

A

(RE)FORMING FAMILY: COMING OF AGE IN FOSTER CARE

by

NANCY V. BENIGNUS

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in Anthropology in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy,
The City University of New York

2004

UMI Number: 3127850

Copyright 2004 by
Benignus, Nancy V.

All rights reserved.

INFORMATION TO USERS

The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted. Broken or indistinct print, colored or poor quality illustrations and photographs, print bleed-through, substandard margins, and improper alignment can adversely affect reproduction.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if unauthorized copyright material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.

UMI[®]

UMI Microform 3127850

Copyright 2004 by ProQuest Information and Learning Company.

All rights reserved. This microform edition is protected against
unauthorized copying under Title 17, United States Code.

ProQuest Information and Learning Company
300 North Zeeb Road
P.O. Box 1346
Ann Arbor, MI 48106-1346

© 2004

NANCY V. BENIGNUS

All Rights Reserved

This manuscript has been read and accepted for the Graduate Faculty in Anthropology in satisfaction of the dissertation requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

29th April 2004

Date

Shirley Lindenbaum

Shirley Lindenbaum
Chair of Examining Committee

29 April 2004

Date

Donald K. Robotham

Donald K. Robotham
Executive Officer (Acting)

Gerald W. Creed

Barbara Katz Rothman

Kim Hopper

Supervisory Committee

THE CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK

Abstract

(RE)FORMING FAMILY: COMING OF AGE IN FOSTER CARE

By

Nancy V. Benignus

Adviser: Shirley Lindenbaum

This dissertation expands current theoretical understandings of family by engaging in an exploration of the lives of women who were raised in the New York City foster care system, specifically in a group residence located on the Upper East Side of Manhattan. The discussion is not limited to conventional definitions or perceptions of family, but rather explores the multitude of connections that are significant in the women's lives. Some of their connections overlap traditional meanings of family, whereas other connections contradict those conceptions.

By revealing the tensions in the women's daily lives as they attempt to understand, fulfill, or maintain various relationships/experiences, this dissertation recognizes the ambivalent and ambiguous nature of family. Family includes people the women despise as well as people they love (and people they alternately despise and love), it brings them pain as well as comfort, and is often a fluid group of people. The various interpersonal relationships that are examined in this dissertation are not always contextualized as family by all of the former foster care youths, but the relationships are significant and are framed as family by some of them some of the time.

The dissertation also reveals that their concepts of family, connections, relatedness, and kin are intermingled and integrated with concepts of a non-profit institutional foster care agency, the foster care system in which they and the agency are imbedded, the physical building and neighborhood where the building is located, care and care-giving professionals, and photography, memory, mementos, and shared history.

Additionally a further detail of the dissertation is that I, the researcher, am connected to the women beyond the researcher/subject connection. As a result, another element of this dissertation is an examination of the anthropological theories and methods which are challenged by my location vis-à-vis my “subjects”. Conceptualizations of the anthropological “field”, “subject”, and “ethnographic writing” are critiqued and expanded. The dissertation also contains a brief discussion of the institution of foster care. The accompanying appendix provides historical grounding and further insight on foster care. A historical overview of the residence and the agency that operates it are also included.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This dissertation describes the various significant connections of women who were raised in foster care. Exploring their connections caused me to reflect on the nature of my own connections. The process of the completion of this dissertation (as well as the long and at time arduous process of graduate school) required me to rely on many of those connections. It is therefore with gratitude and great pleasure that I acknowledge those whose support, energy, love, caring and belief helped me complete this process. I ask forgiveness from those whom I may forget to acknowledge and release from blame for any flaws in this dissertation those who are mentioned below.

In keeping with the understanding generated by my research I acknowledge my various connections and experiences recognizing that even those that are not directly connected with the dissertation process nevertheless have influenced who I am and affect what I bring to and find within the research. Also, similar to the women within my study, my experiences and connections include some of a more ambivalent and painful nature, but even those have influenced and impacted the dissertation as they have impacted me.

I start by thanking my biological family; I have felt supported and encouraged by them from my earliest memories. Specifically, I thank my father for his constant reminder to D.L.T.G.Y.D. and his never-ending confidence that I would prevail. I thank my mother and my sister Beth not only for their love and encouragement, but also for the practical help in alphabetizing and typing my bibliography. My sister Sara encouraged me with her unconditional support and was forgiving for the times I neglected our relationship when complications and deadlines arose in my life. My brother-in-law Alan was tolerant of my preoccupation as was my niece, Melissa; or at least she was as tolerant

as her youth would let her be. She often reminded me of the importance of personal interactions with her wondering if I was finished spending time on the computer and ready to play. My nephew, Benjamin, provided an example by his joy in simply being alive and interacting with others.

It goes without saying that the dissertation would not have been possible without the former residents, staff, and board members of Sweet Haven. I thank them for sharing their lives with me -- not only the sharing that happened under the auspices of research and is thus included in the dissertation, but also the sharing that happened as we lived and experienced our lives together. My learning, growing, and being were greatly influenced by our many years working and being together. I hesitate to mention names, because I know I will leave most out. But how can I not attempt to include some of their names, to those not mentioned, know that you reside in my heart and mind. So thanks beyond words to Rhonda, Donna and Gerry, Pam, Linda, Nancy, Ella, Mae, Ms. Daniels, Vic and Merle, Dan, Cynthia, Zeena, Maria, Clarette, Shadell, Joy, Monique, Pearlease, Julia, Carrie, Nikkia, Sabrina, Donna, Sandra, and the many others.

Thanks go to Tom, Cynthia and Dennis, Lissan, Gloria, and Dave, Ruth, and family for computer loans in times of crunch.

Many friends have been continually available and encouraging. I thank Melissa Carp for her reminder that road trips and outsider art are every bit as important as academia and insider research. To Betty Macomber, thanks for reading chapters and keeping me connected to the outdoors. Elaine Shank, thanks for enlightening conversations. Mary Stein, thanks for being a connection and a clear example of the power of connectedness. Gloria Leinbach, thanks for always coming through at a

moment's notice and for years of friendship. Gail Presbey, thanks for your example of a politically engaged and social-justice-focused academic life and for years of friendship, thanks also for being my first connection to Kenya. Jennie (Maduforo) Francis, thanks for your enthusiasm and for sharing many events and adventures. To Aleta (Engola) Curry thanks for being a dear person and a true friend and for sharing your friendship with Naeem Vargos who has now become my friend as well.

There are also many people who I would like to acknowledge and thank who have been part of my various "identities" and connections.

I begin by acknowledging those who have been part of my life as a graduate student and an academic. First, thanks to my dissertation and second exam committees, for without their willingness to be a part of the process, this dissertation would not have been possible, their insightful reading and comments helped shape my thinking. Thank you, Gerald Creed, Michael Blim (second exam committee), Barbara Katz Rothman, Kim Hopper (outside reader) and Shirley Lindenbaum. I am especially grateful to Shirley for her on-going support and for seeing and believing in the light at the end of the tunnel and for occasionally being the light in the darkness of grad school. I am also grateful for my additional "point of connection" with Barbara Katz Rothman and thank her for knowing when to ask about the dissertation and when to just be a fellow Clearwater festival participant. I am also indebted to Ellen DeRiso for helping with the multitude of bureaucratic details involved in the process of graduate school and for the friendly way she provided that help.

I appreciate the clarifying conversations, studying sessions and enriching friendships with fellow graduate students. Even though on-going contact with some

of my friends has faded as our lives have gone different directions, I am eternally grateful to Lally Thomas-Salz, Daniela Drew, Belkis Nekos, Kitty Clarke, and others in our cohort for providing a point of sanity and confirmation, especially in the early years. Lally and Kitty, your continued friendship has been a strength. I am grateful to Susan Falls for her willingness to meet with someone from an earlier era; her passion for the anthropology of “objects” was inspiring and provided a new point of insight and direction.

My foray into the world of college teaching was greatly enhanced by the two years I spent as a CUNY Writing Fellow at Hostos Community College. I thank the other writing fellows, Linda Hirsch – our fabulous supervisor, and the professors with whom I collaborated. My current teaching is intensely influenced by the many working sessions, writing fellow conferences, and by the teaching example of Amanda Bernal-Carlo (Biology), Susan Anton (ECE), and Carlos Acevedo (ECE). I am also grateful to the other faculty and staff in the Early Childhood Education Department, where I spent much of my writing fellow time. I also gained valuable knowledge and new friendships from the Looking Both Ways project, in particular I am grateful for the on-going friendships with Loretta Brady and Judith Duncker that were forged during those eight weeks of sharing and learning about teaching, writing, and inquiry-based learning.

Thanks to Dr. Brook and the adjuncts with whom I shared an office, my teaching experience at Montclair State University was very enjoyable. Special thanks go to Sue Goscinski who helped me through many paperwork and university policy situations with humor and speed, which gave me more time to teach, as well as finish this dissertation.

During the years I spent in graduate school it was often my other “identities” that gave me the strength and inspiration to carry on. I therefore offer a huge thank you to

fellow committee members and volunteers at the Community Church Shelter, BJ's Place, for years of friendship and shared concern for the plight of homelessness. I especially acknowledge Helene Lightbourne, Charlotte McPherson and Ofelia Sorzano who were friends before I ever started graduate school and who have been there for me throughout. I thank people at Jan Hus Presbyterian Church and North Bronx Mennonite church. My time spent worshipping with you and the many projects and work we have done together in the name of social justice has been inspiring. I especially thank Cliff Frasier at Jan Hus for being a friend, for great trips to the School of Americas protest, for his example of commitment to the struggle, and for his suggestion that we just set a date for my graduation party, since he figured if I had all those friends coming to celebrate, I'd have to get done. (Couldn't quite work like that but I am grateful for the "image of completion" which his suggestion created for me.) Also at Jan Hus, I thank Debbie Widerkehr, Erynne Ansel, Jan Orr Harder, Aelred, Andy Robinson, David Wellman, and Geneive (Austin) Russell for years of support and encouragement and for having the grace to not stress how long I had been working on the degree. North Bronx is my current church "family" and I thank them for inspiration about how to be present and there for each other and for their many examples of "expanding" family. Thanks to Ruth Wenger for insightful sermons and her example of inspired leadership. Thanks also to her husband Dave and children – Stefan, Kirsten, and Marin, to Susie, Derick and Deana, to Jane, to Jen and Dean and Grace, to Audrey, to Tanya and Pat and Shanae, Shanequa, Natasha and Pedro, to Cynthia, Ariel, Amber, and Jimmy. Special acknowledgment to Cynthia, whose commitment to her children and strength in times of adversity is inspiring. I am grateful to both of these church communities for having a shared vision of

Christianity as a loving and social-justice-inspired spirituality. My personal connection with God and Jesus sustains me, even as I recognize that there are many sources of sustenance and that not all are shared by all my connections. In the larger Mennonite circle I am grateful for long-term friendships with Merv, Ruth Ann, and Michael and Addie and for Camp Deerpark.

I thank Mass Transit Street Theater and the cast of “What Does the War Cost?” for providing me the alter identity of stage manager and for inspiring performances and audience discussions. Special thanks to Lyn Pyle for continually asking about and supporting my studies even as she asked for my time and help in the midst of her efforts to keep the productions going. I thank my Catholic Worker friends, Robert and Ginny, Gary, Sue and Paul for years of friendship. I thank Witness for Peace for their existence; my travel with them has definitely enlarged my views and understandings. Special thanks to Anne Barstow and Tom Driver for the skillful leadership of one of the delegation and also for their on-going friendship. My creative artistic self has been inspired and encouraged by Dustee Hollinger; her enthusiasm, her dynamic leadership of Gifted Hands, and the way she welcomes people into her life and into relationship is awe-inspiring. Art has often served as the means to ground me, supplying needed strength and I relish the moments I have shared that love of art and its healing power with Dustee. I have been equally grounded and strengthened by running. I am grateful for the New York Road Runners Club and their sponsorship of the New York City Marathon. My months of training for and then running marathons were part of what got me through my first and second exam. As I drew on my internal reserves in many a long run, I mentally compared it to graduate school and as I endured an all-nighter to finish papers or do exam

preparation amid a busy job schedule I would mentally compare it to those same long runs. I am also grateful for the friendships I developed with members of the running community, especially with Michele Grossman and her daughter – my Goddaughter – Alison. I thank the Women Building Community group for inspiring dinners, fun weekends, and insightful comments. I thank the teachers and students at the Brooklyn New School. One of my big disappointments of graduate school was that the enjoyable and worthwhile research and work I did with peer mediation at BNS was short circuited by academic bureaucracy and did not come to completion; in a way this dissertation should have been about peer mediators and conflict resolution. I have not forgotten those themes and the inspiration and revelations gained during my research at BNS will continue to inform my subsequent research. I thank my current (and former) housemates for being so easy to share space with and for enlarging my understandings about sharing. Thank you Likye, Temesgen, and Lissan. I also thank returning houseguests, Francis, John, Daniel, Jane, Alice, Diane, and Mr. Mulo for the way their visits helped me recognize dimensions of becoming “family” by levels of sharing rather than by birth or marriage.

I also recognize past influences which surface at times as present in this research and my current life. People and experiences no longer “present” are still influential and in fact some of these friends physically resurface from time to time and the visits we have at those time before we again get separated by physical distance and time are appreciated. I therefore want to acknowledge Cheryl Scott and the other first grade teachers at Mary McLeod Bethune PS 92 who helped me survive a year of teaching first grade. (A year which gave me a great respect for elementary school teachers, but also made me realize it

wasn't my calling -- which indirectly led to graduate school and college teaching) I am also grateful for many great times and friendships with people at Middle Collegiate Church and the former Divine Theater Company, as well as to those at the Good Food Coop -- now known as the 4th Street Food Coop (Diane and Stephanie), at SCAN in the Bronx (Lynn and Naomi), at ABC's day care in the former Martinique Hotel, at Bushwick Salvation Army and their former programs -- Bushwick Families Against Drugs and Children First (Anne, Regina, Laly, Vivian, Pegine). I am also grateful for the friendships of Janis Jilg, Karen (Bahr) Nelson, Kayla Springer, Pat (Reed) and Curtis Hadley, and Kathy (Manweiler) Smith, high school friends who have remained friends to this day. Likewise, the friendships that began during my college days living in Smurthwaite are still ones which I value, especially with Debra J Romberger, MD. Additionally, I continue to feel connected to several of my high school and college friends' parents, just as they still feel connected to my parents and sisters, and my parents and sisters likewise continue to connect with them. With these on-going connections across and between "family" lines, my dissertation findings get echoed in my life.

Table of Contents

Abstract	iv
Acknowledgments	vi
Chapter One – Introduction	1
Choice of research topic	4
Designation of “subjects”	7
Anthropological research models	7
Research methodology and methodological quandaries	11
The starting and ending dates of the research	11
What counts as research? Who counts as “subject?”	13
Research activities	14
Dissertation overview	16
Summary and conclusions	25
Chapter Two – Setting	28
Introduction to Sweet Haven	28
Sweet Haven history	31
Life in the house	39
Staffing patterns	44
Resident’s initial placement at the house	47
Daily life in the house	57
Agency structure	64
Summary and conclusions	66
Chapter Three – Foster care	67
Images of foster care	68
Living with other family members	70
Kinship foster care	73
Reimbursement rates	76
The Sweet Haven experience’s divergence from “average” foster placement	79
The foster care bureaucracy’s influence on the Sweet Haven experience	81
Movement within the system and long-term connections	83
Foster care as a factor in situations of on-going poverty	85
Summary and conclusions	86

Chapter Four – Anthropology at home	88
Early designations	89
Status of North American anthropology	93
The other – the exotic	95
“Cultures” as unified wholes distinct from each other	97
Danger of false preconceptions and perceptions among the “reading audience”	99
Rationale for anthropology at home	104
Distance between researcher and subject as an anthropological convention	107
Summary and conclusions	109
Chapter Five – The Double-edged sword: struggles for/with family	111
Family is multivocal	112
Family from an individual’s perspective	115
Formulations of family	119
Biological family and family as it should be	119
Family as a constellation of tasks	125
Reconnecting with family	128
Connections due to common circumstances	131
Bonded family	132
Rotating family	133
Siblings and children as family	134
Foster care and other professionals as family	135
Friends as family	137
Immigration as a factor in family formulation	139
Legal formulations of family	141
Bureaucratic systems and institutions	144
Institutional living situations	147
Economic influences on the formulations of family	149
Choice as a factor in family formulations	150
Summary and conclusions	153
Chapter Six – Family as caring, caring as family	157
Staff and board members stories	160
Professional care-giving and emotional labor	170
Relationships within the work environment – “work culture”	177
Relationships within the work environment – dichotomy between work and “non-work”	182
Being cared for – attitudes toward care-givers	185
Being cared for – creating conflictual feelings	186
Receiving care versus being controlled	188
Caring about- care without physical manifestations	190

Care as the essential factor in human affiliations	194
Summary and conclusions	197
Chapter Seven – It is not blood, but it still bonds: memories and objects as connectors	199
Memories of care	200
Memories of separation	201
Impacts of past	202
Objects as connectors to familial relationships	203
Objects as gifts and/or “inalienable possessions”	206
Objects/gifts as creators of connections	208
Photographs as connection	210
Summary and conclusions	214
Chapter Eight – Location	216
Family/kinship and its physical reference point	218
Family space as a private realm	222
Place attachment and identity	226
Boundaries	227
Hierarchy of physical spaces	228
Safe places	233
Place attachment	234
Place as history	237
Summary and conclusions	238
Postscript	238
Chapter Nine – Summary and conclusions	240
Overview and review of chapters	242
Concluding comments	251
Appendix A – Foster Care	253
Foster care viewed internationally	253
United States foster care viewed historically	256
Government involvement	262
Relationship between poverty and foster care	263
Foster care drift – “Afloat in care forever”	264
Selected Bibliography	270

CHAPTER ONE INTRODUCTION

I am scared, where will I live come March? Will I be homeless? God knows when was the last time I talked to my grandparents or so called family. What is going to happen to me? (Resident's comments during a discharge planning conference as she approached age 21)

I always end up calling her [her mother] and I don't know why I do, it is always the same, she always makes me feel bad, but still I call her, I have milestones, you know. Like I called her when I graduated from college, but she didn't care. Then I tell myself you are in this world alone, you have to keep yourself strong. (Former resident in her 30's)

"You gotta love your family?" I ask "why?" "Cause they are the hardest people to love. If you can love them you can love anyone (laugh)" (Conversations with a friend in her 30's, who was not in foster care, but who knows about my research. This comment, though, did not start out as a research focused conversation, but rather about how her family didn't agree with a decision she had just made.)

"It was so great to have you all here, since you are my family." (Comment of a 25 year old former resident celebrating a special occasion with myself, her fiancé and a former social worker from another program.)

This dissertation research is an exploration of how the lives of women who were raised in the New York City foster care system, specifically in a group residence – which I call Sweet Haven – might inform current discussions regarding family and kinship theory. I believe the various ways in which these adult women construct their lives, families and relationships/connections will offer valuable commentary and insights that can productively revise understandings of "family". Taking as my starting point Carsten's (1995) suggestion that

The central question should be: how do the people we study define and construct their notions of relatedness and what values and meanings do they give them? It seems to me that we would do better to use the term "kinship" to characterize the relatedness that people act and feel. In this way we may arrive at a new and more flexible approach to the study of kinship in anthropology (1995:236).

I did not presume any particular relatedness and as the research progressed and I explored the roles of the various relationships in the women's lives, I realized their lives stretched the conceptions and framing of classical kinship and family rubrics beyond even my own predictions; yet in other respects their construction of family was surprisingly similar to stereotypical "standard" family forms¹. My formulation differs slightly from that of Carsten, as presented above, because the theme that emerged in the lives of the former foster care youths was connectedness rather than relatedness. Additionally, as will be explained in more detail throughout this dissertation, these connections include new connections, as well as some old connections that are nuanced in new ways and thus require new conceptual frameworks.

One such nuanced connection, which I had not expected but was consistently mentioned by the women was not a connection to other people but rather was a connection to an experience and a place. The influence and impact of this connection was revealed most vividly in their comments regarding both the house where they lived as adolescents and the particular non-profit social service agency that operated the house. That non-profit agency's program and philosophy fulfilled significant roles in the formation of the women's connections. In order to fully exam the women's connections, this dissertation will analyze a wide range of multiple, intertwining, and at times conflicting, relationships and experiences that impacted the women's lives. Many of

¹ One possible way to designate their multiple and at some levels competing understandings and formulations of family is to borrow a term from O'Connor's discussion of African American student's understandings of the relationship between hard work and "making it". She "opts to use the term *conarratives*, since these students did not dispute the dominant theory of making it, but maintained the dominant narrative alongside other narratives. Thus, they complicated and circumscribed, but did not negate, the dominant theory" (1999:155).

these relationships still have importance and relevance. For many of the women there is constant tension in their daily lives as they attempt to understand, fulfill, or maintain these various relationships/experiences. At times their past in foster care is present in their reactions, relationships and self-perception. This dissertation touches on the various dynamics operating in their lives weaving together the multiple strands and influences. The second half of this chapter presents the various dynamics and analyzes their interrelationships. Prior to that introduction, the chapter discusses the research and its methodology, beginning with a discussion of my own connections and relationship to the research and to the women.

I “began” conducting my “formal” research in 2000. I interviewed women, ages twenty-two through thirty-five; who had been in foster care as adolescents. However, as will be discussed in more detail later in this chapter, the women and I were not unknown to each other, we had a shared history. I am a former employee of the agency where these women lived therefore, I knew many of them when they were adolescents in foster care. I have first hand knowledge of the agency and residence where they lived. Although my prior involvement with these women provides increased awareness, it also raises theoretical and methodological questions.

Additionally, the fact that I am no longer employed by the agency does not necessarily mean that I am disconnected or a “disinterested” researcher. My research involved conversations with current board members, who not only shared their lives and opinions with me, but also expressed interest in and asked me about my insights and findings. I also attended planning and board meetings. By virtue of my past experience and current research, there were times when my presence at these meetings could be

classified as “involved”; a fact which might induce some people to label the research “applied”. Neither label “applied” nor “academic” can exclusively be used to describe this research. Instead it belongs in the “emergent – though still elusive – trend in anthropology [whereby a]cademic and applied perspectives and approaches seem to be more powerfully merging into one stream” (Lassiter 2003:13). In the chapters that follow, I discuss a social service system – foster care – in hopes that what I present will impact and benefit not only the women, whose lives are the focus of this dissertation, but also the agency where they lived and the larger foster care system. At the same time, I will engage, support, and critique academic literature and ideas as my research crosscuts various theoretical, epistemological and methodological debates.

Choice of research topic

In 1982, I moved to New York City and began working in a foster care agency’s group home in Harlem. I quit working at the agency in 1984, but continued to stay in touch, at times returning to work for the agency. As I worked with the agency and in my other social service positions, I had numerous experiences that developed a strong belief that it is necessary to know the person’s circumstances and rationale for behavior before making a determination or judgment of that behavior as irrational, unacceptable or outrageous. Thus I gravitated to anthropological approaches, finding them a helpful corrective to the social work/psychological habit of assuming that behavior considered outside some predetermined norm was in need of fixing or correcting. Reading Baxter and Hopper’s 1981 study of homelessness had been a pivotal point for me. In their examination of the behavior, values, and attitudes of homeless people, they remained ever cognizant of the socio-economic environment within which that behavior was

enacted. I also resonated with their use of the anthropological tradition and method of spending time with people in order to discover not only what the people did, but also to understand the people's reasons and beliefs surrounding that behavior (cf. Malinowski 1984, Originally published 1922). Equally important was their ability to discover, analyze and critique the social and political structures that were part of people's daily existence – influencing and shaping those behaviors. This combination seems to be an extremely important starting point for working with people and public policy.

As Goode (2002) has pointed out in relationship to the “culture of poverty” debate, a political economy-informed anthropology emphasizes the need to consider the dynamics of structural factors in order to understand those who live in poverty and the perpetuation of that poverty. Like Goode and others, I approach anthropology from a political economic and applied perspective with a strong concern for issues arising in the urban United States. However, when I turned to anthropology in the early 1990's, anthropologists' role in the study of “their own” culture was just gaining acceptance.

My first inclination was to choose a research topic where I could study one of the urban issues I found interesting, but to conduct the study somewhere I found unfamiliar and where I would be unknown to the participants. I felt this was a way to mitigate some of the “down” side of research “at home”. This choice was made during a time that I was a “live-in” staff member at the foster care agency. In this position, I experienced and participated in the foster youths' everyday lives and as the constantly present staff member I was often the one who caught the residents breaking the rules and had to endure the loudly rebuking “You can't tell me what to do, you aren't my mother.” However, I was also the one who accompanied them to the emergency room in the

middle of the night and signed as their parent/guardian. Because I didn't "leave the job and go home" at the end of the day like the other staff members, my position and perspective were different.

Several of my friends and a few fellow doctoral students kept suggesting I do field work in this setting, since I was in many regards already a participant observer. I always resisted, for several reasons. First, the residents already felt that I, and other staff members, knew too much about them and were "in their business" more than they wanted us to be. Secondly, although I believed strongly in the agency and its program, I also knew its shortcomings. How could I reveal those to others? Thirdly, I couldn't do research on my friends and coworkers. Just as a photograph can freeze frame imperfections, subjecting lives to too close a scrutiny can make something that works in everyday life seem wrong and unnatural. (See for example Miner's classic *Body Ritual among the Nacirema* (2002, originally published 1956).)

My resistance to researching the residence continued, but I started to notice some interesting patterns among the girls who left the house. Many of them stayed in touch with us and with fellow residents. They lived with each other; they called on the agency and other residents in time of stress, need, or joy. They maintained their close bonds with former roommates and with their favorite staff member. I found this interesting and considered studying it, since if my focus was on the girls who had left, some of the concerns about being too much "in their business" as well as those about "revealing agency flaws" would be mitigated. But there were still questions, especially regarding the closeness of my subject – I still lived at the house and worked for the agency and the people I would be studying were still people I considered friends. I moved out of the

home in the fall of 1998 and quit working for the agency shortly after, creating further resolution. Other questions, though, were more impervious; in fact a few at some level still remain unresolved.

Designation of “subjects”

Several dissertation quandaries converge around issues of terminology/language. The first of those terminological difficulties is how to designate the people that I am studying. I am not studying foster care; I am studying those formerly in foster care – so how do I refer to them as I write about them. Looking to their or social service’s terminology for inspiration drew a blank; there is no term. Unlike adoption, where children then become “adopted”, which carries with it the giving of a new position and a ‘family’, foster children are *in* foster care. It is just a temporary location, with the assumption that when they are no longer in foster care, there is no identification left. But as this and other studies have revealed, there continues to be influence and identification, even if for some that identification is silent because of the stigma involved in its revelation. I am not ready to invent a term, or create a referential group where they may not be one, so in spite of the clumsiness I will use the words ‘formerly in foster care’ or ‘former residents’ to refer to the women whose thoughts and lives are contained in this dissertation.

Anthropological research models

The non-existence of a self-referential group could be seen as problematic in some anthropological circles. Additionally, the women I am studying are no longer living together; therefore, there is no ‘site’ in the classic ethnographic sense. I am not stepping out into totally uncharted waters. Ortner (1991, 1995, 1999) in choosing her

high school graduating class as research subjects, has already undertaken comparable research. Similar to my study, her subjects' connection is a previously shared location and experience. However, the objectives of our studies are different. She is interested in exploring issues of class in the United States. Her goal is to observe how current economics and other situations mediate and translate themselves in the lives of people from a common location. Moreover, she chose her subjects because

such sites of largely (but not entirely) white, largely (but not entirely) middle-class reproduction can be seen as the breeding ground of much of dominant American culture, as well as of the people who go off to universities and eventually forge the academic discourses within which we talk about the world (1991:164).

My objective, on the other hand, is to explore how sharing a common experience can affect people, albeit sometimes in differing ways. I do this by focusing on the former foster youths' experiences and descriptions/depictions of family. What is 'family' for them? I believe this will reveal how foster care affects family designations and will serve as a window to understand the larger phenomena of family experience and family theory.

An additional difference between Ortner's and my study of a commonly shared experience is that the composition of my group is not 'largely' any class, ethnic or racial designation. Some have completed masters degrees, whereas others never finished high school; some own homes, whereas others are homeless; some are working in 'professional' jobs, whereas others are in 'menial' positions (or unemployed); some are American citizens, whereas others struggle with issues of 'green cards', naturalization, and the legion of circumstances that enter into the immigration equation; some of the 'Americans', by self or other's reference, are hyphenated Americans; and lastly, 'white' is only one of the racial designations that characterize the group as a whole. These facts

mean that what I am labeling as a group are people who share a common experience, but who are not a 'group' according to most traditional classification systems.

This led me to consult studies of diverse populations for potential research models. However, most of these have focused on diverse populations as embedded in

the fabric of the neighborhood ...interwoven networks of associations, identity, and loyalty that criss-cross through physical space and that yield a new type of neighborhood in which mutual tolerances and careful attention to social, physical, and temporal boundaries are required if harmony is to prevail (Abu-Lughod 1994: 28).

These neighborhood studies are interested in the ways in which diversity mediates what happens in a particular location. Thus they diverge from my study in an important aspect. However, the historical location of my participants was similar to that described by Abu-Lughod (albeit on a smaller scale). Relations in the house occupied by adolescents of extremely diverse background required 'mutual tolerance' and 'careful attention to ...boundaries' if 'harmony [was] to prevail'. As an aside, the former foster care residents often mentioned this factor as they reflected on their current ability to get along in difficult situations. Many of them identify their learning to "get along with others" while living in foster care as a strength on which they now rely.

I also referred to the "emergent methodological trend" (Marcus 1995: 95) of multi-sited ethnography. Given its 'emergent' status, the research models are less developed, in fact at this stage it is primarily a suggested framing and methodology outline, rather than a body of research to probe for insight.

Marcus envisions the multi-sited ethnography as a way to explore "circulation of cultural meanings, objects, and identities in diffuse time-space" (1995:96). I prefer to refer to my work as multi-trajectory, rather than multi-sited, because the defining of 'site'

in my study renders the term ambiguous. Are the sites the various homes, restaurants, and public places where we talked? (What about the case of interviews and sharing of life over the phone? Where is that 'site'?) When I explore the relevance of the physical location of the home, where is the site? Is it the house, where none of them live anymore; or the memory each of them has of that house and the way that memory influences their futures; or the city bureaucratic structures that have determined which locations for foster care are appropriate?

Although I do not resonate with the term "site", my research techniques echoes his conceptualization of ethnography as

practices of construction through (preplanned or opportunistic) movement and of tracing within different settings of a complex cultural phenomenon given an initial, baseline conceptual identity that turns out to be contingent and malleable as one traces it (1995:106).

Even single-sited ethnographies need to be "strategically situated" and remain cognizant of the systems that operate beyond them; incorporating the implications of what happens in those other realms into the perceptions and analysis of what happens in the studied realm. For example, I can thus start out describing the construction of family for those formerly in foster care and find myself discussing the value of a prestigious location and the city policies that impact on foster care location decisions, or aspects of homeless policies, or board members connection to the program.

A second methodological insight is that

in practice, multi-sited fieldwork is thus always conducted with a keen awareness of being within the landscape, and as the landscape changes across sites, the identity of the ethnographer requires renegotiations. Only in the writing of ethnography, as the effect of a particular mode of publication itself, is the privilege and authority of the anthropologist unambiguously reassumed, even when the publication gives an account of

the changing identities of the fieldworker in the multi-sited field (1995:112).

Putting aside for now the dynamics of “the writing of the ethnography”, this methodology takes into account my identity as a ethnographer, a friend, former co-worker, former staff (An ambiguous role in itself – at various times it stands for authoritarian, role model, or giver of counsel.), as well as former positions such as a case worker with parents suspected/accused of child abuse and neglect. These experiences enter into the analysis at some level even when and if I tell myself they shouldn’t.

Research methodology and methodological quandaries

This dissertation is based on research that follows a participant-observer model. My understandings of the connections of former foster youths have been gained by sharing in their lives and activities; becoming in a few cases the point of connectedness which I describe in these pages. I also used more formal interviewing to gain some of my insights. In spite of using these traditional anthropological methods, my methodology has aspects that stretch the traditional boundaries of anthropological research. That stretching highlights some of the methodological quandaries of conducting research in one’s own community.

- The starting and ending dates of the research

My first dilemma is to determine the starting and ending dates of my research. I first met several of my “research subjects” twenty years ago, long before I was an anthropologist, let alone conducting dissertation research. The descriptive and historical overview of the women’s lives in the foster care residence, as presented in the following chapter, is based on my experience living and working with those women in the past.

This past association was not just limited to my relating to the women during their adolescence in foster care. Because the agency has an active alumnae program, my prior connection to a number of the women continued in the years following the time they left foster care. When I became a graduate student, although I was not formally conducting research, my anthropological training and perspective began to influence my framing of the lives and experiences of the residents as well as those of the adult women with whom I was still in contact. However, in spite of this anthropological perspective, my activities and interactions were not conducted as formal research.

Therefore, the beginning of my research should probably be designated as the point at which I made a choice to actively pursue questions of family and connectedness from an anthropological perspective. Although I did not start formal interviews until somewhat later, I framed my research proposal in 1999 and from that point on many of my interactions with current and former residents, as well as the staff and board members from the agency, were registered and filtered through my ever growing and evolving understanding of their connections and lives.

Dragadze (1987) has noted

The absence of pressure on time in the field, and the possibility of returning at will for further research because of geographical proximity of the area are helpful to all anthropologists working 'at home' (1987:161).

I would add that a nature of this returning at will and the proximity of the research site is that at some level the active research continues even during the analyzing and writing stage. Although I have completed much of the analysis and am writing about my findings, I am still in contact with the former residents. At times as I interact with them I

think of details that I should include or change in my writing, so in some respects the research does not end until this document leaves my hands.

- What counts as research? Who counts as “subject”?

When research is conducted at home, it is hard to separate what is research and what is just your own everyday life. Were all my interactions with former residents, staff and board members research or were some of them just conversations with friends and acquaintances? Many of the methodological quandaries arising out of this question will be explored in chapter four. Presently I will just highlight a further question which results from a positive response to the previous question. If all interactions are research, then does that mean that former staff and board members are also “subjects”?

In addition to the questions of which groups of people with whom I interacted to ‘count as subjects’, there is a related question. What level of interaction moves someone into the “subject” category? How do I designate those people with whom I had short phone conversation regarding my research and their lives, but with whom because of their own busy schedules never took part in an “interview”²? Likewise, there are former residents whose experiences inform the discussions in this dissertation although I did not speak with them personally. Their experiences were conveyed to me by other former residents with whom I spoke. In these instances it is not that I actually present the stories, since I do not want to reveal someone’s story without their permission. However, those stories and experiences help me filter the stories and experiences that were freely shared. With this larger knowledge of the experiences of former foster care youth, I can

² In keeping with the Human Subjects’ protocol and with my own beliefs and practices of confidentiality and respect for people’s rights, I do not use or present quotes or personal information that was given to me without the individual’s formal permission.

better determine the commonalities within those experiences. How do I designate such knowledge within this methodological section?

There is also the quandary created by my attendance at two documentary film screenings. Both films' subject matter was foster care and the portrayals included adults who had been in foster care as youth. The films were followed by question and answer sessions. As I watched the films and listened to the discussion, I framed and compared the featured women's stories; the film makers, panel members, and audience's interpretations and analyses; my own research subjects' stories; and my evolving analysis. The films, discussion and the presented "lives" certainly influenced me – by either confirming or suggesting new avenues to explore. Were these documentary screenings part of my research methodology and if so how do I (ac)count such influence?

- Research activities

Other activities that I participated in and conducted fell into a known anthropological methodological framework. I attended activities of the agency's alumnae³ program, which included annual summer picnics and Christmas holiday parties. I was also present on an alumnae trip to Pennsylvania and at an alumnae-lead seminar given in the final months of the agency's foster care program. Additionally, there were occasional informal times that former residents and former staff would get together and I would be present. There were also occasions where a few of the former residents would invite me to special events such as baby showers, graduations, children's birthday parties, and a naturalization ceremony and on an infrequent basis I babysat for three of the former

³ I use the term alumnae rather than former foster care youth in these sentences because that is the terminology used by the agency to describe their interactions with former residents.

residents. There were also times that former residents would call to discuss personal topics, Sweet Haven events and business, or just to catch up and let me know how they were doing.

Although as previously discussed, it is difficult to give a count of how many women's lives and experiences are represented here, the number of women with whom I conducted formal interviews is sixteen. There were another eighteen women with whom I interacted or had some kind of contact and then the countless others whose information and stories were conveyed to me.

I was given complete access to the agency's archival records which included annual reports, newsletters, fundraising letters, the thank you letters sent to agency supporters, staff meeting minutes, and other miscellaneous documents. Many of these documents contained published stories and letters from former residents that illuminate the themes which I had extrapolated from my own first-hand interactions and conversations.

In addition to my research interactions with the former residents, I also contacted and connected with former staff and board members. I attended board meetings, received messages sent to the Sweet Haven board's e-mail list serve, attended program planning and development committee meetings, received and made phone calls to former staff, during which they discussed their own and former resident's lives and activities. I also formally interviewed two board members and two former staff members.

My interactions with the staff and board members prior to my more formal research created a rapport and background knowledge that facilitated the understandings I gained in the research process. In some respects it is comparable to a pre-research visit to

a prospective site and thus those interactions could be considered part of the research process. Yet in other respects my prior interactions, connections and knowledge base was different from most pre-research visits because of duration and intent.

As might be expected, aspects of methodology and choice of topic will resurface in other discussions within the dissertation. The remainder of this chapter will outline each chapter of the dissertation, providing an overview of content and interrelationships.

Dissertation overview

- Chapter two – the residence

This dissertation explores the lives of women who share a common experience of residing in a foster care residence during their adolescent years. As mentioned above, the agency that operated the residence and the women's interactions and experiences in the residence significantly impacted their lives and future relationships. Thus the foster care agency is the focus of chapter two. Both staff members and residents were aware, to varying degrees, that the program they were participating in had historical precedents. The policies and philosophies were an extension of that history; therefore the chapter begins with a brief history of the agency. Highlights of the program, policies and activities of the agency during the years when the interviewed women lived in the residences are provided to enhance understanding of the impact of these earlier experiences.

- Chapter three – foster care

Many of the women with whom I spoke said that they think about foster care often or that their children know they were in foster care. Other similar comments reveal the extent to which the foster care experience still impacts their lives. The residence was

a foster care placement and in some regards it paralleled other foster care placement, but in significant ways it was also very different. Additionally, the agency's residence was not the only foster care experience for many of the former residents. Therefore, although I am not studying foster care per se, background knowledge of foster care provides helpful insights and frames of reference for understanding the later lives of the women. This seems particularly important since when I spoke to friends and others outside foster care about my research involving women who had grown up in foster care, their responses and questions displayed many common misunderstandings regarding foster care. A definition of foster care is good place to begin. According to the 19th edition of the Encyclopedia of Social Work foster care in the United States is

a publicly funded child welfare system of organized services for full-time residential care-giving of children whose parents' condition or behavior prevents them from discharging their parental responsibilities. These services are provided in foster family homes by foster parents, in group homes, and in institutions, where the primary adult caretakers may or may not be related to the children in care. (Edwards 1995:375, first sentence as quoted from Family Impact Seminar, 1990).

This definition focuses on parental shortcomings and a public system that takes over those responsibilities. However in some cases, and for some of the girls who were in foster care at the agency, foster care placement is the result of the youth's behavior and the parent's claim that they are no longer able to control their child. These children are placed and labeled PINS (persons in need of supervision). The definition just quoted from the social work encyclopedia provides an example of one official designation and role of foster care, but of course there are many nuances that can not be contained in a single definition. It is also important to note that the experience itself is not uniform;

each youth's experience is unique and it is hard to speak of an "average" foster care experience.

Chapter three provides an overview of the various images of foster care, the array of foster care living arrangements, the ways in which the women's experience in this agency paralleled or diverged from the average arrangement, the effects of the foster care bureaucracy, and long-term effects of foster care – both positive connections and on-going struggles with poverty.⁴

- Chapter four – Anthropology at home

My understanding and interpretation of foster care is affected by my close association with the past experiences of the former residents. I was not in foster care, but I shared their physical location. This embedded location with respects to my research raises methodological and epistemological questions, which will be discussed in depth in chapter four.

In Mascarenhas-Keyes's (1987) study in India, her multiple-identity similarly made her both insider and outside. She decided to use herself as informant, observing and recording others reactions to her behavior, and then determining why certain behaviors on her part got the stronger reactions. Hennigh (1981) similarly "gained a key informant's perspective on the community by becoming my own key informant" (1981:123). He had been hired to do a five-year evaluation of an Oregon State Education Department program. He discovered that it was easiest to join and become active in local committees. He felt that his becoming "civic minded" gave him a perspective on what was happening in town, not by asking informants but by being part of the happenings.

Likewise, there were times when I tended to take a position that could be interpreted as being a personal informant. I would often filter what I was told through information I had by virtue of having worked in the foster care setting and also by virtue of sharing experiences with the women. Moreover, with regards to my thinking about their stories and those stories' relevance and connection to the larger United States society, which they and I are part of, it is possible to consider myself a key informant. I reflected on my family, I talked about my research to friends and noted their responses, before presenting the "family and kinship" lecture to the cultural anthropology students at the state university where I teach, I asked my students for their definition and experiences of "family", and I listen to news reports with a comparative ear.

The traditional anthropological understanding was that the "move by some anthropologists to conduct fieldwork at 'home' is a fundamental break from the classic tradition" (Jacobs-Huey 2002:792). Conducting research 'at home' raised epistemological, methodological and theoretical questions, not the least of which was the question of "how does one *know* when one is home?" (Hastrup 1995:151). Given their multiple identities, it is difficult for anthropologists to really be 'at home', because they are "seldom considered insiders by default, instead [constantly] experience[ing] various 'gradations of endogamy' throughout the course of their fieldwork" (Jacob-Huey 2002:792).

Descriptors such as "insider" and "outsider" assumed a static and contained location of people and obscured the realization that people's multiple identities can transverse both ends of the designations. Although I did not share ethnic and/or racial

⁴ Appendix A is included for those who desire additional information, including a

identity with most of the former foster youths, we did have commonalities and shared identity at some level. This shared identity affected my research in significant ways. I believe my grappling with and analyses of that influence sheds light on the theoretical issues of doing anthropology in your “own” culture. My – as well as their – multiple identities (discussed in detail in chapter four) meant that I vacillated between insider and outsider, sometimes occupying both locations simultaneously.

This recognition of multiple identities follows the lead of Merchant and Willis (2001) and the contributors to their edited volume who

offer a serious challenge to the overly simplistic, often dichotomous descriptors (e.g., “insider” versus “outsider”)... They write directly and courageously about the ways in which their multiple identities and positionalities harmonize, and at times conflict, with those of their research participants; in doing so they call attention to important complexities in the qualitative research process (2001: x).

Research “at home” requires negotiation of the tensions of the insider/outsider dichotomy because by default if the researcher is “at home” they are at some level an “insider”, but given the complexities of “home” there will also be some degree to which they are an “outsider”.

- Chapter five – The double-edged sword: struggles with/for family

A conversation with former foster youths about their relationships, connections and their interactions with family is rife with ambiguity. Peletz (1995) has noted that

contemporary kinship studies ...tend to focus on everyday experiences and understandings, ...and tend to devote considerable analytic attention to themes of contradiction, paradox, and ambivalence (1995: 343).

Those themes were present in the lives of the former foster care youths and were revealed in many conversations. In part the feelings of contradiction and ambivalence

historical and international overview of foster care.

were as much related to expectations as to actual experiences. Contemporary anthropological kinship studies of “variably situated actors engaged in the practice of social reproduction within broader political economic contexts” (Peletz 1995:366) have (re)defined kinship. Studies of gay and lesbians (Hayden 1995, Lewin 1993, Weston 1992), adoption (Modell 1994), medical and reproductive technology (Finkler 2000, Franklin 1997, Ragone 1994, Strathern 1992), ethnicity and class (Yanagisako 1995, Zavella 1991), and divorce (Simpson 2001, Stacey 1990), have shown how the “everyday experiences” of people challenge the perception of kinship as a system, whose “primitive and irreducible elements are, first, shared bio-genetic substance and, second, a code for conduct which [is] characterized as diffuse, enduring solidarity” (Schneider 1972:41).

Those who grew up in foster care, like many of the “situated actors” listed above, are considered outside of the normative experience, therefore it is reasonable to expect their practices and understandings of family to likewise challenge normative formulations. What is surprising is that the challenge coexists with normative beliefs and practices and not surprisingly that coexistence is not always smooth. The former foster care youths’ experience of family is full of ambiguity.

Given the ambiguous nature of family, chapter five presents a number of formulations of family that exist, in some cases simultaneous, in the women’s lives.

- Chapter six – Family as Caring, Caring as Family

Caring about someone is a point of connection that can be perceived in various ways. At times that perception is affected by the dynamics of the situation within which that care takes place. This is especially true for those circumstances where care takes place within an institutional setting. The literature on the service economy is a helpful

reference for analyzing those institutions which take on the role of parental substitutes or caregivers. For example, Foner's (1994) ethnography of a nursing home is a useful comparison. By considering her and my findings in light of each other, my research can add to the understandings of work and work culture, and her study validates some of my interpretations of the connection created by caring.

Highlighting caring as a connector or point of relatedness can illuminate understanding of 'family'. Borneman (2001), who considers caring to be a tenet of human relationships, believes anthropologists have privileged 'blood' and marriage in determining what they categorized as kinship and have thus obscured care, which he believes is a more productive concept for understanding human relationships and connections. This conceptualization has the potential to move family theory in an important and necessary direction; however, when my research and the service economy literature are added to the analysis important points of revision are introduced. Care is revealed to be a more ambiguous and complex concept than his paradigm suggests.

- Chapter seven – It is not blood, but it still bonds: Alternative forms of connectedness

This research attempts to overcome the "impasse set up by imagining kinship as divided between the 'social' and 'biological' manifestations of itself" (Carsten 2000:28). Following Carsten and others my analysis sets aside predetermined assumptions about the primacy of biological relatedness and examines variables and variations of relatedness/connectedness. By pursuing subjects and areas of importance that arose in many of my interviews, I am not suggesting that they replace biologically formulated versions of kinship. I am suggesting that there are multiple ways that people feel

related/connected to each other. Relations of biological connectedness are just one of the multiple points where people feel a sense of belonging and “kindredness”.

What if the concept that was given primacy was that all people have relationships that are important and central to their life and their self-identity? The focus would then shift to determining the answers to questions such as, what does the person say are the important connections, what connections do they make the time and energy to keep, what are the benefits and hazards of those connections, and what is the length and strength of the connections.

The exploration of some of these points is helpful in achieving a more complete understanding of the lives of the former foster care youths and the connections and associations they forged while in care. The discussion of these points can be viewed as a weaving of various threads in the tapestry of their lives and relationships. It is my belief that these areas are also important connections for people who were not in foster care and that a larger consideration of them can add to the anthropological framing of family.

The trajectories explored in chapter seven include the role of memory, which can include objects that represent past or current relationships. Objects such as personal mementos, items that were gifts or things the residents made or bought while in care are important. For example, in the course of conversations the women often commented, “I still sleep under the quilt that I got from the agency”. Similarly a woman, who had not contacted the agency for over seven years, but whose address was on the mailing list (meaning she received mail from the agency twice a year) told me, “When the mail comes it always make me smile”. These, and similar comments, have led me to devote a section to exploring memory and its role as an emotional connection. How much does

someone's memory of a time that was influential, positive, or affirming affect their identity and their renderings of family? Likewise what is the effect of negative memories? Within this framework, photography's place in maintaining, signifying, and remembering "families" will be explored.

Additionally, the lived experiences of foster care had a pivotal role in the lives of the former foster youths. They describe the foster care experience as helping them finish school, learning to get along with their family or creating other equally transforming behaviors. They want us to know they are doing well, yet at the same time they want assurances from us that they are doing well. Reflecting on her time in foster care a resident now living in Florida said to another former resident, "Tell Nancy she should interview me. I just became a manager of my store". Likewise, I often heard women say, "I think I came out okay", as they talked about their lives after foster care.

- Chapter eight – connections to physical location

There is another connection which is relevant for conceptualizations of family, belonging and identity. The women have a strong connection not only to the physical house in which they lived while in care, but also to the neighborhood where the Sweet Haven residence is located. The residence was a touchstone for many of the women I interviewed. I realized the magnitude of the connection to physical location in a rather fortuitous fashion.

While I was in the early stages of the research, the city changed the foster care programming. In keeping with the managed care model and the neighborhood-based initiatives that were happening in other areas of social and medical services, the city switched from an evaluation based on quality of services to one based on both the ability

to provide multiple services and the extent to which participants were drawn from the community where the agency was located. The agency fared poorly on both these counts. As a small and intimate agency that only provided services to adolescent girls, it could not service/house the entire family; nor meet the family's multiple needs. Secondly, the house was located on the Upper East Side of Manhattan and few, if any, of the residents were drawn from that community. Based on these two criteria, the city did not renew the agency's foster care contract and the agency thus closed their foster care program. The agency had a hundred year-old history and owned the building, therefore they did not dissolve. Instead they began a process of determining what their next phase would be. As part of this process, they desired to know how the alumnae felt regarding the agency's future. They scheduled a couple of meetings with the alumnae and also requested that I ask alumnae a few questions at the end of my individual interviews. Those few questions often turned into long, emotional and insightful conversations. Shortly after I began these conversations, I started to realize how much the physical structure of the house, as well as the physical location on the Upper East Side of Manhattan was a significant factor for them. In many ways it had profoundly affected their foster care experience, and at some level was still present in their lives and attitudes. This realization led me to analyze the meanings of physical space and geographic location and their relevance to an analysis of anthropological depictions of family and connections.

Summary and conclusions

One of the features of this dissertation as was exemplified in the above chapter overviews is the manner in which the discussions switch between descriptions of past and current activities. Each description includes a notation of when the event or conversation

took place. The ‘whens’ of the event are important not only in determining resilience and time-depth of certain activities or attitudes, but also because of the variance in the age of the residents between the time they were living in the house and their present age. The former residents are now adults and most of the analyses of how foster care impacted their feelings, beliefs and practices of family focus on the adult years, however, analyses of the feelings, beliefs, attitudes and practices of their time in care as adolescents is equally insightful and is included throughout. It is important to recognize that developmentally adolescents often perceive and behave differently than they might as adults and this should be taken into account when reading and analyzing the historical accounts. In the words of one of the former residents.

We complained a lot when we were there, but it really wasn’t just about being there. We were going through our changes. It’s where we were in life.

This introductory chapter has summarized the various themes and significances that are elaborated in the remaining chapters, thus serving to begin the discussions of the ways in which the lives of these women, who were raised in foster care, reveal the limitations created by focusing solely on biological connections/relationships when describing an individual’s conceptions and experiences of “family”. It is worthwhile to reiterate several points that were made above, because they are the lenses through which the dissertation needs to be read. The first point is that ambiguity and ambivalence are ever present in the women’s lives and therefore they often discuss and possess multiple understandings of “family”, including understandings that they claim even if they do not actually possess them, as well as relationships and connections that they acknowledge and possess, even if they do not necessarily label them “family”. This last category

includes such connections as their connections to the former foster care residence, to objects and memories of the past, and their relationships to caring people. Secondly as was stated on page 23, the intention is not to make these connections family, but rather to acknowledge their importance in the women's lives – an importance that sometimes rivals “family” in its level of impact and value in the women's lives. Thus my evolving realization is that the term “family” may be too narrow and thus obscure relevant connections.

This dissertation also highlights areas of the anthropological enterprise which are challenged by my research. I situate my research along the lines of anthropologists who seek to “reinvigorate an agenda for anthropology that addresses domination, exploitation, class, structure, social process, political economy and the production of culture.” (Lem and Leach 2002:3). It is within this idea of “production of culture” that one of the goals of my research and writing fall. Adding to the work of anthropologists who have explored family and kinships as experienced by gay and lesbians or people who have been adopted, this research highlight ways in which the lives of women who were raised in the foster care system critique and expand our understanding of what is to be considered “normative” in our society.

CHAPTER TWO SETTING

INTRODUCTION TO SWEET HAVEN⁵

Welcome to the staff at Sweet Haven Home! You are now a member of a family which works together to provide a place for young women to live and grow into a healthy, independent adulthood. We are a team. Like in a family, we are in constant interaction with each other and with our residents (Staff/employee manual, page 1).

The program "Sweet Haven" was founded in 1899 by two women who felt called by God to work with women. They had a great deal of faith and very little money (they began with 36 cents). Through the years there have been different programs at Sweet Haven, what remains the same is the story of faith (Resident's manual, page 1).

This dissertation's exploration of the current lives of women who spent a portion of their adolescence in foster care requires a historical component. In order to fully analyze the effects of a particular experience it is useful to have some comprehension of that experience. This chapter will provide a background understanding of the particular residence, which was the shared experience for the women whom I studied. The chapter will profile the agency, its philosophy and program, and the daily life in the house as the women experienced it when they were living there as adolescents.

I begin this chapter with quotes from the first pages of that agency's employee and resident's manuals, thus providing people reading this dissertation with the same introduction to the agency and its program that the people whose lives inform these pages received. These quotes furnish a window into understanding the agency, which played a significant role in the women's past. The agency introduced itself to future residents and employees by declaring the newcomers to be members of a group with a history and a direction. As stated in the resident's manual, the hundred-year-old agency has had a

⁵ I use the pseudonym Sweet Haven for the agency's name in this dissertation.

variety of programs. Even though those earlier programs did not directly affect the residents, both residents and the agency staff members were part of an on-going history presented as one of successfully overcoming obstacles. Former residents returned to share with and encourage current residents. Administrative staff and board members kept an archive of the agency's earlier documents. The agency mentioned its history in its newsletters and other documents, in addition to the above mentioned reference.

The history of the agency will be highlighted in this chapter. The time period which coincides with the years when the interviewed women were residing in the house will include descriptions of day-to-day life in addition to those of major events. It is important to mention at the onset that the history is also a part of my history. I am a former employee of the agency and therefore knew many of the women when they were adolescents in foster care. I acknowledge that this prior involvement in foster care and in the lives of the women raises theoretical and methodological questions, many of which will be explored within an "anthropology at home" framework later in the dissertation.

