sitting in the right office with the person with the right signature and stamp. I gambled and chose the village of Gabane.

2.1.2 The village



Source: Ministry of Local Government, Lands and Housing, Gaborone.

The following day I was escorted in a Government vehicle to the location I had chosen. The irony of it is that my host father and I had been driving around the evening before just for me to get acquainted with the area. He wanted to show me the rural side of Botswana and took me to a village not far from the capital. I remember thinking when I saw all the bars and felt the atmosphere there that this village I have to steer away from. And the next day I found out that it was here that I was going to do my fieldwork. It felt like I had no time to change my decision. The letter of introduction had already been written to the village chief in *this* village.

The village felt big. And it was. The village chief estimated that the population of the village was between 10,000 and 13,000 people, spread over an area of 14 square

kilometres. The first thing I noticed was that the fences around the houses were much lower and made either out of bushes, bricks or metal wires. The houses were much more visible to me here than in Gaborone. Small paths went along the houses and into alleys between two hedges and then further into the landscape; a web of roads and paths that people used to get from one place to another. Looking back at it in retrospect I still recall the satisfaction of being able to navigate from one location to another using the paths that everyone used without getting lost or asking for directions.

The village seemed unorganised at first. Houses, bars, butchers, tailors, churches, schools and grocery stores seemed to occur at random. To a certain extent they did, but the houses were not that unorganised. In some areas you found that houses made up wards that made up the village. Wards consisted of relatives. Brothers and sisters and their spouses lived geographically close to each other. These days the closeness of the buildings is not as it used to be, I was told by an old man who had spent all his life in the village. He still recalls the day when the first man moved out of his ward and settled on the other side of the village. He was an icebreaker; soon many other followed his idea. As a general idea, I should then expect neighbours to be relatives, but not always.

The first person I met in the village was the village chief who welcomed me warmly. He said that I had to attend the first Kgotla meeting of the year to be introduced to the village and see the social worker who would help me in the search of children without parents whom I wanted to interview. The social worker also welcomed me warmly. Heavily loaded with paperwork and cases to attend to she took time off to introduce me to the schools in the village. Through these visits I encountered a couple of individuals that was to be of great importance for me in my fieldwork. She introduced me to a faith-based organisation dealing with children being taken care of by grandmothers, and then finally I was introduced to the social worker's office and the routines there. I was free to hang around the office. I was not introduced to any orphans as such by the social worker. The biggest challenge was entirely up to me to

solve. The snowball had started to roll, but I still had not found a single child-headed household.

I started to hang around the social workers office. I heard stories of single mothers, elderly and finally one day I met a teenager who said she had heard of me. I asked her why she was there. She was there to get some help with her school situation, and since she had lost her parents it was the social worker's responsibility now. I introduced myself and asked if I could see how she lived. She agreed and suddenly I had found what I came to Botswana to study. Suddenly getting access to child-headed households had become less worrying than I first anticipated.

Through them I got in touch with two other child-headed households. I visited two sisters who lived alone. I followed a group of brothers that lived by themselves. In addition to that I was after a while introduced to a fourth household where children who had lost their parents were living with a distant relative. As time went by, I also got to know several others who told me their stories about how HIV/AIDS had changed their lives. As an example, a young boy who had seen me in one of the schools wanted to share his story with me about how losing his father had affected him and his family. As for the data this thesis is based on, I have only used data collected from the child-headed households.

2.1.3 The child-headed household:

After Kirsty was finished at the social worker's office we walked together to the place she called home. The fence around the house was made out of bricks and so tall that you barely could see over it. The gate was heavy steel that you pushed to the side. A dog came barking to warn that someone was trespassing. There were other houses on the plot. These were rented out to generate income to Kirsty and her brother TJ that also lived there. The house where they stayed was made out of bricks and a not hundred percent waterproof steel roof. The wooden door led into the living room, furnished with a table, two small worn-out couches and a chair. From the living room there were two openings, one with a door and the other without. The door led into a

bedroom with a bed and all of Kirsty's belongings scattered around. The opening from the living room led into the kitchen. Before you came to the stoves and the kitchen supplies you had two doors again, one to the left and one to the right. To the left was TJ's bedroom. He had a bed and a drawer. To the right was a room with two beds. Not in use any more.

The other houses I visited looked the same. Not all of them had a living room, but all had a kitchen and bedrooms. All in all I followed three households that were child-headed and one household that took care of additional children that had been orphaned. Within these four households I followed seven individuals closely. In addition to these seven children a web of relevant others appeared. In total including the children's networks I worked closely with about 20 informants.

The time I spent with each household and individuals varied. I tried as best as I could to allocate my time so that each household and each individual was visited equally. I realised very early in my fieldwork that one household was more welcoming and relaxed than the others. I started to spend more and more time in this one household. This means that I might have sacrificed time I could have spent with the other individuals, but it gave me crucial insight to the issues around orphan hood. I could use the data generated in this household to recognise similar patterns in the others. Suddenly they all looked alike and a pattern was illuminated.

It is important to state that the individuals I followed were not children but adolescents. Their ages ranged from 17 to 21. The important thing to know is that despite their age they are individuals that lost their parents when they were around 10 or 12 years old. They have been alone for a while, and that showed itself in the sharing of chores in the house.

In addition to taking care of own laundry and room and belongings, there were chores that needed to be done that would benefit the whole house. Plans were made all the time of who was going to fetch water, cook or sweep the house and the yard. Despite the negotiation about who did what, they always completed the tasks. They could run

a household and keep a house. They showed that it was being lived in. They made themselves very visible by keeping the house as alive as they did.

2.1.4 A typical day:

These families were to become my field. The individuals were my centre or attention that I wanted to describe, and the paths around their houses, who walked in and out and who did not walk in and out, was of great interest to me. A typical day started when the children started their days – meaning 4 o'clock in the morning. I did not follow them to school. This was the children's own wish that I had to respect. So between 6 am and 3 pm I walked around the village visiting uncles, aunts, grandparent and other relevant people. When the children were away, I had plenty of time to concentrate about the context. After the children returned to the house I was there, observing what they were doing and who crossed their paths. A typical day ended around 7 or 8 pm.

Weekends were different. The children were off school and I could spend much time together with them. Sometimes the children did schoolwork or visited friends. I sometimes helped with schoolwork and went along when they visited friends just to get a picture of where the children were going. I did give them the space to be alone with their friends. This gave me time to take field notes and plan the next step.

The village and the people I met became my way of living for almost 7 months.

2.2 Producing data:

Alongside the carving out of what was going to be my field I was also aware of that the only thing that would generate data for my thesis depended on how I methodologically approached the challenge of talking to children about the loss of parents, to grandparents about their situation and uncles and aunts about the challenge of being responsible for their nephews and nieces.

To find out as much I could about the various aspects of the child-headed household, I participated in their lives and my main source of information is through participant observation with conversation along the side. Other methodological grips were put into life as I got to know each person better. This will be outlined later.

The topics in the rest of this chapter will cover many aspects of my data gathering. It will cover ethical and practical issues that I faced during my fieldwork. The order of the topics discussed are irrelevant since they all the time were issues that frequently came to the surface and became a concern for me all the way through my seven months in the village. But first I would like to dwell on the issue of having children or adolescents as informants.

2.3 Children and anthropology:

There are pros and cons involved in every action we take. As regards studying children there are pros and cons as well. One anthropologist that argues strongly that children must also be included in ethnographic work is Helen Schwartzman. She argues that children must be studied by anthropologists not like secondary references, but be informants or agents themselves. If anthropology is to strive for a holistic approach to social science it is only fair that children also get included (Schwartzman 2001:3). She further draws the attention to see children in a more global perspective, recognising that the changes we see in the world today also affect children. Children, too, become victims of the AIDS pandemic either by being infected or affected. Political violence also hurt children. Wars and unrest that triggers many to flee and migrate also affect children. There are so many history-changing events that involve children. Schwartzman argues that anthropologists must move beyond the academical discussions and engage with policymakers and practitioners in development of something that she calls “an anthropology of children” (Schwartzman 2001).

As an extension of Schwartzman’s argument, Scheyvens, Murray and Scheyvens also argue that doing fieldwork on children is important. They also include a pure

methodological guidelines when doing fieldwork with children as participants. This guideline is to prevent harm and to avoid threatening their safety (Scheyvens et.al. 2003:167-176).

The guideline states that the children involved must be informed about all aspects of the study so that they understand what they are doing. This is both to understand their situation but also to understand the role of the ethnographer. To give the children time to digest and understand what they are doing is also important. Let them talk about it with family and friends. The research also involves acknowledgement of their involvement and talking to the children about what you have taken note of.

Constantly being in a dialogue with the children and including them along the way also decreases the risk of misinterpreting them.

One might argue that doing fieldwork on children is to do harm. They have not developed any sense of what a research project includes. But I argue that to exclude children from ethnography is a way of marginalising them further.

2.4 Participant observation:

Before I really started to be an observer that participated in the child-headed households, it was very important for me to get the children's, and preferably an adult member of the family's, informed consent. I wanted to inform them who I was, the purpose of my participation and their rights to choose whether to reject or include me in their lives. I emphasised that they would be kept anonymous in my writing but also from other people that I encountered during my fieldwork. This meant that the social worker could not come to me for information about the children I studied. I was very clear from the beginning that my presence would have an effect on both the children and the people around them, but to minimise that sensitive information leaked out through me I kept a zero policy on talking about my informants to other people. This seemed to be understood right away from the people that I chose to study. They had no problem with me being around at all.

I was also very clear from the start that I had a limited chance of going native. The colour of my skin revealed that I did not belong in an African village, so I had to do other things to blend into the community. At a community level I engaged myself in a Catholic parish. Many of the persons that became my network worshiped here. Many other people saw me at church, and by being present every Sunday for singing and worshipping I acquired goodwill from many more people than just the ones I saw on a daily basis.

Furthermore I also involved myself at the schools in the village. I became a face that many children recognised. By being present there and even conducting classes in art or English, children in the village recognised me and even started to talk to me. I managed to turn the frustration of me running after informants to them running after me.

On a less institutionalised level in the community I participated in countless funerals. I broke the cultural code of what to wear and how to behave at such an event quickly, and I managed to win goodwill from many villagers. I paid my respect to the dead and by doing that I felt on my own body and energy level how exhausting it is to bury so many bodies. For me it was emotional and sometimes I felt I had gotten in too deep with my participation since I more frequently had emotional outbursts as a consequence of what I saw, heard and felt with my own body.

The solution for not entirely losing my mind was to sleep outside the village. I had a vehicle to my disposal and I was able to move out of the village whenever I wanted. Distancing myself from the village and having my own space outside it became the medicine that helped me through my fieldwork. I don't feel that not sleeping in the village reduced the quality of my data since I left after everyone had gone to sleep, and since I would have been indoors alone anyway at that time.

My involvement with the child-headed households that I followed ranged from helping with schoolwork, being a person to talk to or a helping hand. I often just started to sweep the floor or fetched water or did whatever chores that needed to be

done. I did not do the chores alone. The children and I did them together. I also followed them around the village. Wherever the children went I followed. But I established an agreement with all the children. This was that they had to be clear if they wanted me to follow them or not. This worked perfectly. I was from time to time told to leave or not follow. I made this agreement so that the children still would have a private life and a sense of control despite my presence.

All this involvement and winning of goodwill from both random village members and the respective households I followed meant that I was able to collect data of interaction because after a while I was taken for granted within the areas where I went. I had in a strange way managed to blend in. I realised this when people came up to me before my departure and said that I was the strangest white person they had ever seen, and in fact they did not regard me as white at all.

Language is a very important aspect of participant observation. I knew from before my entrance into the village that English was widely spoken in Botswana, but when communicating with small children who have not learned English at school or elderly people who never went to school, the issue of language became more relevant than anticipated. It must be said that many of my informants spoke English perfectly. It was only a handful of people that I met on a daily basis that did not speak English. So from day one I started to learn eight Setswana words a day. After three to four months I could communicate, although very limited, with people who only spoke Setswana. Learning the language also became a way I won goodwill and acceptance from the broader mass of people.

I deliberately did not search for an interpreter. I did this for one simple reason. There would be one person less for my informants to relate to and get to know. In addition I could not guarantee that the interpreter would adhere to my strict zero policy about keeping information about informants anonymous from other people.

As a reward or a thank you for letting me participate in their daily routines I bought food or sweets. This was to show them that I appreciated their openness towards me. I

also reciprocated their kindness because ethically one can not get something without giving something back.

2.5 Anonymity:

As already stated anonymity, as a way of covering up my informants' identities, was important in the field but also in my data collection. I kept every detail of information to myself to prevent that sensitive information would become known throughout the village. Of course I used the acquired information to investigate further or ask questions that would widen my understanding of the child-headed household, but then I asked general questions and avoided examples from my own fieldwork.

No real names can be found, not even in my field notes. I created a new set of names from the day I met my informants. This required that I in my notes were thorough in placing new faces and names in the right relation to the fictive names that I had created.

In this thesis the names are all fictive. The only name that is not fictive is the name of the village. To have their names changed is the wish of my informants themselves. My data circles around the characters of 'TJ' and 'Kirsty'. They are real persons, but the other households that I encountered also have their own TJ and Kirsty. By this I mean that I have not created one case out of many, but that the case of TJ and Kirsty is not unique in the sense that my argument about keeping the house is important for all the households that I followed. By stating this TJ and Kirsty becomes more anonymous since their case does not stand out.