It is perhaps beneficial at this point to mention that although not extensive, foster care does have its own lexicon. I will occasionally use words in ways that may be slightly different from their common usage. If the meaning of the word can be briefly explained I will give the meaning in brackets following the word. In other cases, I will stop and give a more detailed explanation. For example, in residential care the people who work for the agency are not called employees; instead they are referred to as "staff". Especially in the case of those who work directly with the residents, this word is sometimes not even prefaced with the word *the* and is seldom followed by any other word such as member or person, it is just *staff*. Atkins (1998) believes that resident's use

of this identification indicates both their lack of connection with the employees and their feelings of depersonalization.

At Sweet Haven, when speaking directly to or about an individual childcare staff, the residents would usually refer to the person by their first name, however if the resident was upset, angry or impatient they would often just yell “*staff!*” The childcare staff occasionally interpreted this as disrespectful or inappropriate – in part because of the depersonalized nature of the usage. However, when referring to the workers as a group, staff was the word that was used and is the term I will use in this dissertation to refer to agency personnel. If it is not obvious by the context of the usage I will preface the word with the type of staff I am referring to, such as childcare, administrative, or social service [social worker].

It is also instructive to take a moment and discuss the word agency and its usage. References are often made to *the agency*, when referring to Sweet Haven or to any other foster care or governmental agency. This usage is holistic, inclusive and is at some level a reification. Social service agencies often seem to take on a life and personality of their own. As is the case with other bureaucratic organizations, the agencies, as individual entities, are often perceived as being responsible for and capable of actions beyond those carried out by the individuals within that organization. Therefore, depending on the context of the comment, *agency* can include any combination of the organizational structure of the agency, the employees, the policy, the history, or any other aspect. The word *program* within a social service setting has much the same connotation as *agency*; it signifies the whole ethos of the services and activities that are provided to clients in any

particular setting. In some instances the words *agency* and *program* are used interchangeably⁶.

Sweet Haven history

This history was compiled from documents contained in the agency's archives. Those documents included annual reports, internal publications/brochures, fundraising applications, letters and other legal documents. When I quote directly from these documents I have given the citation information in a footnote, rather than in the bibliography section, since many of the documents are unpublished.

In the late 1890's a young woman "graduated from the Baptist Institute for Christian Workers in Philadelphia and came to New York City to work as a missionary in a reading room for fallen women⁷". When the group that was sponsoring the reading room decided to disband she felt that she should not give up her contacts with the women, who were street walkers on Broadway in the Tenderloin District. She enlisted the help of another woman and they located a house on West 53rd Street. The support of a Baptist church and friends enabled them to pay the rent. The house was dedicated on March 31, 1899. These two women lived in and were in charge of the house, where they provided both housing and services for 'fallen' women. For funding they relied on donations and it appears (based on the wording in a couple of documents) that one of the workers also used the salary she received teaching in a school located elsewhere in the city. Donations came from individuals as well as from churches. Some of the donations

⁶ In the early period of Sweet Haven's history the words *the work* are used to designate what we now refer to as the program, so when quoting from and discussing that time frame I will use that colloquial phrasing.

⁷ Taken from the founder's speech given at a 1955 event.

were just a dollar or two, but other people were able to give more. For example, after several months of operation, Grace Dodge visited the house and became a consistent financial supporter. She was also the one who suggested the name “Sweet Haven” for the program. Ms. Dodge believed the house was “a sweet home center for tired, tempted fellow sisters.”⁸ In addition to the help they provided to the women who lived in the house, these two women also did outreach in the middle of the night “meeting the girls where they were to be found doing their solicitation.”⁹ They also did outreach in courts and at the hospitals. Additionally, at the request of both “parents outside New York City” and the Travelers Aid Society, they worked with “wayward girls.”¹⁰ In the first year they were open they provided housing for thirty-four women/girls. At the end of that year seventeen of the thirty-four were still living in the house. Of the seventeen who had left, seven returned to their families, three were transferred to other residences and seven did not keep in contact, so their whereabouts were unknown¹¹. By 1907, the annual report did not clearly differentiate how many had lived in the house and how many had simply been provided other services, such as meals, clothing, or respite. In many cases the women were helped to find employment, often as live-in domestic help, which meant they then had a place to stay. The annual report of that year states they had provided services to three hundred and thirty-two women of whom one hundred and

⁸ Ibid. The Grace Dodge quote also appears on a number of annual reports from the early 1900's.”

⁹ Ibid.”

¹⁰ Ibid.”

¹¹ 1900 Annual Report.

eighty-six had been homeless, thirty had been pregnant at the time they were helped and fifteen had had young children.¹²

In 1906, the founder signed her rights, interest and property over to two other women, who continued the program. Although it is hard to determine conclusively from the documents in the archives, it appears that there were also other women who from time to time lived in the house and/or helped provided needed services. The reading room was open all night and provided a place where people could come “to talk with the Sweet Haven workers about their present difficulties and troubles [and] to get a little pure atmosphere and to ask about how they can become true. Piano, papers, periodicals, games, and a circulating library of about five hundred volumes make it a living room and a place of brightness for darkened lives”¹³. They also had two doctors who provided free medical services.¹⁴ In 1909, Jacob A. Riis, mentioned Sweet Haven in one of his newspaper columns. He was impressed by the two women and their work and tells of a time when a policeman was looking for a place for a homeless woman to stay. He came to the Sweet Haven house and said, “We have this case. She isn’t wanted in this home, or in that institution. She doesn’t come under their rules. We thought you might stretch yours to take her in. Else she goes straight to the devil.” The reply from the woman who answered the door at Sweet Haven was “Bless you we have no rules. Let her come in.”¹⁵ The house they were renting on West 53rd Street was “as mean as the streets, it was flanked on one side by a jail, on the other by a big factory. In front, right under the

¹² 1907 Annual Report.

¹³ Program description in a 1907 bulletin from evening of music conducted to benefit Sweet Haven.

¹⁴ From an article in *The Christian Herald: an Illustrated Family Magazine*. April 20. 1904. Page 356.

window, ran the elevated trains, so close that to open the window was impossible, for the noise and the dirt. Back of it they were putting up a building which when completed, would hug the rear wall so that you couldn't open the windows there at all".¹⁶

In 1906, in a speech given at the seventh annual meeting it was stated, "We want to own a building. It is impossible to rent one for this kind of work. We have tried it. We want a building large enough to accommodate all the needs. [The list of needs included] housing, room where people can spend a quiet, homelike afternoon or evening. Also a room for social gatherings, classes, etc."¹⁷ The two women began a building fund and by the end of 1909 were able to buy a house and move their program to East 51st Street. The two women went to the lawyer to draw up the papers for the purchase of the house, but he refused to do it because they were one thousand dollars short. The next day an unexpected donation of one thousand dollars arrived and was taken to the lawyer. In an interview many years after the event one of the women reflected back on that purchase. She described how the lawyer had told them "that we were buying this house as we would buy a yard of lace and that we would never buy a house that way again, I told him that we had bought it that way once, and we could do it again."¹⁸

With the move, the nature of the work changed, because the new neighborhood was very different from the West Side. The 1916 annual report, "Sweet Haven Work for Friendless Women", talks of their work feeding, clothing and visiting women and also

¹⁵ Riis, Jacob A. 1909. *The Sunday School Times*. Page 495.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Typed *Seventh Annual Report of the Sweet Haven Work*. An interesting aside is that in the beginning of this speech when discussing the "How do they come to fall?" question, one of the reasons given was, they "are paid such low wages in comparison with living expenses, that they are easily enticed into sin, thinking to stay the hand of want."

¹⁸ Interview with Ms. Scofield. n.d.

housing a smaller number of those women, some of them mothers and occasionally children without their mothers. They discuss how their work was originally only with women, but “there was a desperate need” for housing for a young mother and her ten day old baby who had been released from the hospital. Therefore, they had begun to care for mothers and babies.¹⁹ They established a nursery on the top floor of the house and in several cases provided for babies who were brought to them when their mothers abandoned them. The reports state that an important aspect of the services they provided for the women was to “train them to become self-supporting. To this end, classes are conducted in Bible, English, Stenography, Sewing and Domestic science.”²⁰ They also established a “Sweet Haven Mission Circle” [*circle* is a word used by some churches and organizations to designate a group of people; similar in usage to the word club] that was attended by former residents and others. The goals of the meetings were to encourage and support each other and also to “give and think of others less fortunate than themselves.”²¹ This group took a collection at each meeting and then gave the money they raised to among other things, the Africa Island Mission, and the Leper Colony in South America. Historically not only did Sweet Haven give money to needs in other countries, they also served a large number of immigrant women. The annual reports and other documents identify the country of origin of the women who they helped. For instance in 1915 of the one hundred and seventy-three women who had been served by the agency, one hundred and twenty-eight were born in the United States, the remaining forty-five came from eleven different countries, the most common three were Ireland,

¹⁹ 1916 Annual Report.

²⁰ 1910 Annual Report.”

²¹ 1916 Annual Report.

England and Germany. Additionally as a 1917 fundraising letter from the president of the Board of Trustees acknowledges, “The problem of other nations has become ours. At this writing we have six girls in the Home, the fathers of whose children are either on their way to France or there. One girl we were able to have married. These forsaken ones must be cared for and the little unwanted waifs given a start in life.”²²

In 1920, Sweet Haven incorporated under the name Sweet Haven Home for Women and Babies. At that time the two women signed over all their interest and property held in the name of Sweet Haven to the corporation. However, the annual report of that year states that even though they had incorporated they were “neither an office nor an institution, [making] it hard to give an adequate account of the real work in statistical form²³.” The two women continued to work for and live in Sweet Haven for several decades after the incorporation. In fact, the terms of their signing over their interest in “Sweet Haven” to the corporation was that they would be allowed to live in the house as long as they desired.

The 1920 annual report also mentioned that the year before they had felt the need to secure a cemetery plot, since “many of the unacknowledged little ones have been buried in scattered graves by lonely mothers”. During 1919 funds had been donated and they had “secured the plot in the cemetery (sic) and in it are lying two of the babies – one the premature baby of a fourteen year-old girl, the other a two year-old child of one of the Circle’s best members.”²⁴

²² Warren, W.J. 1917. Letter on Sweet Haven letterhead.

²³ 1920 Annual Report.

²⁴ 1920 Annual Report.

The annual reports of the 1920's, 1930's and 1940's continue to talk about meeting the needs of women. The language changes, "fallen" women become "wayward" women or women whom had been "deceived" by men and were having children without being married, or who were "frivolous". The agency, in its house on East 51st Street, continued to provide housing and services for women. In 1939, the annual report emphasized one of their founding principles, which was to create a home where girls could learn homemaking skills and also learn to take care of their children. Their desire was that the girls would become "successful founders of families²⁵". This goal was achieved partly by example and partly by having the girls take part in the cooking, cleaning, and care of the house.

A 1963 publication entitled *A Haven for Girls...Ministry of Mercy and Reclamation* said

Sweet Haven is a home for girls – frightened, forgotten girls – who find themselves in a serious predicament. From all walks of life, they come to Sweet Haven – unwed mothers-to-be hoping to avoid social stigma while awaiting the birth of babies they will never be able to raise.²⁶

In 1965, the house on East 51st Street had become too small and inadequate. The agency sold that house and bought a larger house on the Upper East Side.

In the late 1970's out-of-wedlock motherhood became less of a social stigma. It was around this time that the Sweet Haven program again changed. They began contracting with the City of New York to provide care for adolescents in the foster care system. Because their historical mission was to serve women, Sweet Haven received a license for only girls. Additionally, because of the nature and size of their only building

²⁵ 1939 Annual Report.

²⁶ 1963 Sweet Haven brochure.

that license was restricted to girls age sixteen to twenty-one. If these girls had brothers or younger siblings who needed foster care services, those services were provided by another agency. The common custom in New York City was that the city agency contracted with various private/non-profit agencies to provide the foster care services which the city was legally obligated to provide.²⁷ According to their contract, the Sweet Haven agency provided a prescribed level of care to foster care teens and the city agency paid them an amount, which was calculated by multiplying a predetermined rate by the number of girls who stayed in the house each month or portion of that month. The amount paid and the level of care which the agency provided in return were based on current city requirements and the previous cost of providing that care by both the particular agency and other agencies city-wide. By virtue of the contract Sweet Haven had to relinquish major decision-making regarding many areas of program, budget allotments, and the details of individual girl's intake, discharge, and planning goals to the city agency.

The board and agency staff designed their program as an independent living program. Much as they had earlier helped women from the street know how to manage their own households, the program was designed to help adolescent girls²⁸ learn to live successfully on their own. The program was modified over time, but providing care for adolescents in the foster care system was what the Sweet Haven program consisted of for

²⁷ See Chapter three and the Appendix for a discussion of when the city deemed foster care was needed and what services were offered.

²⁸ The staff and agency referred to the residents in several ways – as teens, young ladies, residents, but the most common term was to call them *the girls*. In my discussions I will use all these various terms.

the next twenty-five years. It is this era of Sweet Haven programming that becomes the connecting point for the women whom I knew and interviewed.

Life in the house

Early in 1982, in response to suggestions from the city and a desire to increase the number of adolescents they could serve, yet provide the residents with a smaller more intimate setting, Sweet Haven opened a second residence. The new residence was a brownstone near City College in Harlem that housed six adolescents. The other house, the larger row house on the Upper East Side that had been purchased in 1965, housed sixteen adolescents.

Late in 1982, I started working for the agency; working for two years in the Harlem house. I interacted daily with the young women, teaching them cooking, cleaning, budgeting, shopping, communication, and other independent living skills. The house's floor plan included private living space for the live-in house parents on the first and half of the second floor. The other half of the second floor was a living room for the residents. There were four bedrooms on the third floor, which were shared by the six residents. The ground floor contained a study room for the residents as well as their kitchen and dining room and a landscaped back yard. The wife of the live-in couple was the program director of that house and the husband had an unrelated outside job. During the daytime and evening hours in addition to the live-in staff, there were other staff members who supervised the residents and provide for their safety, care and training. The agency social worker, who spent most of her time in the larger house on the east side, came to the Harlem house two afternoons a week to meet individually with the residents and to attend the weekly staff meetings. She also filled out the forms and documentation

required by the city. She was the person who kept in contact with the girl's school and went to the parent-teacher conference. In many cases the girls were allowed to make weekend visits to relatives' houses. The social worker was the one who did the initial visit to these places to assess their suitability and safety. She was also the one who went to court with the adolescents to verify and re-certify placement.

When I stopped working for the agency in 1984, I continued to stay in touch and worked occasional shifts on an emergency on-call basis. The house in Harlem closed in 1989 and after that date all programming and offices of the agency were located in the house on the Upper East Side. In 1991, I moved into a studio apartment on the administrative floor of that building to serve as the live-in staff person. I continued in that capacity for the next seven years. My seven years of living in the house as well as my experiences and interactions with foster care youth both before and after those years have helped inform the research which is discussed in this dissertation, just as the years of living in foster care have informed the lives of the women whom this dissertation discusses.

As the live-in staff person my primary responsibility was to be present in the house five nights a week from midnight until eight in the morning, serving as a back-up to the overnight staff person who was on duty. The city required a staffing pattern of one staff person per eight residents. Because there were sixteen residents, it was necessary to have at least two staff people in the building at all times. It was not necessary for both people to be childcare staff or even to be actively on duty; they just had to be physically present. During the night, I could be contacted by intercom if the overnight staff person needed assistance. Additionally, the residents and staff usually knew when I was in the

house and often asked for my assistance during my “off” hours. There were also two separate periods of about a year each during which I worked part-time for the agency in the daytime in addition to my overnight shifts. During one of those periods I was the program assistant and during the other I was the interim executive director of the agency.

At eight a.m. when the overnight person left, the eight-to-four person came in. During this time frame, the requirement for a second staff person was fulfilled by the administrative, office or social service staff. Then at four p.m. the two evening shift people came in. On weekends, when the administrative and social service offices were closed, this pattern varied and two childcare staff worked during the daytime. On the two days that I was “off”, a second person came in as back-up for the midnight to eight shift. The childcare staff’s responsibility was to provide for the everyday needs and safety of the residents. They supervised and monitored the activities and behavior in the house and made sure that meals were prepared and served and that the girls ate. They also assessed the tone of the house and intervened if necessary to maintain a calm and safe environment. The vast majority of the childcare staff were women. Due to regulations a male staff person could not be alone with the residents, therefore male staff had to work the evening or weekend shifts, when there were two staff people present around the residents. In spite of this scheduling difficulty, there were several men who worked as childcare workers over the years. Additionally, some of the non-childcare staff were male. The staff turnover rates were very low, several staff members had been with the agency for ten years or more and most stayed at least three years. Statistically this is not

the norm, most social service agencies; especially in what is considered “direct line” work have high staff turnover rates.²⁹

The house was a five-story row house, with a full basement and a back yard area. The young women lived on the second and third floors. There were four bedrooms on the second floor and three on the third floor. Each bedroom had its own bathroom and with the exception of two larger rooms, which housed three residents, the young women shared the bedroom with one other person. The first floor had a large living room, three smaller rooms, a bathroom, and a large foyer area. One of the smaller rooms was used as a recreation room for the residents. In this room there were games, a piano, a treadmill, a table and chairs.

One of the other small rooms was the “staff” office. This was the office where the childcare staff, who provided for the day-to-day care and safety of the residents worked. They were often around the house interacting with and providing help and guidance, so they did not remain in this room for the totality of their shift, rather it was the space they came to for privacy, when either talking with each other or with one of the residents. It was also the place they carried out their record-keeping responsibilities. These records as required by city and state guidelines were kept locked in a closet in the room. Medications and other supplies were also kept locked in that closet.

The other small room’s use shifted over time. For the first couple of years various part-time people such as the nurse, program assistant, tutor, and others used it as an office. Later the room was shifted into a computer room for the resident’s use. In the basement,

²⁹ One of the former residents has been working in a group home setting for about eight months. She said she is now one of the staff people who have been there the longest. Many people who were working there when she started have left. In fact there have been

in addition to the furnace room and elevator motor room, there was a laundry room, a large dining room and a large kitchen, equipped with commercial size appliances.

On the fourth floor, in addition to my studio apartment, there was a large business office shared by the part-time bookkeeper and the full time secretary and a smaller office that was used by the executive director. There was also a large library/conference room, which served a variety of functions. One activity that was required of the residents was to complete a self-paced curriculum, which covered topics such as interpersonal skills, self-awareness, money management, health awareness, job preparation, and household management. A part-time staff person worked with the residents individually to support and monitor their completion of this curriculum. Her desk and the resource materials were located in this room. The room was also used for evening seminars for the residents. Additionally it was also occasionally used for staff seminars, for alumnae events, for resident's individual need for quiet study or quiet space, and as an overflow space for people who shared offices when they needed extra space. This room was adjacent to my small kitchen and so I also occasionally used it as a living room space. However, its proximity to my studio apartment also meant that when it was being used by others I needed to be extra quiet, that I was often by default the staff that monitored its use and reported its misuse, and also was called upon by the residents to help with computer problems and homework help. The fifth floor of the building was a single room that was about a quarter of the building's square footage. It was where the program director worked and where weekly staff meetings took place.

people who came after her who have also left.

The process by which adolescent girls became residents of Sweet Haven and the process by which they entered foster care were related, but were not exactly the same process. In order for a child to enter the foster care system in New York City, the family court must make a determination of need for care and then mandated that care. The need for care may be based on factors of parental inability or inadequacy or may be based on child's behavior. This second determination is labeled PINS [person in need of supervision]. Although the precipitating factor in some PINS cases may be parental inadequacy, this designation pinpoints the "problem" with the child, labeling them as someone who is unruly and unsupervised(able). Once the court has mandated foster care the child is assigned a caseworker within the foster care department of the Human Resources Administration. The dynamics of the relationship between the agency and the city as well as the various name changes the office went through will be discussed in a subsequent chapter. The assigned city caseworker does not necessarily provide much in the way of direct service, but instead manages the child's case and arranges for referral to either a city agency or a non-profit agency such as Sweet Haven.

Staffing patterns

Although mentioned above, for reasons of clarity this section will detail the staffing patterns within the agency during the time the former residents who are part of this study lived in the residences. Staffing patterns of previous programs varied, although it appears from the historical record that at least some of the staff members lived in the residences with the women whom they were serving. In fact two of the current board members were live-in staff members of the agency before the maternity program ended and the foster care program began – in the early 1970's. There was a short gap to this

pattern for a few years of the foster care program, in at least the Upper East Side residence.

As stated above, for most of its history the agency only operated one residence. The exception was between 1982 and 1989, when the six-resident house was operating. The small number of residents meant that the staff size was correspondingly small. A married couple lived in the brownstone and generally their presence served as the required night coverage. During the day there were two other staff positions – one person worked during the morning/early afternoon to help get the residents off to school and supervised their activities when they returned, the other staff person who relieved her in the late afternoon was in charge of dinner and evening activities. The wife of the live-in couple planned program activities for both residences. There were people who worked part-time to cover these staff responsibilities on the weekends. Additional staffing consisted of the social worker, who worked full-time for the agency and spent a portion of her time at this smaller house.

The larger residence by virtue of its size required more staff people. The operation of this residence also extended over a greater period of time, from the late 1970's to 2000. During these years, program and staffing patterns were slightly different; therefore what is presented here is a composite and not necessarily exactly the pattern that existed at any one moment in time. For instance, during the later part of the 1970's into the mid 1980's there was no live-in staff person at the larger residence on the Upper East Side. From the mid-1980's the live-in position was filled by a couple with two children and then by a succession of single women. The general staffing pattern consisted of staff in the following categories: administrative, social services, childcare,

and auxiliary. The administrative staff included the executive director, who was responsible for financial oversight, upkeep and oversight of the physical building and interacting with and adhering to all city and bureaucratic regulations and requirements. He supervised the part-time maintenance person, the part-time bookkeeper and the full time receptionist/secretary. (The receptionist/secretary was supervised by the executive director, but also performed secretarial tasks for the program director and social worker.) The other administrative person was the program director who planned and implemented the in-house training and supervised all employees who worked directly with the residents. The social service department was the social worker, whose tasks were described previously. Most of the time, there was also a part-time social worker who assisted and was supervised by the full-time social worker. The social workers and the executive and program director were referred to as the administrative team and meet together weekly to make many of the programmatic and therapeutic decisions regarding the running of the house. Many of those meetings were also attended by a consulting psychologist who was involved in placement as well as procedural decisions. Other auxiliary (part-time or consulting) staff consisted of a tutor who was provided by the board of education, the curriculum counselor, whose task are delineated elsewhere, a nurse who talked about health issues with the residents, scheduled doctors appointments, and kept first aid supplies on hand, and a religious life person, who offered bible study and counseling to any residents who wished to meet with him. The childcare staffing patterns have been described elsewhere. The childcare staff were numerically the largest group and included both full and part-time people. All full time people had an area they supervised. For example one of the evening people was responsible for teaching the

residents how to cook and for ordering and inventorying food and kitchen supplies, another was responsible for ordering and inventorying household and cleaning supplies. She was the person who supervised and trained the residents with regards to household cleaning. Another staff person was responsible for planning recreational activities and working with residents to foster individual hobbies and recreational activities. There was also a person who worked with the residents on cleaning, organizing and decorating their bedrooms.

Resident's initial placement at the house

The referral process is conducted by the city's foster care placement office. Their protocol changed over time, based on administrative and legal decisions. In the earlier days of my work at Sweet Haven, the agency had much more control over the intake process. The minimum requirements were that the girl had to at least have an I.Q. of 70 and not have severe mental problems that required controlled psychotropic medication or hospitalization. It was felt that girls who did not meet these requirements would not be able to live unaided after discharge, which was the goal of the program. Decisions about who from the pool of girls who needed placement and who met the minimum requirements would move into the house were made by the agency. The Office of Placement put together referral packets that contained psychosocials, psychiatric evaluations, school reports, histories, and other relevant materials. The agency then based their acceptance decision of this placement packet and an interview. There were times when it was also possible to arrange for the potential resident to have an overnight visit, before coming to the house to live. This gave both the girls and the agency a chance to see if the program, the current dynamic of the house and the individual

applicant were a good match. This control also gave the opportunity for girls currently in the house or agencies that had previously referred girls, to recommend girls who they knew and thought would benefit from and be appropriate for the program.

Beginning in the late 1980's, the city's placement policy began changing, in a large part in response to the Wilder lawsuit. [A pivotal case that will be discussed in more detail in the foster care chapter.] With this change, interviews were not allowed and girls who heard about and requested the program were not assured that the city would approve of their placement in the agency. Placement packets were still sent by the city agency, but Sweet Haven had to accept whoever was sent. Exceptions were allowed only when the girl did not meet the minimum requirements or if the agency's psychologist could make a case that placement was not in the best interest of the girl or the residents currently in care at the house. This changed the dynamic in the house, with the newer residents often not wanting to be in this placement creating increased incidents of running away as well as causing more disruptions with the other residents, who at times resented the impositions these newer residents caused.

The placement office and its allocation division were further strapped by the Wilder decision and bureaucratic difficulties thus they often did not send out placement packets even though the house reported openings as required. The house, therefore, was operating below capacity, even though there was still a glaring need for placement of foster care teens as reported in the press and by the city agency. A 1993 discussion with the city agency about the lack of referrals was met with a request that the agency accept "emergency placements". Because of the bottleneck within the allocations division and the current situation with many of the teens, a large proportion of teen placements were

coming through the emergency placement subdivision rather than through normal placement allocations. In most cases these were not the teen's first placement, they had been in the foster care system for awhile, but had either run away from their last placement, or that placement was no longer appropriate or desired by the adolescent. In some cases this was due to disagreements or acting out behavior on the part of the resident, whereas in other instances it was just that the youth felt their needs weren't being met or had changed due to their age. When these changes of placement were stalled in the placement office, youth would get impatient and situations would escalate requiring an emergency placement. This created frustration for all concerned, because these teens should have had a 'planned placement'. Someone at the previous agency or their city case-manager should have been able to anticipate the need for new placement and arranged an appropriate movement ahead of time, to give the youth time to prepare. The emergency placements often had only the clothes on their back, or maybe a shopping bag full of personal things.

The protocol for emergency placements was that the agency would receive a call, usually in the late evening or middle of the night, telling of a teen who was in need of placement. The information was usually scanty and except for glaring inappropriateness (i.e. wrong sex, age, or severe mental or emotional disturbances) the agency had to accept the placement. The girl then arrived within the next several hours, most often in the middle of the night. This process was very disruptive to the girls currently in the house, as well as for the new girl, who often arrived in an unfamiliar place at 3 o'clock in the morning. The presence of emergency placements was disruptive on a number of levels. For the current residents it meant they never had advance notice of when there would be a

new roommate or new resident to whom they would have to adjust. Because of this unsettled environment, incidents of theft, disagreements and physical altercations went up. From an agency point of view, staff felt more stressed and at times threatened as they had to deal with an increased number of residents who were unknown to them.

After a resident was accepted and moved into the house it did not matter if they came through the planned or the emergency placement route; once they were accepted and arrived at the house they could stay until they turned twenty-one. In actuality many moved out before their twenty-first birthday for a variety of reasons. Common reasons for moving out included living at and attending college, getting a job and an apartment, becoming pregnant and moved into a maternity or mother-child program if they were not prepared to live on their own, opting to or being required to switch agencies for other reasons (which ranged from mismatched or botched paperwork to excessive fighting or drug use), or running away and living either on the street, in a friend's home or elsewhere. The shortest stay was one day and the longest was five years. With that kind of range and given the variety of factors and methods that can be used in statistical analysis it is hard to talk about an average length of stay. For instance in 1993, during the time when the agency was required to take residents referred on an emergency placement basis, there were thirty-two different young women who lived in the house that year. Of those thirty-two, nine stayed anywhere from one day to two weeks. The remaining twenty-three residents included four who stayed between two and eight months, six who stayed between a year and a year and a half, five who stayed between two and three years, four who stayed between three and four years, three who stayed between four and five years and one who stayed five years. These last twenty-three residents are more reflective of

the common length of stay. In some regards, the nine short-term residents almost seem to have never been at the agency. In many cases because of their short stay and unplanned placement, their records and identifiable information never even arrived at the agency. The agency did not develop relationships nor have the time to compile extensive case information before the resident left. Due to these factors, I was not able to trace or interview any of these nine residents. The above discussion is not to imply that all emergency placements left quickly or that all planned placements stayed for extended periods of time. In spite of the trend in that direction, there were nevertheless exceptions. A few of the emergency placements lived in the house for several years and some planned placements did not work out as expected and left soon after their arrival.

Two examples reveal the ends of this spectrum. As the on-call person, if a new resident arrived in the middle of the night, I was awakened and did the initial intake. Depending on how tired the youth was and what kind of information we had received regarding her situation, the initial intake was more or less detailed. I would talk to the new resident about their situation, ascertain their goals and current school and job placement and then introduce them to the agency. I could often tell during the initial interview if there were any apprehensions or potential problems and tried to counter them with information. I remember one sixteen year old who arrived in the wee hours of the morning. She was dropped off without any possessions. She had been picked up by the police, because she had run away from her last placement. In the course of our conversation, she was forthcoming with information, but also stated clearly that she had been doing fine on the street if not for the police picking her up. When I talked to her about our no fighting and no weapons policy, she willingly revealed and surrendered a

“box cutter” that she said she was holding for her boyfriend. I gave her sheets, towels, and something to sleep in and then showed her to her room. I told her I would see her the next day. I did not. By the time I got home that evening from my other job, she had left, once again taking nothing with her, and the agency did not see or hear anymore about her.

In contrast, another emergency placement was a girl who had left her family because of abuse and was homeless and alone when she came into Sweet Haven through emergency placement. She was depressed in the beginning, but she decided not to leave. She became comfortable in the house and developed an out-going and positive personality. She graduated from high school and also received an associate degree. She was at Sweet Haven for over 4 years. She left when she turned twenty-one and now has employment and an apartment.

These two vignettes show the range of emergency placement experiences. Likewise planned placements also had a range in length of time they stayed at the agency. Not only was there variety in the length of time that residents stayed, there were also variety in almost every aspect of their lives. As previously stated, all the residents were female and between the ages of sixteen and twenty-one. Those were the only two given similarities. Residents were racially and ethnically diverse³⁰, with different concepts of

³⁰ The racial and ethnic make-up of the house shifted as residents arrived and left. Additionally determination of racial identity can be problematic and political, therefore in many regards the next statement obscures as much as it reveals. In the early 1990's the residents in the house seemed to fall within the following ratio – about 60 percent Black, 30 percent Hispanic and 10 percent White. Ethnicity is an equally difficult category to determine, furthermore a significant portion of the residents I categorized as Black would have placed their first identity in ethnicity rather than race. Over the 15 to 20 years that are discussed in this dissertation the resident's countries of origin included Nigeria, Haiti, Jamaica, St. Kitts, Puerto Rico (not technically a country), Dominican Republic, other Caribbean Islands, India, an Eastern Europe country, among others. Immigration issues affected a number of these residents.

“family” and of relatedness. There were a variety of economic backgrounds, although the lower socio-economic background was more prevalent. The residents’ previous experience with foster care was also varied, some had just left their families and others had been part of the foster care system for many years. Among those who had been in foster care prior to living at Sweet Haven some had lived in only one or two foster homes whereas others had been moved often and had experienced a number of foster homes. Additionally, some had lived in residential treatment centers (RTC). A foster home is when a child is placed with one family and lives in their home. A RTC facility is a large congregate care facility where the children live with other children in units. These facilities have multiple units on one site, the children usually attend school on site and the facility is often located out of the city. Sweet Haven was a third kind of foster care setting. It was a group home. Group homes are individual houses, although they may be run by agencies that have multiple group homes, each home operates individually and usually has 20 or fewer residents. The legal policy was to place the child in the least restrictive setting as possible, with foster homes being the least restrictive and RTC being the most restrictive. Where the child was placed was based on their reason for coming into care and their “diagnosis”. Depending on “diagnosis” a child might need more monitoring, medication and restriction. For example, children that are diagnosed with drug addiction, oppositional disorder, frequent AWOLing [away with out leave - run away], fire setting, or active suicide ideations need a different setting than someone who has no psychiatric diagnosis.

Even though it is not possible to describe an average background for the residents, there were some themes and familiar situations that framed their lives before and their

entry into foster care. I do not intend to try to state what or how family history and background affects future outcome because I believe that the variables are so extensive that determining specific correlations is a speculative and not necessarily productive task. However, it is worthwhile to at least be aware of some of the situations which precipitated their entry into care, because although these situations do not determine the women's futures, they definitely remain in the women's memories and are part of what defines them and how they define themselves (or in some cases what they define themselves against). Perhaps the easiest way to discuss backgrounds is to excerpt some of the referral material that the agency received at time of admission. With the exception of the time around 1993 that was described above, the agency received a packet of information about a prospective resident's history and "functioning level". The social worker and administrative staff then discussed the referral materials, to determine whether to "accept" the adolescent. This decision was based on assessing the match between the future resident's needs and abilities and the agency's offerings and requirements. The referral packets contained recommendations from the adolescence's current agency regarding the program needs of the adolescent. There was usually a psychiatric evaluation as well as a psychosocial [Psychological and social histories and assessments of functioning, often including a diagnosis]. Excerpted below are paragraphs from five of these referral packets, which are illustrative of resident's pre-placement histories.

She was voluntarily placed into foster care along with her sisters. The major reason for placement was because of the natural mother being out of control and unable to maintain the children at home. The request for placement was made by the natural mother who had resumed drinking and therefore was unable to manage her children. The mother openly complained to the worker about major housing problems. [and] felt alone

and frustrated. The natural mother felt that the children, who refused to assist her in house chores, were compounding the problems with their blatant defiance of all rules and regulations. ... [One daughter] occasional became violent towards her mother. ...It should also be noted that [the children] had been in placement [that placement had lasted a year, occurring two years prior] because of the natural mother's drinking problem.

She was raised by her paternal grandmother in [a Caribbean island] ... At the age of 12, her father sent for her to come to the United States to live with him and his wife. ...but she did not get along with her step-mother.

Mother is said to have been deceased [when resident was 5 years old]. ... Information concerning her father is unavailable. [Resident] notes that she has not seen her father for sometime now. She has a sister (two years older) who has lived with the grandmother from infancy and resident herself indicates that she began living with her grandmother at age 5 after her mother died. ... Child reports absconding from her home due to sexual harassment received from her maternal uncle... Maternal grandmother reports child keeps late hours, is disobedient, argumentative and that child displays conflict.

Very little is known of [her] early developmental history. She was often left by herself unsupervised, and when [at age four] she was placed by emergency for maternal neglect, the doctors found her hungry and possibly abused. ...She returned to her foster home after having lived for three and a half years at [a residential treatment center]. She has lived with the same foster mother since her placement [at age four]. ...Foster mother is seeing old behavioral problems reappearing. She said she found a pile of burned matches in the bathroom.

[She] was placed on a PINS [person in need of supervision] petition initiated by her mother. Her mother found her behavior beyond her control. They have a conflicted mother and daughter relationship. Mother has historically been in and out of her daughter's life. Her involvement has remained minimal. Issues related to her non-involvement were apparently her substance abuse and the relationship with her paramour with seems to interfere with her supervision of daughter. [Youth's] father is incarcerated at this time... he became incarcerated [when she was 8] (she was 17 when she entered Sweet Haven and had been in residential treatment centers since age 14, her father remained incarcerated during her stay and she visited him in jail on occasion).

There are many factors illustrated above, which contribute to a youth being placed in foster care. Often more than one factor leads to placement. These factors include: the

death or disappearance of one or both parents, parental substance abuse, physical abuse or neglect, parental incarceration, sexual abuse by family members or friends of family, remarriage of parent and subsequent conflict with step-parent, conflict with foster or adoptive parents, substance abuse or truancy on the part of the youth, unavailability of parent due to immigration issues and conflicts between youth and parent or grandparent. In some cases the youth have been in and out of care as the family struggles to stabilize the situations. In other cases the situation is of a more recent origin. It is often the case that the situation was managed in a variety of ways previously but then reaches a point where the resources are exhausted. In the case of children raised by a grandmother, this may happen at the point of adolescence.

Not all youth that require foster placement receive the same type of services. One of the factors that determine the type of agency and the type of care and services the child will receive is the child's designated PPG [Permanency Placement Goal]. With a few exceptions the PPG of the residents of Sweet Haven was 03 – Discharge to Independent Living. This determination meant that there was no court or city expectation that the child would return to live with a family member, instead they remained in foster care until they either “aged out” [reached their 21st birthday and thus become too old to be within the foster care system] or obtained adequate housing and employment allowing them to leave care before 21. The ideal was that a youth would leave care prior to turning 21, enabling them to be on “trial discharge”, a status that gave them the option of returning if their plans failed. This gave youth a chance to try living on their own and to learn by their own mistakes; however the “trial discharge” was only applicable if the youth was under 21. Once a youth reached their 21st birthday he/she were final

discharged from foster care no matter what and were not allowed to reenter or receive foster care services. A youth with a PPG of independent living is expected to receive services that will help them develop the skills and resources required to survive on their own. This is the type of programming that Sweet Haven provided.

Daily life in the house

A typical day at the house consisted of the overnight staff preparing breakfast. Because the girls' outside programs varied, as did the amount of time it took each to get ready, they each got up at different times. Some ate the breakfast provided, whereas others fixed something for themselves. Roommates had to coordinate with each other for bathroom usage. Some mornings were smooth, while on other occasions the girls squabbled in the morning about having to get up, wait for showers or not having the exact food they wanted for breakfast. Most of the girls were at school during the day, returning in the afternoon. The time before supper was designated as study time and the girl assigned to cook supper worked with the food preparation counselor to prepare the evening meal, which was eaten "family style" in the dining room. After dinner the girls did an assigned household chore and then had free time to watch television, talk, play games, go out with friends or study. They were required to be in the house by ten o'clock, in their rooms by eleven o'clock and asleep by midnight on weeknights with weekends being an hour later. The house operated on a "level system", which meant that girls who were fulfilling academic and house requirements would be placed on higher levels which allowed them certain privileges, including being allowed to stay up later at night and also to have a later curfew.

There were house expectations and requirements that influenced the activities that took place in the house. Although the residents attended school or job training programs outside the house during the day, Sweet Haven provided training in independent living skills. A 1986 class action suit was filed by the Coalition for the Homeless on behalf of former foster youths who were becoming homeless shortly after discharge from foster care. The case stipulated that the state had not adequately prepared the youth and had not provided them with the training and services they need while in care, thus resulting in their inability to maintain themselves in housing and employment upon discharge. As a result of the suit youth were allowed to remain in care until they turned twenty-one and foster care programs were mandated to provide training in independent living skills to all youth over the age sixteen with the hope that the youth would thus have the skills they needed to be able to sustain themselves and not become homeless. Sweet Haven had been providing independent living skills prior to this class action suit and their program greatly exceeded the city's requirements. However, the city's requirements changed the documentation process and the dynamic, since it included financial incentives to encourage youth to participate; participating youth were given a monthly stipend. The stipend was to be used specifically for purchase that would benefit the youth in independent living. For example purchase of pots and pans, or sheets, irons or other household items. These purchases had to be monitored and receipts filed with monthly reports to the city regarding the independent living skill training.

Sweet Haven's training included a weekly seminar which was sometimes a single presentation and sometime a multi-session series. These weekly sessions included presentations by professionals discussing their work and the training required to attain

that type of employment, interactive workshops building communication or conflict resolution skills, discussions of household budgeting, and practice sessions on interviewing techniques. Additionally, the agency had designed an individually paced curriculum that residents worked on while they were living in the house. This curriculum expanded on many of the seminar topics and included interactive worksheets as well as booklets and videos. By participating in this curriculum the residents developed skills and knowledge in areas such as goal planning, household management, apartment leases, and developing interpersonal skills.

The residents also received hands-on experience with many of these tasks. They were expected to maintain a clean and presentable bedroom and to perform one house chore a day. These chores were assigned and supervised by one of the evening staff and usually took the resident no more than half an hour to perform. Residents also helped with the weekly grocery shopping and cooked one meal every other week. They received allowance and could receive a larger allowance by volunteering to do more chores. If residents worked outside the house they also met with their social worker to discuss budgeting and saving plans.

Another activity that took place in the evenings was the weekly "house meeting". This meeting, which was often facilitated by one of the residents, included discussion of the current dynamic in the house, planning of upcoming activity, airing of complaints, and making announcements regarding accomplishments.

Some evenings were relatively calm, yet on other evenings disagreements arose among girls about television shows, music choice and volume, phone usage, or other issues which the girls had with each other. The girls also had disagreements with staff

about rules, attitudes, or behavior. Usually the disagreements could be settled easily, occasionally social workers, administrative staff, and other residents became involved in resident disagreements and the entire house would be tense and volatile for days before the issues were resolved. The women, both at the time they were living in the house and later in retrospective reflection on their foster care experience, often commented that compared to many prior placements and living situations where the atmosphere was usually tense and volatile, Sweet Haven's relative calm was a relief. The calmer environment allowed them to feel safer and many believed it increased their ability to focus on the tasks they needed and wanted to do.

Other exceptions to the normal flow of events were special occasions. There were special dinners and recognition for birthdays, graduations or special academic achievements, holidays and a once a year agency award ceremony. Every spring the agency had a fundraising dinner in Pennsylvania. Often residents and alumnae would attend the dinner and spend the weekend at the homes of board members. In the summer some residents chose to spend a week at the Pennsylvania board members' homes. There were also other summer trips to amusement parks or the beach. A number of the residents would also take weekend passes and stay over with their biological family or with other adults with whom they had a significant relationship. The agency social worker, often in consultation with the city case manager, had to pre-approve overnight visits.

There were weekly staff meetings, where staff discussed the overall program, city policy requirements and changes, and reviewed each resident, noting their progress, areas which they needed improvement and any difficulties they were having outside the house

which impacted on their behavior in the house. This was also the time when staff received training in such topics as crisis intervention; working with acting-out, at-risk teens; personal interaction and communications skills; or mental health and substance abuse issues. These staff meetings were also the setting of the 6-month case conference, where the resident was present and goals for the next 6 months were set. This case conference was required by the city regulation at the time the UCR (Uniform Case Review) was due.

Other city regulations impacted on staff, but not directly on the girls. These regulations included the need to keep a daily log of the girl's activities, behavior, attitudes and health concerns. The childcare staff on duty wrote a few sentences regarding each girl at the end of their shift. In these sentences they noted any unusual incidents, behavior or mood shifts, activity in the house, any health problems, and any potential or brewing points of conflict. The childcare staff also had to document any girls who did not come in at night (according to city policy if a girl was gone more than 48 hours, the agency had to file a missing persons report with the police department). Any medication, money or other items given to the girls had to be documented as did meals that were eaten. (Reimbursements from the city were all based on statistical documentation). All logs and paperwork were locked up in the staff office. These logbooks served a number of purposes. They were they a legal document that was reviewed by the city agency during their assessment visits and if there had ever been any court action against the agency they could have been called into court. The most relevant use however was inner agency use. The logbooks served as a reference for other childcare workers, the social worker, and administrative staff to ascertain activity,

behavior and mood, during times those particular workers were absence from the house, such as evenings, weekends and days off. These reporting regulations were staff-based record-keeping requirements and thus the girls were not directly involved. They were, however, definitely influenced, and were aware (and often complained about the fact) that their every move was monitored and recorded.

As a result of the city and state regulations, compounded not only by the group setting and dynamics but also by the individual resident's variety of emotional and behavioral difficulties; it was necessary to maintain a certain level of control over the living environment. Some of the girls needed this control and partially appreciated it, while at other times they resented and rebelled against it. However, not all the girls would have needed that same level of control in a different setting. Additionally each individual girl's needs changed as they aged and adjusted to the program. A number of the girls came from more restrictive settings located in the suburbs at treatment centers where the school and all activity took place on the "campus" and girls had little interaction with anyone outside of the agency. These girls often went through adjustment periods when they came to a less restrictive environment and had to learn to develop their own internal controls to keep them from staying out all night and possibly becoming involved in substance abuse activities. Some of the girls had substance abuse problems when they came into care and others developed those problems in care because of their associations with their peers in care.

Sweet Haven had policies about drug and alcohol use, the residents were not allowed to use drugs or alcohol in the house nor to enter the house under the influence. There was also an expectation that they would not use these substances at other times, but

that expectation was difficult to monitor or enforce. Residents, who had a history of substance abuse or whose misuse seemed on-going, were requested to enter substance abuse programs. Other behavior that was not allowed in the house was excessively disrespecting each other or staff members, cursing or verbal fights and physical altercations. These expectations as well as those around coming in on-time and not staying out all night were adhered to with mixed success. Infractions could lead to suspension and or discharge to another agency. The city regulations did not allow girls to be discharged without city approval and they could not be discharged to a shelter or the street, they had to move to another agency or have a verifiable and acceptable apartment or living situation. Violence and substance abuse were not necessarily common in most of the youth's lives; however they were often hovering just below the surface.

I remember a particular evening when one of the residents had just returned from watching a movie in the Times Square area. She and I were talking about her evening and also about what had been happening in the house lately. Knives had been found in the possession of a couple of other residents. She was talking about why they had them and she told me, that when she went down to Times Square she always carried something that she could use as a weapon if necessary. I remember expressing surprise, since in the house she usually got along with everyone. She was very articulate; managing to talk herself out of conflicts. She responded that I just didn't understand what it was like, when they were outside. I told her that I was surprised she couldn't think of a verbal come-back rather than fighting. We talked for awhile about possible responses to various scenarios, with her rejecting various suggestions until she found ones she thought might work. When the conversation was finished she stated that she would try the responses

first. She acknowledged that being involved in a fight would sabotage her college plans, yet she also stated that if the responses didn't work, she would have to physically fight, because you had to respond to certain situations, walking away was not an option. (I am happy to report that she did go to college and although she has not graduated she continues to take classes when she can. She has since had children and when we spoke she was talking about her strategies for avoiding the troublesome people in her neighborhood to keep herself and her children out of fights)

Agency structure

Because the agency was small, the board played a different role in agency life than is typical for boards of larger agencies. The board was designed as a fifteen person board, although the actual number of active members was often less than fifteen. Three constituencies made up the board. A third of the board members were from Mennonite Churches in the Pennsylvania area, a third were from New York City Mennonite churches and a third were at-large New York City members. The board appointed and elected replacement members following these proportions. The board was primarily but not exclusively white and primarily but not exclusively middle-aged. They also tended to be in the income range that would be considered middle class. The board typically met six times a year and those meetings took place at the house on the Upper East Side. At those meetings in addition to the financial, legal, programmatic, house repair and maintenance discussions; the board also received a report from the social worker and the program director detailing house functioning and individual residents' goals and successes. Unlike some boards, the Sweet Haven board was a working board, which meant board members served on board committees and were on the board because of

their commitment to helping women. They were not paid and in some cases did not request or receive reimbursements for expenses incurred attending the meetings or carrying out board responsibilities.

After the board meeting the board members would stay for supper and would meet and interact with the residents. Additionally the board planned and carried out two annual fundraising events. The first was a banquet in Pennsylvania which raised money from the Pennsylvania constituency. Sweet Haven staff, residents, and alumnae would attend this event and participated in the presentations that were made during the banquet. The second fundraising event was a fall craft fair that took place on the Upper East Side, in a neighborhood church. Churches and women in Pennsylvania would make and donate handicrafts and baked goods. There were also Pennsylvania based business, such as an Amish quilt-making business or a wooden handicraft business that would attend and donate a portion of their profit to Sweet Haven. At this fundraising event, similarly to the first, Sweet Haven staff and residents would attend and help.

These activities created relationships between staff, residents and board members that were further strengthened by social trips. During the summer residents had the option to go to Pennsylvania for a week. This house trip entailed renting a van and having residents and staff members stay in the homes of board members or the homes of other agency supporters. There were some activities planned for everyone who had come on the trip, which included visiting Hershey Park, the local malls, a swimming pool, or hiking in the surrounding countryside. The residents would also spend time with the individual families where they were staying. Additionally, Pennsylvania board members would occasionally come to New York with their family or churches and stay at the

house. There were also several occasions when residents and staff had a barbeque at the home of a New York board member.

Summary and conclusions

This chapter has given a brief overview of the agency, its residence, and life for the women while they were in foster care. Although this chapter in format corresponds to a typical anthropological setting chapter (and I have titled it as such), the agency and place I have just described is not the actual setting of my research, rather it is the setting which the women who I am studying have in common. My choosing to begin this dissertation with a description of history; a retelling of how life was in a past setting is one indication of some of the methodological and theoretical quandaries that this research entailed. Chapter four will begin to address some of those methodological questions. Prior to that discussion Chapter three will provide an overview of foster care.

CHAPTER THREE FOSTER CARE

Well the time has come for me to say farewell...I've been a part of the foster care system for 14 years. And, what a SYSTEM. On a political note ...we all should do whatever we can to alleviate a lot of the pain and suffering that occurs within the system. And on the other hand we should all praise those individuals who have helped to maintain a positive outlook within the lives of those children within the system. I personally, would like to simply thank you Sweet Haven for being that pillar in my life. (Thank you note published in the Sweet Haven newsletter which was received from a former resident sent soon after her discharge from foster care.)

My mother had recently died and for the first time I felt alone. I knew if I did not establish a foundation, my life would collapse. I could not live with my family and I knew I had to live somewhere. I could have chosen to live with my boyfriend, but I decided to go to a group home. I had reservations about entering a home with all of the stereotypes. But Sweet Haven proved itself to be the opposite of all negative reservations that I had in the beginning. (22 year old reflecting back on coming to the house.)

I didn't have any place to stay and that was a terrible feeling. A real terrible feeling. It's terrible to feel that no one cares and that there is nothing you can do to help yourself. I was 16 and I was moving around so much. I was living just for the sake of living. I felt I had nothing to live for. School didn't seem to be looking up for me. When you move to Sweet Haven you get someone to push you. (23 year old college student reflecting back on her early years in foster care. This resident had left home due to a conflictual relationship with her mother.)

It is hard enough when you don't have family without dealing with people's stereotypes. (Former resident reflecting back on her time in care)

Chapter two's description of the actual setting where the women resided during a portion of their foster care experience revealed the particularities of the physical location they shared. They also shared another location, that of "foster child". What does it mean to be a foster child? This dissertation is framed as an exploration of how the foster care experience shapes women's perceptions of, attitudes toward and arrangement of family. An understanding of foster care's influences in their lives requires a basic level of

knowledge regarding foster care as an institution and as an image/concept in the minds of the former residents and the larger U.S. public. This chapter will thus explore how the women and others frame and identify foster care. It will also identify aspects of the women's experiences which diverge from current statistical designations of foster care youth. Additionally due to the intricacies of the New York City system it is helpful to explore the political and legal influences that have created the particular evolving system³¹ that impacted the women and shaped their experiences. The chapter will end with a brief comment regarding bouts of poverty as an on-going effect of foster care for some former foster care youths.

Images of foster care

The former residents quoted above speak of negative stereotypes; both their own and those of others. The words "foster care" often conjures up images in people's minds. These images may include that of an unwanted child shuffled from place to place with their few possessions in a plastic bag; a child who lives in the midst of a family that everyone knows isn't theirs; or an angry and violent child who is often in trouble. The images are predominantly negative and the child is often seen as sad and pitied. Some direct their negative opinion only toward the parent of the child; whereas, for others the child is also stigmatized.

³¹ In New York City, as elsewhere in the United States, the policies, procedures, perceptions, and attitudes surrounding foster care are continually in flux. They are constantly being mediated by court cases, media's depiction, federal laws, and bureaucratic considerations including administrative decisions regarding enforcement policies. Understanding these multi-level and intertwining influences is further complicated by the fact that in some circumstances the influencing decision or policy comes from outside the foster care system and is instead precipitated by events or reactions rising out of "family" or "poverty/welfare" concerns. See appendix A for a brief overview of the historical evolution of the New York City system.

These images are not necessarily inaccurate, but they are incomplete. It is not possible to give a singular image of foster care. The foster care experience varies depending on statistical categories such as the child's age at placement, the amount of time in care, number of placements, whether their other siblings were similarly placed and whether the placement was kinship care [official government-supported placement with family members other than the parents]. Additionally, and more difficult to categorize, there are psychological and social variations such as the child and/or foster parent's personality match, child's previously developed outside support systems, and whether the loci of the problem is presented as the parent [neglect or abuse] or the child [PINS – person in need of supervision]. In many cases situations that lead to either an abuse/neglect or a PINS petition³² are very similar; it is not the situation which varies, but rather the perception of those outside the situation. In some cases, people outside the family identify parental inadequacies or inappropriate behaviors and recommend/require placement, whereas in other instances it is the child's acting out due to their parent's behavior that draws the attention which results in placement³³.

For example, agency records show that a common "reason for placement" given for former residents' entry into care was a diagnosis of "adjustment disorder" (Agency statistical records 1993). According to Miller (2000), adolescents are particularly vulnerable to adjustment disorders since they are experiencing a transitional period in their lives. Adjustment disorders are defined as stress related disturbance in emotional or

³² As will be discussed later in this chapter the court system has hearings to formalize foster care placements, thus all foster care placements begin as a "petition" to the court outlining the reason the placement of the child is being requested.

behavioral functioning. This disorder manifests itself in behaviors such as acting out against the rules and regulations of family and school. For many of the youth at Sweet Haven, the instability of their families was a factor in the stress they were experiencing as adolescents. Their inability to deal with that stress lead to adjustment problems, which in turn led to placement based on a diagnosis of adjustment disorder. It is thus often hard to differentiate whether parental or youth behavior precipitated the placement.

Living with other family members

Not all foster care placements are for adjustment disorders; likewise not all youth with adjustment disorder are placed in foster care. In some circumstances the family may handle the situations in a variety of ways. Because of the synergy between their choices and the child's behavior there are many instances where a variety of solutions are attempted in succession. For some of the women at Sweet Haven, their placement at Sweet Haven was preceded by prior placements and return to family or placements with other family members. As these situations fail to work, stress levels and the resulting acting out behavior increased.

One former resident poignantly describes this process:

I lived with my uncle for awhile, but then that didn't work and I lived with other relatives. My mom just sent me around and I felt abandoned and then when they told me I couldn't stay, I felt rejected. ...They were telling my mother what she should do about me ... that I needed to be placed, because I wasn't acting right. ...I had no control ...I felt like they thought I was the only one in the family that was a problem...none of my cousins were treated like this.

³³ It is also important to note that the removal from and subsequent placement in care of one child in a household does not necessarily lead to the placement of all the children in the household, thus not all of the siblings of Sweet Haven residents were in foster care.

In this case, the former resident's mother and her mother's family perceived the resident's behavior as problematic. When her behavior didn't "improve" in the uncle's or other family member's households, the family "decided" on foster care as the place for her to live.

Foster care is thus just one of the options (sometimes the option of last resort) with regards to where youth can live if they do not live with their parents. Many of the women I interviewed had lived with another family member at some point in their life before entering foster care. In a number of these situations, living with non-parent family members was not an unusual occurrence in their family's history. The situation of children living with a non-parent is also not an unusual situation if the care of children is viewed cross culturally. A cross-cultural consideration reveals a variety of established patterns of child guardianship and rearing. In some locations and traditions children who are not raised by their biological parents are fairly easy to incorporate into either a variation of the standard pattern or into a situation that is considered acceptable and relatively unproblematic and/or desirable. For example, in some countries in Africa, "strengthening kinship ties was and continues to be one goal of voluntary fostering; as a cultural practice it implies no loss or deficit in the child's immediate family" (Hegar and Scannapieco 1996:197). An awareness that expectations about children's living arrangements are not the same in all countries allows an expansion of the definitions of "family". An acknowledgement that the perceived psychological or social deficits do not

have to be integral to the situation of not living with your parents emphasizes that the perceived deficit is overlaid by cultural considerations.³⁴

Several of the former residents of Sweet Haven whom I interviewed had spent significant portions of their childhoods with family members, usually grandparents, in a country other than the United States³⁵. The former residents were later sent to live with their parent(s) in the United States either due to the poor health of the grandparent or more commonly because a decision was made that it was “time” for the child to live with her parent(s). The length of time they then spent with their parent before they entered foster care varied among the women as did the reason they eventually entered care and the level of trauma that was involved in their placement. For instance in one case it was due to abuse by the parents, whereas in other cases it was due to conflicts between the child and the mother. The former youths talked fondly of the time spent with grandparents and had not been pleased when they were told they had to leave their grandparents’ home. In these particular situations the time spent living with the grandparent, was not official foster care, but was rather a living arrangement deemed appropriate and approved within that setting. For these women, foster care was the result of the unsuccessfulness of the subsequent arrangement to live with their parent as opposed to their grandparent. It is difficult to assess the factors of the child’s age, the move to the United States, and other family dynamics in the eventual placement of the

³⁴ In addition to cultural influences, viewing foster care from an international perspective also highlights political and economic influences on people’s perceptions of foster care. (See appendix A).

³⁵ Former residents from the Caribbean, Nigeria, and India reported living with and having significant relationships with their grandparents.

resident. What is clear from their stories is that the time spent with grandparents is framed as a happy and satisfying experience³⁶.

Kinship foster care

Other former residents' living arrangements with relatives were made within the legal foster care system. These women had been legally placed with aunts and uncles, grandparents, or other relatives prior to placement at Sweet Haven. This highlights an increasing, but misunderstood and understudied area of foster care – kinship care (Berrick 1997). This gap in understanding and research is partial due to the relatively recent designation of kinship care as a type of foster care. Although, “the voluntary fostering of children in the homes of relatives or friends is a tradition found in regions as diverse as medieval Europe and twentieth century Africa” (Hegar and Scannapieco 1996:196), it was not until 1979 that kinship foster care received political and official designation in the United States. At that time, a Supreme Court decision “ruled that states were required to pay foster care board rates to caregiving relatives who met foster care licensing requirements, [thus] encouraging the greater inclusion of kin as foster parents³⁷” (Berrick and Needell 1999:152). Previously, many states “had prohibited

³⁶ This is not to imply that all former youth who lived with their grandparents view that arrangement as totally unproblematic. There were also several instances of former residents who had lived with their grandparents prior to foster care and it was the abuse they received in that household or the conflict they had with that grandparent that led to placement.

³⁷ The government pays the foster parent a set amount of money each month to provide care for the foster child. The amount of money (the rate) might vary according to certain characteristics of the child, i.e. physical or mental disability, age, or other conditions that the government deems would require more expenditure by the foster parents. However, for the most part, the parent receives a standard amount of money for each child. This rate is higher than the rate which the government pays a parent who receives public assistance and is administered by a different agency than is public assistance. These rates may also vary by location, but the foster care rate is consistently higher.

relative caregivers from receiving the higher foster care rates” (Hegar and Scannapieco 1996:200). The ruling allowed families who had been informally taking care of their relatives to become part of the formal foster care system. Also the ruling has been embraced by some states, which “either require a diligent search for relative caregivers before placing children with non-kin (8 states) or identify relatives in statute as the first priority placement (21 states)” (Berrick and Needell 1999:153).

This inclusion of kinship placements has allowed some states to cope with the overwhelming number of children in the foster care system for whom they previously had trouble placing. Although “informal kinship care is still overwhelmingly the most common type of kinship care” (Gleeson 1999:3), formal kinship care in some locations accounts for a large percentage of the foster care population. In fact by some reports

approximately one-third of all children in foster care in the United States are living with relatives. Forty to 52% of the children on child welfare systems’ foster care caseloads in California, Illinois and New York are in kinship foster care ...particularly in major urban centers” (Gleeson 1999:4). One of the concerns with kinship placement is the finding that “children in kinship foster care return home at a slower rate than children in other forms of substitute care (Gleeson 1999:63).

A related factor, which is not discussed in the literature, concerns children who do not return home when they leave the kinship placement, but instead move into a non-kin fostering arrangement. Several of the former residents went from placement with their relatives to group home placement.

Cimmarusti (1999) notes that a large percentage of kinship foster care arrangements involve grandmothers caring for grandchildren and the “empirical evidence is strong that older African Americans may be providing more support than they receive” (1999: 259), which is an important consideration given that there is a “strong and

significant relationship... between caregiver burden and emotional distress” (1999: 265). His research and the experiences of a couple of the former residents could suggest that in some cases adolescence and its related additional stress of child rearing, interpersonal and intergenerational relationships were factors in the overload of this living arrangement leading to the subsequent placement in a non-kin setting, such as Sweet Haven.

The discussion of kinship care and its relatively recent acceptance as an official designation within the foster care system highlight the need to recognize that foster care in the United States is a result of historical arrangements which have evolved over time.³⁸ At the basic level these arrangements are social arrangements regarding living situations, but throughout history these arrangements have been heavily mediated by political, legal, and economic systems and situations. The varying degree and balance of these influences within the changing historical context renders it difficult to compare the prevalence and impact of foster care across time. For instance, Mullings (1997) comments that “kin and nonkin networks continue to be important in raising children, but the extent to which these networks are threatened by the crisis conditions is indicated by the record number of children in foster care” (1997: 99, references omitted). If the “record number” of cases of children in foster care is viewed through the lens of kinship foster placements and the statistics cited above by Gleeson it is possible to extrapolate that in New York City, and other urban areas, 40 to 52 % of these foster children are actually living *within* kin networks.

Mullings (1997) and many social analysts accept the stigmatized view of foster care and thus use foster care as an indicator of societal “distress”. I believe the increasing

rate of foster care does not necessarily indicate threatened networks; what is threatened are assumptions about the use of those network. Many of the urban foster children are still living with kin, but with intense governmental involvement. Additionally, as the lives of the former residents reveal, many foster children stay imbedded in kin networks during (and long after their exit from) foster care (See chapter five and Bernstein 2001: 394). It is not the kin networks that are indicted by “record numbers” of children in foster care, but rather poverty and governmental policy toward the poor; which in the United States often translates into policy towards African Americans and Latinos.

Reimbursement rates

As noted above, the reimbursement rate for foster care is higher than the public assistance rate. Thus, if a family, receiving public assistance decides to take care of their relatives' children they will receive a larger payment for the foster child than they will for their own children. This factor led a few of the former residents to believe that their relatives were only taking care of them for the money.

She was only interested in the money. She never bought us things and I had to do housework and I had to take care of my sisters and my cousins never helped with anything. ...She was very mean to us and said we were no good (A former resident who lived with a relative after the death of her parent).

Some former residents who were not in kinship placements also expressed the belief that money was the operating principal in their foster mothers' decision to foster.

They need to screen foster and adoptive parents better. ...She was only doing it for the money. After she adopted me, she took out a life insurance policy on me, she didn't think I would live. ...You go into an abyss where you can't get out. (A former resident who was abused in her

³⁸ See appendix A for a historical overview of the changes in foster care in the United States.

foster/adoptive home and who had become self destructive before she left that home. She is now a college graduate).

Another circumstance related to foster care payments occurred on a couple of occasions. In these situations, the mothers of former residents were licensed as foster parents and took in young foster children during the time the residents were living at Sweet Haven. These situations created confusion and emotional stress for the residents. They vacillated between the belief that their mother must care more for this child than she did for them, since they were not wanted/allowed to live with her, or alternatively her interest in and reason for foster parenting was the financial reimbursement³⁹.

These various situations regarding foster care payments, like many other situations in foster care, are difficult to analyze due to the multitude of factors and possibilities. I did not talk to the foster mothers described above, therefore I can not discuss their decision to foster nor can I determine their motivation(s). Likewise, although I am aware of the perceptions of the former foster care youths with whom I spoke, their perceptions of foster mother's motivations may not be shared by all former foster youths. The fact that these former residents of Sweet Haven were in residential care indicates the likelihood that a "family" foster care setting had not been effective for them⁴⁰. Although the reasons the placement with a foster family did not continue or succeed are varied, the fact that the former resident did not continue to live with the foster mother of whom they spoke likely creates a critical and cynical opinion about the

³⁹ In these two situations the agency staff also expressed some "confusion" regarding the city's decision to certify someone as a foster care mother during the time her children were placed in the system.

⁴⁰ Foster care regulations require that children be placed in the "least restrictive" setting. Thus from the system's point of view the preferred placement is with a "family".

motivations of the foster parents. Youth whose foster family placement had been more successful and who had “aged out” or returned home with fewer and more successful placements have different opinions of foster parents. There were also former Sweet Haven residents who mentioned previous foster mothers who the resident felt had genuinely cared for them. It seems likely that reimbursement rates affect people’s fostering choices, but that does not necessarily mean that women who foster children are operating from solely financial motivations.⁴¹

Katz’s (2001) discussion of foster care reimbursements focuses not on the foster parents’ motivations, but rather on the motivations and intentions of the policy decisions. She points to statistics that reveal that children who live in poverty are more likely to be placed in foster care (cf. Katz 2001 and appendix A) and then suggests that policies which are willing to give a foster parent more to provide care for a child than they would give that child’s parents through public assistance indicate the government’s attitude that it is better for someone else to raise the children of families who live in poverty. Katz (2001) and others who share her analysis advocate for higher assistance to the birth families, which would allow them to care adequately for their own children. There is also concern among many who work and research in the foster care field that legislation such as the “welfare reform” act of 1996 [Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act] will increase the correlation between foster care and children from families who are living in poverty. According to some calculations

Therefore children who are placed in residential care have usually been moved from an “unsuccessful” placement in a “family” setting.

⁴¹ Findings from studies of foster mothers have not found the desire for financial remuneration to be the prime motivator for choosing to fostering children. (See Osby 1999, Wozniak 2002)

the cumulative impact of these policy and program changes, because of their effects on families' abilities to support their children, is likely to be increasing numbers of children entering out-of-home care, most of whom will be poor (Simms, Freundlich, Battselli, and Kaufman 2001:170).

The various dynamics regarding both the prevalence of foster care placements and the effects of the changing social, economic, and political environments in which families live make it difficult to assess the causation factors in the relationship between poverty and foster care placement. With regards to placement at Sweet Haven the reasons for placement were sometimes for factors which also correlate with poverty such as homelessness or substance abuse by the parent. However, in other cases the reasons for placement were less conclusively income related, such as those where the death of their mother or a parent-child conflict precipitated the placement.

The Sweet Haven experience's divergence from "average" foster placement

Another factor in the placements of the former residents of Sweet Haven was that for a number of these women, Sweet Haven was their first placement, which meant they were sixteen or older when they entered care. The dynamics involved in entering placement as an adolescent can be different from those which affect the placement of a younger child.

Additionally since:

According to the Child Welfare League of America, out of a total of approximately 483,000 children living in out-of-home care at the end of 1995, 49% were living in family foster care, 23% in kinship care, 15% in residential group care, 1.7% in therapeutic foster care, and 11.3% in other facilities such as emergency shelters and psychiatric hospitals (Petit and Curtis 1997 as quoted in Curtis 1999: 4).

Thus the former residents of Sweet Haven fall within the 15% residential group care category, which separates their experience from that of the other 85% of foster youth

who did not live in a group home. That statistic, however, does not take into account the longitudinal progression of many foster care experiences in which youth move around between types of placements. In fact the majority of Sweet Haven residents had lived in another category of setting prior to or in some cases after Sweet Haven. This is similar to – in essence since ‘homelessness’ was one of the settings in which former residents found themselves, this validates – Hopper’s (2003) observation that

The upshot is a pattern of intermittent official homelessness (staying in shelters or on the street) that can make distinctions between housed and homeless somewhat arbitrary (2003: 169).

Furthermore, the type-of-care statistics are not aggregated according to location, so it is not clear what percentage of children in the New York City foster care system are in group placements and how that might compare to the prevalence of group placement in non-urban areas.

With regards to geographic location, statistics show that nearly one half of all the nation’s foster children live in one of five states: New York, Illinois, California, Michigan or Texas. In these states the concentration is in the urban areas, so in this respect the women of this study are closer to the “average” foster child. Statistically minorities are over represented in the foster care population and that statistic was certainly the case at Sweet Haven, however hidden within that statistic is the variable of country of origin. As indicated earlier, many of the youth who lived in Sweet Haven were immigrants whose foster care experience was compounded by issues of “green cards” and immigration considerations. The statistical reports do not indicate how common this is in the larger foster care population in either the United States in general

or in New York City specifically, so it is not possible to determine if the women I interviewed were representational in this aspect.

The former residents' divergence from the statistical and assumed picture of foster care both by nature of their demographical descriptors and by nature of their experience highlights the danger in assuming that there is an "average" foster care youth and then basing program and policy decisions on that assumed "norm". The women's experiences, both in foster care and after illustrate the need for programs and policies that are diverse and flexible enough to accommodate and "service" the full range of foster youths.

The foster care bureaucracy's influence on the Sweet Haven experience

Foster care in the United States is administered by a complicated system, which often does not allow for flexible delivery of services. The policies and procedures are designed in response to a multifaceted interplay of political, legal, economic, and administrative factors. Once these policies and procedures are in place they are expected to apply to every foster child and all foster care programs. Sweet Haven's philosophy and program design had to comply with these regulations even if the regulations did not concur with the agency's understandings of what treatment was most appropriate for the individual resident. Although the foster youth were under the care of the agency, the agency did not have the ultimate authority. Foster children are "under the case management and supervision of the primary state child welfare agency" (GAO/HRD 91-64 1991:20). In a large urban area like New York City, the state's responsibility is usually overseen (overtaken) by the city child welfare agency. The state and city then often contract with non-profit agencies to provide the day-to-day care for many of these

youth. A further complication to the decision making process is that as a result of the federal mandate for all placements to be authorized by the court, judges and lawyers also influence what care the individual child receives.

One of the ways this complexity affected the foster youth was to increase the number of people with who they had to relate. A foster child in a 'contract agency'⁴² was required to interact with numerous people, whose purposes or ideas sometimes contradicted each other. These people included; a social worker and the childcare staff in the 'agency', a legal guardian or lawyer (who represent the child in court placement hearings), a case manager at the city agency level, as well as workers, staff, teachers, and counselors in any of the agencies which might be providing additionally required services. This was in addition to any interactions they might have had with their biological family, which at times contradicted and complicated the other relationships and interactions⁴³. Ideally, in order for the child's needs to be meet adequately, each of these workers should communicate with each other at the same time that they are meeting the multitude of implementation and reporting requirements of the city, state and federal oversight bodies. This situation often lead the Sweet Haven residents to feel that too many people were involved in their lives and decisions, leaving little room for them to have any control of their own.

⁴² In New York City, as in many other cities and a number of states as well, the majority of the client services that the state is obligated to perform based on federal regulations and requirements, is actually carried out by 'voluntary' or 'contract' agencies. These are independent social service agencies that enter into an agreement (contract) with the city to provide designated services in exchange for a proscribed amount of federal funds. The contract details services to be provided, the relationship that is required with the city and other agencies, and the required reporting and documentation.

The strains and conflicts around decision-making were perhaps most clearly revealed with changes in placement. As mentioned in the first section of this chapter, placement results from a petition to the court either by the parents or by a party outside the family. Once the petition has been made, the child and the family in effect lose their ability to decide their future. The court decides whether to place the child based on the petition and once the initial placement happens, the child is “in the system” and from that point on the legal and bureaucratic regulations control all future decisions. After that point even if both parent and child decide the child can return home, the child can not legally return home until the court approves that “plan”. The same is true in any subsequent placements. The child’s wishes are taken into consideration by the court, but ultimately it is the judge’s not the child’s decision as to where they will be placed. An effect of this policy was that sometimes placement changes seemed arbitrary or sudden.

Movement within the system and long-term connections

Even placements that were in agreement with the foster youth’s desires were still often temporary, since many programs were designed to be utilized by a limited age group or for a specific duration of time. For some youth, the realization that a change of placement was inevitable created a feeling of instability and powerlessness which affected their ability and desire to sustain relationships.

It was not only foster youth who developed the attitude that the formation of long term relationships were not possible or desirable; some city and agency policy was based on this assumption. New placements meant that youth were required to connect to new

⁴³ Although some of the biological family worked alongside the agency, there were occasions where the biological family appeared to be sabotaging plans made in the interest of the resident.

rules, circumstances and people. Often there was an underlying assumption that if they did not separate from the old program they would not be able/motivated to form new relationships. Thus many agencies either prohibited or discouraged youth's continued contact with people from the former program. Even if the agency did not prohibit contact, the logistics of changing programs was detrimental to relationships. As one former resident describes it,

your friends [at the old placement] feel betrayed, by the time you do get situated and try to contact them, they don't want to be your friend anymore, cause they think you abandoned them.

In many cases childcare staff and social workers were unable to maintain contact with youth after they had been transferred to a different agency. This lack of continuity was not only because of the need for the youth to emotionally connect with new people, but also because once the new placement was official, the new program had jurisdiction and the former staff were no longer permitted to be involved due to policy and liability considerations. Thus changing placements led to a severing of former relationships and the forming of new relationships.

Because Sweet Haven was an independent living program and serviced older foster youth, it was the final placement for the majority of the residents. Thus the agency and the youth were not restricted in their ability to keep in contact with each other. In fact the city required the discharging agency to remain in contact with the child following discharge. This follow-up was mandated as part of the stipulations of a class-action suit filed on behalf of the disproportionate number of former foster youth who were in the homeless population. The city required follow-up services be provided to assure that discharged foster children did not become homeless and that their living situation was not

dangerous. The extent of services required and the length of time which the agency need to maintain contact varied, however, when the child turned 21 all city-mandated contact and service ended. The city childcare agency's legally obligation was only to minors. Their follow-up services were motivated by liability and legal concerns not by an understanding of the benefits of long-term ongoing relationships.⁴⁴

Foster care as a factor in situations of on-going poverty

As discussed earlier, poverty and placement in foster care correlate. Additionally, some (but not all) of the former foster care youths struggle with ongoing poverty. In some cases, those most affected by poverty are women who either left foster care early because they were pregnant or those who had children soon after leaving. Women whose experiences either before or during foster care created a large range of unmet needs or social and/or mental deficits are also more likely to struggle with financial problems. These women did not leave foster care totally prepared to survive independently. The city, public policy, and public sentiment is that children need care; however, when these 'children' turn 18 or 21, the same sentiment is not present and the youths' lack of preparation becomes their own problem. In many cases they can not find adequate support.

Some foster care advocates propose that adequate foster care policies

would be more child-centered and would take more seriously the child's developmental needs. These would include considering who ... will continue to be a family for the child when he or she becomes an adult (Mason, et. al. 1998:10).

⁴⁴ Sweet Haven continued contact with former residents who were over 21, however that contact was outside the jurisdiction of the city, whereas some contact with former residents who were under 21 was under city requirements and oversight. As will be discussed in chapter five, youth's continued contact with each other and with former staff members often served important functions.

Their view is that foster care policy should assume that there is a role for ‘family’ even after a youth becomes an adult. Current public policy appears to be based on the opposite concept – that of a truncated image of nuclear family where adult children are no longer ‘family. As has been suggested by foster care advocates and as my research has shown, many adults who have been raised by the foster care system continue to need the kinds of support that are often supplied to others by familial networks. Many of the former residents comment that they wished they were back in care, because they could really use the help now, others comment that they wish they had taken more advantage of what they were offered then, believing that if they had done so maybe they would be in a better place now.

Summary and conclusion

The women who are the focus of this dissertation were in foster care. However, their feelings towards and experiences of foster care are not identical due to a variety of factors. These factors can be arranged into a number of categories which include: the child’s characteristics (i.e. ethnicity, race, immigrant status, or family’s “class”), the child’s situation (i.e. family dynamics, level of abuse or neglect, or age), the child’s geopolitical location (i.e. state and local laws, regulations, and available services), the child’s placement (with relatives or a non-relative family, in an institution or group home), the quality and dynamic of their placement and the children themselves (i.e. personality, coping skills, or intellectual level).

In addition to these factors, the institution of foster care and the agencies that provide care are profoundly influenced by larger social, political, and economic

conditions, by legal statutes and legislation, and by the attitude of the officials who enforce and implement the policies and programs.

In spite of these varied factors and individuals' different experiences there are commonalities and themes that can be drawn, not the least of which is that a situation that is structured to be "temporary" has long-lasting ramifications. As will be revealed in more detail in later chapters many of the women still feel the effects of the instability, loss of control and disconnectedness that resulted from the legal and bureaucratic involvement in their life as foster children. Rather than countering or helping to mediate these feelings the foster care system adds to them during the youth's time in care, by discouraging both participation in decision-making and continuity in relationships.

Many of the former foster care youths are also still affected by the negative perceptions that they and others have of the institution of foster care. They often worry that they have not overcome the losses and compensated for the disruptions that foster care created in their lives. Numerous times the former foster care youths would immediately follow a comment about being in foster care with the rhetorical question/statement, "I think I came out alright."

CHAPTER FOUR ANTHROPOLOGY AT HOME

Today as I was walking on the streets with Jenny and her children. The girls were playing the game children sometimes play – the “when I am 13, Katie will be 10 ...” and then before she said how old her baby brother would be, she suddenly asked, “When Jason is my age, will he know Nancy?” Jenny looked at her, laughed and said, “Of course, where is Nancy going?” I think about my concern that my (is it a friendship or a mentoring or what) connection with her, will be seen as just a part of my dissertation. Am I only connected with her and her family because of my research? But then I remind myself, that we had the connection before the research started; in fact my connection with her (and others) is what propelled me to do the research in the first place. So has the research overtaken and altered the relationship, or is it just my fear of the ramifications of the research that needs altering. (Field notes May 20, 2003)

Talked to Janis [a former staff person] today, she kept telling me I had to finish, that the girls had talked to me, and if I didn't finish they would feel the interviews had been a waste of their time. Then she said I was a role model and therefore I needed to finish what I started so they could see the completion. I know she is saying whatever she thinks will influence me the most and keep me moving forward. Is she just being a friend and helping me succeed or is there some fragment of truth in her insistence? She and other former staff, and board members all seem to be behind me and want me to get this finished. So, is this all because they like me and want me to succeed or are they interested in the final product. And if they are interested in the final product, does their desire/interest threaten the dissertation process. I remember the imperatives I was given early in the discussions of dissertation projects, “It can't be a program evaluation; it has to be theoretical.” (Field notes January 10, 2003)

Fieldwork is a characteristic (some might say requirement) of the anthropological endeavor (cf. Watson 1999:2). Fieldwork traditionally entailed “going to the field” and becoming a participant-observer. “The distinction between ‘the field’ and ‘home’ rests on their spatial separation. ...Temporal succession therefore traces the natural sequence of sites that completes a spatial journey into Otherness.” (Gupta and Ferguson 1997d: 12). My dissertation reverses that scenario. I was present and “participating” with my research “subjects” long before I “arrived” as an anthropological “observer”. Thus, I end

up in the “anthropology at home” conundrum.

The practice of “anthropology at home” challenged a number of anthropological conventions that were at the core of the traditional anthropological endeavor. In fact, the very phrase “‘anthropology at home’ gains its force from implicitly appearing as an oxymoron” (Morton 1999:244). Although there is overlap and interplay between the challenged concepts, the discussion can be organized within the following categories: exoticism, the “culture concept”, dynamics of “closeness” to subjects, the final portrayals of those researched (the “writing up”), and rationales presented for partaking the study of your own in the first place. This chapter will discuss each of these concepts in relationship to my research. In order to ground these discussions, the chapter will begin by briefly outlining the historic characterization of and challenges posed by anthropology at home. It is also important to note that anthropologists who study in their own society often fall under the rubrics of various specialization designations; therefore, this discussion also draws from and enhances studies conducted in urban, feminist, and applied anthropology.

Early designations

Various designations have been assigned to anthropologists who study “their own”. Discussions regarding these descriptions usually recognized that the framing of the category is as problematic as the choice of a word to describe it. Different terms gained acceptance at various junctures in the discipline’s history and were attached differently to different practitioners. One of the earliest terms (as well as the earliest acceptance of anthropologists studying their own) was “native” anthropology (Peirano 1998). This term was usually applied to “non-Western” anthropologists, who had trained

in “Western” universities. They were encouraged to study their own, but were often considered

not as a professional who will conduct research and develop theories and generalizations, but as a person who is in position to collect information in his own culture to which an outsider does not have access (Jones 1970: 252).

The historical construction of these researchers as “natives” who turned into anthropologists – quasi anthropologists – was related to the binary inherent in the early construction of anthropology. This formulation required an insider/self in opposition to the outsider/other. The “native” anthropologist thus was only valid when paired with a “real” anthropologist who could provide the “outsider” interpretation. The “logic” of this formulation was that without the binary there could not be the comparison, as per the metaphor popularized by Kluckhohn (1949: 11), anthropology requires the double gaze, the looking in the mirror at the other to see yourself. The problem though is which “yourself” do you see. Are you the “native” or the one gazing to “see?” We are all native to somewhere, or to manywheres, just as we are all sometimes insiders and sometimes outsiders. For example, within my research what is my connection to my research site and to my “subjects”? Am I an ‘insider’, a ‘native’ (Does 20 years in New York make me a native New Yorker – whatever that is?) and are they “my own”? The affirmative answer to these questions can be found in a postmodern/multicultural/multi-identity paradigm. How else can I say I am studying my own, when I, a middle-aged white woman raised by both her parents in a small Midwest town, study women who are relatively young (19 - late 30’s), mostly non-white, and raised in an urban foster care system? In spite of these demographic descriptions which seems to have little but gender in common, I was and in some cases still am, part of these women’s lives in a role that

mimics many of the roles of a family member, in some ways they are ‘my own’. In fact, as one of the agency board members said to me as I was describing some of the struggle I was experiencing midstream in the research. “No wonder it is hard, you are part of the family you are studying.”

Narayan’s (1993) challenge to the native/non-native dichotomy provided useful insight. She proposes

that at this historical moment we might more profitably view each anthropologist in terms of shifting identifications amid a field of interpenetrating communities and power relations. The loci along which we are aligned with or set apart from those whom we study are multiple and in flux (1993: 671).

Within my own research, I and the women whom I interviewed were certainly part of “interpenetrating communities”. During a portion of their adolescence, we shared a home, an address, a location; yet we occupied that “home” differently. They were youths and under the “control” of the state in the first place and the house’s guidelines in the second. I also had certain guidelines I had to follow as part of my job description, but I was in different power relationships within the situation than they were. As the residents became adults and left the house there was still a connection through their alumnae status and through the bonds that were formed during our time of living together, but the dynamics between us changed.

If the concept of “shifting identities” is extended to include the multiple “identities” of the research subjects an even larger picture of the “interpenetrating communities” is revealed. During the time they were living in the house, the connections of the residents were clearly in flux. There were times when tensions would develop in the house, and residents would split along various lines, depending on the source of the

tension. The groups that formed reflected various connections/loyalties. Therefore some arguments were between those who lived on the first and those who lived on the second floors, between new residents and long-term residents, between Hispanic and non-Hispanic, between Caribbean and non-Caribbean, between residents and staff people, between social services [social worker] and childcare staff (set-up by the residents' ability to play staff members off against each other with regards to residents' behavior/needs/activities), between former association with one borough or another, or just between two personalities, who then brought others into their conflict. There were also times when the residents talked about how the house was different from other foster homes and were upset if other residents brought too much hassle into the house. Depending on the alliances, my or any staff person's involvement or ability to mediate these conflicts changed. Additionally while they were living in the house, and after, most of them identified with other groups; such as biological family, school, neighborhood acquaintances, and friends. In some instances these other groups overlapped or interacted with their associations in the house, but often those connections were a totally separate dynamic in their lives. At times I had (and in some cases still have) knowledge of and conversations with some of these other connections, but neither I nor the former resident would consider me a part of that realm of their life in the same way that I am part of their "foster care experience".

The shifting paradigm from native/non-native dichotomizing to recognition of multiple and intersecting identities grew out of the challenges that "native" anthropologists presented to the discipline. My research however, would not have been labeled "native" since that term was not used for white U. S. scholars. This research

would more likely be labeled “insider” research or be called anthropology conducted “at home”. As is apparent by the title of this chapter, if a label needs to be attached to this research “at home” is probably the most appropriate, since “insider” implies the same bounded location that “native” requires. As was previously noted, the former foster youths and I are inside some of the same spheres of identification, but in other ways, I am outside their range of experiences, just as they are outside of mine.

Status of North American anthropology

A further complication with my own research was created by the fact that not only was I doing “at home” research; I was also researching people that were known to me prior to beginning the research. It would have been slightly less complicated to have started my research from my first “encounter”. However, that was impossible, due to the fact that in 1982 when I first met some of the women I had not yet become an anthropologist. In 1991, when as a graduate student I took the live-in position at Sweet Haven’s residence on Manhattan’s Upper East Side, it still would have been difficult for me to conduct an anthropological study of foster care. As a New Yorker and professional in the foster care system, I had the interest and the background to study foster care. Nevertheless, as an anthropological graduate student the expectation at that time was that first research should be done abroad. In fact, the appropriateness of study at home was a concern for not only fledgling anthropologists; even seasoned American anthropologists often felt the need to provide assurances that their work was anthropological *even if* it was conducted in the United States (c.f. Powdermaker 1950, Myerhoff 1979, Weston 1991).

Wolcott’s (1981) sentiment that anthropology “at home” was valuable, but needed

to be preceded by anthropology “elsewhere” was shared by many anthropologists. Anthropologists researching at home often prefaced their work with references to their previous work “abroad” to validate themselves as anthropologists. For example, in the introduction to Myerhoff’s study of elderly Jewish people in California, Victor Turner claims it is appropriate for her to conduct the study because she had already “written an important book, *Peyote Hunt*” (1979:x).

It is now acceptable to conduct anthropological research in the United States; however, that acceptance has waxed and waned since the first American research in the late 1920’s (Lynd and Lynd 1929, 1937 and Warner’s *Yankee City* series in the 1940’s). North American anthropology⁴⁵ did not become a unit of the American Anthropological Association until the 1990’s. Their regular column in the *Anthropology News* chronicles their ongoing struggle for complete acceptance as a legitimate anthropological enterprise. In 1997, Goode stated that the “marginality of North American anthropology is alive and well” (quoted by Waterston 2002:51). In 2002, Waterston’s assessment of the outlook was improved as “more among us are claiming North America as an important site of critical research, writing and activism. ... [But] there is more work to be done” (Ibid).

Waterston’s assessment reveals the activist, applied and critical position of many North American researchers. Although not all “public” or “applied” anthropology is conducted by anthropologists in their “own” society, nor is all anthropology done in one’s own society “public” or policy-based, the theoretical and methodological

⁴⁵ On its web site the Society for the Anthropology of North America, a unit of the AAA, identifies its “area” as North America, including the United States, Canada and Mexico. However, many authors of books and journals identify and label their work as “anthropology of the United States”. My research specifically focused on the United

discussions of either approach often involves a discussion of the other. A similar overlap occurs between “at home” anthropology and the anthropology of the United States. This dissertation research joins a large body of research located at the intersection of these designations; where those who identify as “at home”, “applied” or United States-focused anthropologists explore questions regarding anthropological enterprise, methodology and theoretical underpinnings. In part these questions are fueled by (and fuel) larger challenges within anthropology. Morton (1999) frames these challenges by identifying

two main problem areas [on which] to concentrate in relation to the idea of anthropology at home. The first pertains to focus and to the question of what makes the idea of home-as-object problematic in relation to the practice of anthropology. The second relates to method and the implications of the first question for an understanding of what the practice of anthropology actually ought to be. I suggest the legacy of ‘othering’ which anthropology inherited from its earliest institutional days in the nineteenth century remains surprisingly strong at the present time. (1999: 243-4).

Although particularly salient in the “at home” context, the legacy (and inherent problems) of ‘othering’ is not restricted to anthropologists who study “at home”. Currently anthropologists from a broad spectrum of interests/”areas” are reexamining their choice of “location” and “people”, often under the rubric of confronting the vision of anthropology as the study of the “exotic” (cf. Di Leonardo 1998 and MacClancy 2002).

The other – the exotic

This dissertation joins other research that finds itself at a “juncture in anthropology – a time that perhaps witnesses the end to the serious academic exploration of exoticism” (Goldman 1999:3). In fact, one of the goals of this dissertation, as stated at

States, as does most of the literature I reference; therefore, I will use that designation in

the end of the introduction, is to reveal the ways in which the lives of the former foster care residents illuminate and expand our understanding of what is considered “normative” in our society. As the “gotta love your family” quote which began this dissertation reveals, those formerly in foster care are not the only adults who negotiate the “double-edged sword”, which is “family”. Thus to truly understand the lives of those formerly in foster care, it is necessary to recognize the ways in which their lives and their upbringing is not a tragic experience that is beyond our realm of possibility/understanding but is instead an experience which has dimensions that are shared by all of us.

Although comparing the “culture” of the anthropological “subject” with one’s own “culture” is not a departure from classical anthropological approaches, my research does not present the two “cultures” in a traditional parallel or hierarchical comparison, but rather views the lives of the “subjects” and “our” lives as existing within the same frames of reference, as lives that co-existing in the same “realm” (even though the experiences within that “realm” are often divergent). Conceptualization of the “subject” as the “other”/the “exotic” was partially the result of the antecedents of the anthropological discipline, which many acknowledge were rooted in the colonial enterprise (See for example Hymes 1972, Asad 1973, Fox 1991, Harrison 1991, and MacClancy 2002).

Traube’s (1996) review article noted that few anthropologists focused on

the remainder of the text.

mainstream American culture⁴⁶. She attributed this phenomenon to the anthropological convention which defined its object as “other”. Traube referred to a suggestion first made by Abu-Lughod (1991) that “anthropologists working ‘at home’ may exoticize their subjects to reassure themselves and others that their disciplinary identities remain intact” (1991: 129).

Trouillot (1991) clarified that although “exoticizing” may be anthropology’s legacy, it is not necessarily its invention. Pointing to the framing of the exotic other as ‘savage’, he highlighted the political and religious agenda which consigned the ‘savage’ to a position in opposition to utopia. This agenda used anthropological as well as missionary and travelers’ accounts to define and describe this ‘savage,’ which was a counterbalance to the concepts of utopia and order. He believed that if postmodern anthropology did not look at the substantive reasons for this opposition, it would change terms, but it would not move beyond the “savage slot”. My dissertation demonstrates an anthropology designed not to exoticize, but rather to counter the media and public policies which often ostracize and sensationalize foster care. It attempts to move the reader beyond an initial and commonly felt “pity” for the lives of those who were raised in foster care, thus avoiding reinforcing the view that those who lived in foster care had a deficient and substantially different upbringing; whereas the rest of the United States population (who are viewed as having been raised in a “normal” family) had an idyllic childhood.

“Cultures” as unified wholes distinct from each other

⁴⁶ She further notes that “most of these studies were written by already established scholars rather than recent PhDs suggest[ing] that work on American popular culture cannot be relied on to certify professional anthropologists” (1996: 128).

Traube (1996) expanded the discussion of exoticism by suggesting that

the exoticism inscribed in the anthropological culture concept and reproduced in classic ethnographic writing ...emphasize[d] differences between the cultures of observers and observed, suppressing what connects them to one another and neglecting intracultural forms of difference (Traube 1996:128-9).

Thus ethnographic writing was distinguished by its practice of producing a text which described as completely as possible all the aspects of (an)other's life. The totality of the "people's" life was considered to comprise their culture and anthropologists could then portray a "culture" as a unified whole in their ethnographies. Each individual "culture" – unified whole – was separate from every other unified whole and thus difference was inscribed in the "culture concept". Privileging the differences and ignoring the connections between the researcher and those they research resulted in the required practice of a disconnect between the researcher and the people who were researched. This relative positioning was inscribed in the anthropologist's role as the objectifying describer of the object. Weston (2000) noted that for anthropologists who study "their own", this dichotomized positioning becomes especially problematic because these anthropologists are no longer in the "subject position peculiar to anthropology, with its long history of participation in the colonial ventures that produced 'the native' as an object of Euro-American subjugation" (2000:158). Bourgois (2002) moved the critique from anthropology's "colonial" antecedents to their identification as a *science*, which therefore requires *objectivity*. He cautions that "[t]o avoid imposing, in the name of science, images that "other" the people they study, ethnographers need to be self-reflexively critical and to recognize that no single, simple reality or essence of a culture necessarily exists" (2002: 19). The previous chapter adhered to that caution as it

confronted the social science and political view of foster care, thus revealing that it is neither realistic nor possible to present a cohesive picture of the foster care experience. This dissertation thus reinforces the belief that anthropologists working in their own “culture” must continue to expose and analyze the intricacies which are obscured by the “culture concept”, acknowledging the places where they share coterminous categorizations with their “subjects”, the places where their identities diverge, and the range of categorizations that exist among their “subjects”. The unified cohesive “culture” which the early anthropologists claimed/imagined is no longer heuristic.

Danger of false preconceptions and perceptions among the “reading audience”

Another danger of the structuring of anthropology as a science that objectively describes another “culture” is that this formulation often ignores the power dynamic between the anthropologist as the one who presents “reality” and the subject of that reality whose voice is presented, but who often has no “voice” in how that reality is portrayed. Di Leonardo (1998) suggested that the anthropological practice of presenting a perceived view of reality often led to a freezing of “lives” in an “ethnographic present”, which rendered the people and their lives “hidden in plain sight”. Instead of leading to understanding, it led to an assumed and false perception of knowledge of a group of people, while in some instances the individuals of that group had to confront reactions of others based on that false perception.

This danger of false perceptions is one which this dissertation encounters. In this case the current perceptions are not those created by anthropologists, due to the historic lack of anthropological studies of foster care youth. However, because the media, “popular image”, and government’s representations of foster care and poverty have in

many cases already created perceptions in people's minds, this dissertation research runs the risk of falsely reinforcing existing negative perceptions, rather than providing new insights. Bourgois (2002) warns the "one of the weaknesses of ethnographic accounts [is that] they risk becoming voyeuristic constructions of a dehumanized, sensationalized "exotic" other in a political and economic vacuum" (2002: 24-25). Thus I could present behavior which on the surface seems to reinforce a negative stereotype, but in actuality is a strategy that fits the circumstances of the former resident's existence. There is an inherent risk that the reader will focus on the behavior, validating preconceived notions while overlooking the discussion of the circumstances.

For example, how can I clearly present the lives and struggles of some of the former foster youths who are living in poverty without readers either assuming that all the former foster youth are poor or superimposing their already formed attitudes about poor people's behavior on the actions of these women? With hesitation I present a concrete example of this danger.

A common theme discussed by the former foster youth is the struggle to acquire affordable housing in New York City. Standard market rate apartments are often beyond their budgets, therefore if former residents do not live in "the projects" or have "Section 8" they often fall behind in rent or are unable to find housing in the first place.

Section 8 is a federally subsidized program which pays part of the rent for qualified apartments directly to the building owners on behalf of the holders of the certificate, thus reducing the Section 8 recipients' rent to a manageable portion of their income/resources. However, there are a limited number of certificates granted and qualified applicants are prioritized into certain categories. Those applicants who do not

fall into one of the special categories can wait 10 years or longer to be given a certificate⁴⁷. Homeless families and domestic violence “victims” are a prioritized category and in many instances received Section 8 certificates within a year. Therefore on occasion when a former resident did not have affordable housing⁴⁸, they turned down friends and family’s offers to allow them to move in with them. Based on their own and others’ experiences, they believed they would not be able to find affordable housing and so decided that “doubling up” was not a viable option, because it would end up lasting forever and they would eventually have to enter the homeless system, so they might as well just start out there⁴⁹. However, the prospect of going into a homeless shelter was not an experience which the former residents entered with enthusiasm and was one which they recognized was not an ideal place for themselves and their children to live. Instead, they believed it was their best option to affordable housing. As one former resident described it, “It is like jail, you have to do the time and you aren’t allowed any freedom.” I pointed out that there was no crime associated with “doing the time”; she just laughed and said, “You know what I mean.” For her, and others, the shelter is definitely experienced as a punishment.

⁴⁷ One of the former residents reported that she had re-contacted the city about subsidized housing and had been informed that the application she had filed ten years ago was still active and that her name was nearing the top of the list. They told her to check back in a few months, because they were currently awarding Section 8 certificates to people who had applied a few months before her.

⁴⁸ Former residents became homeless for a variety of reasons; some where living with their boyfriend or his family and needed to leave when the relationship soured, some were evicted for failure to pay rent, some were sharing apartments and were asked to leave for personality reasons or because they or the other person got pregnant. Sometimes they had lost jobs and in some cases they were in their early 20’s and had never really had a lease in their own name, but had always been between other people’s living situations.

This “decision” to enter the homeless shelter system could be viewed as involving a certain level of “false” presentation, since one had to present oneself as having *no* other options. Yet at another level the offer to share someone else’s apartment is often not a truly viable option, given that living in cramped quarters in someone else’s space for extended periods of time often leads to conflicts that are detrimental to the relationships, as “even families renowned for their tenacity and resourcefulness in the face of adversity, were courting exhaustion” (Hopper 2003: 161).

Recent conversations reveal that the city has further limited eligibility priorities and now mere homelessness does not necessarily guarantee a quick Section 8 certificate. One of the former residents, who has been living with her daughter in a Tier II shelter⁵⁰ for more than a year, told me that the social workers at the shelter were

not helping people find apartments [and that the social worker implied that] too many people were going into shelters to get subsidized housing, therefore, they [the social workers and the ‘system’] are making the waiting period longer to discourage people from coming into the shelters.

Thus some of the former residents were advised and advised each other to frame themselves as victims of domestic violence, a category which still receives priority. Here again, what may appear as a false pretense, is actually part of a larger complex which includes the New York City housing market, the bureaucratic governmental housing system, and tenuous relationships, which in cases that were not openly physically “violent” were nevertheless detrimental. In one of these situations, the former resident

⁴⁹ There were other former residents who had no offers and no other options and so did not weigh those factors before entering the homeless system.

⁵⁰ In theory, families who stay in the shelter system for extended periods of time are placed in a Tier II shelter, which is transitional housing that theoretically includes kitchens/kitchenettes and supportive services. However in this case the Tier II shelter was a single room in a former hotel, with a refrigerator and an “illegal” hotplate.

was harassed so much by the shelter workers about whether she *actually needed* a domestic violence shelter that she went back to live with the father of her child, where she feels so trapped that she often considers putting her child in care, so that she can get out of the situation.

This discussion of former residents' struggles and strategies for solving housing needs is an example which illustrates that not all former residents who are homelessness lack connections and relationships, but rather they are constrained by the near non-existence of affordable housing and the fact that family and friends are not able to allow the women to live with them for extended periods of time⁵¹. The analyses of the situation and the former resident's behavior requires multiple layers of knowledge regarding such factors as interpersonal dynamics of living arrangements, housing markets, and governmental bureaucratic programs, therefore, the presentation of the behavior entails a risk of misinterpretation leading to a reinforcement of preconceived perceptions of manipulation of governmental programs and policies.

Ginsburg (1993) discusses being confronted with similar challenges when her research countered her colleagues' preconceived perceptions of her "subjects". She describes the difficulties she had because the people she was studying were

considered by most of [her] colleagues to be their enemies... [When she] offered representations that rendered the right-to-life position sensible or

⁵¹ See Hopper and Baumohl (1996) for a discussion of available but "finite" kin resources, "public shelters [as] the most expeditious route to housing assistance", and "residents who come directly from ...foster care placements: their homelessness is an artifact of careless or cynical institutional practice, with shelters serving as substitutes for (and thus reasons to neglect) 'discharge planning'" (1996: 11, 13) [I would add that in some cases discharge planning is provided but is not able to counter the deficits resulting from foster care and/or realistic discharge planning is resisted or rejected by adolescents whose expectations, job experience and money management skills are not in line with their current situation and status.]

even as powerful as it is to those who adhere to it (as any good ethnographer must), [her] ‘objectivity’ or results were called into question...[She believes] the more general concern is how the interpretation of research is shaped when home audiences are often directly engaged in the issues being studied (1993: 165).

“At home” research and the accounts that are produced from that research have to allow for this “direct engagement” of their readers. In many cases the people who are reading the research have already formed opinions and in some cases have personally “encountered” the people whom the researcher is discussing, thus the reader may assume they already “know” the “subjects”. When the research analysis contradicts that “sense of knowing” there may be a tendency to challenge the research rather than reanalyzing former “understandings”.

Rationale for anthropology at home

Given the historic interest in the other, why did anthropologists turn their gaze inward? The reasons are complex, but the litany usually includes in some combination - the loss of accessibility to the exotic other, the reduction in funding requiring a less distant study, competition among scholars/students for sites, and the interest of other disciplines in our methods for use at home (cf. Hayano 1979, Jackson 1987). I want to suggest the existence of a slightly different rationale, which is alluded to by some researchers who study “at home”. A full comprehension and acceptance of this rationale is facilitated by a slight pause to engage in a storytelling tradition. Anthropologists, especially those from a reflexive or postmodern paradigm, will at some point tell the “how I became an anthropologist” story. There is also another story that is often included, even in the earliest ethnographies, albeit usually not as part of the analysis but rather

in the introductions or first chapters, where opening narratives commonly recount the writer's arrival at the field site. ...[where these stories] play the crucial role of anchoring that description ...[by] inserting into the ethnographic text the authority of the personal experience out of which the ethnography is made (Pratt 1986: 31-33).

Because my field is my home, to some degree, my two stories are the same. Before I had any notions of anthropology or of being an anthropologist, I was doing social work with parents suspected of child abuse and neglect. The agency was labeled a "prevention" agency, because our goal was to prevent foster care placement. We worked with the parents, often single mothers, to help them stabilize their family and raise their children in such a manner that the children were considered "safe" and therefore not needing to be placed in care. One of my tasks was to meet periodically with the agency psychiatrist and "present" my cases. I described each case and he asked questions to ascertain the mental state of the parent and the safety of the children. I remember one salient conversation in which he was probing to determine if a single mother of four boys who lived in a two-room apartment was clinically depressed. I had mentioned that she sometimes shut herself in the bathroom for over an hour at a time. I was trying to explain the behavior based on the situation in the apartment and her comments about having so little space and that with four boys she occasionally needed some privacy and quiet. I remember saying that I would probably shut myself in the bathroom if I was in her place. He was extremely upset with me for considering these circumstances and was more interested in the DSM III (Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Third Edition, American Psychiatric Association. 1987) checklist of depression than he was in the context of her life. I remember thinking at the time, that to understand behavior you needed to understand context and the rational of the person performing the action. I also

remember thinking that maybe I shouldn't have told him she shut herself in the bathroom and that if she lost her children because of it, she would probably wish she hadn't told me. At the time of the initial conversation with her I was doing a "home visit". I could see the physical layout of the apartment and understand her assumption that being in the bathroom did not jeopardize her children. I realize, in retrospect, that during that meeting with the psychiatrist, the anthropologist in me was born.

So why do I include this story? Is it just to participate in the storytelling tradition? No, it is because I think the story is "telling" for a number of reasons, one of which I will highlight here and the other themes will surface later. I suggest that for myself and others (Tokar 1993, Singer 2003, King 2003) the choice is not between "home" and "elsewhere" as research location; rather it is a choice between "anthropology" and "other discipline" as an approach for exploring questions and social "problems" "at home". In these cases the interest is not to explore and explain the unusual, the oddity, or the foreign way of life. Instead, the motivation is to grapple with and understand a situation, engage in praxis, and seek to discover new ways of comprehending and engaging with the multifaceted world in which we live. As was mentioned in the introductory chapter, concerns for praxis can lead others to question your concern for theoretical integrity. But as Rodriguez (2001) highlights, theory and practice are not opposite, not an either/or proposition, instead they are concepts that must be held simultaneously.

anthropology at home has been called an anthropology of issues in that it implies an attempt to link the theory — practice dichotomy.

...[A]nthropological analysis⁵² should be a vehicle for shedding new light on ongoing problems. Yet we must remember that our work as native anthropologists is intellectual work (Rodriguez 2001:244, 246).

Distance between researcher and subject as an anthropological convention

Both feminist and applied anthropologists are often led to ask themselves what the relationship between researchers and researched should be. There are two possible formulations that have been suggested, alluded to, or tried: friends and collaborators. In some instances the relationship has been both. Both have strengths and weakness, as Rabinow, in his attempt to build collaboration into his study of scientists, discovered. Sometimes the other's interest in your research is not strong enough to motivate them to put forth the energy required in collaboration. In contrast, in Behar's (1993) case, her comrade collaborator was motivated and believed in the project. Their relationship was an important dynamic of the work and leads Behar, along with other feminists to believe that they should "tak[e] as [their] focus women's relationships to other women" (1993:301). Sometimes however this approach is problematic. The dynamic of the research can create barriers to what could be or what was a friendship. A personal example can illustrate this point. During my research, I was traveling with a friend who was not connected with the research, but who had agreed to stop on our trip in the town of one of the former residents, who I was planning to interview. As we neared the town, I told my friend I had not seen this woman for at least three years and was feeling unsure about her receptiveness. (When I had called her to arrange to meet her, she had avoided the part of my conversation about research, but had said she would like to see me). I had

⁵² Rodriguez was speaking specifically of "Black feminist anthropological analysis" (2001:246). However, I believe her mandate should be considered by all "at-home" anthropology.

arranged to meet her at a gas station near the interstate and then follow her car to where we were going to spend some time. When she arrived I got out of my car and she screamed with delight and we hugged. When I got back in the car with my non-research affiliated friend to follow the former resident and her son, my friend said to me “You can’t interview her, she is too happy to see you.” My friend assumed that I would invalidate and jeopardize a friendship, by inserting the dynamic of researcher and research subject.

My friend’s assumption was not an unrealistic assumption; other researchers have detailed examples of their research changing the dynamics of their relationships. This is especially true when the nature of the research or the topics make people or groups of people who were once close feel betrayed or misrepresented, or in danger of either (see for example Hendry 1992). Weis and Fine discuss the experiences of those “who have been positioned as outsiders by their own racial or ethnic group throughout their research experiences” (2000:90). The research stage of the anthropological endeavor is not the only time when these issues arise. In some instances it is at the point of publication or in the press coverage of the publication that the “process of redefinition from insider to stranger” (Brettell 1993:5) takes place. At times the reaction is even more powerful and negative and “the indigenous anthropologist ...faced the wrath of a research community” (ibid.).

A related dynamic when the research site is “at home” or is at least close enough to make repeated visits over time is that

this close-to-home research means that the project has the possibility of being more long-term, as well as more sporadic or intermittent, and thus the fieldwork may come to interweave with our everyday lives – family, work, even friends may occasionally become enmeshed with our field

community or its members (Hopkins 1993:123).

Correspondingly, when the field is close, people we meet in the field though the “emergence of the give and the take of fieldwork” and the deepening of relationships that occur over time can become our friends. O’Brien relates how she has “thus been able to share aspects of [her] life with the community, just as [she has] expected them to share aspect of their life with [her]” (1993:246). Part of this early give and take was that several of the village residents “watched out” for her safety when she first moved to the village. In my own case, I think about how several of the former residents, as well as board members and staff, take an interest in the progression of this study, not only because it concerns them, but equally because it concerns me and they care about my life. Thus when they see me (even if we are not ‘formally’ doing research) they will joke and chide about the progress of the study as one of the ways which they relate to me on a personal level.

Mehra (2001), in discussing her own research, ponders how to deal with these ongoing relationships.

When does a study end formally? If I continue my relationship with my research participants, I grapple with the issue of considering my conversations with them simply as conversations between friends and not as additional data for my study. (2001:80).

Summary and conclusions

This dissertation exploring family and connections among women raised in the New York City foster care system implicitly draws me into a discussion of the conceptual and methodological insights of the anthropology at home literature. My research draws on and enhances discussion of the role and practice of fieldwork, the relationship between researcher and researched, exoticism, applied anthropology, the culture concept and the

“write up” and subsequent reading of the ethnography. Like Darrah, English-Lueck and Freeman, (2003) who also studied American families, I believe

[T]he study of American families challenges our very definitions of the discipline and of ourselves as practitioners. We study across a thin line between our own and other families that constantly reminds that the familiar can be exotic and the exotic very familiar. We do not simply engage new audience from the position of *being* anthropologists, for we are compelled to reexamine ourselves *as* anthropologists. Such research sharpens our awareness of our own moral compass and sense of self. Such awareness is part of any fieldwork, but it is especially compelling when the people studied are intimately bound up with our fundamental sense of who we are what it means to live in good ways. Such fieldwork provides knowledge that can be both simultaneously liberating and unsettling both for anthropologists and the families they study (Darrah, English-Lueck and Freeman 2003:12, italics in original)

The “reexamin[ation of] ourselves *as* anthropologist” accentuates the ongoing critique and realignment of anthropological theory and methodology. My research highlights the intersecting, overlapping and diverging nature of identities among those who are viewed/perceived as sharing identity and those assumed to have little commonality. As this chapter, the preceding quote, and the methodological section of chapter one reveal the discipline’s acceptance of anthropology at home has caused a reevaluation of the “other”, “culture”, “fieldwork” and the presentation of the “data”. Anthropology at home is also creating new understanding of the relationship of our research to the needs and issues of our world, as well as highlighting the ways our research also relates to our own lives as researchers, scholars, activists, educators, friends, family and people.