2.6 My role:

I have touched upon many aspect of the role I had in the village when describing my participant observation. It was not as easy to negotiate my role as a student of anthropology all the time and blend in as might have been the case. I would also like

to add that my role as a student of anthropology being in the field had to be constantly negotiated meeting new people. Even though I won goodwill by participating on many arenas, there were always people who encountered me for the first time. There were many people that expected me to build bars, schools or get together money to re-open the Red Cross kindergarten in the village. My being there had to be reciprocated in one way or another. People that I had met many times and gotten acquainted with asked me several times when my help was going to come.

In order to let people define who I was, I had to let people get to know me. Suddenly I was in situations where people asked about me, not me asking about them. I felt that time was running out when I had to talk about myself to them. How was I going to get the information I required then? It became clear after a while that by letting people get to know me and by being honest about my stay and my background, people understood who I was and what errand I was in.

As regards the children in the child-headed households and their closest kin the task of negotiating my role was much simpler. They took me in with open arms. Suddenly I had a grandmother, sisters and brothers. Many of the children stated that I was the best friend they had ever had, because I listened and talked to them about things they would like to get off their chests, like their parents' deaths or other difficult situations at school or at home. Being given the role of a family member I suddenly had obligations. Whether I filled them or not, I do not know but what I do know is that being defined as a member of a group I could use this role actively to try and understand the situation I was in.

Another aspect of my role is what it might have done to the quality of my data. I wish to emphasise that the knowledge base or ethnographic material that this thesis is based upon is acquired with me present. It seems odd that my presence should not influence my informants' behaviour at all, and it would be naïve to believe otherwise. But as discussed earlier, the striving for goodwill did pay off in the sense that after a while I was taken for granted and welcomed and did not constantly have to prove myself.

2.7 The data collection and transcription:

The data I wanted to collect was network analysis, household data and life stories. The data about the children's networks and households came to me through participant observation where I was able to collect data of interaction. How did I take note of all that interaction around me? Sanjek's article '*A Vocabulary for Fieldnotes*' (1990) helped me a lot to structure the note taking of the data derived from interaction. During daytime I had with me a small notebook that I had made from a bigger notebook. This fitted into my pocket perfectly. With it I also had a pen. In the other pocket I had a camera. I took notes of everything I saw, from what the yard looked like to where the well was, to how many minutes it took to walk from A to B. All these data I wrote down in my little book. I took pictures of houses, places and people in order to recognise them later.

I tried to be discreet about taking these scratch notes, as Sanjek calls them. I often excused myself with going to the toilet or went behind a house or tree to quickly write down words so I would remember events and people in the exact manner as they had appeared. I did not flash the camera either. When I took pictures of people I asked for permission, and made a photo session out of it instead. For me those pictures became of great value when I later in the afternoons rewrote my scratch notes into field notes.

Every night after returning to my place outside the village, I sat in front of my computer and wrote down everything that I could remember from that day with the help of both my mind and the scratch notes. I included the pictures in my writing as well. From these notes I slowly built up what would become my field notes, which constitute the basis for the empirical examples used in this thesis.

I did many more things that just collecting data of interaction. I conducted several structured interviews. The interview objects varied: representatives from the Government that dealt with orphan care issues and other stakeholders representing orphan care like UNICEF and SOS-Children's Village. I also interviewed people who could teach me about the village and how it was organised. People who in some way

contributed to the understanding of the children's context was of great importance to me. After a while I always had questions on my mind, and when I met someone who possessed any knowledge I just asked.

With the children within the households I also handed out diaries and pens for them to have them write about their lives. I wanted them to write about their past, present and future prospects. All the children did this. The children could choose whatever they wanted as reward. I set the limit in terms of the cost. This was a project that I started right at the beginning and it lasted until the week before I left. Then they all handed in their books to me. I read them and took thorough notes, then I handed the books back. To hand the books back was part of the deal when having the children write the diaries.

In addition to this I gave the children a disposable camera each. The cameras had 27 pictures each. I asked them to take ten pictures of safe places and safe people and ten pictures of unsafe places and unsafe people. The seven pictures remaining the children could choose their own motive. The reward was to keep one set of the pictures. Alongside the camera I gave the children an additional notebook where they noted down the motivation for taking the 20 pictures for me. After having the pictures developed, we sat and talked about them. Additional information about the children came to the surface. This added to what they wrote in their diaries.

At the schools I visited I started an essay project. I got children in various classes to write about their lives – past, present and future. I gathered over a hundred essays from the schools. Many of the children had experienced the loss of a parent, and many of them were now without parents. The majority had parents. Comparing these essays to each other opened up the world to orphan hood in a way that was later going to open up my eyes to the analytical perspective I would use in my analysis.

3 THE HOUSEHOLD:

In this chapter I will start by introducing the essays I collected at the schools in the village. By using the essays as a point of departure I will guide the reader towards an understanding of the child-headed household in terms of its boundaries, flexibility, production and consumption. By looking at the child-headed households creation and present situation I hope to portrait a picture of the social mechanisms that evolve when children loses their parents within a Botswana setting.

3.1 The “taken-cared-of” versus the “care-taker”:

I start with a presentation of the essays in order to highlight some of the social mechanisms that are set in motion when children loose one or both of their parents. It was the essays that opened my eyes to go deeper into the understanding of the household and later the house as an analytical category to understand the social complexity around the child-headed household. After reading the essays a very clear pattern revealed itself. The pattern was not that boys and girls had different prospects for the future. Children from both sexes wanted to become both soldiers in the Botswana Defence Force, nurses, doctors, lawyers and teachers – just to mention a few. The pattern showed itself in how the children combined the past with the present and the past and present with the future. The pattern is related to whether the author of the essay had experienced the loss of one or both parents. Out of the many essays that I collected I have summarised the main lines of their contents in two essays, meaning that there are many voices behind each essay.

The following essay is an essay woven together of essays written by children who have both their parents alive.

My name is Opelo. I am a proud Motswana from the country Botswana. Life is like a silver spoon. I was born in Gaborone the capital of Botswana. I was born in 1993 at Princess Marina Hospital in Gaborone. I am the third born. I have two elder brothers

and only one younger sister. My parents are both working. My mother is working as a tea-lady for a company in Gaborone and my father is a mechanic. We live a good life, and we have money for food.

At present I am going to school. My brothers are going to school outside of the village; they are doing Form 1 and Form 3. My brothers and my father say that I must have a good education; otherwise I will not have a good future. My mother is taking good care of us and she makes good food.

In the future I want to become a lawyer or a doctor. I want to become a lawyer so that I can make money and support my mother and father who have supported me. I want to have a good family. I want to marry a nice woman and have 4 children, just like my family now. If I fail to become a lawyer I want to become a doctor. I want to help all the sick people who are dying from AIDS. In the future I shall be a great man.

The following essay is woven together of essays written by children who have lost their parents.

My name is Mokadi. I am a girl. I was born in 1993 at Serowe. Serowe is a village in the Central District of Botswana. I am dark in complexion. I am the first born and have a younger brother and a younger sister. I never knew my real father, but my mother had a boyfriend that used to live with us. One day when I was coming home from school I saw many people in our yard. The first thing that I could think of was my mother. I ran towards the house and found my mother sitting on the porch crying. "Dad" had passed away. We buried him the week after. This was terrible for me. Now we had no money and life became hard for us. Only three years later my mum passed away. That was the day the hardship started. I remember her, but her face is fading in my mind.

Now we live together alone. It is me how have to work in the house now. I make food, wash all the clothes and sweep in front of the house. We have no food, clothes or money. When my sister cries because she is hungry I get really sad because I believe it is my fault. We have a grandmother in the village. She is nice and she gives us food. She is old, and she is the only thing we have got. I wish she will live until she is 100 years. Then I will be old enough to take care of myself and my sister and brother. I do all the chores at home since my grandmother is old and my siblings are

too playful. I also see other children in the village also being orphans. I want to help all of them.

In the future I want to have my own house with some lands I can grow vegetables. I want to work as a nurse at the clinic and make money. I know I have to work to keep my family alive. I want to marry a rich man who loves me and my siblings. When life treats you like this I can not take a good future for granted. I always take it one day at the time.

These two essays represent two different perceptions of care and responsibility. In the first essay the future is viewed and reflected upon in positive and problem free terms. The child is being taken care of. This stands in contrast to the latter essay where the future is almost unthinkable and where a sense of living in the present becomes a preoccupation. Mokadi has gone from being taken care of to become the caretaker. This is where I see a clear distinction between the two essays. The change in their roles has to do with the death of the parents. But the most interesting part of the second essay is that the children live alone despite the existence of an adult member of the family. The household composition has changed and now includes the grandmother. The boundaries of Mokadi's household are not longer set to only include her own house. The flexibility of the household becomes visible. Mokadi is working to keep the household. She cooks and cleans inside and outside the house. Instead of moving to a place where she could be treated like the child in the first essay, she takes on the responsibility to continue the household with help from her grandmother.

3.2 Case: TJ and Kirsty:

It is time to introduce the household of TJ and Kirsty. While reading about its creation and present situation, look for the keywords noted above about Mokadi. Pay attention to the household's boundaries, which again reflects its composition. The undefined boundaries reflect the household's flexibility as regards to changes. Notice how the

children divide labour to keep the household sturdy, and how they take on the responsibility of keeping it as a productive unit.

Let me take you back many years. We are not in the village where the child-headed households I studied reside. In fact these households have not yet become child-headed. We are in the house of a woman named Sofia. She is putting on her hat and is ready to go to work. Her sons have left for school and her husband, well, who knows. She is walking to the 'combies', the local busses that seat 12 people or more if necessary. She is on her way into Gaborone, the capital of Botswana, to go to work. She is a hard-working woman. Every day she commutes the distance from her own village to the capital. It is a good hour each way. And she has to catch another 'combie' to get to her final destination; work.

At work she and her colleagues have a good relation and it is a good job. The salary could of course have been higher, but Sofia counts her blessings. It is better with a job and some money than nothing at all. At work she gets in touch with a man, Roger. Nothing but a professional relationship. They become good friends. When Roger realises what trouble Sofia goes through to get to work every day, he offers her an accommodation at his place. She thinks about it for a while. She considers her own family, her sons and her husband. Her mother is alive so she could take care of the youngest son while she lives away during the week. And her husband, well, who knows? She has made up her mind; she leaves to stay in a village much closer to where she is working.

The trip from Gaborone and out to the new village takes about 10 minutes. The walk from the bus stop and to Roger's plot also takes about the same time. When she gets there she is led to a little house at the far right corner of the plot. She steps on to the concrete floor outside her door that makes some sort of a porch. She opens the door and looks inside. It is dusty but apart from that it is fine. Through an opening in the wall she can enter another room. A small window gives some light as she walks about. There is no electricity or running water in the house. There is in fact no

electricity in any of the houses on the plot. There is a water tap on the far left end of the plot. She can use that one. She moves in.

As time goes by she gets to know Roger's family very well. She also gets to know his wife Amy. She is a difficult person to get to know, but she is decent and well behaved towards Sofia. There is the eldest son Axe, the second-born Flora, the youngest boy TJ and finally Kirsty, the youngest of them all. She likes the children. They often come over to just hang about. Sofia grows very affectionate towards these children.

The children's recollection of their parents is that they fought or rather disagreed loudly from time to time. Sometimes Amy could just leave the house and abandon her children and leave them with their dad. But still they were caring parents. TJ's recollection of his father is that he was always full of surprises. He often brought home sweets and other luxury food from Gaborone like fried chicken, the fast-food way. He even bought a TV. They were one of the first households to have a TV whenever they had a car battery to spare.

In 1993 when TJ was 7 years old, the year he started school, the household as they knew it underwent drastic changes. TJ recalls this event like it happened yesterday. An argument outside the house caught his attention, and he went out to see what was going on. He saw his mother arguing with one of the neighbours. The neighbour was not a relative. His brother Axe was standing close to her. Then out of nowhere Amy (M) started to attack the neighbour. Suddenly the neighbour fell to the ground. TJ thought the person was dead. Luckily he was not. But this triggered the uproar against Amy (M) from a group of villagers, most of them strangers to Amy.

Later that evening when Roger (F) came home he had heard rumours in the village that they were plotting to kill Amy (M) for her misbehaviour. They decided that Amy should leave Botswana and go to South Africa where her mom (MM) and relatives lived. Amy (M) and Roger (F) came into the room where the children were and told them what they had decided. The children started to cry. They did not have much time. They had to say their good-byes quickly. Amy (M) got out of the house and

disappeared out of the village. The only thing they could hope for was that she managed to sneak out of the village unseen and get on a bus to Johannesburg.

Just an hour later the yard was full of angry people who had come to harass Amy (M). Whether they were going to kill or frighten her was not clear. But Roger (F) could not take the chance of having the children stay in the house. He got them out through the back door, lifted them over the fence and told them to run to their grandmother Tina (FM). It was a frightening situation for the children. Barefooted and blinded by tears and the darkness they finally managed to reach Tina's house. She took care of them that night.

The next day they returned to the house. Windows were broken, furniture was torn apart and the yard looked like a mess. Roger (F) could not be seen anywhere. But later that night he came back. He decided that the children should go and stay in Johannesburg with their grandmother (MM) for a while.

The children stayed in South Africa for a couple of years. Then Axe (B), TJ (B) and Kirsty (Z) returned to Botswana again. Flora (Z) was still in Johannesburg perusing her education. Amy (M) was now not able to return. After the event that made her flee, and by the time the children returned, she had been deported and was not allowed to enter Botswana again.