CHAPTER FIVE THE DOUBLE-EDGED SWORD: STRUGGLES FOR/WITH FAMILY

At Sweet Haven I found a new family and support. (27 year old former resident.)

I didn't like some of her ways but I loved her to death. She would get so mad at us. Remember the time [two girls] were fighting and went out onto the sidewalk, and the rest of us were yelling them on out the window and she said we were embarrassing ourselves that ladies don't act that way. (A 30 year old former resident talking about one of the former staff members.)

"So how are you doing?" I asked one of the former residents. She just looked weary and shook her head. "What's going on?" I asked. With a deep sigh and a knowing glance she said, "It's my family." "So what happened?" I ask. "You know how they are" she answers. (A 28 year old former resident whose family alternates between expecting favors from her and calling her to berate her or to pass on bad news about other family members.)

The previous chapters' discussions of the institution of foster care, my connections with the women and the research dilemmas those connections created have made references to "family". This chapter will focus on the women's various designations, descriptions, experiences and recollection of "family" as well as discuss how their formulations are a departure from earlier theoretical understandings of "family" and kinship. The title of this chapter comes directly from the words and descriptions of several former residents, for whom "family" cuts both ways. They feel hurt by the interactions they have with their "original" family, however, not associating with that family would also hurt. Many, if not all, of the former residents help remedy their hurt by establishing other connections, although in some circumstances these new connections are equally painful. In some instances former residents designate these new connections as "family", whereas in other instances or circumstances they do not use the term "family", even though the relationship mimics "family".

This chapter will present the various formulations of “family” which can be drawn from the experiences of the women who were formerly in foster care. The formulations and understandings of “family” as presented in this chapter are underlain by two principals: that there is not a concise or conclusive definition or experience of “family”, and that although “family” consists of a group of people it must be understood and analyzed from an individual perspective, as outlined in more detail below. Following the presentation of those principals the rest of the chapter details formulations of “family” as experienced by the women who spent their adolescence in foster care.

“Family” is multivocal

The double-edged nature of “family” reflects another dilemma in exploring “family”. There is not a singular definition or understanding of “family”. What does it mean to say that a relationship “mimics family”? What is “family”? The definition of “family”, as well as its perceived function and role, varies across discipline, historical period, and physical location. “Family’s” role is often assumed to be the (re)production of the next generation. What exactly does that entail? Is it solely the passing on of biogenetic substance, or does it also includes providing for physical needs and “training and educating” the next generation? Does financial inheritance, family pride, emotional stability, identity, or the provision of a foundation for relating to the larger world also need to be considered in discussing and defining “family”? Additionally, anthropologists, such as Mullings (1997), have clearly shown the importance of acknowledging that understandings and definitions of “family” must account for the differences of experiences across gender, race and class.

The exploration of the range of relationships and connections of the women reveals some models which fall within the various family paradigms; however, others do not fit within traditional biologically-based categories. My research builds from and enhances anthropological studies that have similarly contested, expanded, and reframed kinship and “family”⁵³. In earlier chapters I used the convention of quote marks to signify the ambiguity and often reification of family. In the remainder of the dissertation for ease and fluidity I will discontinue that convention, but it should be understood that the word family as used throughout the dissertation is a heavily symbolic and a politically and socially charged word. Yanagisako (1979) reminds us that “native kin categories, including family and household, are often polysemic, that is, they encompass a range of different meanings” (1979:192). Therefore, terms such as family, mother and relatedness can have multiple meanings for the same individual. A board member can thus talk about one of the former residents being part of her family, and five minutes later in the conversation talk about her family and be including only her children by birth. Likewise a former resident can talk about her family and at one point mean herself and her children, at the next mean her biological mother and siblings, or the people she knew in care, or people from her church or other associations.

As I reflect on the women’s descriptions and stories of their relationships as well as my observations and analyses of their interactions, several themes and formulations emerge. These formulations do not always replace the media and politically-driven

⁵³ See for example: Carsten 2000, Collier and Yanagisako 1987, di Leonardo 1991, Edwards, et al 1999, Franklin and McKinnon 2001, Franklin and Ragone 1998, Ginsburg and Rapp 1995, Lamphere, Ragone, & Zavella 1997, Martin 1987, Modell 1994, Ragone 1994, Reiter 1975, Scheffler 1991, Stack 1974, Strathern 1992a, 1992b, Thorne and Yalom 1982, Weston 1991, Yanagisako and Delany 1995.

formulations of family, instead they operate alongside or in contradiction; at times agonizingly and other times defiantly. That more than one formulation can operate at the same time is acknowledged by Coombs (1980) in his discussion of how children learn what words to use for the various people in their lives.

a child's formal concept of the word *relatives* mirrors the usage of the parent-nomenclator, which dichotomizes between the words *family* and *relatives*, rather than the adult's formal concept, which includes family in the relatives category. [Situating this in the current debate regarding the] 'psychological reality' of various abstract models ...it is not enough, of course, to say only that the first is 'cognitive reality' and the second, 'behavioral reality'... Why should we expect something as complicated as the human brain to entertain nothing more than a single conceptual model by which to organize kinship data? Surely all individuals possess alternative and interacting models (1980:25).

Coombs' acknowledgement of the complexity of the human brain also implicitly acknowledges the complexity of the concepts of kinship and family. As he states the complexity is not limited to mental understanding or the day-to-day practice of experiencing family. Emotional, imagined, remembered, idealized, and economical constraints are among the many complexities that enter into conscious or unconscious understandings and conceptualizations of family. The complexity and ambiguity which interweaves the former foster youths' experiences of family produces multiple models which they access in different situations⁵⁴.

⁵⁴ As I was completing the final draft of this dissertation, Peletz's (2001) discussion of ambivalence as a vital consideration in kinship studies came to my notice. In this article he extends the beginning forays into the theme of ambivalence as a theme that he noted in his 1995 Annual Review article. He highlights how anthropological theory and studies have not analyzed the ambivalence inherent in relationships, even in those instances where they have recognized it (or where it is recognizable within their study). His essay is an "effort to rectify this situation" (2001:414). He makes one reference to "the double-edged nature of kinship" (2001:415) paralleling the women's interpretation of their kinship relationships. Therefore, although it was not necessarily designed as such, this work can be read as a "response" to Peletz's imperative.

Family from an individual's perspective

Exploring the dimensions and dynamics of how individuals variously frame their view of whom and what is family allows for a departure from the common analysis of family “units”. This refocusing of the usual framework reveals the ways an individual relates and interacts with people within and across those units. It is then possible to discover how various relationships sustain and constrain an individual. It is also worthwhile exploring how individuals’ impressions and experiences of themselves are affected by their relationships. At the most basic level the lives of the former foster youths requires a focus on the individual because, as was detailed in chapter three, there were instances when a youth was removed from their house of origin while their siblings remained. When that youth maintains contact with their siblings and/or other family members, they remain part of that family at one level, but not at other levels. Thus, viewing family members as a coterminous unit masks the levels of being part of a family. The complexities can be partially resolved by focusing on an individual situated in multiple (intersecting or not) relationships.

Stack’s (1974) ethnography similarly recognized the individual nature of relationships. Her research showed how “the chain of sponsored parent-child connections determines the personal kindreds of children. ...[Thus,] each child will grow up in a slightly different personal network from his brothers and sisters” (1974:53). This conceptualization of personal kindred depends on a focus on children and the details of how siblings can have different biological fathers as well as different uncles, mothers’ boyfriends, and grandparents. She also acknowledged the importance of

the creation of mutual aid domestic networks which are not bounded by genealogical distance or genealogical criteria. [Therefore, a]nyone in the

community with whom a person has good social dealings can be classified as some kind of kin. ...[However,] a person defined as a kin, for example does not usually bring to the relationship her own personal genealogical entailments (1974:58, 61).

Some of the formulations be presented below echo Stack's work. However, in order to achieve a full understanding and a complete analysis of the lives of the former foster women it is necessary to extend and enlarge her conceptualizations. Although she acknowledges the individual nature of each person's kindred, her overall analysis presents kin groups with some fluidness around the edges, but basically as relatively stable groups formed mainly by genealogy. Her research in the late 1960's and her writing in the early 1970's is framed in part as a response to the "culture of poverty" and to "illustrate the collective adaptations to poverty of men, women, and children within the social-cultural network of the urban black family" (1974:28). She thus emphasized cohesiveness and sharing amongst people who claim each other as kin⁵⁵. My research does not contradict that framing; however neither does it privilege it, instead it reveals the nuances within a complexity of relationships. Some of the former foster care youths inhabit or create sharing and mutually obligating networks reminiscent of Stack's *All our Kin*, whereas others have kin relationships that are draining and demanding, non-existent, or which alternate between obliging and obliterating.

Another nuance which I discovered in my research is that although the analysis needs to proceed from an individual perspective, an individual's relationship with someone often expands and includes other people within each others' network of relationships. Unlike Stack's belief, people do at times bring their "own personal

genealogical [or other] entailments.” For example, a former resident often inquires about my parents, which I had always assumed was just polite inquiry. However, recently I replied with my usual, “They are fine” and she said, “You know your mom told me I could come visit them”. I responded with surprise and she told me that during a time several years earlier when she was spending her college vacation at my apartment, my mother had phoned when I wasn’t home; they had talked and my mother invited her to visit, saying “You’re welcome anytime”. The tone of the former resident’s voice as she relayed my mother’s words revealed that she believed that she and my mother now had a connection.

As I reflected on this former resident’s words, I realize that she, as well as other former residents, have expanded their comfort and familiarity with me, extending it to others within my circle. I would not characterize her as a member of my circle of siblings and parents, although there is probably a degree to which she does feel (and perhaps is) a part of that circle. However, the assessment I feel more confident making is that she feels more accepted as a person and perhaps more connected to me, by virtue of acceptance by and connection with my mother. An appraisal of my family or her family using standard formulations of family would not locate either of us within the others’ family, however an appraisal of her individual connections reveal a level of familiarity and more than one point of overlap with me. That connection provides her with a strengthened sense of worth and identity. The fact that my mother does not remember

⁵⁵ Stack’s (1996) later discussion of her own ethnography recognized that she “paid less attention to the tensions and contradictions in people’s experiences and looked less for the disjunctures and contradictions in the stories” (1996b:105).

that exact conversation⁵⁶ highlights another dimension of exploring family from the perspective of an individual. When the analysis begins with an individual, rather than a unit, it is possible to consider circumstances where the strength of the connection is potentially one-sided, but nevertheless significant and influential.

This understanding of multiple – sometimes intersecting, sometimes incompatible – formulations of family, which are slightly different for each individual within the groups or units of relationships, is the framework within which the formulations of family as experienced by the former foster youths are presented in the remainder of this chapter. The fourteen formulations/models/considerations of family which follow are thus neither mutually exclusive nor inclusive. No individual former foster care youth's experience would approximate every category, yet each youth's life resonates with more than one. As each section is discussed it is important to remain cognizant that the women and their lived reality do not conform to neat, succinct designations. An individual's stories and depictions at times contradicted each other; for instance a former resident's conversation can be simultaneous affirming of the importance, value, and pleasure regarding her biological family (or her friends) and in subsequent comments can degrade, despise, or disregard that same biological family. It is also important to recognize that even when former foster care youths' experiences resonate with some of the categories below, the individual woman does not necessarily always label that connection/relationship family. There are times that they use different designations, but the intensity of the feeling and

⁵⁶ My mother's lack of memory of that specific conversation does not mean it did not happen. My mother's attitude is that her children's friends are always welcome, with or without the accompanying child. For her the conversation contained common information that was thus not engraved in long-term memory. The former foster youth,

the connection/relationship is definitely of a “family nature.” For example one woman said, “I lived with you all for so long, you are and always will be very *special*.” She did not call the agency and the staff people by the word, family; however, she spoke of specialness with a voice inflection that designated it as a word with great significance. Additionally, other aspects of her conversation revealed the importance and endurance of the foster care relationships.

Formulations of family

- Biological family and family as it *should* be

As discussed above, in order to analyze the former foster youths’ experiences and constructions of family it is necessary to consider alternative formulations. However, it is important to recognize that when the women alternate between and intertwine various formulations, one formulation that strongly influences their understandings of themselves and their designations of family is a formulation that would not be labeled “alternative”. It is a “commonly accepted” formulation that is touted by media, politicians and “societal expectations”. This biological-based, nuclear, “blood is thicker than water” view of family is inscribed on their understandings and is one of the alternating ways they experience and frame family. As one former resident stated when explaining why she continues to make the effort to relate to her biological family,

there is some unfinished business you have to finish – I can’t see myself without them, you were born to them, so it was meant to be, you have to carry it on. To just leave I couldn’t do that, it would mean the whole experience would be like nothing if I left.

however, had clear recollection of the conversation five years later, signifying that it had significance for her.

For her, as for others, the connection with her biological family is part of her identity, part of her belonging, her life experience, no matter how difficult that experience was or is. The mere fact that she ended up with “her family” by virtue of birth meant that she must continue to relate to them, even if they are not as she wished they would be and even if the relationship is problematic.

These relationships are often expressed using possessive pronouns. Edwards and Strathern (2000) suggest that the English language’s use of the word *my* in reference to *my* family reveals aspects of belonging or “ownership”. The nature of that sense of belonging may help explain why the bond is still so strong even after circumstances that would break other relationships bonds. As stated by the former resident, her experience – and by implication her life and herself – “would be like nothing if [she] left”.

In addition to the feeling that they must stay connected to those they were born to, the other circumstance where this “commonly accepted” formulation impacts the former foster youths’ understanding is in their conceptualization of actions or behaviors a family “should” do.

Sometimes I say [to myself] you’ve got to leave, but I have no where to go, where am I going to go? I have no place to go, if I go back to my family, I’ll be going back for a safe haven but it won’t be. I have no place like that. That is my mother and them and I love them, but they are not that to me, they don’t make me feel comfortable and safe. It is not where I can go to this woman and tell her anything. You see, you tell my moms something (voice trails and then comes back) and then you have to hear I told you so from her and everyone else she tells. No! did that, done that, ain’t doing that no more. (32 year old former foster youth.)

This former foster youth believed family should be a safe haven, a place where you were accepted no matter what you had done, but her family is not that for her. She went on to explain that she “keep[s] everything to [her]self, cause [she is] not a trusting

person”. However, she has made sure that “my kids can tell me anything; I talk to them and make sure they can talk to me.”

This theme of what a mother should be was echoed by many of the former foster youth.

I was scared to tell my mother anything. A relationship needs communication. Your mother is the first person you should turn to, but she use to beat me. (27 year old former foster youth.)

As in the previous example, this woman’s concept of what a mother should do had not been her own personal experience. This woman, like the previous example, was making sure her child had the kind of relationship that she felt mother and child should have.

Almost every former foster care youth, even those women who currently have what they describe as good relationships with their biological families, refer to times in the past when their biological family did not do what a family *should* do, and in almost every case the former foster care youth make a point to note what they are doing differently with their own children. The inflections in their voices and the frequency and context within which they say the word *should*, reveals that with that phrasing they are referring to a whole spectrum of behaviors that they felt their family had not accomplished. An additional way the former foster youths make references to conceptualization of family as they believe it *should* be is when they compare their biological family to other families who they know and idealize and note the difference between those relationships and their own relationships.

A particularly painful and poignant area where biological family fell short was in the area of encouragement and expectation of success. Several former foster youth talked

not only about the lack of encouragement from their biological family but also about times their family resented their achievements and new direction and accused the women of acting like they were “better than us”⁵⁷.

Former foster youth and their biological families are not the only people to compare themselves to models of what they think families *should* be like. DeVault (1999) believes that “nearly every family that differs from the SNAF [Standard North American Family] ideal probably feels some pressure and at least occasional moments of desire to pass as ‘normal’” (1999:60). That pressure is probably more extreme for former foster youth, since a portion of their life was spent imbedded in a social service system where the nuclear family was viewed as the ideal and “[v]ariations were considered deviant or pathological, and ‘correctable’ through social policy” (Bridenthal 1982: 229). The system has a “view of the American family system that reflected their own middle-class bias. They saw harmony and concord, not tension and discord” (Hutter 2000: 1). Although research by social historians and anthropologists have revealed varying family forms each “derived from a different cultural concept of family life” (Hareven 2000:303)⁵⁸, nevertheless many people still assume the superiority and normalcy of the nuclear family form and there are former foster youth who use it as a point of comparison to their own lives. That comparison often leads to pressure and desire to pass as normal.

⁵⁷ It should be noted that this was not a universal tension, but it was present in more than one resident’s interaction with her biological family. This tension continued to occur after the former foster youth left care, although it was certainly more common during care, when the youth began to make changes and started accomplishing educational or work goals. Staff meeting conversations often discussed the lack of family encouragement – often analyzing it as either resentment of achievement beyond the parent’s own achievement and/or parental fear that the child was distancing herself from the family.

⁵⁸ See also Coontz 2000.

That desire was noticeable during the time the youth were in foster care. For example, some youth preferred that if school visits were necessary that a “racially similar” and “age appropriate” staff attend as the “parent”, hoping that this might make it less noticeable that it was not their parent making the visit. Likewise some staff members tried to help the girls “normalize” their situations, for example, residents were advised to not reveal their foster care status, especially when applying for jobs. The staff person would give suggestions regarding methods for answering inappropriate or prying questions in job interviews and other settings.

Today some of the former foster youth still avoid discussing their upbringing, whereas others reveal their foster care history to their children and friends. In fact, a number of the women work at social service agencies and share their life stories with adolescents who are currently in care, recognizing that the sharing of their experience can help youth who are in similar situations.

This sharing with others in similar situations helps alleviate one of the dangers of viewing all but the nuclear family as dysfunctional. When people believe their family is dysfunctional they often internalize the view, believing that not only is their family dysfunctional, but they too, as a member of that family, are also dysfunctional. Thus people are caught in a struggle between myth and reality.

families in reality, however, often do not reflect the mythology... We are taught that to be in a family is good and natural and family ties are the most stable, loving, and unselfish relationships we will have in our lives. For most of us, this lesson flies in the face of our own experience of brutality, alienation and confusion within the family... The family, far from being a haven and a retreat from the outside world, is actually a very dangerous place, both physically and mentally (Field 1995:10 quoted in Barry 2000:94)

Another aspect of the desire to perceive your family as acceptable is the tendency for some of the former foster women to discount, avoid revealing, or deny unpleasant feelings towards events in their past. Thus, even when a former foster youth has described family dynamics and events that she (or others) would consider offensive, she will in other settings or conversations refer to her family in good or in some cases even ideal terms. There are many factors and possibilities which contribute to this level of incongruity, but a full discussion of those factors and the degree to which the denial is conscious or unconscious requires a psychological and sociological analysis and is beyond the scope of this research. However, I do think the recognition of the dissonance is relevant, I was often taken aback by their discussions of this seemingly “wonderful” person or family, thinking to myself is that the same person they were talking about last time who was so destructive towards them.

Another feature of biological family that impacts the former foster youths’ lives relates to genetics and its relationship to family. A full discussion of this topic is beyond the scope of this dissertation, but there is one aspect that was mentioned by a few of the former foster youths and so I present it here. There are a number of former foster youths who were placed in care as a result of their mother’s mental inability to provide for their care or who have biological families who have a history of institutionalization or mentally disability. Three of the former residents, who fall in this category, expressed concern to me that they are afraid they are “crazy” or “unstable” like their mother. This worry does not appear to be grounded in their current functioning ability, one is working and the others are in college, instead it is based solely on their knowledge of their mother’s condition and their assumptions about genetics. In these cases, the influence of

biological family on the former residents' lives is not based on a physical connection but rather on identification with a genealogical link and an underlying fear of a potential physical/mental condition, without the knowledge or examination of the fully range of factors involved in and influencing their mother's condition⁵⁹. Although this is a slightly different influence of biological families, it is nevertheless a way in which their biological families, or the women's impressions of their biological family, affect their current interactions.

- Family as constellation of tasks

The above discussion combined biological formulations and formulations of the ways family should behave because many of the former foster youth mapped the *shoulds* of family onto their biological family. The view of family as the people who carry out certain tasks is not a new formulation. For example, Eriksen (1995) describes how "the kin group, in many cases, takes care of one's livelihood, one's career, one's marriage, one's protection and one's social identity" (1995:82). The belief that kin groups were the primary and organizing principal in people's lives led anthropologists to assume that achieving an understanding of kinship held the key to understanding society and thus kinship itself became the "central focus of ethnographies, the privileged site for theoretical debate about the character of social structure" (Collier and Yanagisako 1987:1). The search for understanding kinship led to a search for prescriptive definitions based on descent, marriage and terminology rules. This privileging of the discovery of rules and the beliefs about the resulting biological connectedness narrowed

⁵⁹ See Rapp, Heath, and Taussig (2001) for an analysis of the social and cultural constructions of genetically defined conditions. See also Finkler (2000) for a discussion of genetics and kinship.

anthropologists' examinations, excluding many activities and connections and eventually leading many anthropologists to a false

conviction that the reproduction of society's members is the essential function of family. ...But the unit we label as families are undeniably about more than procreation and socialization. They are as much about production, exchange, power, inequality, and status ...There is nothing wrong, of course, with a functional analysis of family; for if the family is a salient unit in any society it must have attached to it some functions – whether these are symbolic functions, activity functions or both. What is wrong is to decide a priori that the diverse array of social units we call families fulfill the same set of functions" (Yanagisako 1979:199).

Starting without a preconception of the role of families allows their functions to emerge from the lived lives of people. Some of the functions of family that emerge from the former foster care youths' perspective were referred to in the section above regarding the formulation of family as it *should* be and others are mentioned in other contexts in this dissertation. For the former foster youths there are many things that families are/do (or that they wished families were/did). Families are people who "know how [you are]" and "accept you however you are". Families provide a sense of belonging, an identity, a feeling of safety, comfort, stability. Families are "somebody who will be there for [you] always", they make you feel good about yourself, they are people who you have known for a long time and with whom you share a history, they are people you can tell anything to and know that they will still like you.

- I come back to the house to see the familiar faces. When you move around, you meet different people, but sometimes you want to come back and you know see those old people who helped you along the way.
- Over the years we kept in touch that's the important thing, to know somebody who has been there, like she was saying the old people like the staff, you need that stability and support. ...to feel there is someone you can relate to and talk to, cause you always need someone to talk to. (Two former foster care residents who were talking at an alumnae event about why they come back to the residence to visit)

It is important to recognize the emotional component of families. For many of the former foster youths, the emotional (or the lack of) support was more significant than economic or social functions of family. A useful insight for this formulation of family is Mullings' (1997) description of

family [as] a social and historical product [where by] people form affective bonds and associations to accomplish the tasks and share the joy involved in negotiating life. They do so in different ways at different points in history and in their own life cycle. ... [as they] assist each other in carrying out domestic functions (1997:75).

It is the "affective bonds" and the "joy" as well as the "domestic functions" that create family relationships. The lives of the former foster care youths extend the understanding of affective bonds, demonstrating that pain can also be a bond.

Lowe's (2002), research in Chuuk also focuses on performances of certain task as a marker for family. He provides an example of kin relationships that are part of a continuing process that "operate[s] in the active negotiation of ongoing and emergent social relationships by outlining the contours of expected nurturing behaviors" (2002:125). These relationships are formed by "personal engagements with others, particularly those engagements that involve activities surrounding needs fulfillment or the 'sharing of sleeping, eating, and other sustenance relations'" (ibid). He shows how "kin-based social relationships are created" (2002:128) not only through marriage and adoption, but also through client relationships wherein one can join a lineage through "mutually nurturing activities" (ibid).

Additionally, two individuals through "mutually nurturing activities" can become relatives in a dyadic relationship without necessarily becoming members of the others' lineage. Lowe depicts a model that articulates differently at different points in one's life

span; as the person's needs change the social relationship, age, and gender of the individuals who fulfills those needs also changes. The Chuukese experience kinship relations that are continually created as people fulfill each other's needs, including the need for nurture and attachment. The result is a fluid

group identity where multiple vectors of history (e.g. personal, community, global) transect at the nexus of human activity to create diverse forms of personal and social identity (2002:135).

Lowe's (2002) description of the Chuukese helps shed light on the individual nature of kinship relationships. He details the interplay between group identity and the relationships and connections that are important and central to the individual in the process of getting their individual needs met.

Weismantel's (1995) description of Andean kinship and Carsten's (1995) description of the Malay kinship reveal a similar formulation where kinship is not symbolized by blood, but instead is symbolized by "physical relationships ... expressed over time through socially meaningful labor. ...Family consists of those who eat together" (Weismantel 1995: 693, 699). The act of eating and sharing meals was certainly a meaningful connector for the former resident's judging by the memory of certain meals and the fondness with which they regard the woman who was in charge of the kitchen and helped them learn to cook. She is consistently one of the staff people whom they inquire about.

- Reconnecting with family

For a significant number of former foster care youths, the ties that were severed with their biological family were either never totally severed or in some cases the former foster care youth reconnects with her family in an attempt to repair or to strengthen the

relationship with family members. At the far extreme, this reconnection takes the form of the former foster youth serving as the support system for her biological family who did not support her in the past. This reconnection is rife with ambiguities. In some instances the reconnecting creates emotional or financial struggle for the former foster youth, whereas in other instances the reconnecting helps the youth finally resolve some of the conflicting feelings they have about their family.

Now that I have a daughter I decided I need to getting along with my mother, because I don't want my daughter to think that [my former relationship with my mother] is how mother-daughter relationships are.

I can't move out into my own apartment, my mother needs the money from my job to pay the rent, plus I am worried about my little sister, I don't like the way my mom's boyfriend looks at her or treats her. (A twenty-two year old who moved back in with her biological family after she left care).

I hated my mother even when I came back. [Then I] realized she is just who she is, it won't change. Being angry at her gave me an excuse not to be responsible.

Reconnecting with family can be stimulated by the desire to know the whereabouts of their biological family, especially their siblings. A number of times when I have asked someone I haven't seen recently how they were doing their answer was, "Did you know I finally found my sister?" Similarly when talking to former staff members or residents, one of the comments they make about an individual not present is, "Did you know she found her mother?" These individuals had been separated prior to or as a result of foster care. A significant amount of their time and energy has been devoted to finding these particular members of their biological family.

The fact that the success of their search is offered as a response to my question about how they are doing, reveals the extent to which the search and the desire to find

have become a part of them. This phenomenon is also found in the search movement within adoption.

Search activists have framed their life stories in terms of the ethics of self-discovery... and identity concerns are indeed central to the agenda and rhetoric of the movement (Wegar 1997: 79-81).

In spite of similarity in ideology, process, and rationale, searching undertaken by those formerly in foster care has some notable differences. The adoption search is most times framed as the search of adoptee for birthparent, usually mother. Occasionally it is a search of a birthmother for the child she gave up for adoption. Searching for a sibling is not as common and when done is often done in tandem with the birthparent search. (see for example Leitch 1984). For the women of this study the most common desire was the desire to know the whereabouts and well-being of their siblings. Unlike the biological relationship between mother and child, there is no legal recognition of the relationship between siblings, so legal documents are harder to come by. On the other hand, in many circumstances the foster child's separation happens at a much later stage in their lives, therefore, unlike a person adopted as an infant, they have visual and situational memories to help them locate their siblings.

A more significant difference concerns characterization of the rationale for the search. In addition to the search serving to validate the former foster youths' identity and sense of self, a more pressing goal is to assure themselves that their siblings are doing well, and if the sibling is not doing well to offer help. The search is thus not just for the benefit of their knowing, but also for the benefit of the sibling. This goal parallels the aspect discussed above, regarding these women's feeling of obligation and/or desire to mend or correct the relationships and life circumstances associated with their biological

family. However this sibling search is undertaken and considered successful, even if no relationship develops from the 'finding':

I've tried to keep in touch with her...It is up to her now if we have a relationship or not.

- Connections due to common circumstances

I believe a related aspect of the sibling search is the connection those formerly in foster care feel for others in similar situations. Because some of their siblings were also in foster care and/or experienced the same traumatic family dynamic, the former foster youths reach out to them and acknowledge that experience. In addition to adding motivation to the sibling search, a connection to others who have been in care also produce other relationships, actions, or feelings. As explained elsewhere, in 2000 the residence where these women had lived during foster care was closed by the city. Upon hearing this, most former residents expressed concern and questions about what would happen to the girls who were currently living there. They also expressed concern about the potential foster youth who the program would not be able to help in the future.

It is important that they have small programs like this one, if it is big; it is just like you get lost and are just passing time. I don't want those coming up behind us to do that.

This concern for those currently in care was often their first response and interest even though, as will be discussed in chapter eight, the closing of the house also created personal feelings of loss due to their physical attachment to the building.

During the time the foster care program was in operation many former foster youths volunteered to come back to share their insights with the girls currently in care. Additionally many have chosen social work as their profession in a desire to help others.

I want to help others. ...Mentoring is so important. I mean outside help is okay, but you also need someone who has been there, someone who has been in your world. ...If I can help just one person it is worth it. (Former foster youth in early 30's)

This phenomenon can also be observed in the books written by youth formerly in foster care. These books were written in the hopes that the writers' experiences could help youth currently in care. The final paragraph of one such book eloquently expresses this connection. (See also Jones 1990)⁶⁰.

As you can tell, attitude, cooperation, and perseverance have made most of us successful with our lives. Because you are one of us as a foster brother or sister, we care about you and want you to be successful too (Falke 1995:57).

- Bonded families

Several of the women with whom I spoke did more than consider other foster youths as ideologically family. They included this category of people in their current social connections. It is not uncommon for the women to have husbands, boyfriends, or friends who were either in foster care or adopted. This is the type of connection I call "bonded family". Because of a common bond in past experiences, a current familial relationship is formed. This connection is also observed in the choice of godparents for their children. Many times the godparent is their former roommate or a fellow resident from foster care. Additionally, many times the first living situation after care is in the home of another former resident. Thus past bonds continue into current social and living arrangements.

I know that no matter where I am living I will get a card from her [former roommate] on my birthday. Wherever I am she finds me and sends me a card.

⁶⁰ In addition to writing books, E.P. Jones also presents workshops and seminars for foster agencies. She did a series of seminars at Heartsease in the early 1990's.

- Rotating family

These social and living arrangements can be fragile. As is evident in the divorce and marriage counseling and social work literature, the situation of living together is fraught with difficulties under the best of circumstances. For many foster care youths, the transitions and stresses in their own upbringing create a pattern of continual transitory arrangements. The fact that these relationships and living arrangements are transitory does not diminish their impact on the person's life and beliefs. They enter these situations with the belief and hope that they will work out. The term 'enduring' can be subjective. One of the former residents with whom I talked said:

Remember how staff didn't want me to leave to move in with them 'cause you thought it wouldn't last. I was with them for two years, so you were wrong. I was with them until I moved in with the person I am with now (20 year old who left care at 17).

For this particular woman, a two-year relationship was considered enduring. I have labeled this category of relationship as "rotating family". Former foster youths form relationships that they desire to be permanent and they treat them as permanent even though they may be short-lived. When these relationships sever they are replaced with similar relationships. The former foster care youths who make these kinds of attachments or who rely on this sort of support, may or may not be aware of the fluid nature of their relationships. For example, they may simply report "no, we don't talk anymore" when asked about someone with whom they use to exchange childcare; considering further explanation irrelevant. Others will analyze the events and circumstances that led to the estrangement, acknowledging the pattern of people moving in and out of their lives.

Perhaps the most poignant of these rotating relationships are those that involve members of their biological family. For some of the former foster youths, the dynamic with their family is so tenuous that a failure to return a phone call or the refusal to watch a sister's child on one occasion will lead to a period of angry disassociation.

- Siblings and children as family

Family in the United States has traditionally been expressed as generational, the primary connection being between parent and child. For many former foster care youths, as a number of the above quotes reveal, the primary connection is between them and their siblings⁶¹. They have spent much time and effort struggling to help and protect their siblings. In some circumstances they encouraged siblings still at home, in what they considered bad or dangerous situations, to leave and be placed in foster care.

In addition to the connection with siblings, another strong relationship that is common with these former foster care youths is their connections to their children. This connection takes on a slightly different emphasis than the commonly described genealogical generational focus of family. The women's concepts of themselves as mothers is often framed or perceived in relationship to their own experience as children. They often talk about wanting to do for their children what they did not have as children.

⁶¹ The significance of siblings in various "kinship structures" is acknowledged by anthropologists, as illustrated by Weiner's (1995) comments that "Samoan descent is more complex, but reveals the same prominence of sisters...the core kinship relationship, like that of the Trobriands, is still a sister and brother (1995: 287). Or equally Peletz's (1995) comment in his review article following his discussion of the significance of siblingship in a broad array of locations — "by devoting greater attention to the ways in which siblingship serves as a key symbol and central organizing principal ...we can reorient and revitalize the study of kinship" (1995: 350). Glover (2000), in a similar vein to my discussion of siblings within the "American system" explores the emotional bonds between siblings and the effects and tensions of those bonds in relation to other kinship relations in southern United States.

In some cases this mother-child relationship seems to be the source of validation of themselves as a person. In some respects by proving that they can provide for their children, they are creating and/or validating their ability to be a relating and successful person.

[Daughter's name] is my family - I love her unconditionally. If not for her, I would be somewhere else. I'd hate to think what I'd be. When she came, I said it is time to do it right. Do everything your mother didn't do. (pause) plus do everything she did right.

The fact that they frame their relationship with their children in terms of their own experience as children can in some cases have an edge to it, which produces anxiety in their role as mothers. They feel inadequate as mothers because they "have no role models." They are often at a loss, feeling that "it was a shock to have kids, now what do I do?" More than one former resident has expressed the occasional fear that they might have to (or threat that they will) put their children in foster care or up for adoption. They worry that their children are not doing well and that they do not know how to best take care of them. They sometime wonder if their children (or if they) would be better off if the children went into care. This area is one of the many "double-edged swords" of their lives and experiences. At one level they recognize and believe that foster care had a positive place in their life; yet they also have negative feelings as a result of not living with their biological family. This quandary creates ambivalent feeling when they encounter struggles and stresses with parenting.

- Foster care /other professionals as family

Former staff persons, other people who had helped them in the past or people who were currently helping them are points of connection and support.

I think sometimes how it was when I was there and going through my difficulties, people were there for me. Still even now, if I get upset or depressed I'll call them and they'll talk to me.

A number of the former foster youths have maintained ongoing and significant connections and relationships with former teachers or school counselors. In a couple of the cases, the former foster youths describe the emotional and conversational sharing they and the other women have. According to them, the other woman refers to them as "the daughter I never had". These former residents recognize that at one level they are fulfilling a sort of identity and confidante function for the other women⁶².

Another potential connection between former foster care youths and women who were adult professionals or role models involves the former foster care youths' children. Two of the former foster care youth told me that a woman they had kept in contact with had suggested/requested adopting or taking extended care of the former foster youth's baby. In neither case did the former foster care youth take the women up on their offer, but the fact the offer was made is noteworthy. These situations involve a much finer level of analysis and the gathering of more data to determine their frequency and significance.

Because the connections with former Sweet Haven staff are significant to the larger discussion of care – the description and analysis of the contours of those connections will be presented in chapter six.

⁶² I believe there is possibly a significant correlation to the fact that most of the former foster youth who maintain a connection to a high school teacher attended alternative high

- Friends as family

Sweet Haven is still my support system, but it is more the friends I made there. My old roommate and I are real close, like sisters. We have a lot in common. We don't judge each other. We are there for each other.

It's not like I have no support. I have friends, I have my church, I have other people where I get support. Anyone can be positive in your life; it doesn't have to be biological. Just cause the genetics aren't there doesn't mean.

Some of the former foster care youths rely on friends for help and support in several areas. They have friends that they share childcare with, occasionally borrow money from, and often talk to about what is going on in their lives. Some of these friends are former roommates, or people they knew from foster care, but they also form new friendships with people they meet in their neighborhoods and with other mothers where their children go to school, they also connect with people at their jobs or at the schools they attend. At times these relationships are designated with kin-terms, but often they are not. Conceptually a more usefully framework for analysis might be that suggested by Reed-Danahay (1999), who believes anthropology's knowledge is constrained by the trend to

think in terms of a kinship vs. friendship binary because of our disciplinary preoccupation with kinship. However, the stranger vs. friend binary is equally important... [In Lavialle] both kin and friend are placed in opposition to the category of outsider (1999:144).

Hastrup's (1987) analysis concurs, she notes that in Old Norse a word, which is "homologous to 'friends' in Old English, denotes kinsmen" (1987:94). She suggests this indicates a range of friendship that is wide and includes kinsmen, who were considered as one of those friends; they were someone you could depend on.

schools. In some cases the structure of the school included small groups, which were

Durrenberger and Palsson (1999) similarly believe there is a tendency in anthropology to prioritize kinship in the search for order and structure to

make sense of, the seamless flow and chaotic nature of everyday life. Thus, the formal tradition of anthropology, focusing on the way in which social life is embedded in relations of kinship; ...turn[s] the ethnographic gaze away from the realities of the concept and practices of friendship (1999:74).

Durrenberger and Palsson's assumption that social life, which has been viewed as grounded in structured relations of kinship, might more profitably be analyzed as grounded in the fluid yet central relationships between friends is certainly a profitable vantage point from which to view the lives of the former foster care youths.

The ethnographies of Sacks (1974) and Wojcika Sharff (1998) provide examples of neighborhood-based connections and relationships (friendships) that women, predominantly inner-city women, form in meeting their and their children's needs. These relationships are affirming and important. However, in much the same way that anthropological theory undervalues friendship, likewise, societal expectations create a perception that these relationships are and should be substantively less than kinship. This tendency was illustrated in the above "family as it should be" section of this chapter. The former foster care youths benefit from relationships with those who could be categorized as friends, yet even when they valued these relationships, many still felt slightly incomplete if they did not have a similar or "better" relationship with biological family.

Mullings and Wali's (2001) research in Harlem found similar perceptions. Their findings highlight a danger in this socially-acceptable model of privileging biological family relationships. Women, who did not feel they should ask friends to perform tasks

referred to as *family groups* by teachers, students and administration.

that they believe family *should* do, are left without help if their families do not fulfill those tasks. In the examples which Mullings and Wali present, the women have the material support they need and have a social network of friends who they rely on to meet some of their needs, but due to

distance, mobility, or conflicting obligations [their families may be unavailable and] to the extent that it is deemed inappropriate to call upon friends for certain types of help with infant and child care, middle-class African American women may find themselves in difficult circumstances (2001: 122).

This example serves as another indication of the constraints and hardships that an idealized model of connections and reliance on biological family, as opposed to friends and others, places on the many people whose lives and relationships do not match the esteemed model.

- Immigration as a factor in family formulations

An additional factor in the way some of the former foster care youths relate to their families of origin is the impact of immigration. Several of the women's entry into foster care was influenced by immigration issues. In some cases they came to this country as children to live with one parent or with extended family; while the other or both parents remained in their home country. In other cases their parents came to this country first and they remained with grandparents and were later "sent for". In both cases, at some point after their arrival relationships with the family member they were living with became strained. Sometimes this tension had to do with the differing roles and relationships that adjusting to the new culture created, and other times it was due to a dynamic in family patterns that predated immigration. The effect of the tensions, however, was the same; the child left that living arrangement. In cases where neither

returning to their home country nor living with other relatives was an option, the child would enter the foster care system. This arrangement often involved a struggle for the child in terms of identity, not only with biological family, but also the struggle of identity and longing for their home country. In a number of the cases this longing was compounded by the fact that their childhood in the country of origin was remembered with nostalgia, since they characterized it as a happy time before the family problems developed/surfaced.

Once they were in care, these former foster care youths often had to negotiate green card applications. This process was often delayed and derailed not only by their own ambivalence, but also by the ambivalence or anger of their parent who would not release needed documents. Nevertheless, many would attempt to negotiate these immigration requirements and carry on a sometimes less than positive relationship with their parents. Additionally, in some situations where the parents were still living in the country of origin and were living in circumstances that were (or were perceived by the parent and/or the child) to be less financially stable than those of the child, the child would send money back to the home country. This pattern sometimes began while the child was in foster care. The foster care youth would send earnings and other moneys they received "back home". For several of these women the pattern is also part of their adult lives.

My mother she's my mother and everything, but she makes me sick - she always wants money and everything. (A 23 year old who regularly sends money to her mother in the Caribbean to help buy food and clothing for her siblings.)

- Legal formulations of family

In the social service field and literature, foster care is often referred to as “out-of-home” care, emphasizing that the children do not live with their biological parents; instead the state arranges for and controls the provision of their care. The implied definition of “home” is a place/household shared with parents. Care should ideally happen within this “home”, but when it doesn’t the state intercedes and provides care. Even though that “state” care is often provided within a home the child is said to receive “out-of-home” care. The two “homes” are not equivalent terms. Foster home is not legally the same as “home” and the people who live there are not legally the same as family. The foster parents do not have the same rights as biological or adoptive parents regarding decisions made for and about the child. (See for example Wozniak 2002, Shapiro 1999). A Supreme Court decision ruled that there is

a private realm of family life which the state cannot enter. ... [W]hat, in fact constitute[s] a family [is] a group of people whose privacy the law protected from interference by the state. [Although the court] recognized that relationships did blossom between children and the people with whom they were placed, ...that relationship [was] simply not the same as [with] the biological parents... the goal of foster care was ... the child returning to his real family (Shapiro 1999: 20-22).

Legally then, the foster care family is not “real family”. The Justices who wrote the ruling acknowledged that foster parents provide a “socializing function” and are more than a “mere collection of unrelated individuals”, yet the psychological and social ties do not make them a family. Biological ties are the ones recognized by the court system. According to the state and the law, while in care foster care children essentially do not have families. The bureaucratic foster care system is the guardian and the court does not recognize the families or institutions where it places these children as real family; neither

does it consider the biological family (the “real” family) adequate enough to be allowed to be family. The children are thus in limbo, until the state deems their biological family “fixed” enough to again function as family or until the court legally terminate the parental rights thus freeing the child for adoption. The legal systems’ understandings and expectations of family and their assessment of what is needed to adequately care for a child are limited. The system does not acknowledge (or support) the various aspects of child-rearing nor does it recognize the ways it can be achieved in a framework other than their closed view of family.

The legal system contains a related ambiguity which affects formulations of family. In spite of the ruling referenced above concerning the court’s view of the sanctity of the family, courts do “interfere” in a family’s privacy. The common situations within this realm are when judges determine that children should be removed from homes and placed in foster care, when they terminate a person’s parental rights, and when they legally release a child for adoption – which when finalized forms a legally recognized family. In each of these cases it is the judge who has the “power to determine whose relationships are real and whose are mere pretense” (Weismantel 1995:673). It is the judge and the legal system who decides who should be recognized as family. In the case of foster care and termination of parental rights the court decision turns what was family into what is now legally not family; in the case of adoption the court takes what was not family and legally makes it family. The words used are instructive, children are ‘placed’ in foster care; they are ‘released’ in adoption. The courts are caught in this ambiguous situation of claiming they are not involved in family and then becoming involved.

However the level of that involvement is not always standard, uniform, or predictable, nor does court involvement always lead to an improved outcome.

As was discussed in chapter three, the individual nature of what is constituted as the reasons for severing the family are varied and often relate to issues of class and race as much as to the actual parental behavior of abuse or neglect. Although the court's operating principle is the "best interest of the child", it usually does not take the wishes of those children into account. In matters of involuntary placement the wishes of the parents are also not involved. Even in cases of voluntary placement, once the child is placed in care the parents do not make the decision with regards to when the placement ends. Once the state and its court system are involved it is only under their jurisdiction that the child can legally be "reunited" with his/her family.

This brief discussion reveals an ambiguity, not only for an individual child, but also within the entire legal foster care system. The family is seen as biological and its sanctity is protected from the law, yet if parents don't perform certain child-rearing functions adequately, they are no longer an appropriate family. However, the people who subsequently perform those child-rearing functions are not considered family; they are "just" the state funded caretakers. The biological parents are thus no longer parents and the children legally are "wards of the state". Their current guardians and caregivers are not parents; the state has taken on that role.

Judging by the procedures the state uses to fulfill that "parent" role, its definition of parental responsibility does not adequately consider the importance of the emotional, ideological, and social needs and bonds. As was discussed in the previous section of this chapter, in some cases the bonds with biological family survive despite the legal severing

of those bonds. For others, the actions and interpersonal relations that led the legal system to deem the family an inappropriate family were felt severely enough by the child that the bonds were effectively severed.

In addition to the legal influences on foster care legislation, legal influences on the formulation of family also include legislation ranging from welfare reform to minimum wage and child care provisions. The interpretation and enforcement of legislation as well as the political and bureaucratic structures which these laws engender are very much a part of the lives of some of the former foster care women. Even women who refuse to go on public assistance because they “don’t want [their] kids to grow up like that” are often affected by legal and bureaucratic influences as they struggle to piece together a livelihood using what is often non-existent childcare arrangements while they work jobs that barely pay enough for rent and food, let alone to pay for whatever childcare arrangements they do manage to attain.

- Bureaucratic systems and institutions’ influence on formulations of family

Bureaucracies, governmental regulations, and non-profit organizations all influence “family” and the form it takes. Because foster care is not the only system that impacted on the residents’ lives, it is insightful to consider the role of social and political organizations and institutions in both family dynamics and in the definitions/depictions of family. This influence and the resulting definition are not always consistent across organizations; sometimes it serves to broaden definitions and other times to narrow them.

For example, Hall (1999) discusses a court battle between a neighborhood and a non-profit congregate living facility for mentally handicapped individuals. He reveals

Such familiar ideas as “family,” “home,” “voluntary/non profit organization,” as well as conventional boundaries between public and

private action, were taking on [new] meanings ...This epistemological confusion was nowhere more evident than in the concept of the "family" ...legislature had enacted a statute providing for the establishment of ..."permanent family residences" – state-licensed entities whose purpose was to provide permanent care to handicapped children in a home environment and family setting ...ordering local zoning authorities to treat these facilities as families (1999:171).

Hall felt this zoning decision challenged traditional family models as well as newer "alternative lifestyle models" that had been created to allow two unrelated adults to be considered family. The presiding judge had ruled that it was not appropriate to limit to two the number of unrelated people

bound by profession, love, friendship, religious or political affiliation, or mere economics who can occupy a single home. ... 'family,' as an expression of the constitutionally protected right of association, could be anything people wanted it to be (1999: 172-3).

In this example the legal institution has in essence expanded the definition of family, allowing individuals to form whatever family units they desired. In other instances the definition of family can be shrunk, such as when the New York City Department of Homeless Services, restricted men and older boys from being considered part of the family unit that would be allowed to stay in family shelters (Susser 1993).

The influencing factor is not always a singular institution but is sometimes a constellation of policies and economic structuring, which has been labeled structural violence by some theorists. (See for example Wojcicka Sharff 1998). The effects of these policies do not impact all families equally. As Brewer (1998) has pointed out for African American families, it is important to

understand the interplay between interpersonal dynamics and the broader social structure... the intersection of racial, class and gender inequality is the crux of African American families' crisis. ... Family formation is complicated by this economic marginalization of Black men. Welfare

becomes the state structural backdrop to the political economy of black men's irregular labor (1998: 671-2).

However, it is not only within African American families that governmental bodies and economic conditions impact and control families. The global scope of this phenomenon is perhaps best revealed by the United Nations General Assembly's proclamation of 1994 as the International Year of the Family (IYF). In the opening chapter of the papers that chronicled and celebrated that year, the United Nations Coordinator for IYF states:

family matters ... [because] family is universally recognized as a basic unit of society... [it] must be accounted for when establishing policies and priorities for economic and social development. ...IYF was a direct result of the growing international concern over the precarious situation of families. ... its primary focus [was] on action at the local and national levels, supported by regional and international action... [and its issues were] clarifying and understanding the balance between how the family can satisfy its own needs and what it can expect from public services; [and] recognizing the effect of societal problems on family relationships and acknowledging that governmental policy interventions may be needed to counter any resulting negative effects or exploitation in the family (United Nations 1996: 9, 11, 19, & 31-2).

It can thus be seen how at both a national level and at an international level – often based in a stated concern for family crisis – institutions interact, impact and intervene in families.

Bureaucracies and institutions are an ever present structure in life in the United States and thus they impact family and conceptualizations of family. Simpson's (2001) account of divorce detailed the impact on families of the bureaucracies involved. A replacement of the word *divorce* with the words *foster care* illustrates and echoes the understandings explored in chapter seven into the bureaucracies impact on family.

the experience of divorce [foster care] and separation is not so much an event as an extremely complex organizational process which effects a

significant re-arrangement of emotional, economic, and legal ties and attachments. ...When the divorce process is set in train a number of organizations, agencies, and professionals come into play to adjudicate, arbitrate, mediate, or advise upon the difficult and painful conflicts which arise when coupled begin to dismantle their joint investment in family and home. ...[I]t entails passing through a kaleidoscope of organizational cultures which interlink and overlap and which are apt to leave those passing through confused and disempowered regarding their objectives, purpose, and procedures (2001: 99 - 100).

Similar observations can be made for many of the other institutions and bureaucratic structures which constrained, and still constrain, the former foster care youths experience of family. This dissertation began an exploration of how Sweet Haven's policy and program managed at some points to mitigate the effects of the bureaucratic control, but a fuller understanding of all the nuances of the control and influence of similar structures is not resolved, but instead suggests the need for further study into institutions as "family".

Institutional living situations

There is one institution that bears special mention because of it is uniquely related to the Sweet Haven experience. I believe that a significant aspect of the former resident's connections and relationships with people whom they knew while in foster care is related to dynamics of living together. This same dynamic can be seen in boarding schools, college dorms, fraternities and sororities, and other group living situations⁶³. George (2001) discusses

⁶³ A similar phenomenon may also occur in some professions where people work together in intensity over extended periods of time. For example Maddy (2001) believes that "the relationships and social organizations that exist within the biomedical community all contribute to the character and viability of the profession itself. Just as kinship system tend to define certain cultural groups, so too, the fictive kinship of biomedicine characterizes the biomedical complex. ...The relationships described [in

how the schools I attended acted as both institutional stand-ins for families and as conduits for new ‘fictive kin’ relationships. The related and interconnecting themes [of her article include] institutions and their mediating influence on kin; class mobility and family tensions; ...the construction of identity through and against family; and the persistence of family as a category even as one reshapes one’s identity through experiences foreign to one’s family of origin” (2001: 215-6).

Similarly to George’s experience at boarding school, Sweet Haven acted as a “conduit” for “new fictive kin” as the women still keep in touch with each other and former staff and like George, family “persists” even as they shape their identity in opposition to it. The intensity of the situation which is “foreign” to one’s former identity shapes them, yet even though their life is now encompassed in their new living setting, their family and past also mediate those changes, even as the living situation creates new familial relationships. In addition to discussing how the schools “acted as both a symbolic and literal fostering mother,” (2001:225) she also describes how some of her classmates’ families became surrogate families for her. I believe that Sweet Haven, like George’s school – and I would extend the analysis to many group and institutional living situations – the institution as an entity became family. I believe that for some of the former foster care youths, who view foster care as a positive and transformative experience in their life; the agency (or other similar agencies) can take on a symbolic function as family, which is related to, but separate from their connections and attachments to the individuals who were part of that institution. As Gellner and Hirsch (2001) point out, “organizations are not just the sum of their participant’s interactions: organizations acquire a life and a momentum independent of the people who make them up” (12). As chapter two detailed, the agency had a long standing history of successfully

this article] posses several key components that are extant in many consanguineal or

helping women, and I believe in some respects the residents were able to settle in and grow, not only because of their personal relationships with staff, board, or other residents, but also because they accepted and identified with the history and success of the agency and that association gave them a positive identity.

- Economic influences on formulations of family

As just mentioned not all of the former foster care youths rely on welfare as their means of livelihood, in fact most of them do not. At some level, foster care places youths at distinct disadvantages, in part due to disruption in schooling and/or job training caused by the instability and movement in living arrangements and in part due to the relationship and behavioral patterns which that instability can create. However, despite the possible disadvantageous nature of foster care many of the former foster care youths have completed college degrees and attained satisfactory employment. Their success does not override the fact that they are operating in an economic realm which for the most part is not designed to complement their lives and formulations of family. The goal of this dissertation is not to describe the economic constraints on family life; other research provides glimpses into that struggle⁶⁴.

The former foster care youths confront economic difficulties and impasses which they negotiate using many of the same strategies that are described in the footnoted studies. What needs to be registered in the context of the discussion of this dissertation

affinal kinship systems" (297, 299).

⁶⁴ The list includes studies which focus on low-income women and the way political and legal systems create and compound the women's economic situations and formulations of family as well as those studies which explore across socioeconomic lines, but which include issues of economics in their analysis. See for example Edin and Lein 1997; Gordon 1994; Lawson and Rhode 1993; Luker 1996; Mullings and Wali 2001; Newman 1988, 1993; Polakow 1993; Wojcicka Sharff 1998; Stacey 1990; Susser 1996, 1993.)

are the attitudes and beliefs which the former foster care youths acquire regarding their position and abilities in relationship to economic constraints. The ways, some of which were described above, in which they distrust themselves to adequately provide for their children since they do not have the jobs and family structure that they think *should* have is just one example of the interplay between economic constraints and the dynamic of family. Creed (2000) acknowledges this role of economic expectations on attitudes toward family formulations. He describes how

Economic improvements allow lower-class families to aspire to the cultural and material advantages ...[Their] achievement increases the similarity of family arrangements strengthening the power of those models as cultural icons in the society. This iconic status then provides the basis for blaming the lower classes when economic shifts force them to abandon valorized family forms for new arrangements, even if they do so in defense of their families (2000:344).

The ethnographies he reviews examine the understanding and practices of family as experienced by a variety of individuals. They give a window to insightfully examine how the values assigned to family in our current political, economic, and social climate constrain and harm families outside the assumed norm.