After returning to Botswana the children went back to school. Things were about to become better. Then one day they got a phone from Johannesburg telling them that their mother had gone missing. Roger's (F) response was to have the children work hard at school and value what a proper education could give them in return when they got a job. He failed in raising Axe (S) to become a man with a prosperous future. By now he had begun indulging in criminal activities and had already been in jail.

TJ (B) and Kirsty (Z) did well in school. This was reflected in the good grades and the responsibilities they were given in class. Kirsty is remembered for being an excellent actor. In school plays she would always get the leading parts. And in solo performances she would always expel her innermost feelings. One of her former

teachers expressed that she could see through Kirsty's acting that she had gone through much pain in her life.

After four to five years TJ received the message that Amy (M) had been found alive. He could not believe what he heard. He told his father and they all went to South Africa to meet her. It was fantastic to see her again. They stayed for a while in Johannesburg. The children and Amy (M) got to spend some time together.

We are now approaching the year 2000. Roger (F), TJ (B) and Kirsty (Z) are living together. Axe (B) is in and out of jail. We are in the beginning of the year. Things are going all right. The children have made it through a tough period. Now Roger's (F) health is deteriorating. He becomes bedridden. Luckily for TJ and Kirsty there is a group of women that goes around in the village and helps sick people. They show up from time to time and help Roger (F) with the necessary duties. One day they get the message from South Africa that their mother has passed away. The children are sent to her funeral. They are in Johannesburg for some days.

Coming home, Roger's (F) condition has worsened. Later that year he also passes away. TJ and Kirsty are now without parents. They are 14 and 11 years old. Axe (B) has shown himself incapable of taking care of his younger siblings since he is more behind bars than a free man. Therefore Flora (Z) is called back from South Africa to come and stay with her siblings and take care of them. She is 19 years at that time.

The fact that both the parents are dead means that the income to the household is limited. Flora is now working and is the one that generate income for the household. She had a good education from South Africa that gives her a good job in Botswana. She is now the household head.

TJ and Kirsty continue to go to school. For five years the three of them stay together. Axe (B) is still in and out of jail. He is now more inside jail than outside due to longer sentences as a result of heavier crime. But the three other children manage fine.

In 2005 Flora (Z) becomes pregnant. This would normally mean that there would be one more mouth to feed in the household. The baby is born and Flora (Z) dies shortly after. Now TJ (B) and Kirsty (Z) have a nephew to take care of in addition to losing their caretaker. The nephew, John, is taken care of by Roger's brother George (FB). From birth and until recent Flora's son has lived with George (FB), Tina (FM) and sometimes with George's sister who lives in Gaborone.

Flora's death meant reduction of the income of the household. They were dependent on Flora's (Z) money to survive. Before Flora passed away they had started to rent out several rooms that were on the plot. Sofia had one room, but there were a few other rooms to rent out in a house that was built by the father before he died. This meant that by the time of Flora's death, they had some income from the monthly rent.

After Flora's (Z) death, TJ being 19 years and Kirsty 16 years old, have lived alone in the house that their father and mother built when they got married and settled down in Roger's (F) native village. Up until the present time when I get to know them, TJ and Kirsty have always been living in the same house. Despite how turbulent the composition of the household has been, they have stayed in the house. George (FB) has been there and Tina (FM) has been there, but they have never lived with them permanently or had them come and live with them.

All this time Sofia has been involved in TJ's and Kirsty's lives. She did not move when things got hectic in the other house. She supported the children when they lost their mother, then their father and finally their sister. She has defended TJ and Kirsty whenever they have been harassed by Axe when he has been out of jail and needed money.

This is the story leading up to the time when I first meet TJ and Kirsty. TJ and Kirsty are two very different individuals living together in the same household. They are dependent on the income that the rooms that are rented out can give them. It is enough for transport money to school. Since school takes much of their time there is

practically no time to work to get an income. Sometimes Sofia contributes to gas or other things that they need when they are out of money.

When it comes to the domestic labour in the household like cooking and cleaning they share the duties. In the week the only work that is done apart from reading homework is to make food and wash the school uniform. They do not wash each other's uniforms. Who cooks varies. Despite the fact that they have food at home, the main meal of the day is eaten at school where they get a meal a day. This is often the only meal TJ and Kirsty eat during a day.

Food is provided by the social welfare system that is in Botswana. Kirsty being under the age of 18 gets a food basket every month. This food basket seems on the surface unproblematic and a very good contribution to the household from the government's point of view. But the reality is that this food basket is meant for one person for one month. The problem is that TJ and Kirsty are two people. The basket lasts for about 3 weeks and then they have to go hungry until they get a new one. In addition to this basket another place to get food is school. Here they both get one meal a day. When the food basket is empty, this is the only meal they have during a day. Even if the food basket gets empty, TJ and Kirsty have two options. The first is grandmother Tina (FM). At their grandmother's house there is always food. Even though she does not have too much food she saves and shares whenever her grandchildren are in need of something extra. Sometimes the food is cooked at Tina's place, other times they pack the maize meal or whatever food they are offered in a plastic bag and cook the meal at their place. George (FB) contributes to Tina's food stock. He shares his surplus with Tina. In this way he also indirectly contributes to secure TJ and Kirsty's access to food. The second option TJ and Kirsty have is Sofia. She always shares.

In order to get the food basket Kirsty has to go to a shop quite a distance from the house. She is registered in the shopkeeper's list as an orphan who then gets the money for the goods from the government. The problem is that if the shopkeeper is out of let us say sugar, which is one of the items that is in the food basket, Kirsty will not get sugar that month, and not get any compensation the next month by getting 2 items of

sugar. In addition to this there are also some meat and fresh vegetables in the food basket. With no suitable storage for these goods a few potatoes and cabbage rot before it is all consumed. The meat is used to make biltong that is chewed on every now and then.

In the weekends TJ often endures in domestic work. He polishes the floor, cleans pots and pans and tidies the common sitting room. He does not enter Kirsty's room to help her with her cleaning. That is something she must do herself. After finishing he socialises with good friends. He takes a trip to Tina (FM) to see if there is anything that she needs help with. Often he cooks for her, washes her clothes and sweeps the yard.

Since they both are in school and see their education as the key to a more trouble-free life, much of their decisions and much of their daily lives circle around getting to and fro school, doing homework, do the domestic chores which are most necessary and see to that they have enough food.

The future is something that both TJ and Kirsty have been thinking about a lot. Even though they both know that reality is difficult they can not help but to escape it occasionally. TJ's dream is to be educated and have a good job. He wants to be married and have children. He wants to create for his children an upbringing he never had. His wish is to take John (ZS) and have him grow up as his son.

Kirsty is very determined about her future. She wants to move to South Africa. She is also going to have a great job. She is more doubtful towards entering a relationship. She uses a long time to get to trust people. With or without a spouse, she will manage. In fact both of them manage, despite the emotional and practical hardship that started with the loss of their parents.

3.3 Anthropology and the household:

At this point it is also important to lay out what constitutes a household within anthropology. To use Yanagisako's critical review on anthropological household analysis, she argues that the many contributions to find a suitable definition to what a household is, boil down to the term "domestic" (Yanagisako 1979:166). Domestic refers to the sharing of most aspects of consumption, drawing on and allocating a common pool of resources to ensure production (Schmink 1984:89). The notion that it is the domestic functions, the domestic activities and the domestic organisation that is what a household and family consists of must be recognised as the leading premises. Despite the inconsistent use of the term domestic in anthropological literature, the core of the contributions can be summed up and help us in an understanding of what domestic is.

Despite the fact that anthropologists commonly employ the terms family and household loosely without any formal definition, there is at the same time a recognition that there is a distinction between the two (Yanagisako 1979:162). According to Bender (1967) analytically speaking the family and the household should be separated. They are both logically distinct and empirically different. The logical distinction is apparent in the fact that the referent of family is kinship while the referent for household is geographical connections and common residence (Bender 1967). Bender's argument sums up much of the early literature on household and families; that families must be studied as kinship units and not in terms of co-residence and as a productive unit.

I will return to Bender's argument later in this chapter. What I will focus on now is the boundaries of the household. Its boundaries are interlinked with its composition concerning who is regarded as belonging to it or not. When the boundaries and the composition changes the household shows itself as very flexible. Knowledge of how all this have an impact on the work and who does the work within the household is also of great value since it adds on to the understanding of the household's boundaries. The significance of drawing up the boundaries of the household and

showing its flexibility is to break up the rigid conception of the household and also to analytically question if the child-headed households in this thesis really is child-headed.

3.4 Boundaries, changes and labour:

The boundaries and the functions of a household varies and changes over time with the aim to fulfil its purpose of being a place of production and consumption (Schmink 1984, Yanagisako 1979). The household of TJ and Kirsty has undergone a drastic demographical change. The demographic determinants include the size and composition of the group in a household or the family. The influence on the domestic variations in a domestic group come from variables like age at marriage, birth rates or the level of fertility and death rates or life expectancy. The combination of all these factors reflects how the household is capable of being a production unit. A healthy combination between these determinants makes a household sustainable, but what happens when a lot of people die?

The changes in the household of TJ and Kirsty became clearer after their father had passed away. This change led to the fact that Flora had to return home from South Africa. In order to achieve the purpose of the household as a productive unit it needed a member that could work. Since TJ and Kirsty were in school, and since education is important in the family, this became the only option. To fetch a suitable family member from one setting to another also shows how flexible the household is. Let us not forget Axe. Putting Flora in charge of the household was a statement of viewing Axe as an intruder to the delicate internal balance of the household. Boundaries do not only include, they also exclude.

When, sadly, Flora passed away new changes of boundaries and labour appeared. Sofia had been there all the time and now became a person that both TJ and Kirsty relied on to still make the ends meet for the sustainability of their own household. The boundaries of the child-headed household were not stretched further to include Sofia

that was in reality a stranger to them by blood. Sofia was the one that TJ and especially Kirsty went to for help concerning food. Sofia made it clear early that the children were always welcome in her house, and they did not have to be afraid to ask for food. Sofia shared generously. In addition Sofia was also the one that, when the letting of the extra rooms started, was responsible for the rent money. Every month she collected the money and kept the money with her. She did not spend this money on herself, but kept it safe so that when either TJ or Kirsty needed money they came to her. This money, as we know, was used to transport the children to and fro school. The social services in Botswana do provide orphaned children with transport money, but this money seldom come until the academic year is over. So that is why Sofia had to save this money for school transport. When it comes to sustaining the household Sofia is setting the boundaries. By being included in the household she also has power to exclude. I am referring to Axe again. Axe knows that Sofia possesses the surplus that the tenants aggregate. When he needs money she often lies to him and says that there is no money for him to collect. Often Axe listens to this, but in situations where he is desperate he threatens Sofia and she hands over some money, but not all.

TJ and Kirsty both have stated that Sofia is more or less a mother to them. What she does for the household is returned in favours like running errands or help her with whatever she needs. But Sofia is reasonable and she does not demand big favours of the children. TJ and Kirsty are both sure that if they ever become rich, they will make sure that Sofia has whatever she needs. The reciprocity in the gift that Sofia has given the children in sustaining their household lies in the future, but will be repaid. The changes in boundaries and also in composition challenge the children in working outside their own house to sustain their household. By behaving like an asset to Sofia that can help her whenever she needs to, the children ties her to their household with the classical anthropological perspective of the gift exchange. Sofia sustains TJ and Kirsty's household, they work to reciprocate the favour and a relation based on reciprocity and gift exchange is established (Mauss 1995).

The boundaries of TJ and Kirsty's household encompass more households than just Sofia's. Tina, their grandmother, is very much a part of TJ and Kirsty's household. As for consumption she provides them with food when they need it. In exchange TJ especially helps his grandmother with household duties. He sees to it that Tina gets food. In the weekends he usually cooks for her. He washes her clothes, cleans the floors in her house, sweeps the yard and runs additional errands that she needs to have done. TJ's work at Tina's house contributes to the reciprocity of gifts from Tina to both himself and Kirsty. To meet the needs of their own household TJ and Kirsty have to work outside it to secure a social exchange of services to get food for consumption.

Uncle George is also a figure that needs to be included in the household of TJ and Kirsty. It is important to recognise that he also contributes to the child-headed household's sustainability. The arena for George's involvement is at Tina's house. This is where George leaves his food surplus. He knows that by supporting his own mother he also contributes to TJ and Kirsty's food basket. The boundaries of the child-headed household now also include George. By working for Tina, TJ and Kirsty helps George in looking after his own mother. By keeping TJ and Kirsty close to Tina he also secures that she is visited regularly. If George needs help with any domestic work either at Tina's house, his own house or the cattle post, TJ usually helps him.

The labour division in the household where TJ and Kirsty live is to a great extent shared. Kirsty, getting the subsidised food basket due to her status as an under-aged orphan, supplies the household with one food basket a month. In this sense the production aspect of food is to a great extent covered by the Government.

What I hope I have managed with this section is to show is that the fulfilment of a household is to secure its production and consumption of what is outlined as domestic. When the composition in the household changes, in this case when the parents in the household die, this has a huge effect on the household's boundaries and its changes in belonging and labour.

3.5 The child headed household:

With what I have outlined about the child-headed household above, what is striking at first is the new forms of household-coping mechanisms that arise in the aftermath of the devastating demographical change that the AIDS pandemic creates. As noted in the introduction about impact, it is in the household that the social consequences of the pandemic cluster. Despite the drastic changes the household proves to be very flexible and take on other expressions than earlier.

With the acknowledgement of the flexibility of the household and its boundaries, the question of whether TJ and Kirsty is a real child-headed household can be discussed. A lot has changed and TJ and Kirsty have had to work harder than before to sustain the household. They have taken on a caretaker's role to secure their own livelihood. They have to work on several arenas to keep the household. As I have argued the boundaries of the household have always changed. It has included Sofia, a stranger, and it has to a great extent excluded Axe even though he actually is the brother of TJ and Kirsty. Despite the geographical distance between TJ and Kirsty and Tina and George, the latter do in fact contribute to the sustainability of the seemingly child-headed household. Can we by definition say that the household of TJ and Kirsty is child-headed when there are several others that contribute to its sustainability? I see both arguments. In a way the "new" households encompass several other individuals; hence the use of the word "child-headed" becomes analytically problematic. On the other hand the children have to, as outlined, work for these external relations in one way or the other. The sustainability of these relations requires that TJ and Kirsty keep them alive through reciprocity. This is in a way their responsibility, and with that they can be seen as the head of the household. No matter how you look at this issue, what is important to bear in mind is that the household is flexible in its boundaries regarding who to leave out and who to take in, and even in geographical terms.

Leaving this discussion here, there is yet another thing that I would like to draw attention to. The focus at the end of this chapter is Bender's assumption, mentioned earlier, that the family and the household should be analytically separated. With what

I have now shown and exemplified, I feel that this distinction becomes problematic. To support my argument I draw on Yanagisako's (1979) analysis of the household, which starts with Benders interpretation mentioned above. Yanagisako argues that Bender suffers from the notion that the family and household are always logically distinct and empirically different (Yanagisako 1979:198). Through thorough examples she argues that kinship and propinquity are not as separate and distinct as early anthropological contributions would have it. What lies behind this reunion of household and the family or kinship is in the legacy of Schneider's work about kinship and blood. Schneider is used in the discourse about household and family to highlight that interpersonal relation does not necessarily go along the genealogical grid. The household of TJ and Kirsty would have struggled more to sustain itself had it not been for Sofia. The household is not all about blood relations and genes. It is also much about procreation and socialization. A household is about exchange, inequality and status. Yanagisako's final conclusion about this matter is:

'When we fully acknowledge that the family is as much an integral part of the political and economic structures of society as it is a reproductive unit we will finally free ourselves from an unwarranted preoccupation with its productive functions and all the consequent notions embodied within such a stance'.

(Yanagisako 1979:199)

Yanagisako brings together what Bender separates; namely kinship and the household. Without expressing it explicitly uniting kinship and household is analytically the same that is done in making the house an analytical concept within anthropology. Carsten and Hugh-Jones (1995:2) argue that the house and the body are intimately interlinked. Furthermore they argue that the house is an extension of the person; an extra layer of skin so to say. The house becomes a much more integrated part in the social life of people than just being a shelter.

What I have suggested in this chapter is how to look at or maybe define the child-headed household. I suggest that when children lose their parents the boundaries of the household changes and includes other people and households in order to sustain

itself. When we acknowledge what Yanagisako suggest that house and people are interlinked, we acknowledge that the house becomes a vital place in the social life of the people around it.

The next chapter will focus on the house as shelter. To view the house as shelter is not only to view the house as a protection towards wind and weather, but that it also protects other aspects of social life as well. What I hope to build up is an awareness of the house as a place of social significance.

4 HOUSE AS SHELTER:

From the previous chapter the focus was on the boundaries of the household and how flexible they are in sustaining the production and consumption of goods such as labour. Looking at the child-headed household more closely, what seems strange is that the children do not move, but the boundaries around it do. I suggest that the house matters for the children and their relatives. The house is a shelter and a place of protection against more than just wind and weather. What I suggest in this chapter is that the house is a shelter where the rights to different social acts such as birth, marriage and death are secured. As a good introduction to the understanding of why the house matters I start with the story of a woman named Paula.

4.1 The story of Paula:

Paula knew who I was before I realised who she was. Paula is in her late 30s and has three children. She is this kind of woman that participates in meetings no matter if it is church meetings, community meetings, funerals, weddings or other gatherings in the village. She is very approachable, and for me seeing her around became after a while something that I took for granted. I sometimes visited her because I liked listening to her stories about the village and its development and also about Botswana in general. She is very knowledgeable and has insight into every little bit about Botswana culture and customs that existed or still exist. She displayed on the surface a trouble-free mind and harmony is what can describe her home and her relationship to her children. There was no husband living with her. As I had realised this was something that I could not assume would be the norm. But still Paula managed to keep her household running.

It took a while before I understood the social issues Paula concealed. After we got to know each other the pieces of the puzzle became more clear to me and our conversations after a while would include topics concerning her future but most

importantly for a mother; her children's future. It became clear to me that for Paula, the future of her children relied on the house.

Paula is in her late 30s. She lives in the house that her mother and father lived in. She lives there with her three children. The eldest is a teenager and goes to public school, while the two younger ones are under the age of five and are in a kindergarten programme run by a voluntary church group. She has no job. She used to, but suddenly there was no use for her experience any more, and she got fired. The method used to get her out of her job was according to her self unethical, and she filed for a lawsuit. The outcome is not yet known. She has due to this no regular income. She struggles to make the ends meet.

Paula's medical condition is not the best. She has AIDS, but she is on medication. This medication keeps her stable. The medication has some strong side effects that affect her general health. Despite her stable condition she has experienced some fever rides that has almost killed her. She told me that in her unconscious moments when being bedridden she has spoken to her late sisters who also died from AIDS. The communication with the dead is a sign, she believes, that her turn is soon to come.

This condition of being in and out of fever rides and also health facilities has made Paula plan what will happen when she passes away. It affects her eldest son that she is actually planning what will happen when she passes away. This is the tragic face of the AIDS pandemic. To make rational thought around her own death is not easy for Paula. As a mother she wants to see to that her children grow up herself, and not plan for her eldest to do it when she dies. Her plan consists of teaching the eldest child to be able to do domestic chores but also get an education and have an understanding of job opportunities in Gaborone and the channels he must go through to achieve his goals. Furthermore, her plan consists of where the three will live. The house she lives in now is not really hers. It belongs to her eldest brother. By tradition and law he is entitled to that house. She does not trust her brother to take her children to stay with him. Even though he has money and a big house, the relationship between the two is not that good. She has bought a plot somewhere else, and is planning to build a house for her children. This is to secure their childhood, but also their transition into adulthood. She is creating a place which her

oldest son can call his own. And when he marries he can take his wife to that house which according to the customs is what a man does.

This is Paula's project: To see to that her eldest son can take care of his siblings, and to secure his future by building a house for him since the house they live in now is entitled to someone else in the family.

For Paula the house matters to secure her own children's future. She knows that without a house and what the house stands for her children will face a much harder future economically when getting married. As a consequence of her own situation where she does not rely one hundred percent on her family to be there for her children and fulfil their duties as a new caretaker, her solution is to buy a piece of land and start building a new house. A new house means a fresh start for the children. It secures their rights into adulthood through marriage. Paula can relax now that the plan is in motion. The construction is still just in the planning phase, but there is going to be a house there. What might puzzle many readers is that Paula did not spend much time lobbying to the rest of the family to take care of her children. She had not time for that. To build the house was the best and most secure solution for her children's future.

4.2 Anthropological theories about the House:

The house has been overlooked in much of anthropological writing because we all take it for granted. What it does to the social organisation of human beings and what it does to the ties between people is not as much appreciated as it perhaps should be. I argue that the house as an analytical tool can explain to us the strategies of the child-headed household. It ties the children, their kin and the children's future as married and growing status together. For this to happen they need a house – their own house – not uncles' or aunts' houses. They have their own house with the same relations to their kin and groups. As much as we would hope that children left without parents would regardless of anything be taken care of by relatives, the social structure they

are a part of can explain why the child-headed household still exists. It is what the house represents that is important here.

In the book *About the House, Levi-Strauss and Beyond* (1995) Levi-Strauss and his work with the Kwakiutl, assessing Boas' work amongst the same group and ending at a totally different framework of analysing the Kwakiutl house and composition, is the springboard for the collection of essays that analyse the concept of the house. What Levi-Strauss does is in short terms to highlight the complexity of the house as an analytical category that ethnographers cannot overlook. He establishes the notion that the house is much more vital in the understanding of kinship, alliance and lineage theory than was recognised earlier. The house as a social institution brings together a series of opposing principles of social forms such as filiation / residence, patrilineage decent / matrilineage decent, hypergamy / hypogamy and close / distant marriage which traditional kinship theory treats as mutually exclusive (Carsten & Hugh-Jones 1995:7). In an extension of this the language of the house is *about* kinship, but also *about* economy, joint substance, production and consumption and most importantly property.

Despite the fact that Levi-Strauss led anthropologists to see the significance of the house I will not dwell long on how he viewed the house. The critical look at his theories and the use of them on how to look at houses today are for me more fruitful. As I said in the beginning the house is seen in relation to people and ideas. The contributors in the book *About the House* use Levi Strauss' theories to further study the house as a place of social significance and belonging. The house and the body are intimately interlinked. Houses are thought of as bodies, sharing with them a common anatomy and a common life story. The space around the home is also an extension of the personal space of its occupants. This may seem strange to many readers. Thinking of the house in such a manner is not very common and it has not been very much written about either, compared to other aspects of human social life. This neglect as Carsten and Hugh-Hones argue is rooted in a neglect of the house in general because we take it so much for granted that we simply overlook it. We have to concentrate our

minds to be able to view the house as an extension of the people living in it. To see the house as significant in the social and political life of humans is important. It shapes decisions and actions. It ties to it people, ideas, land and kinship. In sum the house must not be seen as an isolated structure, but in relation to the people living in it. To acknowledge the complexity and the dynamics of the house and the connection between the house and the people opens up our mind to a set of thinking about the house as much more important than just a place to dwell. The house gets drawn into questions about marriage and decent, economy and property and finally about belonging.

Even though the empirical examples from the book *About the House* is taken from Latin America, South East Asia or Madagascar, they still show how the house in various corners of the world are woven into social life and plays a significant role in the social and cultural life. Whether it is marriage rituals on Madagascar (Bloch 1995), division between genders on the island of Borneo (Janowski 1995) or holy houses (Howell 1995) the house, the structure, have a social significance that can not be overlooked.

Levi-Strauss' theory about the role of the house in societies which are neither lineage-based nor organised through clearly defined marriage rules have proved to be fruitful. However, his models are also useful to analyse societies which are organised through such rules. It becomes clear that the African societies, once apparently explained in terms of decent and lineage, might also be fruitfully analysed in terms of their houses (Carsten & Hugh-Jones 1995:18). This suggests that the house in addition to having an understanding of African kinship and decent also adds another dimension to the social complexity around, namely kinship. How fruitful it is to have a focus on houses in addition to kinship to understand the child-headed household will be illuminated later in this thesis. Here the premises for the focus on the house is set.

The rest of this chapter will be devoted to the animation of the house, and to carving out a beginning that will support the assumption that African societies in addition to kinship can also be understood in terms of the house. I will start by viewing the house

as a shelter. The taken-for-granted structure that protects us when it rains outside. Furthermore I will explore the house as land. By this is meant what the house constitutes in terms of the right to land. Building up my argument about the house 'coming to life' I will also explore the house as a site for ritual action. The significance of this is to recognise the house as history of events.

4.3 House as protection and shelter:

Let us start with the most obvious characteristic of the house, the reason why it is so taken for granted, namely that we all need to be protected from wind and weather. The house also protects us from other people. It shuts people out while it keeps other people inside. The house becomes a place of safety and comfort.

In addition to this the house and its immediate surroundings may also serve another purpose of protection. Oliver (1977) draws on empirical material from the southern African tribe of Tonga and found out that the creation of their house also protected the residences from evil spirits and witches. Poles at the entrance of the house were pored with drugs, and medicine was poured down in the pole-holes that are a part of the house. Unwelcome guests would be struck by bad fortune and disease. The house becomes more than just a structure. By protecting people from wind and weather, evil spirits and other unwelcome guests, the house starts to show itself as bearing in it more power than just being a structure to dwell in.

4.4 House as land:

The traditional settlement pattern that many still live by today is actually comprised by three different locations: the village, the lands where the crops are grown and the cattle post (Larson 1998:131). It is common knowledge in Botswana that any citizen of Botswana is entitled to a piece of land to cultivate. The land today is allocated through land boards according to the Tribal Land Act of 1996 (Larsson and Larsson 1984:52). The role of the land board is simple; to see to that people who show

interest in developing new land does not occupy land that is rightfully entitled to someone else. Before the Land Act the allocation of land was the task of the tribe and its chiefs. The tribal land was not owned by its user. This is an important point in as to how the house comes to play an important role. The land belongs to the tribe or the land boards today, and when the land is not in use anymore it is returned back to either the tribe or the land board (ibid.).

Having a piece of land inside the village and a piece of land that is going to be used as the cattle post, a house must be erected to show the connection of the land outside the village to its rightful cultivator inside the village. The space that surrounds the house, despite its geographical distance is also an extension of the personal space of its occupants (Carsen & Hugh-Jones 1995:3). The purpose of fencing the land of the cattle post area, apart from signalling that the piece of land is under development, is to socially tie the lands and/or the cattle post to the owner of the plot and a house elsewhere. The house ties the cattle post and the plot in the village together with its loaners or cultivators.

What is the symbolic value of cultivation land? The purpose of having land outside the village is to have a place you can have your cattle and grow your own vegetables. Cattle is important in a wider social context. Cattle are used in many social settings inside the village. In the arrangements of a wedding the bride price is paid in cattle. The amount of cattle for this occasion varies from region to region, even from village to village in Botswana. In some villages four or six cattle is the norm, while in others ten to twelve cattle is required. The slaughtering of one to two beasts is also required during the wedding celebration. Every guest is supposed to get food. Besides weddings, it is also common to see a beast being slaughtered at funerals. Everyone who gathers to follow a deceased to his/her last place of rest gather at the house of the remaining family. At the house everyone gets a handful of the food that is made from the beast and some vegetables.