- Choice as a factor in family formulation

Choice is a theme that weaves through much of the recent literature on kinship forms. It is insightful to contrast the theoretical understandings of the role of choice in family formations with the dynamics of choice (or lack of choice) in the lives of the former foster care youths. Weston (1991) and others who speak of the new kinship patterns of gay and lesbians often frame their discussions as "*Families We Choose*". Likewise, discussions of the effect of assisted reproductive technology on kinship understandings and relationships often revolve around people's choice to use the

technologies because of a desire to have family. Adoption is also portrayed as a choice made by people who want to raise children – creating or extending family. Motherhood and its timing is often framed as a choice that working women make. For some theorists and for many who participate in these practices, choice is viewed as a means of creating families.

In a discussion of the choice of young women to become mothers, Hillman and Sorensin (1997) acknowledge that the principle of “choice” can be problematic.

In what way is it possible – if at all – to come to a rational and responsible decision to have a first child? ... [Given] the complex decisions that the responsibility of modern motherhood entails. [It is necessary to] examine the ideological, social, economic and physical environment that influences young women’s decisions (165).

Rothman (2000) similarly criticizes the notion of “choice” since it masks the various ways in which factors such as class, race, and religion impact on the ability to have “choices” to choose from, as well as the impact of these factors after the “choice” is made. She remarks on how often she heard women express the feeling that it was “the only choice”, making it in essence a non-choice.

With the former foster youth, there is no illusion of choice concerning the people and circumstances involved in their upbringing. When they do speak of choice it is of choices made by others for them. These choices influenced where and with whom they would be allowed to live. When speaking of their initial foster care place, especially when the placement involved disagreements or incidents with stepfathers or in one case with a brother, former residents would mention their biological mother and then say, “She made her choice”. For these women, choice was framed as their mother choosing

another person over them. This left the resident without a family and a place to stay.

Another former resident described how she was shuffled from one relative to another.

When my mom sent me around I felt abandoned and then when they told me I couldn't stay, I felt rejected. When I first got into foster care, it made me worse, cause I didn't have any control.

Control over her own living situation was beyond this former resident's options. Residents were not able to make their own choices about whether they wanted to live with their families of birth (or in some cases of "failed adoption" with their families of adoption). When they entered the foster care system, "choice" became even more out of their reach. Placement decisions were made by the bureaucratic apparatus of the city child welfare system.

There were some years during which the policies of the foster care system allowed older youth to visit a placement before being placed and thus were at least given veto power. However with the advent of regulations resulting from one phase of the Wilder lawsuit,⁶⁵ even this small modicum of "choice" was taken out of their hands. In the policies following this lawsuit, the office of placement made all placement decisions. The youth, agencies and caseworkers were not supposed to have any influence on the decision. Of course, as is often the case with regulations and people's lives, there were times when ways around the regulations were worked out, allowing the youth to at least decide if they wanted to go to a particular placement or not. When not given that choice, in many cases the youth exercised their "choice" by "running away".

Choice for the former foster care youth was impacted by the full range of economic, racial, social, and philosophical factors that impact all of our lives and

⁶⁵ See appendix A for more details on the Wilder case.

“choices”. Additionally the former foster youths’ “choice” was directly influenced by their age (and current stage of emotional and cognitive development) and involvement within the bureaucratic system child welfare system; both of which entailed political and legal restrictions. With regards to children, age and choice, it could be claimed that the lack of choice was due solely to age and circumstances of childhood, after all children who live in nuclear biological families also have no choice as to who parents them, however the mitigating circumstances of foster care are such that the youth profoundly feels the lack of choice, because the courts, their parents, or others exercise the “choice” to remove the child from their current biological (or adoptive, or foster) home.

Summary and conclusions

This chapter has explored how former foster care youths form, define, and live family. It has looked at how that perspective articulates with theoretical and mainstream definitions and descriptions of family. The chapter draws from and joins a growing body of research interested in how family is lived by varied individuals.

This chapter reveals that when former foster youths’ lives, feelings and perceptions are taken into consideration “family” is rendered an ambivalent and ambiguous term. That ambivalence is often grounded in anger, resentment, or just physical and emotional separation from biological family for significant periods in their lives. In spite of this anger and separation, the women still have the desire and often make repeated attempts to be with that family, even when that reconnecting involves further levels of sacrifice – either financially or emotionally – as they put forth the great effort to “make it work.” Their lives poignantly reveal that family can be something you desire and reject – love and hate.

The ambiguity is in part grounded in the realization that family as they are experiencing it does not match family as they imagine it to be, or rather as they imagine others are living family. Family as imagined is often based on preconceptions embedded in cultural understandings. That fact is one of the grounding principals of the chapter – family, kinship, relatedness, and the myriad of other terms that are used to label a certain range of relationships are culturally, politically, socially, and economically constructed.

That construction often contains a prescribed set of guidelines detailing which connections result in inclusion in the family unit and which do not. The believers in each system assume the primacy of that system, however, as this research and the other studies from which it builds have revealed many people's everyday practices do not match the idealized model. In many cases this leads to the expenditure of enormous energy trying to give the appearance of conformity. This is in part

because pathology in our society is a central marker for difference, those who are considered different in some way are usually also labeled deviant and pathological. This is certainly true in the case of adoption (Wegar 1997: ix)

The ability of any particular group, that is outside the perceived norm, to counter those “markers of difference” and achieve normalcy varies as does the means by which the group strives to achieve that sense of normalcy. For instance within the practice of adoption there is/was a legal maneuver by which the adopted child was issued a new birth certificate with the adoptive parents' names on it, thus creating an attempt at normalizing the relationship by having the appearance of beginning at “birth” “as if” it was like any “normal” birth. On the other hand, surrogacy often succeeds at redefining the perceived rules of primacy regarding which bonds (genealogical link) are to be considered stronger as the courts rule in favor of certain configurations of family based on “inequalities of

power between fathers and mothers, and the social, professional, and legal systems that support that differential” (Harrison 1999: 433, see also Rothman 1999)

Foster care, however, is experienced by people, who have less political and economic clout within the system and who for the most part have not identified themselves as a group to critique/confront the system. Therefore, normalcy is usually attempted at an individual level and often by attempts to at first disguise and then mend the conditions of “difference”. This can involve emotional and financial costs.

The value of the growing number of studies which portray either the lives of people whose families do not match the “norm” or the lives of people who live in places where “different norms” are sanctioned is the ability of these studies to reveal the range of relationships and connections which can be nurturing, sustaining, and life-affirming.

As this chapter has illustrated, the former foster care youths have connections that are meaningful to them even if they are not always contextualized as family. These are connections that are not intrinsic or restricted to foster care; they are instead part of the fabric of many people’s lives. Former foster care youth are not the only individuals who feel disappointment when their biological families do not fulfill the assumed “shoulds” of family; they are not the only people whose needs are met by people who are outside of the idealized model of family. Likewise they are not the only people who dis and re(connect) with their families nor who find bonds in commonalities. Strong connections are also found between friends and mentors outside of the foster care experience. The connections and formulations described in this chapter are not exclusive to the foster care experience, just as the former foster care youth’s struggles to regain and maintain family are shared by many.

The remainder of the dissertation describes various connections of the former foster care youths. Those connections like the ones in this chapter do not always conform to the preconceptions of family, but nevertheless are valuable and significant to the women.

CHAPTER SIX

FAMILY AS CARING, CARING AS FAMILY

At Sweet Haven people were nice, there were normal girls there – they weren't psychotic or nut jobs. I felt safe and normal. It was the closest I've ever been that I felt was home. ... people were real; they weren't just there for the paycheck. You could cry on someone's shoulder and you knew they cared (31 year old former resident).

When I arrived the girls treated me as though we were all sisters. I wasn't a stranger. You have the feeling that no outsider could come in and harm you. It's a good feeling; it's a family feeling (18 year old resident's comments – excerpted from an archival agency letter introducing residents to the supporters and friends of the agency).

At Sweet Haven the staff showed an interest in education. It makes a big difference to see that people care about you. You knew they expected certain things and believed that we could achieve. (23 year old former resident).

Sweet Haven is a safe haven that pulls people out. I am so grateful for the safe space. It altered the way I looked at things. Perception is important. Life is about how you see yourself (25 year old former resident).

The last chapter examined questions that are often raised in both popular and academic discussion of family. What is family? What do families do? The question that follows those questions is: Is there a relationship and synergy between tasks that are considered 'family' tasks and the level at which a collective group of people can or cannot be considered family based on which, how many, or how well they carry out these tasks? This chapter focuses specifically on a particular task (or constellation of tasks) that often is included in the list of 'family' tasks. Building on Borneman's "suggest[ion] that we replace *kinship* with *care* as a unit of analysis" (2001: 44, italics in original), this chapter will examine care. Do families care and does caring make a family? The examination of the feelings and practices of foster care workers – people who provide care within a setting that is a financially-compensated professional context at the same

time that it is an intimate living situation – provides insight into care as an image/metaphor/replacement for family. This allows for an analysis of the relevance of “care” as a ‘unit of analysis’ for anthropological theorizing about ‘family’.

This chapter will begin with a brief exploration of how several former staff and board members depict and describe their relationship to Sweet Haven and to the former residents. The chapter will highlight how former staff and board members’ attitudes and beliefs both illuminate and contradict theories and ideas about the relationships between ‘care’ and ‘family’. In order to thoroughly analyze “care as family” it is important to focus on care in a larger perspective, therefore, this chapter focuses briefly on professional care-giving, revealing the various dynamics and interrelationships of care as it is manifest in ‘emotional labor’. In Sweet Haven’s context, because of the overlap in analysis of ‘care-giving as labor’ and ‘care-giving as family’, family theories are not the only theories which the thoughts, experiences, and attitudes of former staff and board members engage, critique, and advance. Theories that focus on the ‘work’ aspect of emotional labor and discussions of relationships within a work environment are also relevant. Two approaches will frame that discussion; first the literature on “work cultures” will be analyzed, then an exploration of the conceptualization of work environments as discrete from non-work environments will follow.

After discussing care-giving from the perspective of the care-giver, the chapter moves into an oft-neglected perspective. Like Coles (1993), I believe it is important to expand the parameters of the analysis to include the perspective of the recipient of the care-giving. How the recipients feel towards the person who is providing care is an important component of care-giving that is missing from much of the research on paid

care-givers; yet it is essential on several levels. From a strictly practical level this consideration is necessary because an extremely negative response from the receiver can severely damage the desire of the care-giver to continue to provide care. From a theoretical level, if the belief that care-giving is based on relationships is accepted, it is necessary to analyze both participants in that relationship. With regards to both past and current relationships between Sweet Haven residents and staff, there is strong indication that given the intensity and duration of the relationships, the care-receiver often began to genuinely care for the care-giver, although those feelings are complex and conflictual. The discussion in this chapter will focus on two areas where conflictual feelings manifest. First, the former residents feel a level of conflict because receiving care from non—biological family means acknowledging the levels at which their biological family has been inadequate to provide that care. Additionally, because the former foster youths were minors when they were receiving care there were often emotional conflicts resulting from aspects of control and redirection/management of behavior that is often a factor in providing care for young people.

At Sweet Haven care was provided by more than just the individual staff members and board members. Chapter two's introduction of the agency revealed ways in which Sweet Haven, as is the case for other social service institutions, has a "life" of its own, thus the residents perceived/received care, as a component of the agency's ideology and expression of care. This chapter will briefly highlight this "caring", focusing specifically on "caring about" (having feelings of concern for another). This caring was expressed not only by the structure and ethos of the program, but also by outside people who had financial or emotional connections to the agency, which often took the form of

prayer – which in the Sweet Haven context was a conduit for people to “care about” the residents, even though there often were no physical manifestations/connection.

The final section of the chapter will return to Borneman’s (2001) suggestion that anthropological analysis focus on *care* rather than on *kinship* in their pursuit of “understanding human affiliations and identifications” (2001:31). The data and analysis presented in this chapter helps inform and critique Borneman’s formulation.

Staff and board members’ stories

Karen, a white woman in her early 50’s, is a board member who has been associated with the agency at some level for over 25 years. Her first association was before she was married. In the mid 1970s she moved from Pennsylvania to New York City to spend a couple of years being a live-in staff member. At the time, Sweet Haven was operating a maternity program rather than the foster care program. Although she returned to Pennsylvania when the job ended, she remained in contact and later became a member of the board. She states that working for and being on the board of the agency “changed how [she] perceived responsibility and community and affected everything in [her] life”. She credits the experience as instrumental in certain aspects of what she has passed on to her own children. It has led her to “teach [her] children, to expose them to different ways ...to teach them responsibilities ...that they have been blessed and therefore need to be responsible”. One dynamic of “family”, which was highlighted in her conversation during our “formal” interview, is the differential way in which she used the term ‘family’. As she was discussing family it seemed clear that she was speaking of “nuclear” or “blood” relatives, although as she discussed the extended family present at holidays she included an alumna who continues to visit her, especially around the

holidays. However, previously I had heard this board member use the word “family” to describe both the residence and the relationships of people who were associated with the residence. When I remarked on the absence of this alternative formulation from her conversation in our “formal” interview, that was taking place at her home in Pennsylvania, she explained that particular settings at the agency “generated those feelings” and at those times it “felt” like family. The settings she described were not just the actual residence, but also the annual craft fair. This event was coordinated by a group of board members and took place in the neighborhood of the residence. Staff and residents attended and helped with the event. Many of the agency supporters looked forward to the event and some of them spent most of the two days the craft fair was open sitting around at the table eating homemade food from Pennsylvania and looking at (and occasionally buying) a variety of handmade quilts, comforters, clothing, canned good or other craft items. These people, mostly older women, some of whom lived in the neighborhood, talked about past years’ fairs and remarked that they anticipated the event every year. The board member described these women, explaining that they were familiar faces, who had become known to each other. Her interpretation was that these women were lonely people for whom the “craft fair had a sense of family and connectedness”. She acknowledged that for her it was possible for “family [to be] created with people who stay together for a long time”. For her, the craft fair and the banquets where the same group worked together to make the events happen were definitely a “point of connectedness”. However, since the events were not happening anymore she was “losing that now”. In spite of her “losing that feeling” and “connection” with the larger agency and its activities, she still had connections to

individuals associated with her time on the board, whom she included in her “extended family” and friends. The most significant in terms of this dissertation was her connection with a former resident, who still comes from New York City to spend the holidays with Karen. She also discussed another young woman, who had been part of another program where Karen had volunteered and who also occasionally came and spent holidays or weekends in Pennsylvania. Karen has offered her home to other alumnae for visits and at least one of them has gone down for a weekend. Karen is still a member of the board, so continues to relate to board members and also connects with former staff on an occasional basis.

Connectedness was an ongoing theme in her discussion. When I asked her to expand on what she meant by connectedness she spoke of

being connected to family, friends, and the church. I get a lot of value from it. Maybe there is security in that. It gives you security, allows you to give more. ...Affirmation and encouragement is there. You are enabled to give out more because of those points of connectedness.

For her connectedness was crucial not only to her sense of family but also to her sense of how she and others were in the world. She felt connectedness was a necessary part of everyone’s life. She discussed how some connections were of long duration, but that “new relationships come all the time, some are for short periods, but are still valuable”.

Lynn, a white woman in her early 50’s, is a board member whose association with the agency goes back more than 35 years. Lynn’s mother was on the agency’s board when Lynn was a child, so she had known of and visited the agency early in her life. Shortly after college, during the time the agency was operating a maternity program, she became a live-in staff person. Her relationship with the agency has varied, sometimes

she worked part-time, other times full-time, and sometimes she volunteered. This changing relationship has meant a change in responsibilities. Although she has been on the board for the last 4 or 5 years, during one period she was responsible for fundraising and development. This position involved writing fund raising and thank you letters and as well as producing a quarterly newsletter. The format of these letters often included vignettes and life stories of residents or alumnae, which she composed based on interviews or collaboration with the adolescents/women who were featured. Her view of the agency and her discussions with me are therefore filtered through years of having participated in similar conversations and interviews with residents and alumnae. She and I have known each other for years, and have often talked not only about the alumnae, residents and the agency but also about my research. So her thoughts and comments have helped me filter much of my data. Additionally, I arranged a “formal” interview to discuss her views and feelings concerning her connection to the agency. When I asked her what she felt the role of the agency was in her life, she answered,

That is a question I often asked when I was conducting interviews and it is interesting the girls always said things like a backbone and when you asked me, that is the first thing I visualized.

She reechoed this sentiment later in the interview when I asked if her work at the agency had an impact on her relationship with her daughter, her answer was

Probably not, I mean, well yes, cause I was there 15-20 years before she arrived, so obviously that time with Sweet Haven is a large piece of who I am, so in that sense yes, but not in the way of parenting

Lynn believes that her association with Sweet Haven has helped shape who she is and thus, at some level, impacts all of her relationships, including the one she has with her own daughter.

The agency also has a place in her daughter's life. Her daughter, who is 7, has been at agency events and thus knows and plays with children of both alumnae and other staff and board members. In fact Lynn tells a story of driving with a friend when Lynn's daughter was in the back seat and in the course of the conversation, Lynn said something to her friend (who had no other association to the agency) about it sounding like a 'Sweet Haven' girl and Lynn's daughter said "I'm a Sweet Haven girl." Lynn said her daughter doesn't know exactly what the agency does, but

she identifies with the agency as a place in her world, and there is a group of people she certainly regards as her Sweet Haven friends. She likes to go there, because there are other kids and it is a family feeling (and then Lynn laughs) and she gets a present. (At the alumnae Christmas party the agency always had small gifts for all the alumnae's children and always included any staff or board member's children who are there.)

As Lynn discusses what connects her to the agency, she described varied motivations at different points in her life story. There were times that she worked at the agency because it was convenient for her. As she describes the first time she worked for the agency about 30 years ago, it was because she had just finished a job working in Boston and wanted to move back to the area and to live in Manhattan, and so took a live-in job with the agency. Like Karen, this was during the time that Sweet Haven had a maternity program; before they began providing foster care. In spite of her initial description of the decision as "not being an ideological decision", her subsequent discussion had an ideological bent. The image that echoed through her description was "a sense of calling" as well as a real commitment to the agency and its ideology. Therefore, she not only worked for the agency when it was convenient for her, but also when the administrator had left suddenly and "they needed someone quickly," and when

a new program had begun with all new staff and she realized that they needed someone with experience.

For Lynn, her connection with the residents, and with other board and staff members, was related to this same “sense of calling”.

I always thought of it as a ministry; saw it as a calling, a charge, a responsibility. That there were these lives that were very precious and very important and that we were there to serve those lives and to be ...you know... I mean... nothing really beyond that – to be whatever was needed to serve those young people. The other relationships form around that core concept. Because there were other people who, we all shared that. So there was a common, a common work. And I think it does take, it did take a form of family, but I don't think that was the goal, I think the goal was to serve a ministry to serve these young lives. Now they were young lives so they needed parenting, so I think there was a lot ... you did get caught in a lot of raising people because that is what was needed.

Most recently, Lynn has been on the board, she characterized this role with the residents by acknowledging that “I was always a little bit on the peripheral, like you know the aunt who was part of the family and involved but not the primary.” In spite of seeing herself as peripheral, she connected with several of the residents, even during the time she was just on the board. She still keeps in touch with them and the women have spent time in her house during holidays and she attended one of the women's graduation and was present at the other woman's small wedding reception.

For Lynn the agency had a very large role in her life, and the people who were part of the agency therefore became part of her life as well. She describes how some became more important and were longer lasting associations, but even others “have the flavor of any life experience, I am happy to see them if I run into them, because we shared something.” For Lynn, it was the “agency” that was her primary connection and then as people – residents, staff, and board members – came and went; she developed

strong and long-term connections with some of them, even though sometimes her prior connections with others weakened.

She saw her relationships with others based on mutual connection to the agency and the agency's mission, but that did not lessen the importance of those relationships, nor the significance she felt those relationships had in the lives of others. As she talked about the many interviews she had conducted she conveyed the message and impression she had gotten over and over from the residents and alumnae – the fact that staff members genuinely seemed to like each other and their jobs had made a big impact on the residents. They felt more secure and cared for because they could see that staff members were caring people who cared for their co-workers as well as for the residents.

Amanda, an African American woman in her late 50's, is a staff member who, like the board members also has a long history with the agency; however, she quit working for the agency a number of years prior to the city's closing of the foster care program. In spite of not working for the agency for the last 10 years, she still talked about having strong connection with the agency. She still keeps in touch with a number of the former residents, three of them on a regular and consistent basis. In fact three former residents have lived with her in the past and at least one still has the keys to Amanda's apartment. Amanda also helped one of the women's sister get a job at Amanda's place of employment, therefore Amanda sees the sister on an almost daily basis. She characterized the program as "developing a certain atmosphere; it connected the residents together. They have a real connection. It became like family and that continues to this day".

Amanda then talked about other staff members with whom she still keeps in touch.

When I asked her what that relationship was like she said;

Our relationship is with agency. We each care about the girls. One of them is another mother to one of the girls [like I am with the three mentioned earlier]. That is how we see them almost like your children, we don't see them as residents; we take them as family. After we talk about our own affairs it eventually rolls around to the "children". It is part of our conversations of what goes on.

Although she characterizes her relationship with the girls as 'almost like your children', she also feels strongly that they should have a relationship with their biological family. She described on of the former resident's relationship with her biological mother. Amanda said there was no connection between the two. Amanda strongly encouraged and facilitated the former resident's contact with the mother. She counseled this woman about making the contact, helped her deal with her "fear of connecting" and physically took her to the biological mother's apartment building, waiting outside until the visit was over. Amanda mentioned that in the middle of the visit the former resident came outside with her mother, but did not introduce or even acknowledge Amanda's presence. I asked Amanda how she felt about that and she said it did not bother her because it was just nice to see that

she was so happy to be with her mother and sister, but they had their own concept of foster care, so she didn't dwell on that. She didn't want to ruffle that part.

[I ask Amanda if the former resident went back after the first visit]

They are still connected, but not on that level.

[Then Amanda went on to explain why she had felt the former resident needed to make the connection with her mother]

that is her mother. If her mother is alive, she should see her, even if she has to love from a distance, they need that love, that connectedness. Cause that is yours. It does make a difference, just to communicate – just to know things. To say that is my mother. I got that from her. When you see similar characteristics, you can say now I understand why I have this. You can learn how you grew up. It gives you where you came from, what

family is all about; it makes you an individual. Even if stuff is bad, you know it comes from *mine* that has an important place in life.

Although this former foster resident still talks to her mother and sister, Amanda is still the one she uses for support. In fact the former resident tends to give more help to her mother and sister than she receives, and she is the one who keeps the relationship going, the one who initiates much of the contact. Amanda explains that for many of the former residents with whom she is in contact that this is their pattern with their biological family; they are the ones who give. She says she thinks this is because

they fear losing the relationship. Maybe they give because they know what it was like to need. They are almost like the caregiver. They try to provide for their family, to fix it up.

She describes how they give to their biological family, even while they themselves have unmet needs. She helps meet some of those needs, but she feels that for youth who have been raised in care

even as adults over 21 they still need someone to mentor them, they need to be connected with someone who has stability. It takes years and years and years for them to grow up to be a real adult. Even after care, they need to connect with someone. To have someone to call and ask things – someone to talk to, if you have been in a group home you sometimes don't want to ask, 'cause you don't want to admit that you don't know something. People can notice that something is not quite right.

This is one of the reasons that Amanda keeps connected with the former residents; she is their 'someone', their 'mentor', and their 'mother'.

Agnes, an African American woman in her late 50's is another former staff member who talked about her relationship with the agency. Agnes' association with the agency was much shorter. She had only been working for the agency for three years when it closed. In spite of her short time with the agency she "has made life-long relationships" with former residents and staff. She said she cares about the former residents.

Visualizing herself as a nurturing type, she perceives herself as a mother or grandparent to some of them. She discusses how she

Wants to know how they are doing. I stay connected. They have me to turn to, because 90% of them don't have family ties, so I try to stay connected to as many as I can, to see what road ... to see do they need someone to talk to. ...Connected is a human type thing. It is what we do as people who are concerned.

Agnes, like Karen the board member, sees her work at the agency, as well as the other social service work she has done, as influencing her children in a positive way. The former residents and her biological children have met. Agnes recommended one of her daughter for a job at the agency, and that daughter has developed her own relationships with former residents. They each currently have former residents with whom they talk; then the two women – Agnes and her daughter - share with each other how these former residents are doing.

Agnes believes it is good for her children to experience and know the people with whom she works, because her children need to “see those less fortunate as okay and normal”.

The parallel between Karen and Agnes's discussions regarding the ways in which their own caring work outside their household creates children who are ‘accepting people’ is intriguing. It is even more notable, because Agnes and Karen come from different racial and cultural backgrounds – black/white, city/country – and yet both characterize the need to accept and develop acceptance in their children as an outcome of their association with the agency.

She said many of the former residents are now in situations that are “the same stalemate as foster care” and were “still looking for a home, [they] didn't know where

they were going.” Amidst the problems these women were having, she saw herself as “something that is stationary, a rock that they know will be there, when they come back”. They have my number, they can always call.”

Former staff and board members’ depictions of their relationships with former residents reveal the ways in which they functioned and still function as caregivers to the former residents. These insights also reveal some of the tensions inherent in such relationships. The care they provided was partially their ‘job’, however, it is not their paid employment anymore, nevertheless the care continues and they remain connected to the former foster residents. In some respects that relationship is a familial one, but in other respects it is just a relationship that is based on (in Agnes’ words) the nature of ‘human connections’.

Professional care-giving and emotional labor

In the narratives presented above, the staff and board members depict their roles as being “whatever was needed to serve those young people” because that is “what you do as people who are concerned”. These and other former staff and board members chose to work for/with Sweet Haven and as a result of that affiliation and its ensuing obligation, they cared for the foster youth who were “placed in their care”⁶⁶. At a basic level this “serving” and “concern” of the foster youths could be considered a requirement of their job/role as care-givers.

When I was describing my research to a friend, she said, “this may seem simplistic, but isn’t it obvious that at some level Sweet Haven staff would naturally relate to the girls as mothers since the girls were living in the home.” My first response to her

⁶⁶ ‘Placed in care’ and ‘placed in the care of’ are the phrasing used by the foster care

comment was, “sure, but would it be expected that they would continue to relate as such after the girl left and was no longer their ‘responsibility’?” However, further reflection on her comment made me realize that even the initial expectation of the relationship was not a given. I recalled several of the former residents commenting to me about knowing who cared and complaining years later about staff who had been mean and who they felt had been doing the job just for the money. Additionally, much of the popular literature and the popular depictions of foster care are full of images of uncaring adults lording over children.

Is it a given that people whose job it is to take care of other people will in fact be “caring”? One approach to answering the question is to note that in our society most people employed in the care-giving professions are women⁶⁷ and that women have a “special connection to an ethic of care” (Abel and Nelson 1990:2)⁶⁸, therefore, caring is “natural” for them. However, as the previous paragraph revealed, it is not always a valid

system to designate and describe placements.

⁶⁷ At Sweet Haven the vast majority of the staff members were women, however there were a few men who worked for the agency. The former foster residents describe these men as caring. Because the two who had the strongest and longest-term connection with the agency no longer live in the city, they were not interviewed. Their on-going personal contact with the former residents is minimal, although inquiries about them and memories are still very much evident. In the case of one of the men, whose wife was also a long-time staff member, personal contact happens whenever they are back in the country. (See for example the reference in the section in chapter 5.) The other men who worked for the agency from time to time did not maintain contact with the agency and were not traceable for an interview.

⁶⁸ This perceived connection between women and care-giving has led feminist scholars to debate and theorize about the acknowledgment and importance of this connection. The perception that caring is devalued because of its association as women’s work leads some to believe that care-giving is thus implicated and implicates women in oppressive jobs. Others believe that in spite of the devaluing of caring, women should continue to embrace it because of its humanizing nature and its value not only in individual women’s lives but also in society at large (see for example, Fisher 1990: 108 -110, Abel and Nelson 1990: 6-7).

assumption that care-givers are naturally “caring”. A second approach is to overlook gender considerations and analyze care-giving in connection with other professions which, like it, are included under the label “service economy”. This label encompasses jobs where the employee must relate to people other than their coworkers, who expect/require the employee to perform certain tasks in a particular manner which according to Hochschild (1983) necessitates “emotional labor”. Emotional labor

requires one to induce or suppress feelings in order to sustain the outward countenance that produces the proper state of mind in others. ...emotional labor is sold for a wage and therefore has exchange value (1983:7).

Because Hochschild is used as the starting point in many discussions of care-giving, it is worthwhile to explore her research and findings. She was the daughter of foreign service workers and early in her life she attempted to understand what she perceived as “smiling” as an “act” that projected “messages not simply from person to person” but messages that were part and parcel of their jobs and representations of their country’s message (1983:ix). Her research focused on airline stewardess and bill collectors, two occupations that she theorized as opposite ends of the continuum of “emotional labor”. Given her initial interest, the occupations which she researched, her focus on the “psychological cost” of the gap between the “managing of feelings” and the desire to be “authentic”, and her interest in looking at how “capitalism turn[s] feeling into a commodity” (1983:186), much of her analysis, therefore, deals with the manufacture and management of feelings in an environment where people may not naturally or normally want to “smile” or be “friendly”.

Building on Hochschild’s analysis, a large portion of the research and literature regarding “emotional labor” focuses on factors such as the difficulties and alienation

workers feel when they fabricate concern and care for others. These researchers make a “distinction involv[ing] the separation between emotion as displayed and emotion that is internally felt” (Wharton 1999:159). The label “emotional labor” is reserved for emotion displayed that is not felt; “work feelings”, “spontaneous”, “unintentional demonstration of emotion”, or other terms are used for emotions that are internally felt and displayed.

The assumption is that fabricated care, as opposed to authentic care, is motivated by the desire for financial compensation. Furthermore, this “manufacture of feelings” creates emotions and feelings that are qualitatively different from emotions and feelings that occur outside of a work setting. This standard “work as a task in exchange for money” model is not adequate for exploring caregiving as a profession. The narratives of Sweet Haven staff members illustrate similarity of emotional concern and care in both paid and unpaid circumstances as is evidenced by the way in which former staff and board members relate to the former residents with much the same feelings and dynamics that they did when the women were residents and their paid responsibility. The inadequacy of the model is further exposed by the lives of the former residents, a number of whom have chosen careers in the helping professions, not because it will bring them financial reward, but because they have a strong desire to help others who are in the situations where they once were.

Additionally, as Steinberg and Figart (1999) recognize “even the authentic expression of emotion is work” (1999:11). A glance at any “self-help” or psychological book on parenting reveals the difficulty and struggle involved in parenting. Caring for your own children in an authentic way is work. Likewise, a survey of the minutes of any Sweet Haven staff meeting reveals the struggles and effort involved in providing care to

teens, especially teens who are “troubled” or “at risk”.⁶⁹ To illustrate, the following statements were taken from the minutes of an annual staff retreat where staff members were invited to “share one challenge of the past year.”

- Dealing with the increased level of arguments and physical fights; these girls have strong emotions and don’t always know how to articulate them so they act out instead. I have to keep trying to understand what they are experiencing.
- Working with the group of girls who are non-committed to their own personal growth.
- Trying to make group activities positive and to follow through with what they planned even when the group dynamic is negative.
- To keep things in perspective, to value the good, to discriminate between the annoying things and the really bad things.

Staff members were genuinely concerned about the young women who were under their care, yet they still struggled with how to display that concern to the residents and how to deal with their own frustration, which often run counter to the expressions of care. They struggled to ‘keep their perspective’ and resisted reacting to the ‘annoying’. When the staff person reacted to the resident’s underlying needs rather than to her displayed behavior, they often had to mask their own anger and displeasure with the displayed behavior. This could be framed as fabricated or inauthentic emotions, but it is more helpfully viewed as the difficulties encountered in caring and close interpersonal relationships.

Foner’s (1994) ethnography of a nursing home provides another example of paid emotional laborers who authentically feel and express care. She attributes this authenticity to the fact that nursing aides and other service professionals are different from “flight attendants, who have fleeting contacts with passengers, while nursing aides

⁶⁹ These are two designations/phrasings that are part of the city and social service agencies’ terminology used to describe the young women who were in foster care and

care for the same few patients day after day. Many become genuinely emotionally attached to patients” (1994:104). Himmelweit (1999) further resolves the authenticity dilemma by claiming that caring labor is a distinct type of emotional labor and thus needs to be analyzed separately from other emotional labor. She then distinguishes two dimensions to the concept of caring.

The first is the activity of catering directly to another person’s needs, both physical and emotional; the second is the desire for the other’s well-being ... A carer will not succeed in delivering good care unless she appears to the person being cared for (the caree) to be motivated by genuine concern for his well-being (1999:29).

Managing your feelings and putting on a smile can be accomplished with some degree of success in environments of minimal contact. However, in environments where prolonged contact is necessary and where the people with whom you have contact are perceptive human beings and have come to know you, inauthentic behavior is quickly detected.

For example, during the time that I lived with the foster care residents, I began to realize that many of them had developed finely tuned observing and perception skills, which often enabled them to discern other people’s feelings. The residents were often able to pick up on feelings that were not openly expressed but were just beneath the surface. On numerous occasions, when I was dealing with some personal conflict – or even just a lack of sleep – and was feeling a little “edgy”, no one at my outside job or among my friends noticed anything, yet, inevitably I would encounter one of the residents just in passing and she would ask me what was wrong. I soon realized that their previous living situations of often hostile and unpredictable environments had developed

residing at Sweet Haven.

their perceptual skills; they had an astute ability to “read people” and thus could spot “phony” behavior. At times their reaction to phony behavior could be quite hostile. Within this environment a worker does not last long if the displayed feelings are “managed” rather than genuine.

The realization that expressions of feeling and care by a paid care-giver can be authentic and have an impact on the person receiving and perceiving those feelings results in a greater visibility of the dimensions and

actions that go unnoticed but are critical to the construction of the family itself. As our society moves toward ever greater diversity in the types of living arrangements that are labeled as family, emotional work expands to legitimate these forms of intimate connections – forms that violate hegemonic conceptions of family life (Steinberg and Figart 1999:22-23).

These actions of caring and emotional labor help define and delimit family, however, much of the discussion of the relationship between ‘family’ tasks and ‘care-giving’ tasks proceeds without completely defining or conceptualizing what is meant by ‘family’. Thus it appears that the “family life” and “living arrangements”, which Steinberg and Figart refer to as challenging the “hegemonic conceptions”, only challenge the constellation of people that are included in the designation ‘family’, rather than challenging the basic formulation of ‘family’ as a contained and singular unit. Therefore, although Steinberg and Figart’s analysis adds to the understanding of people’s creation of alternate family arrangements, it is not as helpful in providing adequate framework for exploring situations, such as Sweet Haven, where as discussed in chapter five, multiple family forms exist simultaneously and relationships can *become* ‘family’ without necessarily *replacing* ‘family’. Therefore, although the above discussion of professional care-giving aids in understanding connections and relationships of carer and caree, it is

necessary to recognize those relationships are only part of the myriad of relationships in which each individual person participates. The next sections will look at relationships that are part of that amalgam of relationships that impacts the former residents even though they are not directly one of the participants in that particular relationship. At Sweet Haven, as well as in many other social service agencies, the care-givers have a connection with each other and with their workplace, which impacts their relationship with the people for whom they care.

Relationships within the work environment – “work culture”

One approach to analyzing relationships in the work environment is to identify and discuss “work culture”. The general trend in the “work culture” literature is to explore “what a number of writers call a dual character, involving both adaptation and resistance” (Foner 1994:121) in the work environment. This leads to presupposing a climate of conflictual job relationships causing workers to “stake out a relatively autonomous sphere of action on the job, a realm of informal, customary values and rules which mediate the formal authority structure of the workplace and distance workers from its impact” (Benson, quoted in Able and Nelson 1990:17). Not every workplace develops a “work culture” and researchers have identified certain factors within the workplace that can lead to the development of a “work culture.” Although, as the next few paragraphs will detail, Sweet Haven did not necessarily have a standard adaptation/resistance “work culture”, many of the factors that are identified as contributing to a “work culture” were present. It is therefore insightful to explore Sweet Haven using the “work culture” framework. I suggest at Sweet Haven these factors contributed to job satisfaction, which

in turn allowed for the development of a climate of care⁷⁰. Before examining the factors, it is necessary to explore the conflicts that are assumed to be part of a “work culture” and how they were and were not part of the Sweet Haven experience.

In the “work culture” literature, the conflict in the workplace is predominantly characterized as existing between workers and management. Leidner (1999) notes that in “interactive service work the power dynamic of the workplace shifts from a tug-of-war between workers and management to a three-way contest for control between workers, management and service recipients” (1999:91). At Sweet Haven, as well as in many social service and non-profit organizations, the larger body mediating requirements around expression of feelings and caring is not only the agency or supervisor, but also the governmental and bureaucratic guidelines. Therefore, workplace conflicts can exist on more than three levels for not only is the worker constrained and controlled by supervisors and the residents, but also the worker, as well as the agency and the supervisors, are constrained and often in conflict with the bureaucratic requirements.

For example, if a childcare staff person was experiencing difficulties with a defiant resident, that staff person would often resort to an extremely narrow definition of rules and would call on a social worker or administrators to resolve the conflict in a way that the staff person considered acceptable. Or, for instance, a discussion at staff meetings about city policy might revolve around creative ways for the agency to counter the perceived downside of that policy. In other situations, the conflict was more ‘typical’ of the conflict portrayed in the work culture literature, such as when evening staff

⁷⁰ I also believe that Sweet Haven’s small size contributed to the development of a work environment that was bonding and less resistance-based than factory or bureaucratic

develop their own styles and rituals, some of which ran counter to agency intentions and policy regarding residents' bedtime. Additionally, there were times when there were conflicts between childcare workers based on differences in personality, discipline and interactive styles with the residents, or even between day and night shift workers. The conflicts within the work environment thus exist on more levels than can be interpreted within a standard "adaptation/resistance to management" model.

Although a conflictual and resisting "work culture" did not develop at Sweet Haven, the three factors highlighted by Lundgren and Browner (1990) were present. These three factors – opportunities for "informal socializing on the job, relative freedom from supervision, and opportunities for coworker solidarity" (1990:160) – were not always distinct, instead they often overlapped. For example, freedom from supervision allowed the staff members who worked together on a regular basis to become friendly as well as to decide the specifics of how they would work together, which in turn helped them to feel connected and responsible to each other. Additionally, as was discussed in chapter one, the agency was small and therefore all childcare staff were supervised by the program director. However, supervision was only one aspect of her position and her schedule differed from a number of the childcare staff, so supervision was not an everyday occurrence. Furthermore, based on agency philosophy and pragmatic necessity, the program director worked to create autonomous teams that could deal with most issues without taking up undue administrative time.

There were however some areas where the decisions were made not by the childcare workers but by the city or agency. In these cases childcare staff were expected

work environments. I believe my and other's research on small agencies can enlighten

to carry out the policy whether or not they believed in it. Thus in the Sweet Haven context, decision-making had more than one avenue and even when made was not always unilateral. There were weekly meetings, attended by administrative, social work and childcare staff members. During these meetings the program director, the social workers or the childcare staff members would present concerns regarding the current house dynamics. Other staff members would then give input regarding how the situations should be handled. Another part of the meeting agenda was the social worker's presentation of each resident, her issues, her goals, and her progress toward those goals. After the social worker presentation, the staff members could give feedback regarding how they perceived the resident and what they felt her needs were and what the agency's treatment and plan for her should be. This allowed childcare staff to take an active part in the day to day actions of the resident as they both were present in the house together and to have some say in the way in which the resident received services from the agency. Additionally, these staff meetings were a time for socializing. Staff member's birthdays were celebrated plus staff talked with each other in the time before and after the meetings. These meetings thus served as one vehicle to build "coworker solidarity".

Lundgren and Browner (1990) and others who research "work culture" see it developing counter to the desires of management, but as the above discussion revealed, at Sweet Haven, the agency philosophy encouraged and enabled "informal socializing", worker autonomy, and "coworker solidarity"⁷¹. There were other aspects of agency

work-related theories.

⁷¹ Again as mentioned in footnote 3, I suggest (based on experiences and acquaintances outside the parameters of this research) that Sweet Haven was not an anomaly in this regard, but that other small and/or social service agencies likewise encourage and

philosophy that also added to the creation of a caring environment. According to the agency's mission statement, the goal of the residence was to provide a therapeutic environment in which a resident could grow and develop both socially and emotionally. It was assumed that their development could be evaluated by assessing the resident's behavior, attitude and ability to relate/function not only in the residence, but also at school, work, family of origin, or other locations. Because each individual staff member's ongoing relationship with the resident was crucial to the resident's development and to the attainment of a therapeutic environment (as well as to the reduction of conflicts within the work environment), staff's abilities in this area were recognized and valued. No two residents had the same configuration of personality and psychological factors; therefore there could be no singular prescribed or regulated way to develop a therapeutic relationship. Nor was it expected that each individual staff person would develop similar relationships with each individual resident. Given this range of relationship options, staff members were able to utilize their own personalities and styles in developing and sustaining therapeutic relationships with the residents.

Uttal and Tuominen (1999) believe that such "sustained interpersonal bonds are integral to the responsibilities of child care work" (1999:766). They reference Nelson's study of family day care workers, quoting Nelson's belief that "alienation from self is less likely to be an issue because the women become genuinely attached to the children and can acknowledge openly the feelings generated in their daily activities" (Nelson 1990, as quoted in Uttal and Tuominen 1999:766). Leidner (1999) believes that it is the aspect of worker autonomy within childcare work which helps insulate workers against the

develop informal and connecting staff relationships. These relationships often develop

“estrang[ement] from their own feelings [which is often the result of] organization encroach[ment] on previously sacrosanct parts of the self” (1999:90). At Sweet Haven, as I believe is the case in many care-giving jobs, workers are able and encouraged to express and utilize feelings and personalities because in order to carry out their job responsibilities they must interact with the resident or client. Additionally, as detailed in the “coworker solidarity” discussion presented above, in care-giving situations where more than one employee provides care there is a connection between the “interpersonal bonds” that workers develop with those they care for and the interpersonal relationships they have with each other. At Sweet Haven the closeness, caring, and concern that staff felt for each other helped residents feel comfortable and led them to develop a level of trust that they too would be cared for in such a caring environment.

Relationships within the work environment – dichotomy between work and “non-work”

Another framing of working environments is to view work as a sphere of activity separated from the rest of one’s life. Early formulations of this view dichotomized life into public and private spheres⁷². Although many concepts of the work environment have moved away from a strict adherence to this dichotomized view, many times there is still an assumption that financial needs are met and work-related interactions take place in the work environment, and that personal and individual needs are met outside of work. With regards to this research, a more useful conceptualization is one which considers work as one of many aspects of the care-givers’ life, not as an isolated role performed in one location for part of their day. Economically-focused work literature is increasingly

without the associated resistance to management component.

acknowledging that employment is changing and becoming more service orientated or more home-based. Moreover many employees are looking to enhance their quality of life as well as their financial gain. In this era when bus stops, phone booths and other advertising venues carry advertisements that extol, “You spend more time at your job than at home, choose wisely”, it is important to look at all the roles that work plays in people’s lives. It is valuable to acknowledge points of overlap between work and non-work life, and to analyze the points at which work becomes ‘family’ or engages in behavior which fills needs that were traditionally assumed to reside in ‘family relations. For example, Hochschild (1998) asserts that “work and family both are emotional cultures, but many people prefer being at work to being in a family, because they receive more positive reinforcement at work (1998:518).

Many of the Sweet Haven staff worked together over a number of years, often in stressful situations. The working relationships they developed often evolved into friendships. For some of the staff, especially the women who were of retirement age and a couple of the younger single staff members, their job was an important point of social connectedness for them as individuals. Even for those who had families, their family life and work life often overlapped. Many of the staff members had been working together for years and therefore knew each other’s families and the family members knew the staff members. Additionally, staff would support each other and give each other advice on issues involving their “own” family and ‘private’ life. At times, staff members would receive phone calls from family members and the staff answering the phone would chat

⁷² The theme of private/public (domestic) spheres is an on-going theme within both family and work theory. It is referred to in various contexts within this dissertation. (See for example the discussion beginning on page 221.)

before calling the other staff person to the phone. Staff's family members often attended the special celebrations and family members occasionally stopped by for various reasons. Similarly to the nursing aides who Foner (1994) studied, some of the Sweet Haven staff used kin or (friendship and church) networks to secure their own or others employment.

Those friendships often continued even when the women no longer worked together. There was an assumption that fellow coworkers were truly friends, not just being friendly because they had to work together. In fact, one of the former staff whom I interviewed revealed that she felt hurt that another of the former staff did not keep in touch with her. She said, "I thought we were really close, but now she doesn't even take the time to return my calls or contact me." For this particular staff person, caring had included caring for fellow staff members and she had believed the caring was genuine and not just an aspect of the job's need for staff to work as a team. When the fellow staff person did not act as if the friendship extended beyond the confines of the job, the interviewed staff member was definitely affected.

The fact that these staff members care for each other in addition to caring about the residents, is just one of the ways in which an exploration of care must expand beyond its usual parameters. Fisher and Tronto's (1990) characterization of 'care' is useful in this regard. They view care as

a process having four intertwining phases: caring about, taking care of, care-giving and care-receiving. ...Caring about involves paying attention to our world in such a way that we focus on continuity, maintenance, and repair. Taking care of involves responding to these aspects – taking responsibility for activities that keep our world going. Caregiving involves the concrete tasks, the hands-on work of maintenance and repair. Care-receiving involves the responses to the caring process of those to whom caring is directed. ...These caring phases may be carried out by one person or may be divided among different individuals or groups (1990:40-41).

In their discussion of caring as process, they are cognizant that in lived reality the phases “are not orderly ...culminating in some completion of the caring activity. [Instead phases] may be intertwined in chaotic and contradictory styles” (1990:41). Breaking care down into components is one helpful strategy for beginning to understanding the lives of the former foster youths and the women who cared for them while they were in foster care. Understanding that care happens at different levels and different intensities is one step in arriving at an understanding of the lived life experience of the former foster youth. By teasing out the different meanings and components of care, it becomes possible to understand how staff members can spend ‘work time’ receiving care and advice from each other without jeopardizing their ability to provide care for the residents; how the foster youth’s biological parents might have cared about them, but not been equipped to care for them; how board members can care for the residents without actually “giving” care; how some residents can “receive” care from “caregivers” for whom they also “care”; whereas other residents can “receive” care and feel disregard for those whom are giving the care.

Being cared for – attitudes toward care-givers

The chapter thus far has explored care from the perspective of the care-giver. It is helpful to examine care from the perspective of the caree, the one who to whom the care is directed. How do those who are cared for feel about this care? In some instances, they react to the care received by providing care to the care-giver in return. While living at the group home and later as adults, the residents express their care of their care-givers in many ways. At the most basic level they expressed care by inquiring about health and well being, but they also did small favors or tasks for their caregivers. In at least one case,

one of the former residents took care of a former staff member on an occasion when the staff member was ill. A personal example is that of a former resident who lent me her laptop when mine suddenly quit right in the midst of one of my rewrites. I believe that recognizing and analyzing this genuine caring dynamic is important not only in understanding connectedness, which is my interest, but also in exploring the full range of employment in the caring field.

Being cared for – creating conflictual feelings

To state that the former foster care youths felt cared for by those at Sweet Haven, by former foster parents, or by other significant non-biological family⁷³ and that they also cared for those care-givers in return does not fully reveal the complete dynamic of these relationships. The discussion that this caring was supportive, enabling and strengthening often centers on strong juxtapositions that which highlight the conflictual nature of receiving such care. Former residents would compare the care-givers' care with the lack of care they received from their biological family in ways that revealed that the care in some respects served to create or increase feelings of pains and failure.

I regret and resent that I can't talk to my mom like I can talk to Joan. I even call her Mom, she is my surrogate mom, she calls me daughter, 'cause she became what my mother wasn't. ...I have two mothers, one who made me and one who molded me.

This woman still keeps in touch with both of these “mothers” and when talking with me, refers to both of them as mother throughout her conversations. In that regard the woman who was not her biological mother, but who cared for her in a mothering way,

⁷³ Some former residents have on-going connections with former school teachers, social workers, or other caring adults in addition to or in place of connections with people from Sweet Haven.

did not become or replace her biological mother, but instead fills in the gaps of mothering that her biological mother was not able to achieve.

Describing the time away from family as a gap was eloquently described by another former resident.

The agency was the family I never really had, people who showed me love, people who extended themselves for me, people who care about you. Yet, foster care was a big chunk of my life taken away. When I look back on it, it was okay I guess, I got a new family, but I lost time with mine.

Like so many of the former foster youth, this woman acknowledged foster care as a positive and life changing experience for her, but she also felt it was a loss, a separation from family. There was a level at which these former residents acknowledged that at what they felt separated from was a family as it “should be”, not as it was. However, the loss still was there and in many situations the former residents continually connect with their biological families, even if it is at times painful and problematic.

Another former resident, who decided to return to her family after turning 21 and leaving care, said she went back to try to make it work with her family because “if it works with perfect strangers, it has to work with family”. For her receiving care from strangers, strengthened her, in fact, she claims that finishing high school and starting college were possible only because of that care-giving setting. However it still left her with the felt need to have that same kind of caring relationship with her biological family.

Thus, for these former foster youths, receiving care was strengthening and supportive, allowing them to achieve many personal goals and developmental milestones. It was a nurturing environment that became, “like family” or “the family I never had”, but it did not become the only family that was desired, nor did it become the family as “family should be.” It did not take away the feeling that the biological family still should

and in some places could have a role in their lives. Thus care is an important component in understanding perceptions of family, but it doesn't replace nor remove the need for the analyses of family as "it should be"⁷⁴.

Receiving care versus being controlled

Many of the former residents frame the care they received at Sweet Haven as strengthening, supportive and guiding.

Before I didn't know how to cook or clean or set limits. ...Sweet Haven gave me guidance. ...my confidence was built. (24 year old former resident)

At Sweet Haven I learned to want more than just to hang out with my friends. ...I use to hate all that cooking and cleaning. Now I clean everyday. Now I love to cook. It's shocking. (26 year old former resident)

If it weren't for Sweet Haven I would never have gone to school. People were there to talk to you and give you that extra push. (26 year old former resident)

Sweet Haven staff members provided discipline – reinforcing some behaviors and directing, correcting, and managing other behaviors. How these tasks relate to the more general role of care has not been adequately analyzed in the literature. England and Folbre (1999) make a passing mention to one potential framing of this dynamic when as a footnote to the labeling of work as "caring on the assumption that the worker responds to a need or desire that is directly expressed by the recipient" (1999: 41), they point out the following:

the service is something that someone has decided the recipient should have. But sometimes others may view the worker as engaged in social control rather than care of the client. In principle, we would not want to

⁷⁴ Likewise, the concept of care does not counter the acknowledgement of multiple and at times conflicting definitions and framing of the word "family" which were discussed in chapter five.

call the former caring work, but it is hard to operationalize the distinction (1999: 48).

Any attempt to operationalize or discuss the full range of the distinction would need to examine settings such as prisons, mental hospitals and other environments of extreme social control, as well as hospitals and schools. In these environments teachers, nurses and other caregivers need to require that the people, for whom they care, do tasks that may not necessarily be tasks the individual wants to do⁷⁵; thus caring as influence, instruction, advice, or guidance becomes a germane component of care-giving. Guiding and instructing the young are tasks that are often assumed to be the role of family. When the one being cared for is young, this guidance can become especially relevant. If guidance and instruction are components of what happens in the normative example of family, then does the fulfillment of those tasks imply a familial relationship? The former foster youth who responded to staff's request to adhere to certain behavior guidelines with the phrase, "you can't tell me what to do – you aren't my mother" implies that guidance and 'family' are intimately related.

Another difficulty of operationalizing the distinction between social control and care is the ambiguities and range involved in advice and guidance. People differ in their desire for and acceptance of advice and guidance. As staff members revealed in their conversations with me, some of the former residents only call when they are experiencing crisis or turmoil and are calling to receive advice, emotional support and/or actual tangible help. Whereas for other former residents the opposite is true, they never call when they are in crisis. The assumption is that they either want to save face and not have to admit they are doing poorly, or have a need to assert their adult independence, or still

have strong feelings of privacy and do not want others meddling in “their business”. An additional factor involved in advice-giving and the willingness to accept that advice is the relationship between caregiver and the one receiving the care as well as the caregivers’ personalities and listening/counseling skills. Here, as in many other aspects of the caring relationship, the caregiver’s ability to succeed at their tasks is directly related to their relationship with the one being cared for.

Caring about – care without physical manifestations

The caring that has been discussed thus far has mostly focused on care as an activity – an act of providing care for another person. There is however another aspect of care that is equally important. This is care as an emotional and mental exercise that does not necessarily carry with it any physical activity. What is the role of such care in the former foster youth’s lives or in the life of anyone for that matter? This aspect of care was often missing from both the feminist and sociologist’s discussions of care. Even when mentioned, it was often not analyzed, yet in the lives of the former foster youth, staff and board members it is a major theme. I cannot think of a single conversation with these former foster care youths that at some point did not contain questions about the well-being of someone from their time in foster care. This theme is probably best expressed by a former resident whom I missed the last event at which a married couple (influential in the agency but now out of the country) had been present. She had asked about them, which I had interpreted as a disappointment that she hadn’t been able to see them. Since they had not returned overseas, I was exploring ways she might still be able to see them or talk to them. She said that was not necessary because “as long as I know

⁷⁵ This larger discussion of how social control is imbedded in “service-providing”

they are all right, I don't need to talk to them. They hold a strong place in my heart and I wouldn't want anything to happen to them." This theme of "keeping in contact to see if you are still surviving" emerged continually in former residents' conversations. They wanted to know how each other were doing, it was important to know that the person was doing well and likewise it was also important to them that we knew that they were doing well and succeeding. For some this wanting us to know they were doing well carried a hint of the attestation, "see, I told you I could do it". This feeling and motivation may not fit in the usual assumed rubric of care, however I believe there is an importance and validity in the desire to have someone who knows you well validate your success.

A related form of care in its emotional rather than physical aspect is the concern that is expressed in the act of prayer. The role of prayer in the former foster care youths' connections is perhaps most vividly expressed in their connections with staff and board members than with each other although some of the residents do talk about praying for others. With staff and board members, however, some residents not only ask for prayer at particular times of difficulty, but they also talk about what it feels like to know that someone is praying for them.

This theme is also apparent in the activities and printed documents of the agency. The welcome letter that the residents received when they first arrived began and ended with this theme.