The significance of having land is to meet and fulfil the social requirements for both weddings and funerals. Cattle are also considered as wealth. I made the mistake of

asking a man how many cattle he had. He ignored me and did not answer. I later realised that to start a conversation with this question is the same as if a person would ask me how much money I had. I would not regard this as a good opening line to get to know another person.

If you do not have access to cattle there is a possibility that you purchase cattle whenever you need one. The prize, due to its social importance, is high and many cannot afford to buy. That is why the land is specifically valuable because the herd will grow in size, which again makes you less reliant on buying cattle. It is more economical to have land and cattle than to buy.

4.5 House as a site of ritual action:

4.5.1 Birth:

A *motsetsi* is a woman that has just given birth. She enters a period called *batsetsi*, where she stays inside a house for a period of time in confinement. This period according to custom is three months, and no member of the public is supposed to see the child until this time is over. There is an old Botswana proverb that says “Bana ke mpho ya badimo” meaning “children are a gift from the ancestors” (Denbow & Thebe 2006:181). During the confinement period it is believed that the child is hovering between this life and the domain of the ancestors. It is also believed that the mother is in possession of the spirit of the ancestors. This is why there is a taboo against seeing the child and the mother during her confinement. When the time is over the child is introduced to the public for the first time as a child or a gift from the ancestors. The child is acknowledged by the rest of the family and given a name.

The house plays a vital part for the *motsetsi* in the confinement period. It will become apparent later in this chapter how the house takes on another role if a *motsetsi* die before her confinement period is over. As for now I will talk about the importance of the house when it comes to marriage.

4.5.2 Marriage:

Marriage and having children are two of the most central events affecting an individual's status and rights within the community. Through marriage both men and women are initiated into fuller participation as adults in the affairs of the community (Denbow & Thebe 2006:141). Marriage is the transition of girls to women, and boys to men. An unmarried person does not enjoy the status and respect that a married person enjoys. Therefore to be married and have children is the way into adulthood.

A marriage is now understood as a key element in social life in Botswana. To describe the actual wedding ceremony is of no interest here. It is the preparations that are important as well as how the house plays a role in these preparations.

When a couple announces their affection for each other, a process of negotiating the *bogadi*² begins. It is the uncles on both sides that negotiate the *bogadi*. As mentioned earlier the *bogadi* is normally paid with cattle. *Bogadi* is given from the wife takers to the wife givers as a compensation for the loss of a family member. The paying of *bogadi* also secures the family of the groom all the rights to the children that are born out of that marriage. If the woman dies or is not regarded as a worthy member of the family the right to the children are via the *bogadi* not hers. The giving of *bogadi* also implies that the wife-giving family values their daughter and it signals to the wife givers from the in-law family that they will treat her respectfully.

According to custom the man built a house next to his parent's house. It was ready before the wedding. After the ceremony and the right arrangements were fulfilled, the man had a house to take his wife back to. Today the settlement pattern has changed, and houses can be built anywhere. But what is still important today is that a man who marries has a house to take his wife back to. He needs a place where they can live and start a family together. Without a house it becomes harder for a man to get married.

The same is not true for the women who marry out of the house. They move to their husbands' houses. What matters for the married woman is that she needs a place

² Bride prize.

where her *bogadi* can be taken care of. By this I mean a place where the cattle can be delivered to and a place where the cattle can graze. As I stated earlier in this chapter, the house ties the cattle post or the lands to the family inside the house in the village. Without this house and access to some land to cultivate the cattle on, there is in reality no one that can take care of the cattle given as *bogadi*.

In this way, for both men and women, the house matters when getting married. For the man having a house ready to move into becomes his priority. For the woman having a house to live in and a place where the bride prize she accumulates can be delivered to is important.

Relating this to TJ and Kirsty, the house they live in becomes important in this sense. For TJ the house becomes important to keep because he needs it to get married. This is also the case for Kirsty. She needs the house just as much as TJ. For her to get married out of the house, she needs the house as an anchor point so that the bride prize paid when she moves to the house of her husband has a clear direction.

4.5.3 Death:

From time to time the visible distinction between the inside of the house and the fence and the outside is revealed. For me as an outsider this distinction became very clear during the countless funerals I attended. When a family experiences the loss of a family member the closest family comes and gathers at the house of the deceased. Many villagers also come to attend the daily prayer meetings that occur around dusk. When arriving at such a prayer meeting the men sit outside the fence until the ceremony has started. It does not begin until everyone is gathered inside the fence, but until the right time all the men sit outside the fence.

The night before the burial takes place everyone who want gather for the wakening that takes place the entire night before the day of the funeral. Here too the men sit outside the fence and the women inside. Outside the fence one or two beasts are

slaughtered and cut into pieces. The meat is cooked and stewed inside the fence. This task is usually performed by young women.

Then at the arrival of the corpse from the morgue at around 5 o'clock in the morning the funeral ceremony starts at the house. The corpse is taken inside the house in a wooden coffin. Male members of the family join forces to carry the coffin inside. After the procession has entered the house, all who are present gather inside the fence. The immediate family stays inside the house for a few moments. Those who want can view the corpse. The ceremony consists of prayers, songs, a sermon by a priest, speeches from family members and whoever who wants to say anything.

From the house the coffin is taken to the graveyard. At that time the sun has started to shine and the heat is almost unbearable. Everyone joins in the long procession to the graveyard. When arriving at the graveyard, the immediate family and the coffin are to enter the gate first. The coffin is lowered in a prepared grave. Prayers are prayed and songs are sung. When the coffin is in the grave, all the men line up and take a shuffle each until the coffin is covered completely with soil. Then stones, one by one, are also placed around the heap of soil that is now the grave. A welded case, shaped like a house is put on top. Some flowers are put inside the case. A last prayer is sung and then the remaining family leaves the graveyard.

Back at the house the men gather outside the fence again. A meal is served. At some funerals you get a paper plate while in others this meal consists of just how much you can hold in your hand. The meal is digested and not long after a male member of the family, usually an uncle to the deceased says a few words. All kneel and bow their head. This marks the end of the funeral.

The division of the sexes between inside and outside the house stems from the fact that women have through time been in charge of the domestic chores and the males been in charge of representing outside the house. The males gathered at a political arena called the *kgotla* that was situated outside the house. Here they would debate and discuss village matters. In a village there are many small *kgotlas* where men from

the same ward gather. One of these men is the *kgosana* or a small chief. He is that specific ward's representative in the main *kgotla* where the seat of the village chief, or the *kgosi*, is. Nowadays, at the *kgotla* meetings at the main *kgotla* women are also present. Despite this the old values of who is inside or outside the house at funerals are still very clear today.

What is described above is what happens during a 'normal' funeral. There are today persons who do not get buried on the graveyard. That is the *motsetsi*. The house also plays a vital part if a woman dies during her confinement. In the extension of seeing the child as a part of the ancestors in the confinement period, the mother is viewed as having the spirits of the ancestors within her as well. That is why it is a taboo for both the mother and the child to leave the house and any member of the public to see the child or the mother inside the house.

When the body of the mother is to be buried, due to this taboo, traditionally it was only members of the immediate family that was present at the funeral. Today it has become a more public matter, but still these funerals are not attended by as many people as those I have described above. Furthermore the body is not buried on the graveyard, still according to the confinement taboo. The woman is buried underneath the house, the very same house where she was in confinement. Her spirit becomes one with the ancestors of the family. The house carries the symbolic value of connecting the ancestors and the living members of the family.

The child that is left without a mother is still to be kept in confinement since the spirit of the ancestors, and now also his mother's spirit is still within him and in the house. The child still gets out of the confinement period three months after birth, and is acknowledged to the public by being given a name.

The child is now closely tied to that house where his or her mother is buried underneath. The house becomes a place which the child is taken to if illness strikes. To be close to the spirit of the mother is believed to have healing powers. I was also told that sometimes the soil of where they dug the grave for the late mother is taken

and mixed with water. When the child drinks this mixture it brings healing results. Again the house becomes a significant structure in the burying of a *motsetsi*, and her orphaned child.

4.6 Flora, a *motsetsi*:

Flora, TJ and Kirsty's late sister, had a son - John. She went into the confinement period and adhered to the rules of the taboos about not being out in the public. As we know she sadly passed away. She died before her confinement period was over. The funeral took place behind the house of where Paula, TJ and Kirsty stayed together. The men dug about one meter down and two meters in underneath the house. The corpse was gently placed in its grave, and it was soon covered up.

Flora is now connected to the ancestors by being regarded as one herself. What can this tell us about the importance of exactly this house for both TJ and Kirsty but also Flora's son John? What I am hinting at is the word 'protection'. The maternal spirit of Flora is of great importance to her son. His health, well being and development are tied together with the spirit of his mother. The house under which she is buried is the house that in the future will protect John. Also the spirit of the maternal ancestors protects TJ and Kirsty. They are not as 'alone' in the house as you might think at first; although the thought of their sister being buried underneath the house was a fact they had to adjust to emotionally. Knowing that she protect the house is still consoling as it contributes to their own protection.

The spirits of the ancestors do have a double effect. They can protect, but they can also punish. To know that your actions can upset the ancestors and lead to your own punishment means that upsetting your ancestors is something that you usually avoid. To move away from your ancestors (read: house) would be such an action. To keep the house for the sake of the peace with the ancestors becomes important.

4.7 The animation of the house:

The house has become alive and suddenly the house matters. It is more than just a productive unit as outlined in the previous chapter. It is more than just a construction taken for granted. It has become a part of the people living in it. The house has become an extension of the understanding of kinship. The adding on of the house as an additional level of understanding African societies and kinship has proven itself very useful. According to Levi-Strauss' theory about the house in societies where kinship is defined and observable, the house still bears in it the little extra that opens our minds to what it encompasses and means to the people living in it.

Through chapter three and four I have suggested that the house can not be divided from kinship. The house plays a significant role in many aspects of social life. What I have tried to convey is an understanding of the house as a place that matters for the people how they use it as a shelter, but also that this shelter protects other aspects of human life. For the child-headed household the house protects their future regarding marriage. This explains why the boundaries around the child-headed household are flexible in order to sustain the house. The house becomes in this sense a structure that must be kept.

In the next chapter it is the keeping of the house that is in focus. Using TJ and Kirstys case, I suggest that many of the actions taken by both themselves and their close kin are determined by the importance of keeping the house.

5 KEEPING THE HOUSE:

Up until now I have suggested that the house is a vital part within the field of kinship. I have argued that the house has a significant role in social life. What has been highlighted is the notion that the house is something more than just an economical production unit, and the significance of the house as a structure in certain aspects of social life in Botswana. In chapter four the house was described as a vital social unit that must be taken into consideration as a social structure and not only a shelter. It is in the house that kin meet and it is between houses that relations are made. The house is an extension of the people living in it, and it contributes to decision making whether it is concerning a mother buying a plot for her children or to let people stay in your house or not. The child-headed house is not only about making it from day to day, but also to secure a future, as I argue, by keeping the house. Their lives are not only about the present but also about the future. For the children left behind the keeping of the house without their parents means securing their own future within the social context in which they live their lives. The house and how it is constituted and what it ties to itself of land and social status makes keeping the house the top priority for the children and their close kin.

First in this chapter I will argue alongside Levi-Strauss' suggestion that kinship in Africa is fruitfully understood in relation to an understanding of the house. This I do to add another layer to the house as a gendered entity in addition to the two other dimensions of the house that I have already outlined namely the house as a domestic entity and a ritual entity. By doing this the understanding of keeping the house will hopefully be enhanced, and we see that keeping the house secures the children's future. To keep the house becomes a protective act for the children. As an extension to this point I will compare it with how societies in a pre-colonial South-African setting dealt with orphan care and how it can be seen in the light of the importance of keeping the house.

As an end to this chapter I will show empirically, with TJ and Kirsty's case, really how far one can go to keep a house. I hope to show how actions are determined by the importance of keeping the house. The children's agenda of what is important to keep is what I will try to convey, and as I have said before, blood has little to do with the children's decision-making but the house shows itself as the point of reference that must be kept.

5.1 Anthropological theories about kinship:

How people define who they are related to and who they are not does not seem problematic at first. We all have an understanding of what it means to be related or what it requires of us as individuals to belong in a bigger group. Anthropologists have since the discipline's inception been studying the core substance of all human activity, namely the relation between two people (Hylland Eriksen 2003:117).

The received wisdom in anthropology is that kinship represents the very essence of being human and that in all societies, 'networks that connect individuals as relatives are apparently recognized and universally accorded social importance' (Keesing 1975:14). Holy (1996) comments on this statement from Keesing and argues that kinship in this sense means that in all societies people define themselves as more or less related to each other, and that these relations are the basis of the variety in social interaction. We create a difference that makes the difference. The difference includes people but at the same time excludes them from a group. However the picture becomes more problematic when cultural variety is taken into consideration and we have to find the lines that are drawn between those who see themselves as related and those who do not.

To argue along Levi-Strauss' suggestion of linking kinship and house, I will in this section only include people who arrange the act of marriage and the socially significant meaning of this act. As I stated earlier, kinship is not about the individual but about the relationship between individuals. My starting point is therefore the

relationship between a husband and a wife. Let's go back and grasp what lies behind the choices of a particular man and a particular woman to get together and marry.