Welcome! We have prayed for you before you came here and we are pleased to have you as part of our family. ...
 We want to see you healthy and pleased with yourself. We are committed to providing the necessary training for you and we are all here to help you. We expect you to do your part to grow and believe in yourself. We believe in you and will continue to pray for you.

institutions (see for example Bourdieu 1977) is beyond the scope of this dissertation.

The agency's method of fundraising also reflected a belief that religion, prayer and caring all interact and overlap. Many of the people who donated money did so from a religious perspective and the letters that accompanied the donations often contained expressions of care and prayer. Although these donors didn't actually participate physically in the resident's lives, they nonetheless provided a kind of care and felt connected to the residents in a real and tangible way. Many of the residents and alumnae felt this connection as well. This could be observed in several circumstances. As mentioned in a previous chapter there was a yearly banquet that was attended by a number of these donors as well as residents and alumnae. The residents and alumnae who attended these banquets spoke of what it felt like to meet the people who cared about them. When they spoke to the people at the banquet, both informally and in their prepared speeches they often included thanks for not only the money but also for the prayers and well wishes. Additionally, residents and alumnae often volunteered to write the thank you letters that the agency sent out to donors. These letters would often be filled with comments of appreciation for the fact that others cared about them and recognition that the expression of care was more than just giving money but that it also involved a personal level of connection that often included prayer.

It is hard to evaluate or quantify what the effect is of knowing that someone is praying for you or that someone has expressed concern for you. This dynamic is made even harder to define and analyze if that is the only connection. How do you define the connection you have with someone where the only relationship is one of concern for you as a fellow human being in need? Or, as is the case with some of the former residents' current connection with the staff where the only thing left of the former relationship is

this knowledge of having been cared for in the past. This concept draws to mind one of the classic “location” t-shirt designs. The “someone in fill in the blank loves me” t-shirt. What does it mean to know that you are loved/cared for even if the person who is giving the love/care is no longer physically present? Where does this fit, in the theorizing and contextualizing of connectedness?

The strength/tenacity of this “connection by being cared for” was highlighted for me by one of the long-term staff’s explanation of a former resident’s behavior. Before explaining that behavior it is insightful to know this particular resident’s history with the agency. She had lived in the house for about a year and a half. During that time, she developed friendships with both residents and staff. Then one evening she reportedly stole something from one of the other residents, which led to an escalating altercation that ended in a physical altercation with both the other resident and a staff member. As a result she had been escorted out of the house by the police and had spent at least one night in jail. She did not return to the agency when she was released from jail, instead she was transferred to another agency. A number of years later, her current address became known to the agency and she was subsequently invited to an alumnae party. She came to the party but stayed less than thirty minutes and did not move beyond the front foyer of the residence. I asked the staff person, who had talked to her for that half hour, why the alumna had come to the party and then not come in to say hello and see people. The staff person explained that the resident felt because of her earlier behavior she could not come into the house. She was not there to attend the party but had come for the dual purpose of showing us she was doing well and more importantly because she knew that here were people who truly cared for her. What was the effect on her of knowing that

someone cared for her? How would one classify that connection and did it affect other connections/relationships?

Care as the essential factor in human affiliations

Borneman's (2001) goal is to "suggest alternatives for conceptualizing human affiliation outside reproductive ideologies and practices...[believing that] anthropology should focus instead on processes of voluntary affiliation: processes of caring and being cared for." One of his main concerns is the way in which "marriage, exalted as the right to found a family, has established itself as global ideology" (2001:30). He believes that anthropologists, in their search for universal understanding of the essence of humanness, have "subordinated what was human about kinship practice to its organizational form and to the means of reproduction. Lurking behind and prior to either families or groups are relations of care" (2001:36). He briefly mentions formulations of the 'ethic of care' as essentially a feminine domain and the 'ethic of right' as the masculine domain, but, for him the two are neither gendered nor even opposites. Instead caring (and being cared for) is a "fundamental human need and nascent right" (2001:42). It is his belief that when anthropological literature and theories conceptualize marriage and kinship as a priori and normative, then the experience of many people are excluded. Because he believes that anthropology has a "regulative effect of constituting what should be ...it has a responsibility...to examine critically and support in its normative frameworks diverse projects of caring and being cared for" (2001:31).

His ideal of examining people's experiences and building normative frameworks based on their experiences rather than on institutional or preconceived notions of what is normative, is one that I echo. It has definite relevance for the lives of the women who

grew up in foster care, since their experiences are often outside institutional conceptions of “norm”. With his focusing on examining people’s experiences of caring, he wants to unseat the prioritizing of descent and alliance (re: marriage) and replace them with care, which he formulates as the “nascent right” and essential human need. One difficulty I see with this formulation is that as this chapter has revealed, ‘care’ is a complex term and includes many subtleties. These subtleties are difficult to subsume into a singular concept for exploration and analysis. Additionally, based on the analysis of my own research, I believe care is definitely a relevant component, but it is not by any means the only component. I believe there are other “nascent rights” and essential human needs that must also be examined and included in formulations of humanness. These include, but are not limited to connectedness, inclusion in a group outside of yourself and a feeling of self-worth. I believe a more worthwhile project is not to assume care or any other concept as the object to be examined in people’s essence and relationship to others, but rather to examine people’s experiences and ask them what they believe are the essentials.

Babula’s (2001) critique of Borneman’s suggestion reveals several other areas that need further analysis. As she notes, his “understanding of care indicates a far more sentimental and nurturing relationship than one that would consist primarily of rights and duties” (2001:254). She feels an “ideal family” based on this model of care would be very appealing since there would be no conflicts, no unkindness and no “obligation and duties” performed with “negative affect”. Her critique is not of the image of the ideal. Instead it focuses on the likelihood of the ideal. She states that for her personally,

[d]isassociating myself from the people who make up my biological family is absolutely incomprehensible on a practical level, [because of] the

inextricability of the self and one's kin group. ...In attempting to turn my back...I would in effect have to rewrite myself and my place in the world. ...precisely because of the inexplicable sense of belonging and/or obligation I feel toward the individuals who make up my family despite the lack of genuine (positive) affect that I have for them (2001: 265).

Her acknowledgment of the strength of a kinship bond is insightful for my analysis. There have been instances where staff and others have expressed amazement that residents still felt bonds with families whom have been hurtful and at time harmful to them. Although she rightly points out that 'care' as the signifier is not always realistic, because people have 'inextricable' bonds with their kin, she then attaches the word "inexplicable" to her explanation rather than attempting to theorize about the rationales. Her article hints at some of the factors that enter into her "sense of belonging and/or obligation". They include a sense of history, an "ethic of survival by bonding together", socialization, gratitude, and religion, among others. But I think far more insightful is a comment that she postulates not as explanation or even as theory, but rather as a comment within the "Brief Overview of Anthropological Kinship Theory" section. Within this section she mentions an

emerging idea that families are yet another cultural construct, but the rhetoric of the family that signifies particular kinds of attachments with particular kinds of concerns remains (2001: 253).

It is insightful not only to recognize family as a "cultural construct", but also to realize that rhetorical (and I might add ideological) significance of "family" as a signifier remains. It is hard for individuals, embedded as they are, to disengage themselves from the constructs of their culture, even when those constructs cause them personal discomfort.

Babula's assessment is that Borneman's description of care implies a "far more sentimental and nurturing relationship" than the conceptualization that her understandings of care proposes. I agree with Babula's assessment and echo it as one of the shortcomings of his theory. Borneman (2001) views "caring and being cared for as processes of non-coercive, voluntary affiliation" (2001:31). Caring and being cared for are not always a matter of personal choice. The residents did not choose to be cared for by the staff at the agency. (Nor did some of them choose not to be cared for by their family, who would be their first choice of caregivers if not "coerced" by court regulations.) Likewise, the staff did not choose who the residents would be, nor were they totally free to pick and choose which residents to care for, instead they were expected to care for all the residents who were "under their care" because that was how their responsibility was delineated.

Summary and conclusions

Exploring and understanding the lives of those who were formerly in foster care entails examining the second half of that former designation. What is care and what role did (does) it play in the former residents lives? What role does it play in the lives and experiences of human beings? This chapter thus has explored care. Sweet Haven staff and board members provided care to the former foster care youth when they were residents and in many cases they developed mutually caring relationships. As caring people, their life histories and views inform this discussion. The chapter also built on Fisher and Tronto's (1990) conceptualization of care as a dynamic process with multiple phases which "intertwined in chaotic and contradictory styles" (1990:41). A number of those processes and phases were explored. First the chapter focused on the caregiver

perspective, looking specifically at the literature on emotional labor and work cultures. Then the focus turned to the former foster youth as the receivers of that care, exploring the role of that care in their lives and how the process of being cared for affected them. Care as an ideology, as expressed in one's mental and spiritual connection and concern, was also explored.

This chapter has revealed that care is a relevant component of people's familial relationships, however, care alone does not make a family and being family does not immediately insure that people will care for each other. Furthermore, in many of the cases where biological family does not appear to engage in care, the lack of care does not equate to a lack of relationship or connection. The former foster youth continue to pursue relationships where the manifestation of care is not immediately visible, even as they at the same time form caring relationships with non-biological family.

An understanding of the many forms and processual nature of care provides the means to analyze how care can bond people together. The durability of that bond cannot always be measured just in terms of proximity or even in terms of continuation of actions of caring. A more thorough discussion of the power of memory of care will be further explored in the next chapter.

CHAPTER SEVEN
IT IS NOT BLOOD, BUT IT STILL BONDS:
MEMORIES AND OBJECTS AS CONNECTORS

I talk to my boys about Sweet Haven all the time. I tell them the things that happened there. I have such good memories from there (A 26 year old former resident).

I am grateful for Sweet Haven and how it changed my life. My brother has been in and out of jail since he was 17. He is now realizing he needs [to make] a different a history to go with his name, right now he might as well not exist, since the only papers with his name on them are those referring to his being in and out of jail (A 31 year old former resident who has a college degree and is working).

I remember one Christmas I wanted Visionware [cookware] so badly and I got it. I couldn't believe it! But it wasn't just the big things, like Christmas, but all the little things that showed care and gave us a chance to have our wishes come true.

The character of the status *former* dictates that the exploration of the current connections of the former foster care youths entail a looking back to the experiences, times and places of their past. During my research I began to realize that the memories themselves, as well as both the feelings that are stirred up by those memories and the objects which elicit or denote memories, are significant connectors and creators of relationships. This chapter will therefore explore the importance of memories and objects, detailing their function in family formulations and connections and suggesting that memory and objects are important considerations not only in the study of former foster care youths, but also in studies of family relationships in general. This chapter will begin with an examination of the former resident's memories of the time in care, their memories of separation and the current impacts of those memories. I believe it is not just memory that is cherished by the former residents; physically tangible objects as the receptacle of that memory are also cherished. I suggest that the objects themselves create

not only a memory of a caring relationship, but also serve as a contemporary re-valuing of the former resident as a person of worth. There are several frameworks by which anthropologists have examined the role of objects in family and interpersonal relationships. This chapter juxtaposes the former foster care youths' experiences regarding objects with the analysis and presentation of objects in classical/traditional kinship studies and in the larger anthropological discussion of objects and reciprocity. The final section of the chapter explores photographs as a source of connection.

Memories of care

Memory can be used as an individual connector; it can also be used between people to seal, reinforce or recreate a relationship. When staff, board members, and former residents talk with each other about the past, then the connections are acknowledged and strengthen.

For example, one of the former staff members attended a recent gathering of several former residents who are now in their early 30's. She discussed their detailed conversations which included; descriptions of their favorite meals at the residence, remembering individual's specialties, numerous holiday celebrations and the gifts they were given, in fact several of them made a point to mention that they still had the bears they were given one Christmas. The former staff member remarked that their discussion of all these events flowed easily and was carried out with the air and attitude "as if it happened yesterday". This sharing of memories served as a reminder of a happy time spent together, but it is also one of the ways that they strengthen and continue their current relationships.

Former residents' memories are often very clear and easily accessible. They will say, "remember when", and then recite the smallest detail of someone's actions towards them or someone else. These are behaviors and actions that are so minute that I had long since forgotten them. The memories both good and bad of their childhood and their time in foster care slip out with ease, often framed with the statement, "I think about foster care all the time".

Memories of separation

Several times in their discussions the women referred to the first time they came to the house, even remembering who answered the door. One woman actually remembered what the staff person, who opened the door over ten years ago, had been wearing. This remembering of such insignificant details is not surprising, given the intensity of the event. Training handbooks for foster care social workers and psychiatrists include descriptions of the effects of traumatic separations and then detail how to treat the resulting "attachment disorders". Bullock, Gooch, and Little (1998) note that in some cases the youth "focus on matters that may seem trivial to an outsider...but such apparently superficial concerns reflect much deeper insecurities about their situations." Rycus and Hughes (1998) list the possible results of separation and their potential duration.

People experience similar feelings in response to separation: sadness, depression, or despair, often accompanied by anger, anxiety and fear, loneliness, and in some instances, a loss of self-esteem or direction. Some separations remain vivid in our memories, despite the passage of many years (1998:701).

For several of the former foster care youths these memories of having to leave their homes of origin and their subsequent arrivals and departures from each of their

placements are still very fresh. Sometimes they did not want to leave their homes and in other situations, for instance where parents had been especially abusive, the feelings were more ambivalent. In some cases, even though the event was traumatic, it brought a sense of relief.

I remember, (someone at school she had confided in earlier) came and told me I wasn't going to go back home. ...I was so afraid my Dad would come find me and hurt me. ...I was taken somewhere else and didn't go back to that school again.

What does it mean to be connected by memory to both positive and negative people and places in your past?

Impacts of the past

For the former residents it is not only the memories of past events that have carried over into the future, it is also the effects of those events and experiences that are present, shaping their lives. They express, sometimes in rather vivid ways how "my time in foster care is a big part of who I am."

When I look at the other girls that I use to hang out with and where they are now, some of them are dead or in jail and I think that is where I might have been.

My sister, she ran away from foster care, so she never finished high school. Because I stayed I am doing better than she is.

I was talking with Lynn, the board member who had done numerous alumnae interviews in the past, about the number of former residents who were still connected to the agency. She started discussing the women who still come to events and/or who still keep in touch with staff or board members. However, as we continued to talk about the former residents and mentioned those who still carry a memory connection to the house, she said emphatically, "That number is very high. When I use to talk to them, so many of

them talk about how they carry so much of the agency and what they did and learned with them”.

The fact that a large part of ‘who they are’ is connected to their time in foster care can create difficulties in their current relationships. Some former foster residents do not want to share with others that they were in foster care, but it can be difficult to suppress the memories or figure out ways to explain the “whys” of previous experiences.

I was talking with people at my job and I said, ‘When I use to live in Manhattan.’ And they said, ‘Where did you live?’ and I said, ‘the upper east side’ and then they were surprised and wanted to know when and why I lived there.

Another and perhaps more poignant way in which the past must be suppressed for current relationships to survive concerns the former residents who have renewed their relationships with their biological family.

My mother and I don’t talk about that part. We both try not to go there.

I don’t talk about the time in foster care with my mother, cause it hurts her to talk about it. It is hard for me not to talk about it cause it is part of my past. But I don’t in front of her. I turned out pretty good, but my mom didn’t do a good job.

For these and other former residents, their current relationship with their biological family is conceivable only by suppressing the past. By not considering the time when the mother “wasn’t there” and “maybe she feels guilty”, former residents are able to re-establish biological relationships. References to the past would jeopardize this reconnection.

Objects as connectors to familial relationships

Many introductory anthropology texts give a cursory mention of objects in their kinship and family chapters. These “classical” kinship analyses acknowledge objects in

the discussion of concepts such as bridewealth and dowry. The role of the object is to seal or symbolize a union and to create a material obligation between two individuals and their kin “groups”. Often the type of object or range of objects is consistently used throughout an area, for example land, labor, or cows may be given/received by people as connectors. This way of framing “connecting objects” does not quite explain the objects that are important to the former foster care youths. It is not marriage or the forming of new alliances that gives these objects significance; instead it is the memory of the time the object was received, or the memory of the person who gave the objects which imparts the importance. These objects take on symbolic/representational roles of evoking of a time, place and people of importance. For instance, one former resident who lived in the residence close to 20 years ago told me that she still had the robe she had been given one Christmas. Several of the residents revealed they still had and in some cases still slept under the handmade comforters they had received as part of their welcome packet when they arrived at the residence.

Segalen and Zonabend (1987) similarly speak of objects connecting people to the past. Even though they are speaking of past connections across generations, their comments are instructive for the current discussion. They suggest the

study of the forms assumed by family memory is another way of understanding the roles and functions of kinship. This memory can be located by means of the places and spaces where families live. ..and it constitutes, now as before, an anchorage for family memory. The furniture, ornaments, knick-knacks – all these objects have a history that can be recounted in detail. Each has a meaning to be deciphered within the family ...genealogy is tangibly recollected by means of these objects whose origin, history, and future are known. Thus the perpetuity of the family is shown (1987:117).

The above discussion is contained in a section titled “social practices of kinship”. They believe the function of these practices is to “give [members] their unity and their identity” (1987:116). I suggest that for the former foster care youths “kept objects” may not bring unity or connect them to a line of successive generations in the same way that the artifacts in the above quote connect families. However, the former foster care youths’ objects do connect the women to their own past and their feelings of receiving care, nurturance, and acceptance. I suggest that these objects do serve as one means of providing and connecting to “identity”.

In the Segalen and Zonabend (1987) example cited above the objects serve to “anchor” the family history of a family that is present. Objects however can also denote that which is absent. Buchli (2002), acknowledging Pomian, describes how items can become ‘semiophores’ – objects which “being endowed with meaning, represented the invisible” (2002:6). In his examples the meanings were usually ones that were understood by all who viewed the objects. However, sometimes objects take on special meanings and representations for an individual, irrespective of the meanings that others might ascribe to them. For example, Brodkey (2000) reflects on her upbringing in a home where she read fervently. She theorizes that objects connect her to her past identity.

The inordinate pleasure I take from littering all available surfaces with books makes it seem unlikely that in my case books are indexing only my academic enthusiasms. It seems more likely to me ...that the books are there to keep me company, that they are tokens of absent family and friends whose voices have been muted by time and space (2000:15).

In Brodkey’s (2000) example, objects replace the absent family, keeping her ‘company’ and connected.

Objects as gifts and/or “inalienable possessions”

Weiner (1992), in her critique of the anthropological understanding of reciprocity, reproduction and kinship processes, highlights people’s roles in exchange networks and introduces her belief that the power and practice of exchange and prestige within such exchanges is dependant on certain objects being kept out of the exchanges. These inalienable objects are analyzed within a framework shaped by her belief that “all exchange is predicated on a universal paradox – how to *keep-while-giving*” (1992:5, italics in original). In her analysis this ‘keeping while giving’

entails the creation of difference... [and] even in the most mundane exchanges of greetings or Christmas cards, the social identities of the participants – what they have that makes them different from each other – color the styles, actions, and meanings that create the exchange. ...Inalienable possessions are embedded with culturally authentication ideologies, ... imbued with history composed of their own exceptional trajectories ...and verify the difference among individuals who own these coveted objects (1992:150).

The practices and meanings associated with the objects that are esteemed by the former foster care youths have parallels to the understandings presented by Weiner, yet they differ in several significant ways. The objects possessed by the former foster care youths certainly gained importance based on “their own exceptional trajectories”; in fact these objects become inalienable based solely on the fact of where and when they were received. The women who save and cherish a 20 year old robe, a 15 year-old stuffed bear, or a hand-painted personalized storage chest are not keeping these objects because the objects are “culturally authentic” or because the objects elevate their status in the social hierarchy. Instead, these objects are inalienable because they bestow upon the women who own them a connection with people in their past; thus providing comfort, identity, and increased self-worth. The objects are inalienable in the literal sense of the word, they

can not be transferred or repudiated because to do so would require the former foster care youths to forget a point of connection and comfort and in many cases would render the object worthless – given that the objects are old and worn and no longer desirable in the open market. Their value is intrinsically linked to what the object represents idiosyncratically to the individual former resident.

The other interesting divergence from both Weiner's (1992) formulation and the reciprocity model of gift exchange is that a number of the objects that the former residents report still having in their possession were objects that were given by the agency. In the following discussion of the ways in which gift exchange with the foster care youths diverge from the reciprocity model, it should be understood that not all objects given to the residents have become inalienable keepsakes. Not every received object becomes a point of connection; nevertheless, I think it is instructive to explore the reciprocity model in light of the gift giving practices and circumstances at the foster care agency.

In most circumstances when the agency gave one of the residents a gift, the financial source of that gift was the agency's supporters' donations. The city reimbursement model did not recognize/support major gift giving, based as it was on subsistence and "necessity"⁷⁶. Whatever the source of the money supplying the gift, the giving of the gift did not usually require a return gift nor create an obligation on the part of the resident. The reciprocity was extremely diffuse, if it existed at all. The only things

⁷⁶ There were a couple of years where this outside donation of gifts was explicit and direct. Families from a neighborhood church took the names and "wish lists" of the residents and then bought, wrapped and delivered gifts to the agency. The residents knew only the names of these gift givers; they did not meet them in person. These gifts were not part of an on-going connection and did not create an on-going relationship.

that the agency's supporters received in exchange for their gift were any good feelings that might be associated with the act of helping others and a receipt for the amount of the gift; which allowed them to take a deduction on their income taxes. In the act of receiving the gift, the resident incurred no obligation; although, as stated earlier, many of them did feel a general obligation to help others based on their having receiving help⁷⁷.

A helpful corrective to the belief of a universality of reciprocity in gift giving situations is Thomas's (1991) analysis that

the dictum that persons and things are confounded is merely a general premise. Although the notion that a gift carries something of the donor or former user with it may be sustained, the principle of the superiority of the donor, and the compulsion to provide a return gift, cannot be derived from this broader postulate (1991:17).

This understanding and his recognition that ethnography can reveal the connections of objects and their value and that "value can be reinterpreted in specific social contexts ...[and] the estimations people make draw upon a range of historical and sentimental considerations" (Thomas 1991:21) create the possibility of acknowledging the connective power of singular objects for specific residents.

Objects/Gifts as creators of connections

An aspect of objects and gifts that was apparent in the lives of the former foster care youths when they were in care, and which I imagine continues to operate, is the situation of an object/gift serving to create a connection/relationship. The last chapter's

⁷⁷ Reflecting back on the occasions of gift giving and exchange that took place during the time that I lived and worked at the residence, I remember ambiguous situations that defy easy analysis under reciprocity or gift-giving as social connector framework. The gift giving time was always stressful and often full of seeming animosity and ingratitude. As with many of the previously analyzed aspects of the foster care experience, some residents interpreted the receiving of gifts as a reminder of what they did not have, either materially or socially, thus creating anger and a less than reciprocity-minded spirit.

discussion of care explored the ways in which prayer and caring as an action served to create a bond between people who were otherwise unknown and unconnected. At this point I would like to explore a similar phenomenon, the way in which objects can facilitate a bond. On a couple of occasions there were two residents who knew each other, but who did not have a deep or strong relationship. In these circumstances the gift-giving occasion served to facilitate and solidify a bond between them.

In order to present the example that best illustrates this phenomenon it is necessary to examine a gift-giving practice at the agency. Every Christmas, the agency would organize a Kris Kringle exchange. Anyone who wanted to participate would put his or her name in a hat and then each person would choose a name from the hat⁷⁸. The “game” lasted seven to ten days and during that time everyone would leave small gifts for the person whose name they had drawn, being careful to not revealing their identity as they left the gifts. The format of the game required that each person not tell anyone else whose name they drew, thus everyone spent the week not only enjoying their gifts, but also trying to figure out who was their and everyone else’s Kris Kringle.⁷⁹ The game ended at the house Christmas party where each person gave their Kris Kringle a larger gift, revealing their identity at the same time.

One of the former residents in her reflection back to her time in the house was discussing another former resident

⁷⁸ Everyone in the agency “played” in the same Kris Kringle, thus residents, childcare staff, social workers, administration, tutors, and the nurse would draw each others’ names.

⁷⁹ In order to fully understand the dynamic of this exchange, it is important to note that there were years in which the staff person who oversaw the drawing and the “game” had to allow residents to redraw, because when they looked at the first name they had drawn they stated they would refuse to give a gift to that person, because they did not like them.

I remember Janet and I were never that close, then one year she was my Kris Kringle and we were friends after that.

The connection that was created by a week of gift giving became an ongoing friendship.

The former residents' comments about and reactions to the gift giving that happened at Christmas and on birthdays, revealed the ways in which the receiving of a gift created or reinforced connections with the gift giver. As the Visionware quote that began this chapter illustrates, the former residents equated being given a gift, especially a requested or desired gift, with being cared for.

Photographs as connection

Past and memory are also reflected in the prominence of photographs in the former residents' stories. During most of the interviews that took place in former foster youths' homes, photo albums were pulled out at some point in the interview. The women wanted to show me pictures of themselves as children – in some cases these had been recovered from recent renewed connections with family. I was also shown pictures of times at the agency, or of recent family or fellow alumnae gatherings. Additionally, many of them displayed photographs of themselves and their children on the wall, which they pointed out while describing their lives. Former residents also give pictures of themselves or their children to former staff members. The bulletin board in the social worker's office was always full of such pictures, and former residents noted whether their pictures were displayed. Likewise, one former staff member spoke about how the former residents, with whom she keeps in contact and whom she speaks about in family terms, insist that their pictures be placed on the "family" wall in this woman's house along with the pictures of the staff member's children and grandchildren. Similarly, several former

residents' children who were visiting at my house looked for their pictures displayed with pictures of my niece, nephew and my friends' children. There seems to be great significance in the displayed photograph as a representation of relationship. Maschio (2002) in his discussion of the American refrigerator notes,

[The] photos of the household's children on the front of the fridge...were evidence of parental care, concern and affection. Other photos that I saw on the fridge, such as those of distant relatives, also had a certain teaching function...Bits of family history were woven into these descriptions. The refrigerator had become a sort of memory board that function to evoke a feeling of family (2002:8).

Likewise, for the former foster care youths, the photographs from their time in care serve as visual reminders of that part of their life. The fact that these photographs are kept and looked is revealed by the many spontaneous comments of former residents regarding such photographs, which some former residents kept in special albums. A few months ago, a former resident had stopped by the house to reconnect and had left her address. She excitedly arrived at the next alumnae gathering with the yellowed photo album from her time in care. Her thirteen-year-old daughter had obviously seen these pictures before, judging by the daughter's comment, reaction and interest as former residents and staff looked at the pictures and talked about the events and times they represented.

Bouquet (2001) explores the relationship between family and photography

But what of the substance of photography? In what sense do these material objects constitute a kinship substance? ...Family photography is constituted both by conventions of production (such as pose, camera angle, portraiture conventions) [and I might add ownership or access to a camera] and consumption (what is in the eye of the beholder: interpretation, decoding). ...the question is both how photographs circulate as a kind of substance that parallels other constitutive substances of kinship and how this is doubled by anthropology's conventions concerning what kinship "is" or "looks like." The interpolation of

photographic *evidence* of the genealogical ties that count and those that may be discounted is telling. ...The way photographs *somehow become* the relations that are cherished or neglected. (2001:87, 111, italics in original)

She believes that as anthropologists explore new reproductive technologies as a means to form kin and family bonds, they should not overlook what she refers to as “old reproductive technologies, such as photography” (2001:111) which are a process that constitutes and continues families. Her analysis of how photographs can be the substantive matter which validates/creates family is an insightful window through which to view the former foster youths' connection to and use of photographs. However, as I inserted into the quote, in the case of the former foster care youths, especially during their time in care, the question of what and when pictures were taken must be viewed in a larger framework. Many of the youth did not have ready access to cameras, film, or developing costs and so could not take pictures on whim or as desired. Staff members would occasionally bring in their cameras and when the administration needed pictures for newsletters or publicity, residents would often flock around, endlessly posing and suggesting what to photograph. Additionally, effort was made to take photographs at special occasions, such as holidays, birthday dinners, graduations, and biannual recognition and award celebrations. Residents were usually given copies of the photographs in which they appeared.

An interesting story of photographs, objects, connections, time in care, and memory helps illustrate not only the power of photographs as a connector, but also the nuances and subtleties of creating connections in everyday experiences. During the time I was the live-in staff person at the house, residents would occasionally accompany me during weekend trips. One weekend a resident and I went to a retreat center in the

Catskills to help cook for the camp's weekend guests. The camp had a rabbit hutch and we were instructed to feed the rabbits the vegetable scraps from the kitchen. However, prior to our arrival a number of the rabbits had escaped the hutch, staying around the camp. Rabbits have a habit of extreme proliferation, so there was an excess of baby rabbits. The camp administration was not as optimistic or as concerned about the survival of these rabbits as the resident would have liked. She spent most of the weekend begging me to let her take one of the rabbits home. The foster care residence had a no-furry-pet rule, so I continued to tell her we could not take the rabbit home. She came up with all kinds of plans as to how she would hide the rabbit in her room, but I relentlessly told her a rabbit could not return with us to the city. When we were ready to leave I loaded her bag into the trunk of the car, thinking it was a little odd the way it looked and noting that although it was not full, it was not closed and in fact had a towel oddly draped over it. I moved the towel aside as I was loading the bag and there low and behold was a baby rabbit, ready to be smuggled back to the city. Needless to say the rabbit did not accompany us back to the city, but the story of and the desire to have the rabbit did make the journey to the city. For the next few months I endured the lament regarding my denial of her desire to take care of the rabbit. Fast forward to seven years (four years of college and two apartments) later and a recent conversation with the same resident. "Remember that rabbit, you wouldn't let me bring home. I still have a picture of that rabbit. If you had let me bring it home, it would still be alive, instead it is probably dead." This former resident has kept the picture of this rabbit in spite of having made several moves, moves which have involved small dorm rooms and scrounging around for places to store things during summers. I believe her strong connection to the picture of

the rabbit is related to a mix of: the enjoyment she had on that weekend away from the house and the city; the security she feels in our relationship – that she knows I will joke with her about her (mis)behavior, even as I expect and require her to follow the guidelines; and her genuine desire to nurture something as she had been nurtured. When she tells me she still has the picture, she is re-instigating the joking reprimand, soliciting an invite to return to the camp, and validating her desire and ability to be nurturing and caring – because if *she* had kept the rabbit, it would *still be alive*.

Summary and conclusion

This chapter explored the role of memory in sustaining and creating people's connections to each other, as well as to their own identity as a cared-for person. The chapter acknowledged that memory can also be a connection to a negative experience and that memory has the potential of sabotaging, rather than creating connections and relationships. The chapter explored the relationship between memory and the objects received or acquired in the past. It is helpful to analytically differentiate between three levels of connections – those of the person to the actual object, to the feeling of having been cared for which that object represents, and to the relationship with the person who gave the object⁸⁰. Exploring all the levels and nuances reveals that objects can represent, remember, restrict, or reshape connections and thus are not just a connector with a time or person in the past, but are also a support, comfort, or identity in the present.

I propose that a gift or object can engender a particular relationship with oneself. The memory of a previous connection can endure even when the actual relationship does

⁸⁰ In some circumstances in my research that final category was further complicated by the fact that it was not an individual person who gave the object but instead was the personification of the agency (and its supporters).

not. Thus, even though the actual physical presence of the relationship ends, the object stands in for that presence and serves to re-engender the feelings of acceptance and self-worth that were instilled when the gift was first given. Therefore even though the relationship may not be ongoing in the physical temporal sense, it is an enduring relationship which provides the former resident with support. Thus as has been detailed elsewhere in this dissertation, the former residents do not need to be in continual contact with people to feel those people are important in their lives. They do not have to be in continual contact with the people who gave them the gift to be in an on-going (though possible one-sided) relationship. The objects are thus not just memory inspiring, but also create current support and strength. Photographs as visual markers of past experiences are also a valuable component in the former foster youths' present lives.

Chapter eight will also include exploration of the role of memory; specifically the memory of the location where the former residents lived. However, memory is just one of the aspects of the physical locations discussed in chapter eight. The role of location in family and relationships and its role in identity and self concept will also be explored.

CHAPTER EIGHT LOCATION

I think about Sweet Haven and my experience and the girls that were there during my time. We were happy there. It was one of the best places I was put in. The location was nice and was central to everything. So many places were in the boondocks in rough neighborhoods. Like when I was at (another agency in Brooklyn), a girl pulled a gun on me. I just left my stuff and never went back there.

I thought you would answer the door or at least a familiar face. It was depressing to see it not the same, I couldn't stand to look at it or stay there. I kept thinking "I use to live here". I know a lot of people cried when they closed. (A former resident who had dropped by the building over a year after the program had closed. She then called me, when I asked if she had gotten the letter about the program closing, she said, "Yes, but I didn't believe it was true, I figured they would do something and that Sweet Haven would still be there like I knew it".)

The previous chapters have explored the former foster care youth's connections to people, objects, ideas and memories. This chapter will explore their connections to the physical building where they spent their adolescence and to the neighborhood where that building was located. Portions of this explorations will build on (and add to) the previous chapter's discussion of memory, given that the building which connects these women connects them to their past and people in their past. These memories, however, are specifically tied to a physical structure and so are included in this chapter because they illuminate theories regarding location and place identity.

There are anthropological studies which analyze territory, land ownership and inheritance, as well as studies of family farms and family businesses. However, I had not considered the significance of location in my initial explorations. I did not considered the physicality of the agency residence as a factor in the women's connections, partially because of the transient nature of the residence (the longest anyone had lived in the house was five years and several had lived there less than a year). Additionally, because models

of urban kinship and connections usually explore physical locations within an analysis of people's interconnections within neighborhoods and since the women who were interviewed no longer lived in a common neighborhood there was no precedence or model for exploring location. I clearly had not anticipated the lasting identifications the women had with a physical location that they had known would be physically temporary from the moment they arrived. However, as often happens in the life of a research project, outside and uncontrollable events impact the direction of the research. As mentioned in chapter one, in this project that event was the decision by New York City's Agency for Children's Services to end their contract with Sweet Haven. With the physical location no longer able to offer foster care services, the board began deliberations on the future of the building; deliberations which included the possibility of selling the building.

I was therefore present at board meetings where the building's future was discussed and also at meetings which the board arranged for former residents to have the opportunity to share their thoughts regarding the building and the decision of its future. Additionally, in the midst of or at the end of my other interviews the women and I would discuss the future of the program and the physical building. I was often amazed at the intensity of the emotions that were evoked. It is impossible in the printed version of their remarks to indicate the catches in the voice, the tears in the eyes, or the looks of shock on the faces at the possibility of the house where they lived being sold.

Soon, I began to actively explore their attachment to the house, expanding on the realization that the physical structure of the house and its location were a significant point of connection for the former residents. Similar to the significance of the "family farm"

for many agrarian families, it was not only the relationships but also a common and loved place that held these women together. In fact one of the Pennsylvania board members framed the selling of the building by referring to the emotional stress of selling a family farm.

There are several related and intertwining issues which this chapter explores; family and its physical reference point, family space as a private realm, place attachment and the hierarchical arrangement of places.

Family/kinship and its physical reference point

Anthropologists often made a connection between family and location. In fact according to Moore (1986),

studies of space and gender have been linked together in anthropology for some time. The origins of that partnership can be traced back to Durkheim's idea of a socially differentiated space, and before that to Lewis Henry Morgan's work on kinship and territory. It is now axiomatic that spatial relations represent and reproduce social relations (1986: xi).

Anthropologists have linked kinship, family, and/or ethnic identity to territory and land, however, that link was often not fully analyzed. There was often an assumption that connections to land were vital to non-Western and agrarian people. The focus often pertained to understanding the dynamic of land inheritance within the kinship structures of the people. The other research direction regarded the cultures' existence within their landscape. Anthropology's project was an "implicit mapping of the world as a series of discrete, territorialized cultures, [Assuming] that 'a culture' is naturally the property of a spatially localized people" (Gupta and Ferguson 1997:2).

The former foster care youth did not inherit the house, nor was their "culture" spatially located within the residence. However they did identify with the location and at

one level felt ownership of the house. When they return to the house for alumnae events, they would often say to their children, “do you want to go see my room, where I use to live”. Once they were in the room, they described in detail where the furniture had been, what color the room was and how it had looked.

It is also insightful that when former residents were asked for their opinion regarding the future of the building they were animate in their responses and often spoke not only with passion but with a sense of ownership. As one of the former residents phrased her response to the possibility of the building being sold – “we have something like this and to not keep it and use it”. As a former resident the board had indicated an interest in her opinion, but she no longer lived in the house and was not a board member so in actuality she had no official capacity, no ownership. In spite of her lack of official ownership she still strongly identified with the residence, with the location and with what purpose she felt it should be fulfilling. She had graduated from college and aged out of foster care, so there was no possibility that she would be living in the house again, but she still claimed it as her own space, and animatedly resisted the idea of it not being used as a place for women who were disadvantaged. Similar ideas were expressed by almost everyone I spoke with. They believed that the home should be saved not only for their own memories but for the symbolic and concrete way in which it helped those who were disadvantaged to be able to live and dream of a future in a more positive light. Because they had once lived in the house they claimed and were given an opportunity to influence the decision about the property. They felt a level of “ownership” in the building and in the program. At an emotional level the residence was still their house and they still felt a connection to the physical building and indirectly to the future program of the building.

The connection they felt to the people who would in the future reside in and be served by the building was explored in chapter five.

A similar connection was detailed by Chevalier (1999) in the discussion of the links French families have to property. Drawing from Weiner's framing of property relations as "the anchoring of the lineage in a materialized space" (Weiner 1985 as quoted by Chevalier: 1999: 83), Chevalier believes that for French urbanites "the countryside is a place of memory... their link to the countryside is close in terms of family history, placing the family residence at the core of their identity" (1999: 85). Likewise, Barlett (1993) describes farm families who "talk with pride of the number of generations their families have been on their farms" and acknowledge that the farm is "the family's symbolic unity and [that their] self-respect require[s] an agrarian foundation" (1993:231-2). Barlett's description, of the negotiations surrounding the sale of the family farm, highlights a departure from the former foster care youths' experience. She presents a view of farm families who when forced to sell downplay the meaning of farm ownership and redefine other aspects and conceptualizations of themselves. This reconceptualization is a more difficult task for the former foster youths owing to the limited nature of their other mutually held identities. Without the house as a physical presence they have no other "location" where they can attach that aspect of their identity.

The residence as a connection and a source of identity was based on their prior living in that space. It is helpful to briefly describe the conditions and practices of that residing. When the foster youth came to live at the house, it was understood that it was not a permanent arrangement. Lack of permanency, however, did not necessarily mean transitory and many of the residents had an understanding and sense that it could be a

long-term arrangement. A significant number of the residents lived there for more than a year; some lived there for more than three years⁸¹. They became comfortable in the space and considered it their home. The objective of Sweet Haven was to care for teen-age foster women; the building's role was to serve as living space and that was the aspect of the building that was most significant. The building was not just the location of the agency, but was "living space" or maybe a more appropriate wording is "lived-in space". There seemed to be social as well as symbolic significance for the girls that they *lived* in the space – that they had the right to claim the address as a personal location. Both the process of being together with each other on a daily bases, as well as the fact that they could identify themselves with living there, provided a source of connection that lasted beyond the actual time in the house, and in some cases provided a sort of mental bond with others who also lived there even if the time they lived there did not overlap.

I acknowledge the past and continued need to explore and critique why and how certain roles and tasks are stigmatized and discounted. However for the purpose of exploring why people feel a bond and connectedness to each other, I believe it is necessary to explore what happens in the process of meeting your daily needs (or having them met by someone else) on a continual basis in a particular location. As discussed in a previous chapter, anthropologists have made a distinction between household and family. However based on my research, I believe that there are some subtle and not so subtle levels of connectedness that result just from the process of living together that can be as enduring a bond as those created by the classic configuration of family. Past analysis and critique of the framing of a public/private space dichotomy has focused on

⁸¹ See chapter two for statistical data on length of stay.

the social/political hierarchy of those spaces as well as on the socialization process that occurs within the home that reproduces that hierarchy. I believe it is also useful to explore what it is about private space and the vulnerability that is present in the process of having basic needs met, that creates the potential for both enduring caring connections and abusive or repulsive relationships. It is also useful to explore why and how it is that in many cases the actual physical location where those needs were met, the tactile environment of that “private space”, carries significance.

Cieraad (1999) suggest one possible explanation. She believes we

cling so much to the illusion of two worlds apart that maintaining it seems to warrant large investments. Perhaps, because having a home and a job is not as certain as it was forty years ago... Home as the emotionalization of domestic space is more than ever a core symbol in Western culture, one that derives its meaning not only from its opposite, the public space, but also from the practices performed on it and in it (1999:11).

Family space as a private realm

Anthropologists have examined family and its relationship to domestic/public or domestic/political-jural dichotomies (Collier and Yanagisako 1987, Rosaldo 1974). Within this framework, women carried out the activities associated with reproduction and kinship and did so within the domestic sphere, which was the home. The analysis and critique of models of kinship and space that grew from this framing focused on women's location in the home and the “functional division of social activity and [the] nested hierarchy of social space” (Yanagisako 1987:112). The double focus on why reproductive labor, in its broad sense, was identified or relegated to the home or domestic sphere, and why those tasks were considered socially inferior, was the crux of this phase of the study of the relationship between kinship/gender and social-spatial considerations.

Within this framework, the home was often viewed as the physical space where the women's work was carried out and if housing space was explored at all, it was done cross culturally to discover the gender and task allocation of domestic/private/home space. As Lawrence (1993) points out it is not always possible or fruitful to assume such culturally bound or fixed designations. Using the example of rented versus owner-occupied houses, he shows how "the definition of the boundary between the public and private domain is spatially and legally quite different." (1993:12). He believes that not only is there a difference in the domains between these two types of houses, but in general the meaning and use of specific spaces are multidimensional, sometimes ambiguous and often in a state of flux and thus housing must be viewed as a process, not a product or a particular built form. Rodman and Cooper (1996) expand upon this conceptualization and discuss how demarcations are "not always obvious in built form. Often they are observable only in the discourses and actions of residents. ... They are one dimension of ordering space that expresses power relations" (1996:91). Their study of cooperative housing resonates more with the foster care group home experience than a more classic differentiation of space as either public or private. They discuss not only the ambiguous and fluid nature of public and private space and usage, but also issues of place control, which despite Western assumptions to the contrary, is not always "associated with ownership... [but also includes] rights of use and action, appropriation, modification, and disposition" (1996:93). They then gave examples of coop members extending their personal property into the public area of the coop in an attempt to not only extend control, but also to get others to take more pride and responsibility for what would otherwise be bland public spaces.

Like both the renter houses in Lawrence's example and the coops of Rodman and Cooper's descriptions, the foster home was simultaneously public and private space. The youth lived there, so at some level it was their "private" space; however the space could be entered at anytime by both staff and outside visitors, including city officials rendering it public space at many levels. Similarly to the research discussed above, the demarcations of space varied according to activity and action as well as time. In the evening and on weekends when official visitors and administrative personnel were not present, the public living room and kitchen took on a much more private appearance as dress codes were relaxed, the television was turned on, and residents left personal belongs in the space for longer periods of time. Additionally, although bedrooms were shared and it was understood that the resident was not there on a permanent basis, they were encouraged to personalize their room, to give them a sense of belonging, stability and to instill habits of cleanliness. The residents also transformed the use of some spaces, for example they often congregated of an evening in the front foyer, a space designed to be an entryway and a place where deliveries were made. This space was not really designed for sitting. There was only a small bench. It was also very open and public area since it had no doors. Nevertheless, many evenings the girls would sit out there with each other discussing their lives, waiting to see who would come home, or at times attempting to eavesdrop on the staff, whose office was just off the entryway. They transformed this public and meant to be very temporary space into a living space.

The Sweet Haven experience reveals the distortion of an assumed public/private dichotomy in that many of the 'domestic' and 'reproductive' functions were carried out

by staff members who were paid to fulfill those tasks. These staff members did not live in the house and so for them the space was their workplace and therefore ‘public’⁸².

Anthropologists and theorists are now analyzing and emphasizing “space”, “home” and related words such as “place” from a much different perspective. Ward (2003) overviews these new trends in anthropological theory and terminology. She believes the move is away from the public/private dichotomizing of space as well as away from the earlier tendencies to place kinship groups into a fixed and static territory labeled “‘landscape’, ‘locality’, ‘ecology’ and ‘environment’” (2003:80). Anthropologists have borrowed from philosophers using phenomenological approaches, borrowing such concepts as the understanding of

being-in-the-world [and the] mutually determinative relationship between people and place and the primacy of place in everyday lives...[revealed by] the powerful attachments people feel to (and not necessarily by physically being in) particular places. ...[Philosophers] deliteralised the term home and gave it special significance within the mass of different place-worlds (Ward 2003:83).

By viewing home in a non-literal sense, home became fluid and an “elastic metaphorical concept [that] can signal sites as particular as a house or as amorphous as a nation and can be experienced as a physical ‘here’ as well as a remembered or imagined ‘there’”(2003:81).

In addition to viewing “place as an anthropological construct for “setting” or the localization of concepts, ..anthropologists [hold another] seemingly opposite view, ...[that of place] as socially constructed, spatialized experience” (Rodman 1992:642). Rodman believes place, as ‘experience’ must take into account the value that

⁸² See also the large body of anthropological literature on domestic workers and the ways that “hierarchical opposition between private and public spaces is put into question by

people attach to those experiences of place as well as “the tensions between the influence humans exert on their environments and reciprocally, the impacts their environments have on them” (Ibid). She refers to this second viewpoint as concern for ‘lived space’ and its analysis takes into account people’s experiences, hopes, concerns, and activities.

Place attachment and identity

Ward (2002) reveals that much of the current work in anthropology regarding place, place attachment, and “home” use transnational populations as their frame of reference. They then explore the role of connection with nationality and ethnicity. Although the women who lived in the house are not from any one nationality or ethnicity, I believe some of these theories are still relevant. A common thread between analysis of transnational populations and the former foster care women is the way the experiences and realities of both groups require looking at issues of “home” and “place” as concepts that are constructed, in flux, and influenced by events and decisions/structures outside themselves. Additionally, the two concepts can only be understood and analyzed by looking at the relationships of these two concepts within the framework of other equally ambiguous, fluid and contested terms such as ‘belonging’, ‘identity’, and ‘boundaries’. These terms must be considered not only literally but also symbolically and metaphorically.

Identity is a concept that has increasingly been theorized, defined and contested. Although, I will not engage in that larger debate, I do believe that issues of identity are implicitly involved not only in people’s perceptions and practices of family, but also in their understandings and connectedness to places. The former residents’ references to the

these women (Alonso 1994:394).

house as not just a building but as “a place I lived” reveal in subtle ways the level of identity and connectedness which they have to the physical space. Environmental psychologists have recognized “the importance of place attachment in the child’s developing personal identity [as well as that of] children’s favorite places and their role in the child’s self-regulation” (Spencer and Woolley 2000:181).

Boundaries

An overview of the anthropological conceptualizations of boundaries reveals that anthropologists have explored boundaries and the dynamics of their creation and potency beyond their initial interest in boundaries created by ethnic group identity. They now include other social boundaries as well as other boundaries as diverse as spatial, conceptual, physical (both the built environment and the boundedness of the human body), ideological, spiritual, etc. Pellow (1996) believes that boundaries are socially constructed and that some “boundaries are physically demarcated (fixed feature); [whereas] in others, social activities or institutional understandings create the division....[Furthermore, we should] consider how the physical and conceptual dimensions articulate” (2). These boundaries can be based on social, political, economic, ethnic, gender, or any range or combination of categories.

The articulation of the physical and conceptual dimensions of boundaries is clearly perceived in one of the former resident’s reaction to the possibility of the house being sold. When she first heard that the board was considering selling the house, she just sat in total silence. She is an articulate and very outspoken person who is not usually prone to speechlessness. I finally asked her what she was thinking and she replied, “I am in shock”. After another moment of silence, she began to speak

You know it is hard enough for minorities, poor people, people that are disadvantaged to crack into prime property like this and we have something like this and to sell it is to me is absolutely incongruous, like I can't understand, I can't image why someone would want to do that. That is part of it and the second part of it is that it makes a statement, you know, yea I know this community wants to keep people out of the community You know when I live in Coney Island, when I lived in that house (a former foster group home), I remember it was very distinctive, we lived in an area of Coney Island, ... there were these big walls, a very distinct division with their own police and you had to know someone to get in, and they had these big walls, and we always wondered what was behind those wall and they had their own security and this was intense security and *none of us could get in*. And I think there is something symbolic to that, and here we got in, you know *somehow* we got into that segregated campus or that you know that castle that they were trying to keep us out of and to give that up would be giving into their ploy. ... The fact that we got a glimpse of that other side – that we are kept out of – it sort of gave us a direction, you know. ...The house needs to stay to prove to the community that they can't keep segregating people that way, that there is a different system that works.

This former resident, who had experienced actual physical boundaries in the neighborhood of her former group home, was also well aware of the symbolic and conceptual boundaries which those physical boundaries represented. She hoped that the agency would continue to openly resist boundaries that attempt to contain and restrain economic and racial groups.

Hierarchy of physical space

Low's (2003) description of life within gated communities in the United States is an example of how anthropologists and other social scientists are exploring the way physical boundaries and barriers demarcate socioeconomic groups. (See also Drier, Mollenkopf, and Swanstrom 2001; Harvey 1989, 2001; Zukin 1993) These scholars also look at how today's capitalist system can't be understood apart from the concepts of space and time, and the way that they two are often compressed by the flow of capital. This leads to an analysis of how capitalism leads to uneven development across

geopolitical areas. Their detailed descriptions and understandings of the relationships between capitalism and place(s) is vital to understanding many of the political and economic processes that create the social conditions involved in the above discussion of exclusion and inclusion of certain classes and races from neighborhoods. Political economy approaches are however, less helpful in understanding the actual lived experiences of the individual women and their thoughts and behaviors in relationship to the economic unevenness of the city and its neighborhoods. As has been acknowledged, the gap in political economy approaches is that they “generally slighted questions of meaning and of cultural difference” (Gupta and Ferguson 1997:27). They have accomplished analysis of “uneven development of capitalism, the social production of spaces ...changing spatial divisions of labor ... but it is in the realm of representation, and correlatively of spatial experience and meaning that [political economy approach] has been at its weakest” (Watts 1992:118). They have often ignored and left unanalyzed issues, conditions and aspects of social interaction, emotions, symbolism, and psychological dynamics. Material aspects are definitely operating in these women’s lives but of equal importance are memory, and symbolic understandings of life changing experience. As the following two quotes indicate, the house was more than a material location; it was a valuable piece of property in a high-income neighborhood, but it was also much more than that.

A house is more than bricks and stones. ...there is some kind of real *love* in that house and if you sell it and go into another place maybe it might not, you know, the love might not be there, maybe the help might not be there. I don’t think they should sell the house, I really don’t. There are people who have worked there for years, who loved that house, loved working there. I mean their heart is still in that house. (a 26 year old former resident)

I cried when I heard it might be sold. I always tell people it changed me, I don't know where I would be if not for it. Also other people have changed because of that place. If you sell it to someone, that lets the care go. Selling is like putting money on memory. (a 28 year old former resident)

The woman whose words follow was in her late 30's and had lived in the smaller residence that the agency had operated which had closed in 1989. She had kept in touch with the agency and had attended alumnae events at the Upper East Side residence. Her words, and the intensity with which she spoke them, reveal that she still has very strong feelings about the physical location.

As far as selling the building, I am just giving my suggestion, but I don't think it should be sold. It has so much meaning to the girls that were here before, like [the other building] when I found out it was being sold (her voice just trails off and she is quiet, then she starts to speak again, talking very fast with her voice quavering). Keep the building; try to work something out so there would be another program at *this* location. To move it takes the meaning out of the neighborhood. Like when we lived in [the other building], when I found out it was closed I was so sad, because I had gotten so much help *there*, you know like people in the neighborhood even looked at the girls that came out of the building, they thought we were girls that were coming from City College. I learned a lot there, they helped me out a lot and for [the agency] to leave this neighborhood, I could cry.

For these women there was a conscious or sub-conscious understanding of how the neighborhood was a privileged neighborhood relative to other neighborhoods. The overwhelming attachment they had to the house was not because of its materiality, but because of its symbolic value. What it represented in their past and its potential value in the lives of others was far more important than the monetary value attached to it.

Harvey (1989) attaches a social function to neighborhoods; he believes that the residential profile of any particular neighborhood is the result of capitalist structures rather than individual choice. He believes these capitalist structures create residential differentiations. This differentiation happens within a city as well as on a national or

global scale. These neighborhoods then become locations where the people by virtue of their unequal access to resources are socialized into behaviors and roles.

Residential areas (neighborhoods, communities) provide distinctive milieus for social interaction from which individuals to a considerable degree derive their values, expectations, consumption habits, market capacities, and states of consciousness (1989:118).

Salomon (2003) in her discussion of the effects of suburbanization on the small towns and on their social interactions, especially with regards to socialization and adolescent development echoes this sentiment. She believes there is “something crucial to grasping how a community shapes a world view or has an effect on the behaviors of people. ...[This] effect is ...shaped by a community of place – accounted for by such factors as norms, economic opportunity, demography, culture, history, or social networks” (4). Where you live can affect not only what you have access to, but can also affect who you are and what you decide to pursue and what you feel is important.

This basic theme is echoed in many of the former resident’s comments about how being in that neighborhood made them want to do better. However, social interactions, including those interactions aimed at the socialization of youths do not operate in a vacuum. Although the environment of the neighborhood influenced the women to do better, they did so with a clear belief that this achievement was in direct opposition to the neighborhood’s expectations and wishes. These women accepted, even as they resisted, the common ideology of that neighborhood’s desire to be exclusive. Although I agree with Harvey’s assumption that capitalist structures not individual choice create neighborhood differentiation, the people who populate those neighborhoods often personalize and assume choice in their and others locations. Thus former residents

echoing the sentiments expressed in an earlier quote describe their being in the neighborhood in spite of the neighborhood's desire.

And another thing, people who lived in the neighborhood never wanted any kind of program like that, and like another thing to prove them wrong, that like it can work in your neighborhood, it *will* work in your neighborhood. You don't control, you know. Let it be. I know that is another feeling too, cause I know the neighbors really hated us being there, they really hated the house being there – well (and she laughs) not the house the girls that were there.

For some of the former residents and staff this feeling of not being accepted in the neighborhood, cause them to downplay the significance of the neighborhood. One staff person, whose initial comment was that the neighborhood was inconsequential to the success of the program and the former residents, described how the residents always knew they weren't part of the neighborhood. However, as this staff person continued to discuss the neighborhood, she stated that some of the residents, especially those who began to use and spend time in the neighborhood started to see that they could belong there. In this context, she described the value of the neighborhood with regards to its available amenities and credited it for providing opportunity for the residents to access those resources, i.e. obtaining employment in its many stores, using the libraries, parks, and other public facilities.

Downplaying the neighborhood's role in the women's lives was a more common theme among staff than among former residents. Former staff credited the program, the physical attractiveness of the house and the tone set by programmatic objectives rather than the neighborhood⁸³. I believe this is due to two interacting factors. Firstly, staff

⁸³ This difference between staff members and former resident's opinion of the value of the neighborhood relative to other aspects of foster care is more one of scale than substantive differences. The staff members did credit the neighborhood, even if it was

members, the people who implemented the program and set the tone, were more likely to have a biased and vested interest in giving credit to social interactions and programmatic activity. This is not necessarily self congratulatory, but because their professional training (and in some ways the reason for such social service positions/programs in the first place) is based on the belief that their work and actions make a difference. The second factor that I think contributes to the tendency to make the neighborhood inconsequential with respects to outcomes is that most staff people did not live in nor come from the neighborhood and in many cases their own neighborhoods would not “rank” as high on the socio-economic list of desirable neighborhoods, thus if the neighborhood was given primacy in creating change in behavior and motivation it would in some subtle way further demean neighborhoods that were not as privileged.

Safe places

The safety and quietness of the neighborhood were repeatedly mentioned by staff members and former residents as one of the values of Sweet Haven’s location.

The midtown location is important. [In the neighborhood of my other group home] there was too much interaction with people in the neighborhood. The anonymity that you get in Manhattan is good. You don’t have to have the insanity of other people around you. Somewhere where you can be anonymous. You can walk around where others in the neighborhood don’t bother you. It is hard enough being in care and then to have to be near parents or borderline criminals or in a threatening environment makes it even worse.

For many of the former residents the anonymity and safety of the neighborhood related to its distance from their former environment and the people who populated that environment. This was most relevant in circumstances where conflict with biological or

sometimes only implicitly, as the previous quote reveals, and former residents in other contexts of their conversations emphatically credited the program and the former staff for

PINS (person in need of supervision) were the reasons for their placement. For these young women being in a different environment was relieving and healing.

It gave me time alone, time by myself, and then time with myself. It gave me time to write and think and make choices for me.

One benefit was that it was so far from where I had lived. Being in a place that is different pulls you out of situations. It allows you to reflect. It was a space which allowed me to continue with my life. It is a safe haven that pulls you out. It alters the way you look at things. Perception is important. It pulls you out of certain environments. When you are in a depressed neighborhood where there is a lack of services. Some people give up, it is hard to be in that environment and not see anything else. Perspective is crucial.

Place attachment

A different environment was important and life-changing for many of the former residents. There are some psychologists and others who believe that for an individual to be stable and have a secure identity they must feel connected to a stable place. Casey (1993) believes that

to refind place – a place we have always already been losing – we may need to return, if not in actual fact then in memory or imagination, to the very earliest places we have known. And even this return may not prevail against episodes of place-panic that hold us in their grip more than we may care to admit (1993: x).

I believe that because the environment of the foster home was so life-changing for many of the women, they want to be able to return to visit, or if not to actually visit the house and/or their individual rooms, to at least know the possibility is there. The large number of them who acknowledged that they often think about the foster care experience reveals that they return in their memory. Some of the women return for alumnae events, but it appears that additionally many of the women return to the neighborhood. As one of

providing care and life-changing experiences.

them said, “girls go by and remember what it was like there”. Former residents return to the neighborhood because they have kept or found jobs in the area, or they have continued to use the local hospital, doctor’s office and other services. Some of their return to the neighborhood may be pragmatic; they found good services there and so continue to access them, but I also believe some of the returning to the neighborhood and the block of the house is symbolic.

It took the women’s repeated articulation of the importance of the house’s location and the surrounding neighborhood for some of the board members to comprehend the value of not selling the house. Board members who had grown up in and who currently lived in neighborhoods more similar to that of the house did not immediately and fully understand the advantages of the neighborhood. For me, a deeper understanding of the value of the neighborhood was not achieved until I spent time with some of the former residents in their current neighborhoods. I had lived in a neighborhood similar to the neighborhoods where these women were living in. In fact I had lived on the same block as the one where two of these former residents now live. I had worked in a couple of the neighborhoods where former residents now live. However, my experiences of those neighborhoods as a white woman without children was very different from these young single mother’s understanding and depictions of the same neighborhood. When I lived in the neighborhood, I was aware of the fact, that I was not anonymous⁸⁴. I knew from overheard conversations and comments that the locals who regularly congregated on the corners and stoops knew I lived in the neighborhood. However, my lack of anonymity did not significantly impact my personal and daily

existence. Other than occasional waves and hellos, I was not expected or requested to interact, nor adjust my activities or behaviors. Being in the neighborhoods with the former residents emphasized for me that not everyone perceives or is perceived in the same way in any particular neighborhood. Leaving the women's apartments with them and embarking into the streets involved running into people who immediately inquired about the women's recent activities, their child rearing habits, and their intended plans. It was expected that the women would respond to these questions. Researchers from Stack (1974) onward have discussed the fictive kin and reciprocal relationships that are present in many neighborhoods. Although these relationships can be sources of strength and survival, they can also be distracting, stagnating, or confining. They can create an environment where people lose their privacy and their perceived ability to freely choose behavior and make changes. This is especially true for adolescents who are involved in intertwining relationships with peers who engage in activities that are deemed undesirable by the larger society. The effects and perception of the neighborhood is dependant on, and related to, the individual who is perceiving and experiencing that neighborhood. Rodman (1992) believes

[i]t is time to recognize that places, like voices, are local and multiple. For each inhabitant, a place has a unique reality, one in which meaning is shared with other people and places. The links in these chains of experienced places are forged of culture and history (1992:643).

I would add that culture and history are not the only factors that forge the links and perceptions; an inhabitant's race, socio-economic status/position, age and other variables also affect the perceived "unique reality".

⁸⁴ In fact, quite frequently people on the subway home would politely inform me that I was on a 3 train (heading to Harlem) and not a 1 train (heading to Inwood).

Place as history

For many of the women their individual attachment to the place was not the only level of significance. As has been mentioned in this chapter and elsewhere in this dissertation, the women feel a commitment to girls/women who end up in similar situations. A factor in the house's importance was related to its role in providing service to other needy women. The role of service was important not only in terms of the future potential, but also with regards to the history of both the house and the agency. Many of their discussions of the value of the house and the need to not have the house sold were framed with statements about its history.

That particular building had only been owned by the agency since 1965. As was discussed in chapter two, the agency programmatically attached itself to its history, i.e. the resident's manual had a short one-page history about the two women who had founded the agency with very little money and a lot of prayer. Some of the former residents clearly identified with that history and felt it substantiated a reason for the agency to keep the building.

It has been around. We need to be true to its beginning purposes. If the building is lost the meaning will be different. Although memories will survive, the physical representation will disappear. As a statement the building is important. I don't want it to be someone's house. It is an extraordinary place.

We shouldn't move, this is where the program started and has been for a 100 years. This is where we should keep it.

For these women, as well as others, the fact that the house had been helping women for years, affected their sense of belonging and attachment to the house. Being in a place that had a history was significant for them. Attachment and connectedness can be historical, based on your own immediate past or in this case on the past of your current

associations. That the history is not your own personal history does not necessarily compromising the intensity of the connection.

Summary and conclusions

This chapter has explored my discussions with the women about their feelings and perception of having lived in Sweet Haven. It highlights the emotional, symbolic value as well as the practical and material implications⁸⁵ of that residency. These women's stories have exemplified that place matters.

The exploration of connectedness to place has brought into focus the importance of considering connections and relationships between individual people as being just one of many types of connections which people have. Points of connectedness that exist between people and physical structures are vitally important in understanding how people relate. It is valuable to extend this understanding and acknowledge situations where people's point of connection is a physical structure or, allowing for a metaphorical definition of place – connection can be based on having occupied a common “place” or status at some point in your life.

Postscript

The board is still in the process of making final decisions about the status of the house. It appears that the board has decided not to sell the building, although the actual decision is usually tabled rather than made. The most likely outcome is that the New York City Mennonite Churches will take over programming at the house. They plan to

⁸⁵ I say practical and material, because the house added to their outlook on life, which in many cases translated into their completing their high school and in some cases college education. In many cases, as already noted, they also sought employment in the neighborhood while living at the house and were able to parley the address into productive job experience.

have a small transitional residence for adult women on one or two of the floors and rent out the other space to generate funds to cover their operating budget. Seminars by and for local Mennonites, alumnae and other interested persons covering a range of topics would also be offered.

I have been present at many of the board meetings, as well as most of the meetings of the NYCCMC (New York City Council of Mennonite Churches) appointed planning committee. My role at those meetings has been as ambiguous as other aspects of my research. Here again my multiple identities are present. I am a member of one of the Mennonite Churches represented, a former staff member of the agency, and several year ago I had attended the board meetings in my capacity as the interim executive director of the agency. Added to those designations is the one represented by this document, my identity as a researcher. My connection to the former residents which began prior to this research, but which by nature of the research has intensified has meant that I am often called upon to give feedback and insight into the alumnae's feelings and ideas. I believe that my sharing of their poignant words has been a factor in the board continually deciding to hold off selling the building for one more meeting ⁸⁶.

⁸⁶ That statement, however, creates interrelated dilemmas regarding the nature of research, its appropriate application, and power and role of the researcher. Those dilemmas were the substance of chapter four and will not be discussed here.

CHAPTER NINE SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Family to me is not necessarily only father, mother, sister, brother. I think for many it goes deeper than that. It is a bond you share with others that are close to you. Friends, for example, can be so close to you and so active in your life that they may seem related. They are not blood related, but throughout your life you can grow so close and be part of each other's lives. Family is not only who you live with but your extended family as well, ex: aunts, uncles... These people may have also helped shape your childhood and have taken an active role in your life. (University student's response to an informal writing assignment "What is family" given in a state university's introduction to anthropology class on the day the family and marriage chapter was assigned.)

Family is very important. It is home, place of security, friendship, love, comfort all in one. To me, it is very important to have strong family values, without my family I probably wouldn't have all the emotional support and love that my family has given me through the years. In times of need and feelings of confusion through the "young years" my family has opened its arms and steered me in the right direction, showing me responsibility and helping me become a better person. Basically to have a loving family member and friend makes my life much brighter and emotionally more secure. (Different student responding to the same assignment described above.)

Family helps shape ones culture, values, dreams, and even expectation. I can describe family to be many different things, but not one description tells the whole story. It is hard for me to put into words what family is, but when I think of my family the thought is comforting. I'm confident that because of my family, if something goes wrong, I will be OK. (Third student responding to same assignment.)

When I began this dissertation, I like many researchers, especially doctoral student researchers, was hoping that the data would fall into some neat formulation allowing me to assert some concise finding, write a tight and succinct dissertation and be done. But as the previous chapters have shown, that was not to be the case. Instead, my exploration of family from the perspective of women who were in foster care in their adolescence took several tangents. It revealed that for the former foster care youths the concepts of family, connections, relatedness, and kin are intermingled and integrated with

concepts of a non-profit institutional foster care agency, the foster care system in which it was embedded, the physical building and the neighborhood in which it was located, care and care-giving professionals, and photography, memory, mementos, and shared history. In this concluding chapter I retrace these trajectories; summarizing and discussing the relevance of my research. I end with a concluding comment, which discusses what my hope is for the use of this dissertation research, counter-pointed with what I recognize are some alternative undesirable possibilities.

Before beginning however, I wish to present a caveat, which has increasingly become a part of the reports of such research. This dissertation is the report of a particular time in the lives of individual women, and furthermore it has been filtered through this researcher's understandings and experiences. Therefore, extreme care should be exercised before making any assumptions about the foster care system based on this research. The agency was described as a place where care was given and former residents affirmed that they felt cared for and benefited from that care. However, not everyone who entered the doors felt or benefited from the offered care; some adolescents "ran", complained, slipped deeper into feelings of alienation and depression, and picked up addictive habits while living there. Likewise, even for those who stayed for an extended period of time, not everyone kept in touch after they left or felt that the agency became "family" for them. There were also days and times that the agency and the staff did not fit the descriptions given in the earlier chapters, when they were less caring and more bureaucratic – more rule-driven than people-driven. Also, the fact that some of the former foster care youths believe they are better off today as the result of being in foster

care should not be interpreted as a call to remove children from their home environment and place them in foster care.

With that caveat registered, I do believe that this dissertation with its examples of some of the effects of the experience of foster care on a small group of women who were in foster care in a particular agency between 1982 and 2000, can provide insights about both what “family” is and could be, and what foster care is and could be.

Overview and review of the chapters

This dissertation explored the impact that living in foster care had on former foster care youths’ depictions and experiences of family. Women who had lived in a particular non-profit agency’s group residence were interviewed. This group was not meant to be representational of all of foster care, since trying to represent all of foster care is counter productive, although both city policy and media depictions of foster care often attempt to do just that. My focus was on one particular residence, which was described in chapter two. This chapter also presented details of the women’s lives as adolescents. Those descriptions are important, but since the focus of the research was the women’s lives after foster care, the residence was not *the site* of the research. The research extended over many sites and in some respects, part of it was conducted in the “site-less” environ of phone calls and shared memory. I started with a particular location and the people who occupied that space at a particular time. It was not only the physical location of the house that was the space that was occupied. The women also occupied a space relative to society’s definition of what/where foster care is. The trajectories of the people who were occupying that space were then traced into the present and they became the reference group. This method is a way to highlight the natural connectedness and

disconnectedness of people. It explores how similar experiences can affect different people differently.

Foster care does not have a universal definition or practice. The varieties of meanings extend across locations and time and are mediated by economic and political factors. Chapter three and appendix A provided a description of the complexities and idiosyncrasies within the foster care system. A consistent aspect within that complexity is that the child is not living with (or being taken care of) by their biological parent. In the United States that condition is indexed as abnormal and problematic and thus the child must deal with a certain level of stigma. Additionally, the child must determine and then reconcile the reasons for why they are not living with their biological parents. The reasons which the child determines and learns to live with are not necessarily the same as those of the state apparatus, the foster care agency, or even their own siblings and family members. Often the child in some way internalizes the reason and assumes fault for the situation, which can leave the child with feelings of guilt and low self-esteem.

Edell (1997), whose research focus was with foster youth in Catholic group homes, noted that the adolescents “felt abandoned and rejected by their parents, even though they were placed not because of their own but parental problems” (1997: 42). His findings parallel mine and reveal ambivalent and inconsistent feelings. He highlights the ambiguity towards their families, noting that the adolescents wanted to be with their families at the same time that they expressed that they “hated” their families.

All children who are in foster care must at some level learn to adjust to new situations, they must “‘pick up the pieces’ of their lives and try to make sense of them. This quest for an identity, or to ‘feel whole again,’ as one teen phrases it, is paramount in

the lives of teens” (Edell 1997:17). Chapter three’s overview of the various facets of foster care serves to frame the other chapters of this dissertation which explore some of the ways that I perceived that the women who lived in Sweet Haven “made sense” of their experiences and reframed the “separation from family” situation into connections and relationships that have become part of their “identity.”

In addition to providing information concerning how the former foster care youths reconcile their foster care placement, this dissertation highlights some needed areas of restructuring within the foster care system. In spite of the diversity in the foster care experience, much of the foster care policy and practice is based on a singular understanding of foster care. The policies do not take into account developmental stages, thus adolescents are not allowed more freedom in placement and other decisions. Foster care policy needs to be more flexible. Another instance of inflexibility of policy, which is also based on the discounting of developmental reality, concerns discharge. Foster care policy assumes the legal designation of adulthood beginning at 21 years of age. Thus, when a foster child turns 21 they are expected to immediately be a self-sufficient adult. In the case of former foster care youths, as well as many other young adults, continued support is needed and often the need for support extends long into “adulthood.”⁸⁷ Foster care policy must recognize this and take some responsibility for continuing care.

This dissertation presents the effects of growing up in foster care on the lives of a number of women, but it is also the presentation of my life both as a live-in staff person and as a researching anthropologist. As Gardner (1999) has noted,

anthropology is thus not simply about specific discoveries (although these may be important), but is more processual, building upon lessons, which begin before the intrepid neophyte arrives in the field, and long after she or he has left. ...rather than presenting fieldwork as bounded in space and time (my experience in the field), and the anthropologist as trapped in the static identities of before and after her or his transformative experience, it is therefore more constructive to understand it as an ongoing process (1999: 52).

Gardner refers to the ongoing life changes that each of us experiences, which then change our perceptions and understandings. She advocates de-centering “time in the field” as the point in time where understandings and perceptions happen, believing that as we change, so to does the perception of what we previously experienced “in the field.” She advocates revising our understandings and practices of “fieldwork” in all settings. Her insights are particularly valuable when applied to fieldwork conducted in one’s own location, where there is a thin (or non-existent) geographic line between field and home/write up. In the research presented here, another layer is added to the meanings and dimensions of the quote, given that the women whose lives I am presenting were people who I knew and associated with before the research began and whom I will continue to know and interact with after this dissertation is completed. This scenario could run counter to some conceptualizations of anthropology’s purpose and methodology.

Chapter four presented the views and theoretical approaches that have been promulgated concerning doing anthropology “at home”. It discussed the interconnectedness between “subject” and “researcher” as well as the goal of “normalizing” rather than “othering” the “subject”. Revealing the applied nature of much

⁸⁷ See Okimoto and Stegall (1987) for a discussion of the phenomena of adult children moving back home.

“at home” research, this research joined the growing movement toward a merger between “applied” and “theoretical” anthropology.

The discussions within this dissertation extend several of the critiques of the methods and philosophies of anthropology, which the practice of anthropology “at home” generates. For example, “Culture” is rendered a multi-faceted concept, where known individuals can share or not share aspects of “culture” with each other. This overlapping or sharing of culture among divergent individuals is revealed in the differing and similar views, understandings and experiences that the former foster care youths and I developed in the same physical surroundings and cultural milieu. Recognizing the diverging and converging of world views reveals that an acknowledgment of the embeddedness of the researcher in the study can be a heuristic device, rather than a liability. My research highlights the non-existence of a line between the formerly dichotomized view of both “going to”/ “returning from” and “research”/ “write up”. I provide clarification that the processes are not distinct but continual; one moves back and forth between the stages, and often, in essence, occupies both stages at the same time. My research is thus not something I do in a compartmentalized section of my life, but is instead part of what I do daily as a professionally trained anthropologist. When I am teaching my undergraduate anthropology class and observing, learning about my students’ view of the world, and analyzing and framing those understandings, I am doing anthropology, even if I never “write up” my insights, but only share them verbally with the class and my acquaintances. Likewise when I help those same students understand themselves, the world they live in, and the others who live in that world with them, I am doing anthropology. Anthropology is not just the time-constrained, funded “fieldwork” that we do; it is our approach and

view of the world and our understanding of how to best make sense of (and at times also impact) that world.

Chapter five examined family and the various ways family has been defined and interpreted. This chapter's foundational principals were that family can not be universally defined or understood and that exploration of family must begin with the individuals' perspectives because each person's configuration of family is different, even if some of the same individuals are part of the configurations. The former foster care youths experience family in a multitude of ways simultaneously. Family is people who are biological connected, it is people who are obliged and should conduct themselves in a certain way, it is people who perform certain tasks, people with whom you reconnect, with whom you share common history or common kinds of experiences. It is people who are family now, even if they might not be family tomorrow. Family is your siblings and your children, it is your mentors or professionals with whom you connect, or it is your friends. The former foster care youths also reveal the ways that immigration, legalities and bureaucracies, as well as financial factors impact understandings and practice of family.

The understandings of family are imagined and imbedded in cultural understandings. The women profiled in this dissertation reveal the ambivalence and hardships that attempts to reconcile divergent understandings and experiences of family create. My presentation of their stories and experiences add to the growing cacophony of anthropological voices confronting our past understandings and representations of family and kinship. This dissertation reveals the ambiguities in family. It highlights the fact that family can involve pain, discomfort, and disunity in addition to being the "shelter in the

storm” and the “thing that binds us together”. My research demonstrates how anthropologists, media representatives, and politicians who continue to perpetuate a “mythological” view of family do so to the detriment of the many whose lives do not conform to that idealized view, but who attempt to reconstitute themselves into that ideal and then feel less than whole when they do not fit. One of the flaws in the idealized model is its view of family as a unit that is merely involved in procreation and then the subsequent nurture and training of the next generation. This view assumes a point at which those children “outgrow” the family of origin and form their own family (cf. Schneider 1968, 1972). In many people’s experience this does not happen in quite such a clean cut manner. Many of the former foster care youths are as much, if not more, a part of their parents’ lives and family after they turned 21 as they were when they were younger. Additionally, and from a pragmatic perspective, as was just mentioned in the recommendations that grew out of an enlarged understanding of foster care and the needs of foster children, adults need and often rely on family – both their family of origin and their current formulation.

Chapter six focused on a particular formulation of kinship, proposed by Borneman (2001) – that care constitutes kinship. Because foster *care*, even by its label, is formulated as care, it was productive to probe this formulation, bringing in insights from the “emotional work” literature as well as looking at how care was given and experienced by the staff members, board members, and former residents of Sweet Haven.

The stories and experiences of the former staff and board members revealed the ambiguities inherent in the action of care, the difficulties in caring for someone who does not always acknowledge the need or desire to be cared for, and the way in which caring is

not confined to a particular time and place, but rather is ongoing and binds and bonds you to the person you are caring for. Their stories also challenge conceptualizations of “work” as simply an activity performed in exchange for money. Work in their experience is not a dichotomized income-producing aspect of their life, but is integrated into who they are as people and how they live their lives on a daily basis. Their lives illustrate Sacks’ (1984) understanding that

ties of kinship, work, and friendship reinforce each other. Kin, in-laws, and prior acquaintances become friends when they work together. ...In short, one brings family and family values *to* work; one creates family and recreates family values *at* work (1984: 290, italics in original).

The fact that work is an integral part of their total lives and understandings underscores the ways in which they believe care is intrinsic to their image of “what people do”. The exploration of the non-monetary aspects of work allows for the examination of the various ways that “one creates family” at work. Additionally, when work is viewed as not deriving solely from a desire for financial reimbursement, it is possible to analyze the struggles and dissatisfactions with work and work environment from a holistic framework and not just a struggle between those who control the paycheck and those who desire paychecks – although the struggle is certainly one aspects.

Chapter six also looked at care within a larger framework and examined care as a mental and spiritual activity. This dynamic of care is difficult to quantify, or even to thoroughly examine and explore, since by its very nature it is invisible, however the comments of the former foster care youths reveal that it is perceived as an important point of connection and care.

The exploration of caring also examined care from the perspective of the one who was receiving that care. When former foster care youths’ perspectives were taken into

account, care was revealed as full of intricacies, not the least of which was its dynamic nature. Care can be reciprocal, conflictual, coercive, manipulative, liberating, or confining. The complex nature of care does not discount it as an essential factor in human affiliations, but does require that its analysis be flexible and open. My analysis thus does not contradict Borneman's suggestion that care become the unit of analysis; instead it refines and expands it.

Chapter seven went beyond the standard definitions of family as relationships between people and looked at the way in memories served to not only connect the former foster care youths to their past, but also either helped them cope with their present or alternatively confounded their present. The chapter also explored the impact of "objects" on former foster care youths' designation and experience of connectedness. This chapter examined the youth's ideas and feelings regarding their past and the relationship of the objects to that past. This exploration revealed the ways in which "things" can represent, strengthen, or controlled the practice and perception of family. Items which the former foster care youths had received became significant connectors to the feelings and experiences they had at the time they received the object. This was equally true for photographs which connected them back to their past. Their memories, feelings, and connections to place were reserved for chapter eight.

Chapter eight focused on a physical structure and its location in space. It explored the connections and influences of the geographic location and of the physicality of the residence where the women lived as adolescents in the foster care system. It built on studies which explore family's connections to land and property as well as those which discuss family's location in a specific kind of place – that of domestic space. My

research was an expansion of both of these concepts, since in the situation of the group residence it was the agency not the family who owned the space and that space was “public” as well as “private”. In spite of those differences, the physical location did serve as a connector. The physical residence was not a static vessel that contained a family; instead it served as a dynamic process that bonded together everyone who passed through its program, tying them to both past and future residents. It was a place where they felt they belonged and that belonged to them, even after they had physically departed.

The chapter explored the significance of the particular location and looked at the ways that the prestige of the neighborhood where the residence was located was integrated into the women’s views of themselves. This realization is one which needs to be incorporated into the decisions made about where foster care agency’s and others place their programs.

Concluding comment

This dissertation has touched on many topics and contained many stories and words. Some of the story was my story and detailed my struggles as an academic who engages in this anthropological look at foster care thorough a variety of theoretical and methodological lenses (quandaries), ever cognizant of the fact that my life and the lives I discuss are intertwined and, therefore, my personal relationships are put on the examining table so to speak. As Brettell’s (1993) edited volume reveals, this opens me up to risks, not the least of which is a severing of those personal relationships if my words are misrepresented, misconstrued, or mistaken. What if I have included information which the women freely shared in the interviews, but then later they feel “hurt and dismay at finding aspects of their personal lives depicted in print, notwithstanding the fact that

some informants agreed with the authors' analyses" (Sheehan 1993:75). I explained my research, stating that I would be writing about it, but I know sometimes people agree to something, but do not really visualize what the end result is going to look like. How do I interpret what might be misconstrued and what is "safe"? What do I do if that which I decide is not "safe" is central to, or counters, my conclusions? Does leaving it out jeopardize the validity of my other observations? It is therefore with some trepidation that I present the words of this dissertation. Yet, it is not all trepidation, since I know the former foster youths with whom I spoke want me to present this story of their lives. Many have expressed the view that they want the validity and prestige that comes with having someone hear and accept their stories. My hope is that with these words and their appearance in print, the experiences of the women profiled here, as well as the experiences of all foster care children will begin to be normalized. I present these words with the hopes that politicians and the social service administrators will see aspects of foster care through a different lens, and use that view to better understand and tailor services and policy. I also present these words to speak to other anthropologists in an effort to let the lives of the former foster care youth illuminate and challenge the theories regarding how family should be defined and analyzed. I also hope that this research will inform discussions of the role and practice of anthropology. Additionally, as is often the hope in anthropological research, I offer this dissertation in the hope that we might understand "ourselves" better by seeing our "own" lives echoed/mirrored/contained/opposed in the lives and "reality" of the participants in this research.

APPENDIX A FOSTER CARE

This appendix provides background and framing for chapter three's discussion of the ways which foster care impacted the former residents. It begins by looking at foster care from an international perspective, followed by a historical overview of foster care in the United States. Governmental involvement in foster care and foster care policies are discussed next. The appendix then briefly examines the connection between poverty and foster care and ends with an in depth look at the non-temporary nature of much of foster care.

Foster Care Viewed Internationally

Internationally foster care practice and definition are varied. The International Foster Care Organization (IFCO) recognizes the diversity in foster care practices and definitions. In an effort to facilitate communication and understanding among countries and to provide the means for countries to learn about and from each others' programs and policies, they commissioned experts from twenty-one countries (representing all of the continents of the world) to submit a description of foster care's role and structure in their country. Colton and Williams, (1997) summarized and compared these descriptions of care and proposed five criteria to consider when deciding whether something should be called 'foster care'. These criteria are:

1. It may or may not include care by relatives.
2. It may or may not include only those placements, which are mediated by a recognized authority.
3. It may or may not include only temporary placements (whatever is meant by 'temporary').
4. It may or may not mean round-the-clock care.
5. It may or may not involve a 'private home' in the accepted Western sense. (1997: 287)

Colton and Williams also summarized examples of practices and attempted to discern, based on their criteria, if each service was foster care or something else. They concluded that the criterion alone does not determine what is “foster care”. They believed that “foster care can only be defined in terms of what it is intended to accomplish ...[– to provide] care for abandoned, abused and neglected children, so that they will have similar opportunities to more fortunate children...receiving not only the basic necessities of life, but also training and affection” (1997: 288). According to their definition, if a child is in day care while the mother works, that is not foster care. However, if a child spends the day in a setting where they receive specialized services and their mother, who is perceived to have poor parenting skills, also receives services – in the form of not only relief from her responsibilities but also training in parenting – then this child could be considered to be in a form of foster care. Other international organizations view foster care in much narrower terms, although the practices and purposes are similar. For instance, FICE (International Federation of Educative Communities), which was established in 1949, is concerned about children whose “social or economic deprivation, mistreatment or psychological injury” prevents them from residing with their parents. They believe these “vulnerable children require residential or other kinds of extrafamilial services, so as to ensure for them a more gratifying childhood and an increased chance for a better adult life” (Lasson 1994: vii). The terminology used by the Federation and its twenty-four member countries is “extrafamilial care”. The Federation mentions foster care, which it does not define, in a statement that in Eastern European countries foster care was not often accepted or utilized; instead youth in need of care were placed in residential training schools. Subsequent discussion makes it clear

that for them foster care is only placement in homes, so although the youth in their residential programs are not living with parents because of ‘deprivation’ and ‘mistreatment’, FICE does not refer to them as foster care placements. The stated goal of these schools to assure the youth had the skills they needed to be self-supporting functioning adults matches the previously stated goals of foster care. Thus, these two international organizations detail similar living arrangements made for some children who need care, however they do not use similar terminology. Strict adherence to a particular terminology is not necessarily desirable: it can limit the ability to adequately discuss the situation of children who do not live with their parents. Instead, it is necessary to look at the services, practices and attitudes in each particular location or historical moment.

When the whole range of situations and circumstances are taken into consideration, a more complete understanding of children who do not live with their biological parents is possible. This allows inclusion of situations, even when those situations are not necessarily referred to as foster care by the participants. For example, in Indonesia, “foster family care is not officially promoted by the government, but it is an integral part of the traditional Indonesian culture” (Colton and Williams 1997: xxv). It is not unusual for a rich family to provide schooling for the child of a poor family and in exchange that child helps with the domestic work of the rich family. In this case foster care is not the result of the parent’s actions or their lack of concern for the child, but rather from their lack of resources. An additional circumstance of foster care in the international perspective is that women who have no children may be given a child to

foster as a way to validate or increase that woman's status in a society where motherhood is considered vital.

United States Foster Care Viewed Historically

A brief overview of the historical development of foster care in the United States aids the understanding of the current system. One of the earliest and most common methods of "providing" for children who did not have a home was to indenture them. As indentured servants they received food, clothing and a place to live in exchange for working for the people to whom they were indentured. When they reached adulthood the indentured term ended and in many cases they were given at least some resources or possessions to help them transition to adulthood and to living on their own. The people who took children as indentured servants were not regulated and some children received care as if they were a member of the family, whereas others were severely mistreated. In the 1870's, a church worker struggling to help a young mistreated indentured female servant had to rely on the "cruelty to animals" law to protect the girl. This case highlighted the lack of equivalent protection for children and led to a movement to provide protection. By 1875 child protection laws were enacted – first in New York State and then throughout the United States (Altstein and McRoy 2000, Davies 1994, Hacsí 1996).

Children who were not indentured often ended up in almshouses, where the poor of all ages lived together receiving marginal care in less than desirable conditions. There were relatively few facilities that were designated for children only. The "first separate children's institution in what is now the U.S. was founded by Ursuline sisters in New Orleans in 1727" (Hegar and Scannapieco 1996:199) to care for orphaned children. In

1800 there were only 5 orphanages in the United States. All other children without homes lived in almshouses, even if they were orphaned. By 1850, there were only 77 orphanages in all of the United States (Smith 1996). These orphanages, most of which were begun and run by religious groups or philanthropists, were dangerously overcrowded and yet still could not provide for all the children in need. For example, in New York City it was estimated that “at least twice as many poor children roamed the streets as were contained by the city’s institutions and charity schools” (Nelson 1996:50). The parents of the children who were either in the orphanages or roaming the streets were not all dead, but could not provide for their children due to various circumstances. In fact, in most orphanages the majority of the children had at least one living parent; some parents even contributed a small sum to the orphanage for their child’s care. The early orphanages were very regimented, harsh and insufficiently supplied. Children often left before their teens to be indentured, to survive on their own, or occasionally to return home, if the family situation had improved.

In 1853, in response to the harsh, overcrowded and inadequate situations, Charles Loring Brace and his organization, the New York Children’s Aid Society, developed a ‘placing out’ program. The 1850’s were a time of economic panic, stock market downturn, and high unemployment. Previously employed youth were the hardest hit by these economic conditions since scarce jobs went first to the older more experienced workers. For example, “unemployment among Newark, New Jersey youths ages 15-20 increased from 7% in 1850 to 22% by 1860”(Nelson 1996:49). Levels of poverty, petty and violent crimes, youth gangs, and diseases were also increasing. There was also an increase in the number of immigrants and Brace and others blamed them for many of the

cities' problems. Brace's program was "designed to 'protect' children from the urban environment and from their own parents, who were presumed to be unworthy individuals incapable of rearing children properly" (Hacsi 1996:161). Brace's belief was that these children could be helped by getting them out of the environment and allowing a more appropriate family to provide for their care.

Although the program was similar to indenturing, there were some differences. The main difference was that the program, at least in theory, had as its goal the child's interests and therefore, the child was free to end the service at any time. Additionally, the arrangement was made by the agency and the agency or the parent retained guardianship of that child as a means to protect the child from mistreatment. Between 1853 and 1930, these "placing out" programs sent an estimated 150,000 children by train to the Midwest or other farming communities where they worked for the families with whom they lived (Cook 1996, Davies 1994, Vogt and Vogt 1995).

There were people in both the cities and the farming communities who objected to these programs. Although both Protestant and Catholic children were 'placed out', the agency's personnel were Protestant. There were objections that the program was taking Catholic children away from their families, their environment and their religion to convert them. When some of the youth created problems in their new communities, the farming areas complained that the cities were unloading their delinquents on unsuspecting rural communities. These complaints centered on lack of oversight and follow-up in dealing with the children who created problems.

In spite of the complaints and problems, many of the placements worked well for the youth and the families with whom they were placed. Youths often stayed connected

with those families until adulthood and beyond (Vogt and Vogt 1995). The program as a whole was perceived positively and served as the inspiration for a system of family foster care as opposed to institutional type programs. Additionally, in response to the negative stance toward the “placing out” of children by or with people who came from a different religious tradition, many Catholic and Jewish agencies were formed to take care of “their” own children⁸⁸. (Smith 1996). However, this religiously segregated provision of care created problems and was one of the factors that led to a landmark lawsuit (Wilder).⁸⁹

In the 1880’s following the lead of Charles Birtwell of Boston’s Children’s Aid Society, some agencies began to pay local families to keep children in an attempt to protect the child from being sent away and/or required to do excessive work. Because the agencies were paying the families, the agency did a more thorough job of checking out the families before placing a child with them. An additional result of the changes in policy was the involvement of the court in placement decisions. Governmental involvement increased at other levels as well (Davies 1994, Hacsí 1996). Having children live in a regulated foster home near where they had been living was seen as an improvement over either sending the children elsewhere or putting them in an orphanage. By 1919, the White House Conference on the Care of Dependent Children “emphatically

⁸⁸ Some of these agencies are still in operation today, even though they no longer discriminate according to religion.

⁸⁹ Wilder was a class-action suit whose named plaintiff was a black female teenager named Shirley Wilder who because she was Protestant and therefore not accepted in Catholic or Jewish foster care agencies ended up shifting between detention and mental institutions. The case was filed in 1973 and was in litigation for 26 years, during which time it took many turns and nuances as several different foster care and social services issues were political fought through the auspices of the case.

endorsed the statement, ‘The carefully selected foster home is for the normal child the best substitute for the natural home’” (Smith 1996:125-6).

As discussed above, the children who ended up in orphanages, were indentured, or ‘placed out’ were not necessarily orphans; in fact the majority of them were not. In many cases the parents did not have adequate material resources to provide for the children. A controversy developed concerning whether keeping the family together was of such importance that the family should be provided with outside resources to enable them to better provide for their children or did poverty stem from personality or behavioral characteristics and/or a lack of responsibility on the part of the parents making them incapable of taking care of their children, who therefore should be raised by someone else. “In 1909 the White House Conference on the Care of Depended Children took the following position on the removal of children: ‘...Except in unusual circumstances, the home should not be broken up for reasons of poverty, but only for considerations of inefficiency or immorality’” (Altstein and McRoy 2000:6). Conference recommendations and practice don’t always coincide and many of the children in care continued to be from poor families. Additionally, the issues of ‘inefficiency’ and ‘immorality’ are often conflated with perceptions of poverty, so the actual grounds for removal could be hard to assess.

In spite of the recommendation ‘not to break up the home,’ many children were still removed. In “1933, there were 243,000 children living in out-of-home care (5.8 children per 1,000 children in the child population). Many of these children were from poor families” (ibid.). In an attempt to help poor families strengthen their ability to take care of their children, Title IV of the Social Security Act was passed in 1935. It

established the Aid to Dependent Children (ADC) program, whose role was to give financial assistance to the parent. This aid allowed the children to remain with their parents and be cared for at home. 'Dependent children' usually signified children of a poor single mother. (Unemployed fathers were later added and by the late 1950's the program was referred to as Aid to Families with Dependent Children – AFDC. In 1996, this program was replaced by TANF –Temporary Assistance to Needy Families as part of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Act). The Social Security Act also provided funds to states to support prevention and protection services. [Prevention means providing supportive social services to sustain the family as a means to prevent foster care placement. Protection services usually entail investigating abuse and neglect allegations and removing children if necessary.] The federal government extended its involvement beyond just providing prevention and protection services in 1961 when

some children otherwise eligible for the Aid to Families With Dependent Children were denied benefits because their homes were found to be unsuitable. To help ensure that such children received adequate care outside their homes, the Congress made funds available to state child welfare agencies under title IV-A of the Social Security Act (GAO/HRD-91-64 1991:20-1).

It was not stated which factors led to a determination that the homes 'were found to be unsuitable'. However, most interpretations are that poverty played a big factor in the determination. According to Courtney (1999) and others, the federal government's decision to fund foster care, where service providers get a higher per child rate than families get under AFDC, indicates their feeling that some children should not be raised by their own parents. Rather than provide resources so that the children can remain in their own families, the government ends up paying more to have other people raise those

children. Regardless of its intent, the federal funding favored placement rather than family preservation.

Federal involvement, policies and laws dealing with foster care continued to increase after the 1935 Social Security Act. Each of the subsequent policies and actions were often in reaction to the general climate in the country, to the current status and opinion regarding foster care and/or to legal action on the part of advocates or agencies. In order to insightfully and thoroughly examine these developments it is helpful to organize the remaining discussion around a number of themes. These themes include: government involvement (which overarches many of the other areas as well), the relationship of poverty and foster care, the concern with prolonged foster care stays (foster care drift), court and legal influences on foster care, and the impact of the bureaucratic structural systems of foster care.

Government Involvement

With the 1961 funding of foster care, the federal government asserted a huge influence on foster care delivery, although states, city, and even non-governmental agencies still influence and assert their different policies, strategies and opinions. In fact the differences among states and cities often mediate what the federal policy is able to accomplish. For example, the General Accounting Office (GAO) of the federal government has noted the difficulty in compiling and evaluating national statistics due to “a lack of common definitions or methodologies nationwide” (GAO 1991:10). The Department of Health and Human Services maintains oversight. However Congress, the General Accounting Office and any number of other federal government entities are involved in foster care delivery. The purpose of some federal actions; such as the

Adoption Assistance and Child Welfare Act of 1980 (Public Law 96-272) and the 1997 Adoption and Safe Families Act, are to directly influence how foster care services are delivered. In instances such as these Congress' response to perceived crisis and shortcomings in the current system is to institute reform and overhaul of the entire system. In other instances the actions are in areas that are not directly concerned with foster care, but which nonetheless have an impact on foster care. For instance, the direct goals of the Child Abuse and Treatment Act (CAPTA), passed in 1974, were to provide for collection of national statistics, funding for research and demonstration projects, and funding for prevention and treatment. The act did not specifically pertain to foster care, but its regulation that

in order to be eligible for funds states had to pass surveillance laws that required professionals, usually physicians and teachers, to report child abuse and neglect to local child welfare agencies, resulted in a dramatic impact on the out-of-home system. By 1977 the number of children living in out-of-home care had reached approximately 502,000, almost 8 children for every 1,000 (Westat 1978 as quoted in Curtis 1999:4-5).

Another more recent example is the "welfare reform" act of 1996 (Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act). According to some calculations

the cumulative impact of these policy and program changes, because of their effects on families' abilities to support their children, is likely to be increasing numbers of children entering out-of-home care, most of whom will be poor (Simms, Freundlich, Battiselli, and Kaufman 2001:170).

Relationship Between Poverty And Foster Care

There is a statistical correlation between foster care and poverty. The "out-of-home care population is made up predominantly of children whose families live below the poverty line" (Katz 2001:72). However in spite of this correlation, there isn't

agreement as to the nature of the relationship. Why does that correlation exist? Is there an element of causation in the relationship? “Child abuse across the U.S. has always been concentrated in areas of greatest poverty, where stress is more likely. Family income is still the best predictor of removal of a child from the home by a social worker” (Hagedorn 1995). Abuse is not the only reason for removal. In fact the majority of placements are the result of neglect not abuse, but as with abuse, there is a statistical relationship between child neglect and poverty (Katz 2001:72-3). What the statistics can not reveal is the role which the investigator’s bias toward poverty plays in their decision to remove the child rather than choosing to working with the family towards family preservation. There is also a correlation between minorities and foster care placement, “with the greatest disparity [occurring] between the number of African American children in the U.S. population compared to the out-of-home population. ...In 1995 African Americans made up approximately 16% of the U.S. child population compared to approximately 44% of the out-of-home care population” (Curtis 1999:7).

A related factor is that those who stay in the system the longest are

those who enter care under one year of age [and who] tend to be disproportionately African American, American Indian, or Latino, and to come from families trapped in chronic poverty, substance abuse, and violence (Katz 2001:72).

Foster Care Drift – “Afloat in Care Forever”

Poverty and race thus appear to have an effect not only on who enters care, but also on the length of time that is spent in care. The length of time a child spends in foster care is a significant concern for foster care professionals and policy makers. According to legislation and policy, foster care is intended to be a temporary arrangement. The long-term goal is that children will either return to their family or be released for

adoption. As far back as 1959, some people began expressing concern about “foster care drift” [youth who float for years in various foster care placements]. In 1977, the median length of stay was estimated at 31 months, but when studies considered various factors, the length of stay fluctuated. For example, a 1979 study in New York City found that

the majority of children had entered foster care as preschoolers, and those entering before age 2 remained in ‘temporary’ arrangements for over 7 years, on the average. ...[M]any children in foster care had numerous different placements over the years and had little hope of returning to their families or finding other permanent homes (GAO/PEMD-89-17 1989:10).

The Adoption Assistance and Child Welfare Act of 1980 was passed in response to these extended foster care stays. Under this act, states access to some of the funding was based on their implementing policies and procedures to “prevent extended stays in foster care and to ensure that efforts are made to reunify children with their families or place them for adoption” (Ibid.). *Foster Care: Incomplete Implementation of the Reforms and Unknown Effectiveness*, a 1989 evaluation of the effects of this law found that the federal agency responsible for implementing the act set a compliance standard that did not require states to conform fully to the law. Additionally, the compliance standard involved having a plan and procedure in place, but did not consider the essence of these procedures nor determine if they were consequential to the child’s foster care experience. For example, the federal review of the states’ programs only determined if the state had maintained oversight of the individual’s placement, but the point of the review was “not to independently ascertain the appropriateness of that placement” (GAO/PEMD-89-17 1989:31). In other words, the federal reviewer’s job was not to determine or evaluate the quality of the program or the service provided, it was just to determine if the state or its contracted agencies were in fact providing service.

Unfortunately the child welfare system is complex and many factors react with each other, so at some levels the focus on reuniting children with their families or freeing them for adoption as a means to reduce length of time in care is at times misguided. The assumption is that “freed for adoption” means out of foster care and adopted, yet this is not the case. The report mentions “children who have been freed for adoption but not yet adopted” (GAO/PEMD-89-17 1989:39), which is due in part to “the difficulty in finding adoptive placements” (GAO/PEMD-89-17 1989:50). Discussion of reducing length of stay in foster care by advocating that children be freed for adoption without consideration or exploration of the actual and current circumstances of the adoption process is not productive. In fact one study in the mid 1990’s found that

Children, who are legally free, including infants, experience long lengths of stay. Nearly half of the time spent in care by these children occurs after termination of parental rights (TPR), *even when the child proceeds to adoption or guardianship*. The average length of stay from placement in care to adoption legalization was 45 months; 22 of those months followed TPR (Bodonyi 1997 as quoted in Jamieson and Bodonyi 2001:17 italics in original).

Another aspect of reducing length of care was discussed in a GAO report to the U.S. Senate Finance Committee. This research discovered that “children discharged home after staying in foster care for shorter periods were more likely to reenter care than those staying in care for longer periods. Children staying less than 1 year were twice as likely to return to care as those staying 1 year or longer (32 verse 16 percent)” (GAO/HRD-91-64 1991:4). Although they stated they were not suggesting that youth should stay in care longer to prevent reentry, their findings and subsequent discussion could lead to that implication. The Department of Health and Human Services (the federal governmental department in charge of oversight of foster care) disputes that

finding, stating that it was only the case in New York and Illinois, and that before the finding was used for policy decisions further research was needed into the cause of the relationship. The Department also took issue with several of the other findings related to length of care, most notably the “fact that children placed in institutions and in relative foster care have longer foster care stays than children placed in family foster care” (GAO/HRD-91-64 1991:62-3). The original report cited several contributing factors to length of stay. They included: “more emotionally disturbed, medically needy and physically handicapped children who require lengthier treatment. ...[as well as time spent] waiting for services, reunification or adoption. This is due to such factors as too few caseworkers, shortages of treatment facilities and ...caseworkers’ fear that abused children released from foster care may be abused again” (GAO 1991:9). It was also noted that there were several factors that lead to increased foster care placements and that the greater number of placements could indirectly lead to longer stays for individuals because of overburdened prevention, reunification, and adoption systems. The factors that lead to increased number of placements included: declining economic conditions, more public awareness which leads to an increase in abuse and neglect reporting, and the “increased number of substance-abusing parents ...[whose] substance abuse is often an indicator of many other family problems.... Children from these families often stay longer in care because of the difficulties in treating the parents’ multiple problems” (GAO 1991:23 -25).

Because of these and other factors, the 1980’s law did not assure that all children’s stay in foster care would be short. Statistics for 1985 indicated that 15 percent of all children in care had been in care for over 5 years. An additional 12 percent had

been in care over 3 years. When over a quarter of the children spend 3 or more years in care, the term temporary becomes questionable. Additionally, almost a quarter of the children in care had three to five different placements (GAO/PEMD-89-17 1989:59).

The federal government enacted the Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1997 (PL 105-89) as another attempt to end the prevalence of “foster care drift”. This law shortened, to a year, the amount of time a child could be in care without a permanency hearing and reaffirmed the need for a Permanency Planning Goal (PPG). It also moved toward an attitude of termination of parental rights, which frees a child for adoption. In many places compliance with this law has been less than adequate. A January 2002 review of Children and Family Services of New York State (the state agency that has oversight of foster care) reveals that although the state requires

that a petition to terminate parental rights (TPR) must be filed when a child has been in foster care for 15 of the most recent 22 months. ...A TPR petition is not required when: ...the agency has documented a compelling reason for determining that filing such a petition would not be in the best interests of the child. Such compelling reasons may include the following: adoption is not the appropriate permanency goal for the child; the child is 14 years of age or older; ...[it is determined that] the agency did not provide services to the parent(s) that are necessary for the safe return of the child to the parents. ...Data from a State review of NYC foster care cases during the Spring 2000 indicate that of the children in care 15 of the most recent 22 months, 27% had a TPR filed and 48% documented an exception or compelling reason for not filing a TPR. (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. 2002: 54-55).

Thus full compliance with the TPR requirement only happened 27% of the time, although due to exceptions, they would only be considered out of compliance in 25% of their cases. They were similarly out of compliance on requirements to have a permanency hearing within a year of entry into the foster care system. The report documents a number of ‘court barriers’ to compliance including court backlog and

judges' attitudes as well as 'agency barriers' such as staff shortage, turnovers, and lack of knowledge of the requirements of the law.

Other compliance barriers include "large caseloads, inexperienced and untrained staff" (Barbell and Wright 2001:3) and "organizational culture within child welfare agencies that discourages performance measurements for fear that additional data will fuel attacks from the system's detractors, who evaluate performances more on the basis of tragedies than successes. [Additionally,] those closest to practice may be dominated by the tremendous difficulty of the work and by a strong sense that their efforts lack support from the public, policymakers, and management" (Usher, Wildfire and Gibbs 2001:30).

As this example of "foster care drift" illustrates, policies and regulations that are developed to address a perceived "problem" in the foster care system are not always able to bring about resolution of the problem due to a range of factors which include: incomplete or inadequate implementation, insufficient identification of and response to the true root of the circumstances, implementation that results in the development or aggravation of other problems, or failure to recognize and address the other systems that impact on the "problem".

This overview of foster care internationally and historically serves to supplement and ground chapter three's discussion of foster care and its impact on the women whose lives are discussed in this dissertation.

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Abel, Emily K. and Margaret Nelson, eds. 1990a. *Circles of Care: Work and Identity in Women's Lives*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.
- _____. 1990b. "Circles of Care: An Introductory Essay" in *Circles of Care: Work and Identity in Women's Lives*. Emily K. Abel and Margaret Nelson, eds. Pp. 4-34. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.
- Abu-Lughod, Janet L. 1994. "Welcome to the Neighborhood" in *From Urban Village to East Village: The Battle for New York's Lower East Side*. Janet L. Abu-Lughod and others. Cambridge, MA: Basil Blackwell Ltd.
- Abu-Lughod, Lila. 1991. "Writing Against Culture" in *Recapturing Anthropology: Working in the Present* Richard Fox, ed. Pp. 137-162. Santa Fe, NM: School of America Research Press.
- Aguilar, John. L. 1981. "Insider Research: an Ethnography of a Debate." in *Anthropologist at Home in North America: Methods and Issues in the Study of One's Own Society*. Donald A. Messerschmidt, ed. Pp. 15-27. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Allen, Susan L., ed. 1994. *Media Anthropology: Informing Global Citizens*. Westport, CT: Bergin and Garvey.
- Alonso, Ana María. 1994. "The Politics of Space, time and Substance: State Formation, Nationalism, and Ethnicity." in *Annual Review of Anthropology*. Vol. 23. Pp. 379-405. Palo Alto, CA: Annual Reviews, Inc.
- Altshuler, Sandra J. and Gleeson, James P. 2001. "Completing the Evaluation Triangle for the Next Century: Measuring Child 'Well-Being' in Family Foster Care". in *Family Foster Care in the Next Century*. Kathy Barbell and Lois Wright, eds. Pp. 125-147. New Brunswick (USA) and London (UK): Transaction Publishers.
- Altstein, Howard and Ruth C. McRoy. 2000. *Does Family Preservation Serve a Child's Best Interests?* Washington DC: Georgetown University Press.
- American Psychiatric Association. 1987. *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*, Third Edition. Washington, DC: American Psychiatric Association.
- Amory, Deborah. 1997. "African Studies as American Institution" in *Anthropological Locations: Boundaries and Grounds of a Field Science*. Akhil Gupta and James Ferguson, eds. Pp. 102-116. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Appadurai, Arjun. 1986. *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Culture Perspective*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

- _____. 1991. "Global Ethnoscapes: Notes and Queries for a Transnational Anthropology." in *Recapturing Anthropology: Working in the Present*. Richard Fox, ed. Pp. 191-210. Santa Fe, NM: School of America Research Press.
- _____. 1992. "Putting Hierarchy in its Place" in *Rereading Cultural Anthropology*. George E. Marcus, ed. Pp. 34-47. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Ardener, Edwin. 1987. "'Remote Areas': Some Theoretical Considerations." in. *Anthropology at Home*. (ASA Monograph; 25). Anthony Jackson, ed. Pp. 38-54. New York: Tavistock Publications.
- Asad, Talal, ed. 1973a. *Anthropology and the Colonial Encounter*. London: Ithaca Press.
- _____. 1973b. "Introduction" in *Anthropology and the Colonial Encounter*. Talal Asad, ed. pp. 9-19. London: Ithaca Press.
- Atkins, Linda. 1998. *Jamaica and Me: The Story of an Unusual Friendship*. New York: Random House.
- Babula, Carolyn. 2001. "Family I Imagine" in *The Ethics of Kinship: Ethnographic Inquires*. James D. Faubion, ed. Pp. 250-265. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Inc.
- Barbell, Kathy and Wright, Lois, eds. 2001a. *Family Foster Care in the Next Century*. New Brunswick (USA) and London (UK): Transaction Publishers.
- _____. 2001b. "Introduction: Family Foster Care in the Next Century Using Data for Planning." in *Family Foster Care in the Next Century*. Kathy Barbell and Lois Wright, eds. Pp. 1-12. New Brunswick (USA) and London (UK): Transaction Publishers.
- Barlett, Peggy F. 1993. *American Dreams, Rural Realities: Family Farms in Crisis*. Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press.
- Barry, Richard. 2000. "Sheltered 'Children': The Self-Creation of a Safe Space by Gay, Lesbian, and Bisexual Students" in *Construction Sites: Excavating Race, Class, and Gender among Urban Youth*. Lois Weis and Michelle Fine, eds. Pp. 84-99. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Bartholet, Elizabeth. 1999. *Nobody's Children: Abuse and Neglect, Foster Drift, and the Adoption Alternative*. Boston, MA: Beacon Press.
- Baxter, Ellen and Kim Hopper. 1981. *Private Lives/Public Spaces* New York: Community Service Society.