According to Levi Strauss (1963:46) the incest taboo, meaning the taboo of brother and sister or close relatives getting married and producing offspring, is the basic unit of kinship. It is the first truly cultural act and the essential criterion of cultural life. It marks the transition from "nature" to "culture" – the life particular to humans (Levi Strauss 1969:12). But the incest taboo has been under much debate. The range and variety in who cannot mate and who can varies from culture to culture, but it seems that the debate has settled around an agreement that there are rules for who can become a couple and not. If the reason behind is called taboo or avunculate, there are rules of who you can have intercourse with and who you can not. The consequence of this is the fact that it defines who you are related to and who you can marry. It makes a clear division between who is kin and who is not kin and who you can turn to when a marriage is to be established.

Despite how anthropologists define or have conceptualised the marriage, it means a significant change in the status of a person entering it and the creation of a whole new type of relations. As Radcliffe Brown states a marriage is 'essentially a rearrangement of social structure' (Radcliffe Brown 1950:43). The wedding joins together the two groups and an establishment of reciprocity and alliance is also occurring between the two larger family groups. The social significance and function of marriage in this regard have been discussed by many anthropologists. Two of the most common forms of marriage presentations are bride prize and dowry. Bride prize involves a transfer of valuables from the group that receives a woman to the ones that gives a woman away in marriage. Dowry is a transfer of valuables from the brides group to the couple or the bride herself (Holy 1996:127). Let me now concentrate on bride prize since that is of greater significance in this particular discussion.

Bride prize in the early writing in anthropology was merely understood as the woman being reduced to a commodity that men were able to sell and buy as they pleased.

This is not how bride prize was described to me in my fieldwork when I asked people

about marriage rituals and the planning of a traditional marriage in a Botswana setting. As Holy (1996) rightfully states ‘to appreciate the meaning of bride prize we have to realise that marriage is not simply an affective bond between a man and a woman but a relationship which links together two families or groups of kin’ (Holy 1996:129). What bride prize does first of all is to compensate the loss of a family member for the bride givers. This bride prize is extended in the fact that it starts an alliance between the two families. Further the giving of bride prize also secures the paternal kin the rights of the children that the woman carries. (Roalkvam 2005) The children of the married couple also have a link up to the bride prize Here we start to see that marriage is also about exchange and that the children born are also a part of this exchange.

All in all the marriage is designed to be a base for social reciprocity. Further Collier and Rosaldo (1981) have explored the meaning of the marriage regarding what it means for the man and for the woman. No wife for a man means that he has a problem obtaining status in the public space. To be regarded as an honourable member of the public sphere a man needs to have a wife to keep his house. A woman only needs to be married once to have obtained the status she require as a full adult and respected member of a community.

The impact of marriage crosses the border set earlier between the man and the woman. A marriage is the pact between two groups of people – the wife givers and the wife takers. It even extends itself to the whole community as such. A man without a house and a wife is no man at all. It seems easier and more legitimate for a woman to leave her husband, but in real life a woman is much more tied to her husband, her new and old kin group than stated here.

Before I end this section about kinship theory there is one more thing that must be mentioned. Kinship and the getting together of two people from different groups is embedded in the fact that they have to find a place they can live, dwell and reproduce. A space needs to be created for the new couple. The house becomes clearer as an important determinant of the marrying of a husband and a wife. This point correlates

with Yanagisako's (1979) argumentation to see the kinship and co-residence as not distinct. By bringing this together she has, as I see it, defined the status of the house within kinship theories.

As for now, I will focus on Bantu kinship since the people I did research on are anthropologically defined as Bantu. Here I hope to show the connections between the house and kinship and explain why the house in a Bantu setting is so important. What I present here will make the importance of the house in Botswana easier to understand.

5.2 Bantu kinship

When it comes to Bantu kinship what I will draw your attention to is marriage, the meaning of marriage and how it is prepared and planned for. I suggest that marriage and house in Botswana are interlinked, and therefore the social significance of the house is inevitable.

Bantu people are divided into smaller tribes and clans. Membership in a tribe is determined by descent (Schapera & Comaroff 1991:28). A man belongs to the same tribe as his father and remains in the same tribe for the rest of his life. Some of the biggest tribes in Botswana are the Ngwato, Kwena, Twana, Ngwaketse, Kgatla and Malete (ibid.). I did my fieldwork in a village being originally of Malete descent. However, today far from everyone in the village is Baletle. A person of a Malete tribe would refer to himself as a Baletle. Another valuable piece of information is that one tribe does not necessarily have to live in the same village. There can be several villages with the same descent. Another village with Malete descent in Botswana is Ramotswa, situated at the border to South-Africa.

Practices of kinship within Botswana are multiple due to its multiplicity in tribes, but there are some overruling structures that can ascribe to the Batswana people.

However you look at it and wherever you go in Botswana, you will see and encounter that the smallest well-defined unit in the society is the household. This household

consists of a man, a woman and their children (Schapera & Comaroff 1991:33). Every household has its own place of residence called 'lolwapa'. When the authors Schapera and Comaroff wrote about the Batswana in the colonial time from 1900 to 1953, a lolwapa consisted of many houses where the land, livestock, and other property were controlled by the head of the house, normally an elder and his married sons and unmarried daughters. The family was the unit that tied together land rights and other property.

Many of the families back then, as also seen today, were subdivisions of wards. The ward is a patrilineal but non-exogamous body of people forming a distinct social and administrative unit under the leadership of a head-man (Schapera & Comaroff 1991:39). This head-man is called the *kgosana*. The size of such groups may vary considerably. In most of the groups you find the head-man's close relatives, and a number between 200 and up to 1,000 individuals is not uncommon. The function of the ward is to join forces in everyday life and production of food, but also protection of mutual alliances (ibid.).

From the time that Schapera and Comaroff wrote down the social structure of the ward system in Botswana and up until now, there has been a considerable amount of change. The village chief once told me during one of our many conversations what happened when the first man in the village settled out of his 'lolwapa' and even the ward. The elderly that sat around us also joined in the tale. What it ended in was that back then it was seen as a provocation for the whole community and it upset the relationship between his own kin and the rest of the village. Nowadays it is more common, and to assume that neighbours are relatives is not a waterproof assumption anymore.

What lies behind this division into 'lolwapa' and wards is marriage. Marriage as described by Schapera and Comaroff (1991) is an event usually between two exogamous groups, where the husband takes his wife to come and live in his 'lolwapa' and move into the house he has prepared for the making of their new household. The marriage between two people in a Bantu setting happens according to

the lines of bride prize. The meaning of bride prize is described above. The marriage is not finalised until bride prize or 'lobola' or 'bogadi' is paid. In some regions the bogadi must be paid before the wedding and in other regions it can be paid after and during the establishment of the new couple's house and household. It is the uncles of both the bride and the groom that gather and negotiate the bride prize. The uncles from the bride's side of the family are interested in heightening the bride prize, while the roles of the uncles on the grooms side is to try and keep the pride prize at a reasonable and a respectful level. The uncles of the groom are also the ones that have the overview of the families cattle herd and knows how much they can pay in bride prize.

As stated above the act of 'bogadi' ties the two families together. This can be seen in the Tswana recognition of kinship (Schapera & Comaroff 1991:37). They recognise members of the family much broader than westerners do. Their relations are embedded in the language and I will tie up the on-the-surface complicated system. We have the relations between the spouses, the father and mother and their children. Furthermore the parents of the man build a relationship with their daughter-in-law and vice versa. So does the man with the parents of his wife. Then there is the grandparents-grandchildren relation. Cousins also recognise each other. Then we have the relation between the wife's siblings and her new husband. Likewise the husband's siblings bond with the wife of their brother. The spouses of the siblings on both sides are also recognised as family.

To get a more nuanced picture of Botswana kinship it is important to realise the importance of marriage in contemporary Botswana. As mentioned earlier the marriage has a great deal of significance for both men and women, but perhaps especially for the men. Marriages do play a vital role in the status building of both men and women. It is also seen as the leaving of the bachelor phase to go into the adult phase. A change in the status also goes along with bearing forth children (Denbow & Thebe 2006:141). Furthermore the married couple's status changes in the community. They both enter the adult sphere but this has a bigger impact on men than on women since

they become full respected members of the legal institutions of the village, namely the *Kgotla*.

So in Botswana today marriage is still a social institution that has implications out of the holy matrimony of marriage itself. The production and reproduction of members of the community serves the families sustainability, but also the sustainability of the social structure of the village.

5.3 House as gendered entity:

What we know from the previous chapter about house as land is my starting point when trying to link the kinship with the house to a certain extent. Botswana settlement is to a large extent made up of two to three locations. Those are the village, the lands and the cattle post. As I argued earlier it is the house in the village that binds together these three locations; the house as land. Without this land or cattle post there is of course not cattle to be used for ceremonial purposes. Without the cattle a marriage, as presented above, will be more difficult to arrange than if there is a secure access to cattle. And if there is no marriage the transition from being a bachelor to become a married member of the society seems to be almost impossible. The chain of these connections starts with the premises of having access to cattle. Having access to cattle goes all the way back to having a house. The house thus becomes an important determinant in Bantu kinship.

In addition to the house-land-cattle argument, there is also another factor that in a Botswana context ties the house to kinship. As noted earlier, the husband takes his newly wedded wife back to his house. For a man to have a house to take his wife back to becomes important. The same is true for the woman who gets married. Even though she moves out of the house where she grew up, this is the house that her bride prize is going to be handed over to.

This indicates that the house is also a gendered entity. This adds on to what I have written about the house as a domestic and ritual entity. Men and women have

different positions in the house. In the case of marriage the men stay in the house or build a house geographically close to their parents' house. The women move to their husband's house. The animation of the house and the creation of new houses depend on that someone stays and that someone moves. It is the men that stay and the women that move. By giving away a woman in marriage what is given away is returned in the bride prize. The same is the fact for the family that takes a woman to them. They have to give away a prize, the bride prize, to have her in their family and secure the right to the children she will give birth to. What I try to suggest is that men and women have different positions in regards to marriage. This is embedded in the thinking about the house – who stays and who moves, what is kept and what is given away, but also it shows that the flow of women and the creation of new houses is dependent on an already existing house.

I argue that the house is more than a structure that protects against wind and weather. By being a ritual entity the ancestors protect the people living in it. By also playing a vital role in kinship it also protects future prospects of getting married and what this brings with it in terms of status, or ability to live a Setswana life.

5.4 The House and Orphan care in Southern Africa:

In pre-colonial times if a father died the nearest male kin of the deceased inherited the mother and the children (Chipfakacha 2002:2). This man was usually a brother or a cousin of the deceased. The children would call this new man their father. The woman would call him her husband. And he would call his new spouse his wife and his new children he would regard as his own. To discuss or reveal this change was a taboo (ibid.).

A second scenario is the passing away of the mother. Again the nearest kin of the deceased would marry the widower and become the new wife and mother in that house. Again talking about this change or make it relevant later was strictly forbidden. The reason behind the taboo of labelling a new wife as a substitute or the

children as orphans is to make the absorption and the change of roles go as smoothly as possible and to prevent the status from being used actively later in life if a domestic feud was created (Chipfakacha 2002).

The third scenario is if both the parents passed away. Then the extended family would take the children. Whoever chose to take them would call the children their own and let them have the same rights as their own children. To respect the ancestors it was never mentioned that these children were orphaned (Chipfakacha 2002).

These scenarios are believable, and they seem logical and very protective of the widow or the widower and their new spouses and their children. Looking at this more closely with all the background knowledge we now possess about Bantu kinship and the house, I argue that these social mechanisms also bear in them the notion of keeping the house. I do see that many want to argue that this absorption of orphans in an extended family has to do with solidarity and I do not disagree with that. It has to do with blood being thicker than water but I do not think that it should be taken for granted that the reason why family step up to take care of the orphans only has to do with blood. My disagreement on this point is viewed in the light of how the house incorporates itself into kinship theories and also Bantu kinship. It can also be argued that this strategy, in addition to securing the psycho-social well being of the children, also secures the house and prevents the house from falling apart. To prevent it from dissolving also protects the future of the children that automatically got a new mother or father. The house protects the future of the children.

When the network of people creating a social security net around children dies in numbers that we see from the HIV/AIDS pandemic, the importance of keeping the house becomes more visible. When the taken-for-granted social network is gradually weakened, what you are left with is the main focus for both the remaining family and the children left behind – namely to keep the house.

5.5 Keeping the house:

There was one event that was an eye opener for me to the child-headed house. It took place in the house of TJ and Kirsty. We already know these two as ambitious juveniles. It is reflected in their view of the importance of school and a good education. This means that upper secondary school must be taken seriously for their goal to be accomplished. TJ and Kirsty's weeks and weekends are mainly about school work.

When I got to know TJ and Kirsty they lived alone in their parents' house. Little did I know then about their elder brother Axe and what sort of trouble he could start when determined that his way of doing things was the right way. TJ and Kirsty mentioned him when I asked, but it seemed that he was more outside of the picture than inside. They both described him nicely, but did not pretend to hide Axe's criminal past. I did not know if I wanted to meet this man. He lived outside of the village, and I felt sort of relieved that I did not have to be introduced to him at all.

One day Kirsty told me that she and Axe had spoken. She had to get a signature for a letter from her school, and she went to Axe to get it. He informed her that he planned to come back to the village and stay with her and TJ. He had some things to arrange before moving back home, so he estimated that it would take about a month before he showed up. Now I finally had the chance to meet their brother and listen to his perspectives about being the eldest of them all and how he had coped with the loss of his parents. When he finally came he also brought with him his girlfriend and his two-year-old daughter. It seemed from the heavily loaded vehicle he came in that he intended to stay for a while.

Our conversations were not long neither in duration nor frequency. He did not like to talk about himself at all to me. I was also warned by TJ that I should avoid talking about his past since most of his past only consisted of being a villain. I did not get to know Axe through conversations, but I got to know a side of him through his actions.

A short while after Axe's arrival TJ started to lose things. One day he could not find his pencil that he needed for school. One day he could not find one of his pullovers. What really got TJ frustrated was when his cell phone went missing. TJ was sure that Axe was the one responsible and confronted him with it. Axe and TJ had a big argument. They both yelled at each other. TJ accused Axe of stealing his things, but Axe immediately confronted TJ with a pair of missing sneakers that Axe could not find anymore. The argument did not end in a solution to the problem. Instead TJ ran out, mad and frustrated. I ran after him. I could not pretend that I was not there. Despite my presence the boys had been yelling at each other and on the verge of a physical fight. When I reached TJ he could not say a word. He was so mad and frustrated over what to do with Axe. When everything had calmed down and Axe had left the plot, TJ began to think rationally about the situation. He could no longer stay in this house if he was to be able to concentrate on his school work. He had the solution ready. He had to move.

The very next day he went to his uncle George. By the way George is the only uncle that I encountered. The reason for this is maybe that he was the only living brother of TJ's father who still lived in the village. TJ explained his situation to him and asked his uncle if he could come and live with him for a while. George did not take the news about Axe's behaviour lightly. Regarding TJ's question he replied that he had to think about it until the next morning. They made an arrangement that they would meet at Tina's place in the afternoon the next day.

Walking home TJ could not say anything about how the meeting went. Now George knew about how Axe was behaving and maybe he would take the necessary actions to stop Axe from doing what he was doing. TJ also hoped that he could come and stay with his uncle until he had finished school. George had electricity installed in his house so TJ could be up late and read. Where he lived now he had to stop reading when the sun set or he had to buy candles.

The next afternoon TJ went right from school to Tina's house. He sat there waiting all afternoon. The afternoon became night. No sign of George. The disappointment in

TJ's face was clear. He started to doubt that George would let him come and stay at his place. TJ returned home in anticipation.

The next day he also went directly from school to Tina's. Now it had been George's turn to wait for TJ. By the look on both Tina's and George's faces the news was not going to be good for TJ. George rejected TJ to stay with him. No explanation. TJ was frustrated. Tina, who was now informed about TJ's desperate situation, offered him to come and stay with her. As this was his only option TJ moved all his things to Tina's the very next day.

5.6 Sofia and Butu:

The ones remaining with Axe now were Kirsty and, in the neighbouring house on the same plot, Sofia. Her son, Butu, came to visit his mom often. He had known TJ and Kirsty almost all his life and was a good friend to both of them. He worked, and because he liked spending his money he also had gadgets like a cell phones and a disc-man. Things that was attractive to a person like Axe who seemed to have started to coordinate a group of young men doing criminal activities.

One day Butu could not find his cell-phone either. Since Axe had the reputation he did, Butu went directly to him to confront him with the missing phone. Axe as usual pretended to be innocent and got annoyed that little Butu came and accused him of stealing his phone. Butu did not give up and threatened to go to the police with the case. Axe knew that if Butu did this, he would end up behind bars again. Axe threatened Butu that he would kill him if he ever thinks about going to the police. When this threat reached Sofia she got frightened. She had been around Axe for many years now and knew what he had done to other people and what he was capable of doing. Without a moment's hesitation she decided to move away from Axe. She started looking around for a new place and was determined to move.

What has not been mentioned before is the fact that all the time I had been in the village Tina had had a project going on. She was building a new house on her plot.

This house she would rent out in order to make money. When the news about Sofia's plan to leave reached Tina, she asked Sofia to move into one of the two rooms when the house was finished. With borrowed money and a couple of rents in advance from Sofia, Tina was able to finish one of the rooms. About one month after TJ left, Sofia had also gone. Kirsty was left alone with Axe.

5.7 Kirsty:

Due to threats from Axe I became hesitant to enter the house as freely as I did when it was only TJ and Kirsty who lived there. I still saw Kirsty every week. She came to visit Tina in the weekends or even during the week. I asked her how she was doing. She always replied that she was fine. She explained to me that she did not have any trouble with her brother. It was usually TJ and Axe that quarrelled. She made me believe that she was fine. For a while she actually was.

After some weeks her visits to Tina became more frequent. She looked tired and exhausted. In fact she was starving. Not because of lack of food where she was staying, but because Axe and his girlfriend hid all the food in their room. They did not share with Kirsty. The only meal she got was the lunch at school.

I saw that she clearly suffered. The return of Axe had seemingly disrupted the delicate peace that TJ and Kirsty enjoyed living alone together. I asked Kirsty why she did not come and stay with Tina. It was enough space and food in the house for one more. Kirsty's reply to this question was that she was fine, just hungry, and that she felt a connection to the house where she grew up, so it was difficult for her to leave. To me at that time, this answer was irrational. Why would she remain after both TJ and Sofia had moved and Axe was torturing her by hiding the food?

This situation remained the same as long as I was in the village. Kirsty did not move, she remained in the house. After I left I received the news that Axe had moved away. What triggered this move is not known to me. TJ has finished his schooling with excellent grades. Kirsty is not hungry anymore. Sofia still lives in the house next to

Tina. George has stepped up and encouraged TJ to sign his name on the deed to the house he and Kirsty live in.

5.8 Understanding the child-headed household and the people around it:

There are many things in this event that needs to be commented on and be explained when it comes to keeping the house for TJ and Kirsty. What I will comment on is firstly the relationship of the child-headed house to other houses as a strategy to keep the house. Secondly an understanding of George's decision to reject TJ to come and live with him is important to establish. I argue that it was not blood relations that determined his decision but rather the situation in his own house and the fact that he also had an interest in keeping the house for TJ and Kirsty. Thirdly we have to understand why Kirsty did not move while everyone else did. One would believe that when Sofia moved, Kirsty would follow since Sofia was the one that supported Kirsty when she was in trouble.

Sofia had been a person to rely on for TJ and Kirsty even before their parents died. She had always been the person that did her utmost to the welfare of TJ and Kirsty. After the death of their parents she had been the one that had, indirectly, been there and seen to that the day to day necessities of the children had been met. Both TJ and Kirsty introduced me to Sofia first. This, they expressed, was because she was important to them and I should get to know her because being a guest in their house I could not avoid Sofia. They even expressed that she was like a mother to them. Sofia had been a mother figure for the children ever since they lost their parents.

We know from before that Sofia rented a room in an extra house that was on the plot of TJ and Kirsty. There was also another house with three other rooms in it on the plot. These rooms were also rented out. Sofia was the one that collected the money, kept it and gave it to TJ and Kirsty when they were in need of money for food or transportation to school. We also recall that the income from the rooms just covered the expenses of the children getting to school. There was no surplus from the rent.

TJ and Kirsty knew that it was important to keep a healthy relationship between the two houses. The existences of the house where TJ and Kirsty lived depended a lot on Sofia. The children knew this and so did Tina. This explains the reason why Tina was so eager to get Sofia to come and live in the house that she was developing. That is the reason why she hurried the making of that house. The house was not developed until Sofia said she was moving. Tina made sure that TJ and Kirsty's non-kin caretaker for so many years would suddenly become more distant by moving away.

Furthermore another strategy for TJ and Kirsty was to have a good relationship with their grandmother Tina. TJ was the one that was the most active in cultivating this relationship. He was the one that every weekend came to do domestic chores for his grandmother. She did not demand that he did this in exchange for food and shelter when he needed it, but TJ felt that it would be more difficult to ask for help from Tina if she did not get anything in return.

When it comes to the relationship with George, the uncle, TJ and Kirsty was more divided. Kirsty has a more ambivalent relationship with George than TJ. She made it clear from the beginning that she and George did not speak to each other much. The same said George. He described Kirsty as a too independent young woman with very strong opinions and therefore too difficult to handle.

TJ's relationship with his uncle was not problematic at all. George liked TJ and TJ communicated well with his uncle. George even bought TJ notebooks for school. He dropped them off at Tina's place. Doing it like this, he knew that TJ would get the books and nobody else.

What lay behind this good relationship? Why did TJ have a better relationship with his uncle than Kirsty? As I have already explained Kirsty did not see any reason for keeping a good relationship with her uncle. One of the suggestions to why the children differed here was the fact that George was TJ's security as regards his own marriage. George had cattle and as we know cattle is the "currency" for the pride prize. For TJ to get married he was dependant on his uncle to be there with the cattle

in the exchange for a bride. TJ can not afford to not have a good relationship with his uncle. In this was a huge responsibility when it came to getting TJ married and becoming a respected member of the village society. As mentioned earlier marriage is the key to become respected as an adult. Kirsty could not entirely cut all the ties with her uncle George either. She was dependent on him to negotiate a good bride prize deal for her when she was getting married.

Here we see that still after the parents' deaths the children establish relations with other people and other houses to keep their house intact. Even Tina's action in securing Sofia still living close to the family is a sign that she did not want to lose an important and delicate piece in the puzzle it is to secure the child-headed house. If Sofia had moved far away her income, which she sometimes spent on TJ and Kirsty, would have disappeared.

The fact that Tina indirectly helped Sofia to move more quickly than she had to, can be interpreted as a strategy from Tina to get rid of Axe. Tina had ever since the return of Axe been waiting for her sons, Axe's and TJ's uncles, to come together and deal with the matter of resolving the issues that arose after Axe's return to the household. By removing Sofia from the house, Axe's source of income disappeared. When Sofia moved the pressure on Axe to take responsibility increased. There was no one there for him to rely on in order to conduct his own life. The intricate network for the children's support practically vanished and was not there to support Axe. Hence a pressure was put on Axe to realise that the way he was living his life he could not stay in that house. And as a matter of fact, he did move a while after.

5.8.1 Understanding George:

It is about time to get behind George's actions in this setting. He has a huge obligation as the brother of TJ's and Kirsty's father to take care of his nephew and niece. Since his brother had paid "bogadi" to his in-laws, technically TJ and Kirsty "belonged" to the father's side of the family. This should contribute even more to underlining the social responsibility that George has towards TJ and Kirsty. Why

then, knowing that he has an obligation towards TJ, did he reject TJ from coming to stay with him when Axe made the other house impossible to stay in?

The answer is complex. If blood simply was thicker than water he would have taken TJ to stay with him for as long as TJ was in school. George was married to Helena. He had three children and also a grandchild on the way. His wife was a woman that I did not encounter. She was not visible in reality, but the consequences of her being I could see. From people around TJ and Kirsty and even from Tina the blame for George's rejection of TJ was put on Helena. Helena was the other half of George's house and household. Her say in this case mattered to George. She was more interested in and obliged to her own family and keeping her own house than spending time on George's relatives.

Another reason why George rejected TJ can be viewed in the light of the theories about the value of the house and keeping it. If TJ was pressured to stay in the house, instead of moving, the chance of losing the house to the unsuitable brother would be minimal. The rejection can be seen as an act to keep the house to the one most suited to the task of keeping it in proper condition. This would be TJ in George's eyes. Despite the fact that Axe was the eldest, to George it was TJ that was the one most responsible and thus most suited to keep the house. George had also expressed his concerns that if Axe got too comfortable in that house, he would make life even worse for TJ and Kirsty. If Axe became the owner of the house, TJ and Kirsty would have to build their own houses which would mean an even greater economical challenge for the family and especially for George.

What George had hoped for did not happen. TJ moved out. But can George's judgement in this case only be interpreted as ignorant? Why is he not doing more for his own "blood"? As I interpret George's action, I realise in retrospect, that he was actually doing what was best for TJ and Kirsty by securing their right to the house. His actions were motivated by the fact that he did not want to lose the house to Axe, who in George's opinion would ruin it. By doing this, George was securing the right for TJ and Kirsty to have a place to call home and also securing the social value of the

house in Bantu kinship. Securing the house for TJ and Kirsty, George was acting out his responsibility.

5.8.2 Understanding Kirsty:

Why did not Kirsty move as well? This was the hardest thing to comprehend for me. Her actions seemed irrational when we know now that she suffered. But Kirsty was in her own way also keeping the house. She sat in that house to secure TJ's and her own future. The role of the house in Bantu kinship when it comes to ancestry and marriage can not be easily overlooked. Kirsty's decision to keep the house secured TJ the house that he some time in the future was going to live in and use as the starting point for his marriage. In addition Kirsty also secured her own future since the wealth that she was going to generate when she got married would have a house to return to. She secured the house that she could marry out from. TJ would benefit from her marriage by receiving the bride prize.

In addition to this she also secured John's connection to his ancestors and the spirit of his late mother. The social ties between Kirsty and what the house symbolised, was too strong for her to just get up and leave. With her present she made sure that the house was not taken over by Axe.

What becomes clear after reading this is that keeping the house due to its social value, shapes actions from both the children living in child-headed household and their kinsmen. It is evident that the actions taken are triggered by the place of the house in the creation of kinship in a Bantu setting. The house becomes an important brick in the puzzle surrounding the children without parents in Botswana. What TJ, Kirsty, Tina, George and Sofia have shown us is that for adolescents that are in the transition from children to adults the house becomes a place to fight for because it plays an important part in the social transition from juveniles into respected members of the society. How this understanding of the house adds on to the perspective of orphan hood in Botswana will be discussed in the final chapter.

6 Orphan care in a wider perspective, a conclusion:

The number of orphans is predicted to rise alongside the impact of the HIV/AIDS pandemic in the future. It is predicted to be one of the greatest humanitarian challenges we are going to be faced with in modern times. With the orphan situation being so visible in many corners of the world today it is obvious that things are being done to provide help and support to the children who are left without any parents. The response to the HIV/AIDS pandemic has brought forth a political response to its social impacts. Two of the biggest policy-making stakeholders when it comes to orphans in Africa are UNICEF and the World Bank. No one would disagree that to help countries and communities that face the challenge of a rising number of orphans is not worth a try. Strategies are made, strategy plans are developed and an aim for the project is set up. The strategies and policies are implemented and the assessment of the success or failure of the implementation is evident after a while. These policies are based on knowledge produced about how to reach the goal for the help provided.

As for the existing orphan policies the aim is to have the children living with the ones they belong to. Blood and family are viewed as synonyms for love and care and policies are made with this assumption in mind. I do not say that children should be prevented from being taken care of or have the necessary psycho-social support they depend on when growing up. The issue that I want to discuss here is the fact that the policies that are made to help orphans wants the children to live with the remaining family. How can one then explain that there still are children living in houses alone and not with their relatives when such relatives do exist? Furthermore, as we know from TJ and Kirsty's case, the children may also have lived alone for a long time. Is this not what the current orphan policies want to work against? To rephrase it: the aim of current orphan policies is to have children live and thrive with close kin, and as a consequence of that the proportion of children living alone will decline. I argue that the production of knowledge behind international orphan policies are based on a notion that children belong to someone and that strengthening the family ties or

strengthening blood relations will make the families cope with the additional members they have to take care of.

UNICEF and The World Bank start of with the assumption that blood is thicker than water and this leads up to seeing blood relations as relations of solidarity. This will have a positive effect on societies that receives help and support to feed additional children since they with a little support will be able to take care of additional members. This is how the chain of thought is presented when you read orphan policies from both UNICEF and the World Bank. Working with the orphan situation in Botswana I did not start with the assumption that blood was thicker than water. I started in the other end without any assumptions at all. After a while I started to doubt that blood was thicker than water. Because I too was under the influence from my background to think that family stick up for each other. The thing I had to realise was that the look of solidarity was different to what I was used to. When I traced the lines of solidarity via my cases, I did not end up looking at blood relations. I ended up looking at the house and what it constitutes in the social setting that I was in. Solidarity in this setting became to make sure that the house was kept. The actions taken to achieve this goal may seem careless on the surface but when the importance of keeping the house became more and more clear, the seemingly careless actions became filled with solidarity.

It took me a long way and a thorough chain of thoughts to be able to conclude with seeing the house as a vital premise in the lives of the children who have lost their parents and the people around them. My argument leading up to this conclusion started in chapter three where I circled around how to view the child-headed household, or household in general from an anthropological point of view. The essays set the scene for how I ended up looking at the household and my understanding of the child-headed household. It was the flexibility of the boundaries around the household that made me realise that the household, or in other words the house, is important for an improved understanding of the situation the children who had lost their parents are in. By using what I had gained insight to via the essays on my own

case proved to be very fruitful in an understanding of the child-headed house. The boundaries around the household of TJ and Kristy have been changing ever since before the death of their parents, but become more visible after their death. The inclusion of Sofia and the exclusion of Axe is a good example, I believe, in how the boundaries and flexibility of the house works. The inclusion of Tina and also indirectly Uncle George's house as a step into sustaining TJ and Kirstys household is also important to acknowledge. But TJ and Kristy have to work to keep these relations, but by doing odd jobs for others they are in fact securing their own household by securing the right to food if they don't have or other services they need.

This was just the beginning in my way towards an understanding towards why the house is so important to keep. The fact that TJ and Kirsty does not move was a puzzle for me to comprehend in the beginning, but when I realised that the house has a bigger place in the social picture than just being a shelter, it all became clear to me why the keeping of the house was so important. Why the house matters so much is what I have tried to explain in chapter four. Paula, a woman in the village was amongst the ones that made me realise why the house mattered so much. In her case, building a house was the only thing that she could think of in her strategy to secure her three children a secure future. Since her house that she lived in belonged to another person in the family, she could not count on that her children would inherit the house and by that also having their future secured. Paula's case is a very emotional case but also an illustrative case of what the house means in a Botswana setting. The house becomes so much more than just a shelter. What Paula made me realise was the fact that houses are important, not only in an economical sense, but also in a social way. To secure her oldest son the right to marry she had plans to build a house for him.

The social aspect of the house in a Botswana setting is what the rest of chapter four is about. I start logically and build my argument up for looking at the house as a shelter to viewing the house as a security to land and cattle and what that means in the local context. Cattle are widely used in many rituals and especially in the negotiation of the

marriage between a husband and a wife. Without the house there are no cattle and without the cattle a marriage proves difficult to arrange.

The house also plays a vital part in the birth of a child and also the death of a person. In the case of Flora who died in confinement the house plays an important part in her burial. She becomes an ancestor embedded in that house. Her spirit protects her kin and especially her own child. Suddenly the house is a place of ritual action and a place of spiritual protection. I have argued that an understanding of the importance of the house in many social settings becomes an important aspect of understanding why the children simply can not take their things and move to their grandmother or any other relative.

In my last main chapter, chapter five, I use what I have established earlier in the thesis to explain the different actions taken by the person, who according to my view of the household of TJ and Kirsty becomes a part of it. The aim for all of the involved was to keep the house from falling apart when Axe returned and threatening the household's delicate balance. Tina, the grandmother, hurried up the move of Sofia. This led to the loss of Axe's source of income. This put pressure on him to move and find income elsewhere. George's rejection of letting TJ move in with him can also be interpreted in the lines of keeping the house. By forcing TJ to remain in the house the risk of losing the house to Axe would have been minimal. Kirsty's choice to stay in the house, I argue, is the clearest voice when it comes to keeping the house. Despite the hardship she had to go through to secure her own and TJ's right to the house, she remained in the house. My argument by using the case of TJ and Kristy is to show that the child-headed household encompasses many more households and involves other people than just the children living alone in their parent's house. What I also suggest with the case of TJ and Kristy is that the keeping of the house with all that it ties to itself becomes the agenda for both the children who have lost their parents but also the ones around.

This is my knowledge about the situation around children who live without parents. I see the house as an important factor to understand in this regard and by doing so I free

myself from the thinking that orphan care have to be embedded solely in the thinking that blood is thicker than water. Why do not current policies capture the knowledge about the importance of keeping the house? What does this say about the production of knowledge that, in this case, orphan policies are based on? I believe the answers to this question are complex and diverse and that many of the factors run parallel to each other. Let me draw on Hyden's arguments about the informal and formal sector that I presented in the introduction. He argues that the link between institutions and culture are not as easy to keep from each other in mainstream social theories. In this sense culture can not be seen as irrelevant in any political action since it is the founding determinant in both the formal and informal sector. The quality of knowledge that is produced for the purpose of being the base in any sort of policy depends on the recognition of the interference and links between these two sectors. It is apparent that the orphan policies are very formalised and written within a framework where orphan care becomes so to say institutionalised. The recognition of the informal sector or the informal institution of the house and the household is overlooked. With the cultural codes of the house being shut out of the orphan policies the ignorance of culture, that Hyden argues must be included, is excluded from the policies. And as we see in Botswana, children are still living in child-headed households. Ferguson shows with his example from Lesotho that policies that lose out on the cultural context do fail in certain aspects of the structures that was set out to be improved or developed.

Another thing that I strongly argue is that the production of knowledge which becomes the basis for policies often lacks a portrait of the relevant cultural context. The portrait you get depends on where you look for your data, how you look for them, and with what background you are analysing the observations made. This becomes a methodological issue but I think it is relevant to touch upon here. Crewe and Harrison's (1998) book is all about trying to understand how to get development right, and the production of knowledge for development policies constitutes a big part of their book. They argue that where you look for the data that you need to base a policy on is vital if the policy is going to reflect reality. In my case, if you only look at the relatives' house to be the best place for orphaned children to live, you will lose the

sight of the importance of keeping the house the orphans lived in before their parents died. How you look at an issue has a lot to do with methodology. As for me, forcing myself to look away from blood being a determinant of kinship and solidarity, I discovered the importance of the house for both the children and also for their kin. The way you look at an issue also has to do with what sort of data you want to gather. If you are only after data about where the children get food then that is what you look for. But an understanding of the importance of the food is missed out on. A researcher's background also has a lot to do with the production of knowledge. An economist will see the house very much along the lines of the household that was outlined in chapter 3. For an economist securing the production and reproduction in the sustaining of the household becomes important. To give a relative compensation in terms of food and a little bit of money to take care of additional family members is in my eyes a very mechanical view of the matter. If it was this easy, there would probably be no children living in child-headed households because this incentive would be easy to supervise, assess and report from.

Another contributing factor to this production of knowledge has to do with what Ferguson (2006) writes about the recognition of Africa in the world today. A recognition of Africa as a continent of complexity and multiplicity bears in it a sense of a global relation. To see Africa as a part of the global picture in relation to world affairs is to do justice on the actual situation on the continent. This ties into Farmer's argument about structural violence (2005). The structures of the distribution of power are connected to the distribution of poverty and despair. The knowledge produced in orphan policies may as well be a part of a bigger picture where the ones who define what is going to be included in the policies rather contribute, with or without knowing it, to a greater distribution of poverty instead of actually making an improvement.

By using qualitative methods and being very cautious about where and how I looked at the matter of the child-headed household, I feel I have landed at a conclusion that adds another layer to the complexity around the child-headed household. As already stated the keeping of the house is where I have landed as the crucial issue to

understand when it comes to the child-headed household. This is what I have been trying to argue throughout this thesis. We have to free ourselves from the fact that a house is a structure that we can just take for granted. The house is more than just a shelter that protects us from rain and wind and provides us with a comfortable and safe place to rest. The house is more than just a household where the main goals are to sustain a certain level of production and consumption. The house is land. The house is a site for ritual actions. The house is a gendered entity where men and women have different roles to fulfil in both its creation and in its sustainability. The house plays an important part in kinship theories. The house protects the ones living in it and it secures the future of its members when they one day are going to marry and indulge in the respected spheres of adulthood. To leave a house and to lose this protection and security for the life now and in the future is the worst thing that could happen to a group of children that have lost their parents.

From the case of TJ and Kirsty, the importance of keeping the house becomes evident. The keeping of the house is reflected in that Kirsty, despite the hardship, remained in the house and secured TJ's and her own future. The actions of their uncle George and grandmother Tina are also determined by the importance of keeping the house. It is along these grids that the expression of solidarity comes to life. It was an act of solidarity from George to reject TJ from staying at his house when Axe had made it impossible for TJ to remain in his parents' house. George wanted to prevent that Axe claimed the house. With TJ removed the scene was set for Axe to do what he wanted with it. When TJ actually did move, Kirsty was George's only hope for having the house kept to the ones most suitable to live there of the two brothers, namely TJ.

The act of Tina to have Sofia move away from Kirsty was also an act of solidarity. By having Sofia move, what moved with her was the security of food and money which she had. Suddenly Axe only had the little food that Kirsty brought into the house from the food basket to survive. When it became apparent to Axe that he could not feed himself, his girlfriend and his daughter with one food basket he moved. Kirsty got

food at Tina's. Tina's action removed Axe and she improved the situation for both TJ and Kirsty, but she also secured the keeping of the house.

6.1 The research problem:

This thesis takes its theoretical considerations from Levi-Strauss' theories about the house. In addition an incorporation of kinship theories to illuminate the importance of the house is also discussed. The combination of these two theoretical aspects from within the discipline of anthropology is still useful in understanding societies today. Even used on a society that during the deaths of many people and where these deaths manifest themselves into social changes, they prove themselves useful. To see the house as an extension of the people living in it and how the house incorporate itself into the kinship and structures of the creation of new houses is a useful analytical tool to use on the child-headed household. Levi-Strauss' theory about incorporating the house into the understanding of African societies has again grown in strength since it is used in this thesis and by viewing Botswana societies in the light of the house, the importance of keeping it has eventually become clear.

My research problem as formulated in the introduction about how anthropological insight about the house and kinship can open up our understanding to why there are still many children living in child-headed households I believe is answered in this thesis. I have shown that within anthropology and the debates about kinship and the house, much of the analytical tools are provided to understand the child-headed household. By freeing ourselves from the notion that blood is thicker than water and that houses are important in kinship theories, the keeping of the child-headed household is better understood. This adds on to the knowledge base that started this whole thesis. A broader complexity is revealed.

6.2 But what do we do with orphan care?

It is easy for an anthropologist to enter a field, pinpoint where others have misinterpreted the social reality and criticise development. I believe an anthropologist should have a dual role: A critique but also a scientist that uses the theories and methodology available to come up with suggestions about how to make, in this case, orphan policies more helpful to the receivers and the people concerned. Working with this topic for quite a while, I have also come up with a suggestion for how to, with the knowledge now produced, help the children who have become orphaned. With the children's agenda now being revealed, to work alongside and with the house becomes more important than working against it. With the removal of the children even to stay with their relatives is, as of today, an act against the security and keeping of the house. To work with the children is to secure the rights to the house. To legally have the rights to the house secured, is to secure the children's inheritance and their social security for the future. What needs to be secured is that when the children become old enough to take care of themselves, that they have the house of their parents to move back to. This would secure their marriage and their status as adults. How this can be done practically remains the challenge.

My hope is that this thesis has given important insight to the understanding of why children live in child-headed households. I wish to have highlighted the complexity around their situation and that current orphan policies are insufficient in meeting the children's needs.

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