- Behar, Ruth. 1993. *Translated Woman: Crossing the Border with Esperanza's Story*. Boston: Beacon Press.
- Behar, Ruth and Deborah A. Gordon, eds. 1995. *Women Writing Culture*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Bell, Sandra and Simon Coleman, eds. 1999. *The Anthropology of Friendship*. Oxford and New York: Berg.
- Bernstein, Nina. 2001. *The Lost Children of Wilder: The Epic Struggle to Change Foster Care*. New York: Pantheon Press.
- Berrick, Jill Duerr. 1997. "Assessing Quality of Care in Kinship and Foster Family Care." in *Family Relations*. Vol. 46 (3). Pp. 273-280.
- Berrick, Jill Duerr, Richard Barth, and Neil Gilbert, eds. 1997. *Child Welfare Research Review*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Berrick, Jill Duerr and Barbara Needell. 1999. "Recent Trends in Kinship Care: Public Policy, Payments, and Outcomes for Children." in *The Foster Care Crisis: Translating Research into Policy and Practice*. Patrick A. Curtis, Grady Dare, Jr., and Joshua C. Kendall, eds. Pp. 152-174. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press in association with the Child Welfare League of America.
- Bishop, Wendy. 1999. *Ethnographic Writing Research: Writing It Down, Writing It Up, and Reading It*. Portsmouth, NH: Boynton/Cook Publishers, Inc.
- Bolles, A. Lynn. 2001. "Perspectives on U.S. Kinship" in. *Cultural Diversity in the United States: a Critical Reader*. Ida Susser and Thomas C. Patterson, eds. Pp. 267-280. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers Ltd.
- Borneman, John. 1996. "Until Death Do Us Part: Marriage/Death in Anthropological Discourse." in *American Ethnologist*. 23(2):215-238. Washington, D.C.: American Anthropological Association.
- _____. 2001. "Caring and Being Cared For: Displacing Marriage, Kinship, Gender, and Sexuality" in *The Ethics of Kinship: Ethnographic Inquires*. James D. Faubion. Pp. 29-46. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Inc.
- Boswell, John. 1988. *The Kindness of Strangers: The Abandonment of Children in Western Europe from Late Antiquity to the Renaissance*. New York: Pantheon Books.
- Bouquet, Mary. 2001. "Making Kinship with an Old Reproductive Technology" in *Relative Values: Reconfiguring Kinship Studies*. Sarah Franklin and Susan McKinnon, eds. Pp. 85-115. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

- Bourdieu, P. 1977. *Outline of a Theory of Practice*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Bourgois, Philippe. 2002. "Understanding Inner-City Poverty: Resistance and Self-Destruction under U.S. Apartheid" in *Exotic No More: Anthropology on the Front Lines*. Jeremy MacClancy, ed. Pp.15-32. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Brettell, Caroline B, ed. 1993a. *When They Read What We Write: The Politics of Ethnography*. Westport, CT: Bergin and Garvey.
- _____. 1993b. "Introduction: Fieldwork, Text, and Audience" in *When They Read What We Write: The Politics of Ethnography*. Caroline B. Brettell, ed. Pp. 1-24. Westport, CT: Bergin and Garvey.
- Brewer, Rose. 1998. "Race, Class, Gender and U.S. State Welfare Policy: The Nexus of Inequality for African American Families." in *Shifting the Center: Understanding Contemporary Families*. Susan J Ferguson, ed. Pp. 668-680. Mountain View, CA: Mayfield Publishing Company.
- Bridenthal, Renate. 1982. "The Family: The View from a Room of her Own" in *Rethinking the Family: Some Feminist Questions*. Barrie Thorne and Marilyn Yalom, eds. Pp. 225-239. New York: Longman.
- Brodkey, Linda. 2000. "Writing on the Bias" in *Construction Sites: Excavating Race, Class, and Gender among Urban Youth*. Lois Weis and Michelle Fine, eds. Pp. 5-24. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Buchli, Victor, ed. 2002a. *The Material Culture Reader*. New York: Berg.
- _____. 2002b. "Introduction" in Victor Buchli, ed. *The Material Culture Reader*. New York: Berg.
- Bullock, Roger, Daniel Gooch, and Michael Little. 1998. *Children Going Home: the Re-Unification of Families*. Brookfield, VT: Ashgate Publishing Company.
- Cardoso, Ruth C. L. 1984. "Creating Kinship: The Fostering of Children in Favela Families in Brazil" in *Kinship Ideology and Practice in Latin America*. Raymond T. Smith, ed. Pp. 196-203. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.
- Carsten, Janet. 1995. "The Substance of Kinship and the Heat of the Hearth: Feeding, Personhood, and Relatedness among Malays in Pulau Langkawi" in *American Ethnologist*. Pp. 223-241. Washington DC: American Anthropological Association.

- _____.ed. 2000a. *Cultures of Relatedness: New Approaches to the Study of Kinship*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- _____. 2000b. "Introduction: the Cultures of Relatedness. in *Cultures of Relatedness: New Approaches to the study of Kinship*. Janet Carsten, ed. Pp. 1-36. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Casey, Edward. 1993. *Getting back into Place: Toward a Renewed Understanding of the Place-World*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Castle, Sarah E. 1996. "The Current and Intergenerational Impact of Child Fostering on Children's Nutritional Status in Rural Mali." in *Human Organization*. Vol.55, No. 2. Pp. 193-213. Society for Applied Anthropology.
- Chevalier, Sophie. 1999. "The French Two-Home Project: Materialization of Family Identity." *At Home: An Anthropology of Domestic Space*. in Irene Cieraad, ed. Pp. 83-94. Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press.
- Child Welfare League of America. 1998. *Improving Transitions to Adulthood for Youth Served by the Foster Care System: A Report of the Strengths and Needs of Existing Aftercare Services*. New York: Child Welfare League of America.
- Cieraad, Irene, ed. 1999a. *At Home: an Anthropology of Domestic Space*. Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press.
- _____. 1999b. "Introduction: Anthropology at Home" in *At Home: An Anthropology of Domestic Space*. Irene Cieraad, ed. Pp.1-12. Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press.
- Cimmarusti, Rocco A. 1999. "Caregiver Burden in Kinship Foster Care." in *Kinship Care: Improving Practice Through Research*. James P. Gleeson and Creasie Finney, eds. Pp. 257-278. New York: Child Welfare League of America, Inc.
- Clifford, James. 1997. "Spatial Practices: Fieldwork, Travel, and the Disciplining of Anthropology" in *Anthropological Locations: Boundaries and Grounds of a Field Science*. Akhil Gupta and James Ferguson, eds. Pp. 185-222. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Clifford, James and George E. Marcus, eds. 1986. *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Colen, Shellee. 1995. "'Like a Mother to Them': Stratified Reproduction and West Indian Childcare Workers and Employers in New York" in *Conceiving the New World Order: The Global Politics of Reproduction*. Faye Ginsburg and Rayna Rapp, eds. Pp. 78-102. Berkeley: University of California Press.

- Coles, Robert. 1993. *The Call to Service: A Witness to Idealism*. Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin Company.
- Collier, Jane and Sylvia Yanagisako, eds. 1987a. *Gender and Kinship: Essays toward a Unified Analysis*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- . 1987b. "Introduction." in *Gender and Kinship: Essays towards a Unified Analysis*. Jane Collier and Sylvia Yanagisako, eds. Pp. 1-13. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Collier, Jane, Michelle Z. Rosaldo, and Sylvia Yanagisako. 1982. "Is There a Family?: New Anthropological Views". in *Rethinking the Family: Some Feminist Questions*. Barrie Thorne and Marilyn Yalom, eds. Pp. 25-39. New York: Longman.
- Colton, Matthew and Margaret Williams. 1997. *The World of Foster Care: An International Sourcebook on Foster Family Care Systems*. Brookfield, VT: Ashgate.
- Condit, Celeste Michelle. 1990. *Decoding Abortion Rhetoric: Communicating Social Change*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press.
- Cook, Jeanne F. 1996. "A History of Placing-Out: The Orphan Trains" in *A History of Child Welfare*. Eve P. Smith and Lisa A. Merkel-Holguin, eds. Pp. 175-192. New York: Child Welfare League of America, Inc.
- Coombs, Gary. 1980. "Variant Usage in American Kinship: the Nomenclator Effect." in *The Versatility of Kinship: Essays Presented to Harry W. Basehart*. Linda S. Cordell and Stephen Beckerman, eds. Pp. 11-28. New York: Academic Press, Inc.
- Coontz, Stephanie. 1992. *The Way We Never Were: American Families and the Nostalgia Trap*. New York: Basic Books.
- . 1997. *The Way We Really Are: Coming to Terms with America's Changing Families*. New York: Basic Books.
- . 2000 [1997]. "Where are the Good Old Days." in *The Family Experience: A Reader in Cultural Diversity*, 3rd ed. Mark Hutter, ed. Pp. 13-19. Needham Heights, MA: Allyn and Bacon.
- Courtney, Mark E. 1999. "Foster Care and the Costs of Welfare Reform." in *The Foster Care Crisis: Translating Research into Policy and Practice*. Patrick A. Curtis, Grady Dare, Jr., and Joshua C. Kendall, eds. Pp. 129 - 151. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press in association with the Child Welfare League of America.

- Creed, Gerald W. 2000. "'Family Value' and Domestic Economies in *Annual Review of Anthropology*. Vol. 29 Pp. 329-355. Palo Alto, CA: Annual Reviews.
- Csordas, Thomas J. ed. 1994a. *Embodiment and Experience: The Existential Ground of Culture and Self*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- . 1994b. "Introduction: The Body as Representation and Being-in-the-World" in *Embodiment and Experience: The Existential Ground of Culture and Self*. Thomas J. Csordas, ed. Pp. 1-24. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Curtis, Patrick. 1999. "Introduction: the Chronic Nature of the Foster Care Crisis" in *The Foster Care Crisis: Translating Research into Policy and Practice*. Patrick A. Curtis, Grady Dare, Jr., and Joshua C. Kendall, eds. Pp. 1 –14. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press in association with the Child Welfare League of America.
- Danziger, Eve. 2001. *Relatively Speaking: Language, Thought, and Kinship among the Mapan Maya*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Darnell, Regina. 2001. *Invisible Genealogies: A History of Americanist Anthropology*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.
- Darrah, C. N., J. A. English-Lueck, and J. M. Freeman. 2003. "Shock-Absorbing and Sense-Making: American Families and a Public Anthropology" in *Anthropology News*. February 2003 p.12.
- Davies, Margery W. 1994. "Who's Minding the Baby? Reproductive Work, Productive Work, and Family Policy in the United States." in *More than Kissing Babies: Current Child and Family Policy in the United States*. Francine H. Jacobs and Margery W. Davies, eds. Pp. 37-64. Westport, CT: Auburn House.
- DeVault, Marjorie L. 1999. "Comfort and Struggle: Emotional Work in Family Life" *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*. Vol. 561. *Emotional Labor in the Service Economy*. in Ronnie J. Steinberg and Deborah M. Figart, special editors. Pp.52-62. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- De Vita, Philip R and James D. Armstrong, eds. 2002. *Distant Mirrors: American as a Foreign Culture*, 3rd edition. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth/Thompson Learning.
- di Leonardo, Micaela, ed. 1991a. *Gender at the Crossroads of Knowledge: Feminist Anthropology in the Postmodern Era*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- . 1991b. "Introduction: Gender, Culture and Political Economy: Feminist Anthropology in Historical Perspective." in *Gender at the Crossroads of Knowledge: Feminist Anthropology in the Postmodern Era*. Micaela di Leonardo, ed. Pp. 1-48. Berkeley: University of California Press.

- _____. 1998. *Exotics at Home: Anthropologies, Others, American Modernity*. Chicago: University Of Chicago Press.
- Dirks, Nicholas B., Geoff Eley, and Sherry B. Ortner, eds. 1994a. *Culture/Power/History: A Reader in Contemporary Social Theory*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- _____. 1994b. "Preface" in *Culture/Power/History: A Reader in Contemporary Social Theory*. Nicholas B. Dirks, Geoff Eley, and Sherry B. Ortner, eds. Pp. ix-xi. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Dragadze, Tamara. 1987. "Fieldwork at Home: the USSR." in *Anthropology at Home*. (ASA Monograph; 25). Anthony Jackson, ed. Pp. 154-162. New York: Tavistock Publications.
- Dreier, Peter, John Mollenkopf and Todd Swanstrom. 2001. *Place Matters: Metropolitica for the Twenty-first Century*. Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas.
- Dube, Leela. 1997. *Women and Kinship: Comparative Perspectives on Gender in South and South-East Asia*. Tokyo: United Nations University Press.
- Durrenberger, E. Paul and Gisli Palsson. 1999. "The Importance of Friendship in the Absence of States, According to the Icelandic Sagas" in *The Anthropology of Friendship*. Sandra Bell and Simon Coleman, eds. Pp. 59-78. Oxford and New York: Berg.
- Edell, James M. 1997. *Political Control of a "Throw Away" Population: Examination of Sex Education for Teens in Foster Care*. Ph.D. diss., Columbia University
- Edin, and L. Lein. 1997. *Making Ends Meet: How Single Mothers Survive Welfare and Low-Wage Work*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.
- Edwards, Jeanette and Marilyn Strathern. 2000. "Including Our Own" in *Cultures of Relatedness: New Approaches to the study of Kinship*. Janet Carsten, ed. Pp. 149-166. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Edwards, Jeanette, Sarah Franklin, Eric Hirsch, Frances Price, and Marilyn Strathern. 1999. *Technologies of Procreation: Kinship in the Age of Assisted Conception*. 2nd edition. New York: Routledge.
- Edwards, Richard L., editor-in-chief. 1995. *Encyclopedia of Social Work*. 19th edition. Washington, DC: National Association of Social Workers.
- England, Paula and Nancy Folbre. 1999. "The Cost of Caring." in *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*. Vol. 561. *Emotional Labor in*

- the Service Economy*. Ronnie J. Steinberg and Deborah M. Figart, special editors
Pp. 39-51. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Eriksen, Thomas Hylland. 1995. *Small Places, Large Issues: an Introduction to Social Anthropology*. East Haven, CT: Pluto Press.
- Etter-Lewis, Gwendolyn and Michele Foster. 1996. *Unrelated Kin: Race and Gender in Women's Personal Narratives*. New York: Routledge.
- Fahim, Hussein and Katherine Helmer. 1982. "Themes and Counterthemes: the Burg Wartenstein Symposium" in *Indigenous Anthropology in Non-Western Countries: Proceedings of a Burg Wartenstein Symposium*. Hussein Fahim, ed. Pp. xi-xxxiii. Durham, NC: Carolina Academic Press.
- Falke, Joseph. 1995. *Everything You Need to Know about Living in a Foster Home*. New York: The Rosen Publishing Group.
- Faubion, James D., ed. 2001. *The Ethics of Kinship: Ethnographic Inquires*. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Inc.
- Ferguson, Susan J., ed. 1998. *Shifting the Center: Understanding Contemporary Families*. Mountain View, CA: Mayfield Publishing Company.
- Festinger, Trudy. 1983. *No One Ever Asked Us – A Postscript to Foster Care*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Figley, Charles R. 1998. *Burnout in Families: The Systemic Costs of Caring*. Baton Raton, FL: CRC Press, LLC.
- Finkler, Kaja. 2000. *Experiencing the New Genetics: Family and Kinship on the Medical Frontier*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Fisher, Berenice. 1990. "Alice in the Human Services: A Feminist Analysis of Women in the Caring Professions" in *Circles of Care: Work and Identity in Women's Lives*. Emily K. Abel and Margaret Nelson, eds. Pp. 108-131. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.
- Fisher, Berenice and Joan Tronto. 1990. "Toward a Feminist Theory of Caring." in *Circles of Care: Work and Identity in Women's Lives*. Emily K. Abel and Margaret Nelson, eds. Pp. 35-62. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.
- Foner, Nancy. 1994. *The Caregiving Dilemma: Work in an American Nursing Home*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

- Fox, Richard G. 1991a. *Recapturing Anthropology: Working in the Present*. Santa Fe, NM: School of America Research Press.
- _____. 1991b. "Introduction: Working in the Present" in *Recapturing Anthropology: Working in the Present* Richard Fox, ed. Pp. 1-16. Santa Fe, NM: School of America Research Press.
- Frank, Gelya. 1995. "The Ethnographic Films of Barbara G. Myerhoff" *Anthropology, Feminism and the Politics of Jewish Identity.* in *Women Writing Culture*. Ruth Behar and Deborah A. Gordon, eds. Pp. 207-232. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Franklin, Sarah. 1997. *Embodied Progress: A Cultural Account of Assisted Conception*. New York: Routledge.
- _____. 2002. "The Anthropology of Science" in *Exotic No More: Anthropology on the Front Lines*. Jeremy MacClancy, ed. Pp.351-358. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Franklin, Sarah and Susan McKinnon, eds. 2001a. *Relative Values: Reconfiguring Kinship Studies*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- _____. 2001b. "Introduction" in *Relative Values: Reconfiguring Kinship Studies*. Sarah Franklin and Susan McKinnon, eds. Pp. 1-25. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Franklin, Sarah and Helena Ragone, eds. 1997. *Reproducing Reproduction: Kinship, Power, and Technological Innovation*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- GAO/HRD (United States General Accounting Office: Report to the Committee on Finance, US Senate.) 1991. *Foster Care: Children's Experiences Linked to Various Factors: Better Data Needed*. GOA/HRD-91-64. Washington, D.C.: GOA.
- GAO/PEMD (United States General Accounting Office: Program Evaluation and Methodology Division). 1989. *Foster Care: Incomplete Implementation of the Reforms and Unknown Effectiveness*. Report to Congressional Requesters GAO/PEMD-89-17. Washington, D.C.: GAO.
- Gardner, Katy. 1999. "Location and Relocation: Home, 'the Field' and Anthropological Ethics (Sylhet, Bangladesh). in *Being There: Fieldwork in Anthropology*. C. W. Watson, ed. Pp. 49-73. Sterling, VA: Pluto Press.
- Gellner, David N. and Eric Hirsch, eds. 2001. *Inside Organizations: Anthropologists at work*. Oxford: Berg.

- George, Laurel. 2001. "Like a Family to Me: Families of Origin, Families of Choice, and Class Mobility" in *The Ethics of Kinship: Ethnographic Inquiries*. James D. Faubion, ed. Pp. 215-233. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Inc.
- Ginsburg, Faye. 1989. *Contested Lives: The Abortion Debate in an American Community*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- _____. 1993. "The Case of Mistaken Identity: Problems in Representing Women on the Right" in *When They Read What We Write: The Politics of Ethnography*. Caroline B. Brettell, ed. Pp. 163-175. Westport, CT: Bergin and Garvey.
- Ginsburg, Faye and Rayna Rapp, ed. 1995a. *Conceiving the New World Order: The Global Politics of Reproduction*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- _____. 1995b. "Introduction: Conceiving the New World Order" in *Conceiving the New World Order: The Global Politics of Reproduction*. Faye Ginsburg and Rayna Rapp, eds. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Gittins, Diana. 1998. "The Family in Question: What is the Family? Is it Universal?" in *Shifting the Center: Understanding Contemporary Families*. Susan J. Ferguson, ed. Pp. 1-11. Mountain View, CA: Mayfield Publishing Company.
- Gleason, Mona Lee. 1999. *Normalizing the Ideal: Psychology, Schooling, and the Family in Postwar Canada*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- Gleeson, James P. and Hairston, Crease Finney, eds. 1999. *Kinship Care: Improving Practice Through Research*. New York: Child Welfare League of America, Inc.
- Gleeson, James P. 1999a. "Kinship Care as a Child Welfare Service: What Do We Really Know?" in *Kinship Care: Improving Practice Through Research*. James P. Gleeson and Crease Finney, eds. Pp. 3-34. New York: Child Welfare League of America, Inc.
- _____. 1999b. "Who Decides? Predicting Caseworkers' Adoption and Guardianship Discussion with Kinship Caregivers". in *Kinship Care: Improving Practice Through Research*. James P. Gleeson and Crease Finney, eds. Pp. 61-84. New York: Child Welfare League of America, Inc.
- Glover, Lori. 2000. *All Our Relations: Blood Ties and Emotional Bonds among the Early South Carolina Gentry*. Baltimore, MD: John Hopkins University Press.
- Goerge, Robert M., Fred Wulczyn and Allen Harden. 1999. "Foster Care Dynamic" in *The Foster Care Crisis: Translating Research into Policy and Practice*. Patrick A. Curtis, Grady Dare, Jr., and Joshua C. Kendall, eds. Pp. 17 - 44. Lincoln:

University of Nebraska Press in association with the Child Welfare League of America.

Goldman, Laurence R., ed. 1999a. *The Anthropology of Cannibalism*. Westport, CT: Bergin and Garvey.

———. 1999b. "From Pot to Polemic: Uses and Abuses of Cannibalism. in *The Anthropology of Cannibalism*. Laurence R. Goldman, ed. Westport, CT: Bergin and Garvey.

Goode, Judith. 2002. "How Urban Ethnography Counters Myths about the Poor" in *Urban Life: Readings in the Anthropology of the City*. 4th edition. George Gmelch and Walter P. Zenner, eds. Pp. 279-295. Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland Press.

Gordon, Linda. 1994. *Pitied but not Entitled: Single Mothers and the History of Welfare, 1890-1935*. New York: Free Press.

Gough, Kathleen. 1975. "The Origin of the Family" in *Toward an Anthropology of Women*. Rayna R. Reiter, ed. Pp. 51-76. New York: Monthly Review Press.

Grasmuck, Sherri and Patricia Pessar. 1991. *Between Two Islands: Dominican International Migration*. University of California Press.

Gupta, Akhil and James Ferguson, eds. 1997a. *Anthropological Locations: Boundaries and Grounds of a Field Science*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

———. eds. 1997b *Culture, Power, Place: Explorations in Critical Anthropology*. Durham: Duke University Press.

———. 1997c. "Culture, Power, Place: Ethnography at the End of an Era" in *Culture, Power, Place: Explorations in Critical Anthropology*. Akhil Gupta and James Ferguson, eds. Pp. 1-29. Durham: Duke University Press.

———. 1997d. "Discipline and Practice: 'The Field' as Site, Method, and Location in Anthropology" in *Anthropological Locations: Boundaries and Grounds of a Field Science*. Akhil Gupta and James Ferguson, eds. Pp. 1-46 Berkeley: University of California Press.

Hacsi, Tim. 1996. "From Indenture to Family Foster Care: A Brief History of Child Placing" in *A History of Child Welfare*. Eve P. Smith and Lisa A. Merkel-Holguin, eds. Pp. 155-174. New York: Child Welfare League of America, Inc.

Hagedorn, John M. 1995. *Forsaking Our Children: Bureaucracy and Reform in the Child Welfare System*. Chicago, IL: Lake View Press.

- Hall, Peter Dobkin. 1999. "Blurred Boundaries, Hybrids, and Changelings: The Fortunes of Nonprofit Organizations in the Late Twentieth Century" *Critical Anthropology Now: Unexpected Contexts, Shifting Constituencies, Changing Agendas*. George E. Marcus, ed. Pp. 147-202. Santa Fe, NM: School of America Research Press.
- Halperin, R. 1990. *The Livelihood of Kin: Making Ends Meet the "Kentucky Way."* Austin: University of Texas Press.
- Handler, Joel F. and Lucie White, eds. 1999. *Hard Labor: Women and Work in the Post-Welfare Era*. Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, Inc.
- Haraway, D. 1991. *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women: The Reinvention of Nature*. New York: Routledge.
- Hareven, Tamara K. 2000. *Families, History, and Social Change: Life Course and Cross-Cultural Perspectives*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.
- Harrison, Faye, ed. 1991. *Decolonizing Anthropology: Moving Further Toward an Anthropology for Liberation*. Washington, DC: American Anthropological Association.
- Harrison, Michelle. 1999. "Social Construction of Mary Beth Whitehead." in *American Families: A Multicultural Reader*. Stephanie Coontz, Maya Parson, and Gabriella Raley, eds. Pp. 425-434. New York: Routledge.
- Harvey, David. 1989. *The Urban Experience*. Baltimore, MD: John Hopkins University Press.
- . 2001. *Spaces of Capital: Towards a Critical Geography*. New York: Routledge.
- Hastrup, Kirsten. 1987. "Fieldwork Among Friends: Ethnographic Exchange Within the Northern Civilization." in *Anthropology at Home*. (ASA Monograph; 25). Anthony Jackson, ed. Pp. 94-108. New York: Tavistock Publications.
- . 1995. *A Passage to Anthropology: Between Experience and Theory*. New York: Routledge.
- Hayano, David M. 1979. "Auto-Ethnography: Paradigms, Problems, and Prospects" in *Human Organization*. Vol. 38, No. 1: 99-104. Washington, DC: Society for Applied Anthropology.
- Hayden, C. 1995. "Gender, Genetics, and Generation: Reforming Biology in Lesbian Kinship" in *Cultural Anthropology* 10 (1): 41-63.

- Hays, Sharon. 1996. *The Cultural Contradictions of Motherhood*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Hegar, Rebecca and Maria Scannapieco. 1996. "From Family Duty to Family Policy: The Evolution of Kinship Care" in *A History of Child Welfare*. Eve P. Smith and Lisa A. Merkel-Holguin, eds. Pp. 193-210. New York: Child Welfare League of America, Inc.
- _____. eds. 1999. *Kinship Foster Care: Policy, Practice, and Research*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Hendry, Joy. 1992. "The Paradox of Friendship in the Field" in *Anthropology and Autobiography*. Judith Okely and Helen Callaway, eds. London: Routledge.
- Hennigh, Lawrence. 1981. "The Anthropologist as Key Informant: Inside a Rural Oregon Town" in *Anthropologists at Home in North America: Methods and Issues in the Study of One's Own Society*. Donald A. Messerschmidt, ed. Pp. 121-132. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Herzfeld, Michael. 2001. *Anthropology: Theoretical Practice in Culture and Society*. Malden, MA: Blackwell
- Himmelweit, Susan. 1999. "Caring Labor" in *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science. Vol. 561. Emotional Labor in the Service Economy*. Ronnie J. Steinberg and Deborah M. Figart, special editors. Pp. 27-38. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Hochschild, Arlie Russell. 1983. *The Managed Heart: Commercialization of Human Feeling*. Berkeley: University Press.
- _____. 1998. "The Emotional Geography of Work and Family Life." in *Shifting the Center: Understanding Contemporary Families*. Susan J Ferguson, ed. Pp. 518-532. Mountain View, CA: Mayfield Publishing Company.
- Holmes, Lowell D and Ellen Rhoads Holmes. 2002. "The American Cultural Configuration" in. *Distant Mirrors: American as a Foreign Culture*, 3rd edition. Philip R De Vita and James D. Armstrong, eds. Pp. 4-25. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth/Thompson Learning.
- Hopkins, Mary Carol. 1993. "Is Anonymity Possible?: Writing about Refugees in the United States." in *When They Read What We Write: The Politics of Ethnography*. Caroline B. Brettell, ed. Westport, CT: Bergin and Garvey.
- Hopper, Kim 2003. *Reckoning with Homelessness* Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

- Hopper, Kim and Jim Baumohl. 1996. "Redefining the Cursed Word: A Historical Interpretation of American Homelessness." in *Homelessness in America*. Jim Baumohl, ed. for the National Coalition of the Homeless. Pp. 3-14. Phoenix, AZ: Oryx Press.
- Hutchinson, Sharon Elaine. 2000. "Identity and Substance: the Broadening Bases of Relatedness among the Nuer of Southern Sudan" in *Cultures of Relatedness: New Approaches to the Study of Kinship*. Janet Carsten, ed. Pp. 55-72. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Hutter, Mark, ed. 2000 [1997]. *The Family Experience: A Reader in Cultural Diversity*, 3rd ed. Needham Heights, MA: Allyn and Bacon.
- Hymes, Dell, ed. 1972a. *Reinventing Anthropology*. New York: Pantheon Books.
- _____. 1972b. "The Use of Anthropology: Critical, Political, Personal" in *Reinventing Anthropology*. Dell Hymes, ed. Pp. 3-79. New York: Pantheon Books.
- _____. 1999. "Introduction to the Ann Arbor Paperbacks Edition" in *Reinventing Anthropology*. Ann Arbor Paperback Edition. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.
- Jackson, Anthony, ed. 1987a. *Anthropology at Home*. (ASA Monograph: 25). New York: Tavistock Publications.
- _____. 1987b. "Reflections on ethnography at home and the ASA." in *Anthropology at Home*. (ASA Monograph; 25). Anthony Jackson, ed. Pp. 1-15. New York: Tavistock Publications.
- Jacobs, Francine H. and Margery W. Davies., eds. 1994. *More than Kissing Babies? : Current Child and Family Policy in the United States*. Westport, CT: Auburn House.
- Jacobs-Huey, Lanita. 2002. "The Natives are Gazing and Talking Back: Reviewing the Problematics of Positionality, Voice, and Accountability among 'Native' Anthropologists" in *American Anthropologist* Vol. 104 (3) Pp. 791-804. Washington, DC: American Anthropological Association.
- James, Allison, Jenny Hockey, and Andrew Dawson. 1997a. *After Writing Culture: Epistemology and Praxis in Contemporary Anthropology*. New York: Routledge.
- _____. 1997b. "Introduction: The Road from Santa Fe". in *After Writing Culture: Epistemology and Praxis in Contemporary Anthropology*. Allison James, Jenny Hockey, and Andrew Dawson, eds. Pp. 1-15. New York: Routledge.

- Jamieson, Marie and Bodonyi, Jami M., 2001. "Data-Driven Child Welfare Policy and Practice in the Next Century." in *Family Foster Care in the Next Century*. Kathy Barbell and Lois Wright, eds. Pp. 13-28. New Brunswick (USA) and London (UK): Transaction Publishers.
- Jenkins, Janis H. and Martha Valiente. 1994. "Bodily Transactions of the Passions: *el Calor* among Salvadoran Women Refugees" in *Embodiment and Experience: The Existential Ground of Culture and Self*. Thomas J. Csordas, ed. Pp. 163-182. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Jones, Delmos. 1970. "Toward a Native Anthropology." in *Human Organization*. 29:251-259.
- Jones, E. P. 1990. *Where is Home?: Living Through Foster Care*. New York: Four Walls Eight Windows.
- Josephides, Lisette. 1997. "Representing the Anthropologist's Predicament." in *After Writing Culture: Epistemology and Praxis in Contemporary Anthropology*. Allison James, Jenny Hockey, and Andrew Dawson, eds. Pp. 16-33. New York: Routledge.
- Katz, Linda. 2001. "Concurrent Planning: Benefits and Pitfalls". in *Family Foster Care in the Next Century*. Kathy Barbell and Lois Wright, eds. Pp. 69-85. New Brunswick (USA) and London (UK): Transaction Publishers.
- Kimball, Solon T. 1955. "Problems of Studying American Culture. in *American Anthropologist*. Vol. 57(6). Pp.1131-1142.
- King, Richard. 2003. "Becoming a North American Anthropologist" in Society for the Anthropology of North America column in March *Anthropology News*.
- Kluckhohn, Clyde. 1949. *Mirror for Man*. New York: Whittlesey House.
- Kools, Susan M. 1997. "Adolescent Identity Development in Foster Care." in *Family Relations*. Vol. 46 (3) Pp. 263-271.
- Lamphere, Louise, Helena Ragone, and Patricia Zavella. 1997a. *Situated Lives: Gender and Culture in Everyday Life*. London: Routledge.
- . 1997b. "Introduction" in *Situated Lives: Gender and Culture in Everyday Life*. Louise Lamphere, Helena Ragone, and Patricia Zavella, eds. Pp. 1-19. London: Routledge.
- Lantis, Margaret, ed. 1955. *American Anthropologist*. 57(6), special collection of essays on American Culture.

- Lassiter, Luke Eric. 2003. "Theorizing the Local" in *Anthropology News* May. p.13
- Lasson, Steen Mogens. 1994. "Family Treatment in Residential Homes: The Udby Family Treatment Center in Denmark." in *Recent Changes and New Trends in Extrafamilial Child Care: An International Perspective*. Meir Gottesman, ed. London: Whiting & Birch in association with FICE.
- Lawrence, Roderick J. 1993. "Public Collective and Private Space: A Study of Urban Housing in Switzerland." in *Domestic Architecture and the Use of Space: An Interdisciplinary Cross-Cultural Study*. Susan Kent, ed. Cambridge: University of Cambridge Press.
- Lawson, Annette and Deborah L. Rhode, eds. 1993. *The Politics of Pregnancy, Adolescent Sexuality, and Public Policy*. New Haven, CT.: Yale University Press.
- Layne, Linda L, ed. 1999a. *Transforming Motherhood: On Giving and Getting in a Consumer Culture*. New York: New York University Press.
- _____. 1999b. "The Child as Gift" New Directions in the Study of Euro-American Gift Exchange. in *Transforming Motherhood: On Giving and Getting in a Consumer Culture*. Linda L. Layne, ed. Pp. 1-27. New York: New York University Press.
- Lederman, Rena.1986. *What Gifts Engender: Social Relations and Politics in Mendi, Highland Papua New Guinea*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Leidner, Robin. 1999. "Emotional Labor in Service Work" in *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*. Vol. 561. *Emotional Labor in the Service Economy*. Ronnie J. Steinberg and Deborah M. Figart, special eds. Pp. 81-95. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Leitch, David. 1984. *Family Secrets: A Writer Searching for His Parents and His Past*. New York: Delacort Press.
- Lem, Winnie, and Belinda Leach. 2002. "Introduction" in *Culture, Economy, Power: Anthropology as Critique, Anthropology as Praxis*. Winnie Lem and Belinda Leach, eds. Pp. 1-16. Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Lewin, E. 1993. *Lesbian Mothers: Accounts of Gender in American Culture*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press
- Limon, Jose E. 1991. "Representation, Ethnicity, and the Precursory Ethnography: Notes of a Native Anthropologist" in *Recapturing Anthropology: Working in the Present* Richard Fox, ed. Pp. 115-136. Santa Fe, NM: School of America Research Press.

- Lopez, Iris. 1987. "Sterilization among Puerto Rican Women in New York City: Public Policy and Social Constraints" in *Cities of the United States: Studies in Urban Anthropology*. Leith Mullings, ed. Pp. 269-291. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Low, Setha. 2003. *Behind the Gates: Life, Security, and the Pursuit of Happiness in Fortress America*. New York: Taylor and Francis, Inc.
- Lowe, Edward D. 2002. "A Widow, a Child, and Two Lineages: Exploring Kinship and Attachment in Chuuk." in *American Anthropologist*. 104(1) Pp. 123-137. Washington, DC: American Anthropology Association.
- Luker, Kristen. 1984. *Abortion and the Politics of Motherhood*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- . 1996. *Dubious Conceptions: The Politics of Teenage Pregnancy*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Lundgren, Rebecka Inga and Carole H. Browner. 1990. "Caring for the Institutionalized Mentally Retarded: Work Culture and Work-Based Social Support" in *Circles of Care: Work and Identity in Women's Lives*. Emily K. Abel and Margaret Nelson, eds. Pp. 150-172. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.
- Lynd, Robert S. and Helen Merrell Lynd. 1929. *Middletown: A Study in Contemporary American Culture*. New York: Harcourt, Brace and company.
- . 1937. *Middletown in Transition*. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company.
- Lyon, Margot L. 1995. "Missing Emotion: The Limitation of Cultural Constructionism in the Study of Emotion." in *Cultural Anthropology*. Vol 10 (2), Pp. 244-263. Washington, D.C.: American Anthropological Association.
- Lyon, Margot L. and J.M. Barbalet. 1994. "Society's Body: Emotion and the 'Somatization' of Social Theory" in *Embodiment and Experience: The Existential Ground of Culture and Self*. Thomas J. Csordas, ed. Pp. 48-66. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- MacClancy, Jeremy, ed. 2002. *Exotic No More: Anthropology on the Front Lines*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- . 2002b. "Introduction: Taking People Seriously" in *Exotic No More: Anthropology on the Front Lines*. Jeremy MacClancy, ed. Pp.1-14. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

- McDonald, Thomas P., Reva I. Allen, Alex Westerfelt, Irving Piliavin. 1996. *Assessing the Long-Term Effects of Foster Care: A Research Synthesis*. Washington, DC: Child Welfare League of America Press.
- Maddy, Richard E. 2001. "Fictive Kinship in American Biomedicine" in *New Directions in Anthropological Kinship*. Linda Stone, ed. Pp. 285-300. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Inc.
- Malinowski, Bronislaw. 1984 [1922]. *Argonauts of the Western Pacific: An Account of Native Enterprise and Adventure in the Archipelagoes of Melanesian New Guinea*. Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland Press, Inc.
- Malkki, Liissa H. 1997. "National Geographic: Rooting of Peoples and Territorialization of National Identity among Scholars and Refugees" in *Culture, Power, Place: Explorations in Critical Anthropology*. Akhil Gupta and James Ferguson, eds. Pp. 52-74. Durham: Duke University Press.
- . 1997. "News and Culture: Transitory Phenomena and the Fieldwork Tradition" in *Anthropological Locations: Boundaries and Grounds of a Field Science*. Akhil Gupta and James Ferguson, eds. Pp. 86-101. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Marcus, George E. 1995. "Ethnography In/Of the World Systems: The Emergence of Multi-Sited Ethnography" in *Annual Review of Anthropology*. 24:95-117. Palo Alto, California: Annual Review, Inc.
- . ed. 1999a. *Critical Anthropology Now: Unexpected Contexts, Shifting Constituencies, Changing Agendas*. Santa Fe, NM: School of America Research Press.
- . 1999b. "Critical Anthropology Now: An Introduction" in *Critical Anthropology Now: Unexpected Contexts, Shifting Constituencies, Changing Agendas*. George E. Marcus, ed. Pp. 3-28. Santa Fe, NM: School of America Research Press.
- Marcus, George E. and Fisher M. 1986. *Anthropology as Cultural Critique: An Experimental Moment in the Human Sciences*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Marks, Jonathan. 2001. "'We're Going to Tell these People Who We Really Are': Science and Relatedness." in *Relative Values: Reconfiguring Kinship Studies*. Sarah Franklin and Susan McKinnon, eds. Pp. 355-383. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Martin, Emily. 1987. *The Woman in the Body: A Cultural Analysis of Reproduction*. Boston: Beacon.

- Mascarenhas-Keyes, Stella. 1987. "The Native Anthropologist: Constraints and Strategies in Research." in *Anthropology at Home*. (ASA Monograph; 25). Anthony Jackson, ed. Pp. 180-195. New York: Tavistock Publications.
- Maschio, Thomas. 2002. "The Refrigerator and American Ideas of 'Home'" in *Anthropology News*. May 2002 p. 8.
- Mason, Mary Ann, Arlene Skolnick, and Stephen D. Sugarman, eds. 1998. *All Our Families: New Policies for a New Century*. A Report of the Berkeley Family Forum. New York: Oxford University Press.
- _____. 1998. "Introduction" in *All Our Families: New Policies for a New Century*. A Report of the Berkeley Family Forum. Mary Ann Mason, Arlene Skolnick, and Stephen D. Sugarman, eds. Pp. 1-12. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Mead, Margaret. 1942. *And Keep Your Powder Dry: An Anthropologist Looks at America*. New York: William Morrow and Company.
- Medick, H and DW. Sabeen, eds. 1984. *Interest and Emotion: Essays on the Study of Family and Kinship*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Mehra, Beloo. 2001. "Research or Personal Quest?: Dilemmas in Studying My Own Kind" in *Multiple and Intersecting Identities in Qualitative Research*. Betty M. Merchant and Arlett Ingram Willis, eds. Pp. 69-82. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc.
- Meigs, Anna. 1997. "Food as a Cultural Construct" in *Food and Culture: a Reader*. Carole Counihan and Penny Van Esterik, eds. Pp. 95-106. New York: Routledge.
- Merchant, Betty M. and Arlett Ingram Willis, eds. 2001a. *Multiple and Intersecting Identities in Qualitative Research*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc.
- _____. 2001b. "Introduction" in *Multiple and Intersecting Identities in Qualitative Research*. Betty M. Merchant and Arlett Ingram Willis, eds. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc.
- Messerschmidt, Donald A., ed. 1981a. *Anthropologists at Home in North America: Methods and Issues in the Study of One's Own Society*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- _____. 1981b. "On Anthropology 'at Home'" in *Anthropologists at Home in North America: Methods and Issues in the Study of One's Own Society*. Donald A. Messerschmidt, ed. Pp. 3-14. New York: Cambridge University Press.

- Meyers, Diana Tietjens, ed. 1997. *Feminist Rethink the Self*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.
- Miller, John L, MD. 2000. "Adjustment Disorder." Accessed at <http://WWW.athealth.com/Consumer/disorders/Adjustment.html> Revised 7/2000.
- Miner, Horace. 2002 [1956]. Body Ritual among the Nacirema. reprinted in *Distant Mirrors: America as a Foreign Culture*, 3rd edition. Philip R. DeVita and James D. Armstrong, eds. Pp. 27-31. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth/Thomson Learning.
- Modell, J. 1994. *Kinship with Strangers: Adoption and Interpretations of Kinship in American Culture*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- _____. 1998. "Rights to the Children: Foster Care and Social Reproduction in Hawai'i." in *Reproducing Reproduction: Kinship, Power, and Technological Innovation*. Sarah Franklin and Helene Ragone, eds. Pp. 156-172. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Moffatt, Michael. 1992. "Ethnographic Writing About American Culture." in *Annual Review of Anthropology*. 21:205-229. Palo Alto, California: Annual Reviews.
- Moore, Henrietta L. 1986. *Space, Text, and Gender: An Anthropological Study of the Marakwet of Kenya*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Morton, John. 1999. "Anthropology at Home in Australia" in *The Australian Journal of Anthropology*. 10(30) 243-258.
- Motzafi-Haller, Pnina. 1997. "Writing Birthright: On Native Anthropologist and the Politics of Representation." in *Auto/Ethnography: Rewriting the Self and the Social*. Deborah E. Reed-Danahay, ed. Pp. 195-222. Oxford, UK: Berg.
- Mullings, Leith, ed. 1987. *Cities of the United States: Studies in Urban Anthropology*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- _____. 1997. *On Our Own Terms: Race, Class, and Gender in the Lives of African American Women*. New York: Routledge.
- Mullings, Leith and Alaka Wali. 2001. *Stress and Resilience: The Social Context of Reproduction in Central Harlem*. New York: Kluwer Academic/Plenum Publishers.
- Myerhoff, Barbara. 1979. *Number Our Days*. New York: E.P. Dutton
- Nader, Laura. 1972. "Up the Anthropologist - Perspectives Gained From Studying Up." in *Reinventing Anthropology*. Dell Hymes, ed. Pp. 284-311. New York: Pantheon Books.

- Narayan, Kirin. 1993. "How Native Is a 'Native' Anthropologist?" in *American Anthropologist*. Vol. 95(3). Pp. 671-686. (reprinted in 1997 in *Situated Lives: Gender and Culture in Everyday Life*, Lamphere, et. al., eds. pp.23-41.)
- Needham, R. 1971. *Rethinking Kinship and Marriage*. London: Tavistock.
- Nelson, Kristine. 1996. "The Child Welfare Response to Youth Violence and Homelessness in the Nineteenth Century." in *A History of Child Welfare*. Eve P. Smith and Lisa A. Merkel-Holguin, eds. Pp. 45-60. New York: Child Welfare League of America, Inc.
- Netting, R. 1993. *Smallholders, Householders: Farm Families and the Ecology of Intensive, Sustainable Agriculture*. Tuscon: University of Arizona Press.
- Newman, Katherine S. 1988. *Falling From Grace: The Experience of Downward Mobility in the American Middle Class*. New York: Vintage Books.
- _____. 1993. *Declining Fortunes: The Withering of the American Dream*. New York: Basic Books.
- _____. 2001. "Local Caring: Social Capital and Social Responsibility in New York's Minority Neighborhoods" in *Caring and Doing for Others: Social Responsibility in the Domains of Family, Work, and Community*. Alice S. Rossi, ed. Pp. 157-178. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- _____. 2002. "Introduction: Qualitative Research on the Frontlines of Controversy" in *Sociological Methods and Research*. Vol. 32 (2). Pp. 123-130. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Nugent, Stephen and Cris Shore, eds. 1997. *Anthropology and Cultural Studies*. London: Pluto Press.
- O'Brien, Oonagh. 1993. "Sisters, Parents, Neighbours, Friends: Reflections on Fieldwork in North Catalonia (France) in *Gendered Fields: Women, Men and Ethnography*. Diane Bell, Pat Caplan, and Wazir Jahan Karim, eds. Pp. 234 – 247. London: Routledge.
- O'Connor, Carla. 1999. "Race, Class, and Gender in America: Narratives of Opportunity among Low-Income African American Youths" in *Sociology of Education*. Vol 72(3) Pp. 137-157.
- Okely, Judith. 1987. "Fieldwork up the MI: Policy and Political Aspects." in *Anthropology at Home*. (ASA Monograph; 25). Anthony Jackson, ed. Pp. 55-73. New York: Tavistock Publications.

- Okimoto, Jean Davies and Phyllis Jackson Stegall. 1987. *Boomerang Kids: How to Live with Adult Children Who Return Home*. Boston: Little, Brown & Company.
- Ortner, Sherry B. 1991. "Reading America: Preliminary Notes on Class and Culture." in *Recapturing Anthropology: Working in the Present*. Richard G. Fox, ed. Pp. 163-189. Santa Fe, NM: School of American Research Press.
- _____. 1994. "Theory in Anthropology since the Sixties" in *Culture/Power/History: A Reader in Contemporary Social Theory*. Nicholas B. Dirks, Geoff Eley, and Sherry B. Ortner, eds. Pp. 372-411. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- _____. 1995. "Ethnography Among the Newark: The Class of '58 of Weequahic High School" in *Naturalizing Power: Essays in Cultural Feminist Analysis*. Sylvia Yanagisako and Carol Delaney, eds. Pp. 257-273. New York: Routledge.
- _____. 1999. "Generation X: Anthropology in a Media-Saturated World" in *Critical Anthropology Now: Unexpected Contexts, Shifting Constituencies, Changing Agendas*. George E. Marcus, ed. Pp. 55-87. Santa Fe, NM: School of American Research Press.
- Osby, O. 1999. "Child-Rearing Perspectives of Grandparent Caregivers." in *Kinship Care: Improving Practice Through Research*. James P. Gleeson and Creasie Finney, eds. Pp. 215-232. New York: Child Welfare League of America, Inc.
- Oxford, E. 1993. *Blood, Sweat and Mahjong: Family and Enterprise in an Overseas Chinese Community*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
- Parkin, Robert. 1997. *Kinship: an Introduction to Basic Concepts*. Oxford, UK: Blackwell.
- Passaro, Joanne. 1997. "'You Can't Take the Subway to the Field!': 'Village' Epistemologies in the Global Village" in *Anthropological Locations: Boundaries and Grounds of a Field Science*. Akhil Gupta and James Ferguson, eds. Pp. 147-162. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Pecora, Peter J., James K. Whittaker, Anthony N. Maluccio, Richard P. Barth, with Robert D. Plotnick. 2000. *The Child Welfare Challenge: Policy, Practice, and Research*. New York: Aldine de Gruyter.
- Peirano, Mariza. 1998. "When Anthropology is at Home: The Different Contexts of a Single Discipline" in *Annual Review of Anthropology*. 27:105-128. Palo Alto, California: Annual Review, Inc.
- Peletz, Michael G. 1995. "Kinship Studies in Late 20th Century Anthropology" in *Annual Review of Anthropology*. 24:343-372. Palo Alto, California: Annual Review, Inc.

- _____. 2001. "Ambivalence in Kinship Since the 1940's" in *Relative Values: Reconfiguring Kinship Studies*. Sarah Franklin and Susan McKinnon, eds. Pp. 413-444. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Pellow, Deborah, ed. 1996. *Setting Boundaries: The Anthropology of Spatial and Social Organization*. Westport, CT: Bergin and Garvey. Inc.
- _____. 1996. "Introduction." in *Setting Boundaries: The Anthropology of Spatial and Social Organization*. Deborah Pellow, ed. Pp. 1-8. Westport, CT: Bergin and Garvey. Inc.
- Polakow, V. 1993. *Lives on the Edge: Single Mothers and Their Children in the Other America*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Powdermaker, Hortense. 1950. *Hollywood the Dream Factory: An Anthropologist Looks at the Movie-Makers*. Boston, MA: Little, Brown and Company.
- Pratt, M. L. 1986. "Fieldwork in Common Places" in *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography* James Clifford and George E. Marcus, eds. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Rabinow, Paul. 1999. "American Moderns: On Science and Scientist" in *Critical Anthropology Now: Unexpected Contexts, Shifting Constituencies, Changing Agendas*. George E. Marcus, ed. Pp. 305-333. Santa Fe, NM: School of America Research Press.
- Ragone, H. 1994. *Surrogate Motherhood: Conception in the Heart*. Boulder, CO: Westview.
- Rapp, Rayna. 1982. "Family and Class in Contemporary America: Notes Toward an Understanding of Ideology" in *Rethinking the Family: Some Feminist Questions*. Barrie Thorne and Marilyn Yalom, eds. Pp. 168-187. New York: Longman.
- _____. 1991. "Moral Pioneers: Women, Men, and Fetuses on a Frontier of Reproductive Technology" in *Gender at the Crossroads of Knowledge: Feminist Anthropology in the Postmodern Era*. Micaela di Leonardo, ed. Pp. 383-396. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- _____. 1999. "Foreword" in *Transforming Motherhood: On Giving and Getting in a Consumer Culture*. Linda L. Layne, ed. Pp. xi-xix. New York: New York University Press.
- Rapp, Rayna, Deborah Heath, and Karen-Sue Taussig. 2001. "Genealogical Dis-Ease: Where Hereditary Abnormality, Biomedical Explanation, and Family Responsibility Meet." in *Relative Values: Reconfiguring Kinship Studies*. Sarah

- Franklin and Susan McKinnon, eds. Pp. 384-409. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Reed-Danahay, Deborah E., ed. 1997. *Auto/Ethnography: Rewriting the Self and the Social*. Oxford, UK: Berg.
- _____. 1999. "Friendship, Kinship and Life Course in Rural Auvergne" in *The Anthropology of Friendship*. Sandra Bell and Simon Coleman, eds. Pp. 137-154. Oxford and New York: Berg.
- Reiter, Rayna R. ed. 1975. *Towards an Anthropology of Women*. New York: Monthly Review Press.
- Rodman, Margaret C. 1992. "Empowering Place: Multilocality and Multivocality." in *American Anthropologist*. Vol.94 (3). Pp. 640-656. Washington, DC: American Anthropology Association.
- Rodman, Margaret and Matthew Cooper. 1996. "Boundaries of Home in Toronto Housing Cooperatives" in *Setting Boundaries: The Anthropology of Spatial and Social Organization*. Deborah Pellow, ed. Pp. 91-110. Westport, CT: Bergin and Garvey.
- Rodriguez, Cheryl. 2001. "A Homegirl Goes Home: Black Feminism and the Lure of Native Anthropology" in *Black Feminist Anthropology: Theory, Politics, Praxis, and Poetics*. Irma McClaurin, ed. Pp. 233-257. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.
- Rosaldo, Michelle Zimbalist. 1974. "Woman, Culture, and Society: A Theoretical Overview" *Woman, Culture, and Society*. Michelle Zimbalist Rosaldo and Louise Lamphere, eds. Pp. 17-42. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Roschelle, Anne R. 1997. *No More Kin: Exploring Race, Class, and Gender in Family Networks*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Rossi, Alice S. ed. 2001. *Caring and Doing for Others: Social Responsibility in the Domains of Family, Work, and Community*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Rothman, Barbara Katz. 1989. *Recreating Motherhood: Ideology and Technology in a Patriarchal Society*. New York: Norton.
- _____. 1999. "Comment on Harrison: The Commodification of Motherhood" in *American Families: A Multicultural Reader*. Stephanie Coontz, Maya Parson, and Gabrielle Raley, eds. Pp. 435-438. New York: Routledge.

- _____. 2000. "Now You Can Choose! Issues in Parenting and Procreation." in *Revisioning Gender*. Myra Marx Ferree, Judith Lorber, and Beth B. Hess, eds. Pp. 399-415. Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press.
- Rycus, Judith S. and Ronald C. Hughes. 1998. *Field Guide to Child Welfare, Volume IV*. Washington, DC: Child Welfare League of America Press.
- Sacks, Karen. 1974. "Engels Revisited: Women, the Organization of Production and Private Property." in *Woman, Culture, and Society*. Michelle Zimbalist Rosaldo and Louise Lamphere, eds. Pp. 207- 222. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- _____. 1984. "Kinship and Class Consciousness: Family Values and Work Experience among Hospital Workers in an American Southern Town." in *Interest and Emotion: Essays on the Study of Family and Kinship*. Hans Medick and David Warren Sabean, eds. Pp. 279-299. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Said, Edward W. 1978. *Orientalism* New York: Pantheon.
- Salamon, Sonya. 1992. *Prairie Patrimony: Family, Farming, and Community in the Midwest*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.
- _____. 2003. "From Hometown to Notown: Rural Community Effects of Suburbanization." in *Rural Sociology*. Vol 68(1). Pp. 1-24.
- Sanjek, Roger. 1990. "Urban Anthropology in the 1980's: A World View" in *Annual Review of Anthropology*. 19:151-86. Palo Alto, California: Annual Review, Inc.
- Sanjek, Roger and Shellee Colen, eds. 1990. *At Work in Homes: Household Workers in World Perspective*. American Ethnological Society Monograph Series, Number 3. Washington, DC: American Anthropological Association.
- Scheffler, Harold W. 1976. "The 'Meaning' of Kinship in American Culture: Another View. in *Meaning in Anthropology*. A School of American Research Book. Keith H. Basso and Henry A. Selby, eds. Pp. 57-91. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press.
- _____. 1991. "Sexism and Naturalism in the Study of Kinship." in *Gender at the Crossroads of Knowledge: Feminist Anthropology in the Postmodern Era*. Micaela di Leonardo, ed. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Schepler-Hughes, Nancy and Carolyn Sargent. 1998. *Small Wars: The Cultural Politics of Childhood*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Schneider, D. M. 1968. *American Kinship: A Cultural Account*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.

- _____. 1972. "What is Kinship All About?" in *Kinship Studies in the Morgan Centennial Year* Priscilla Reining, ed. Pp. 32-63. Washington, DC: Anthropological Society.
- _____. 1980. "Twelve Years Later" in *American Kinship: A Cultural Account*. D.M. Schneider. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2nd edition.
- Schweitzer, Peter P., ed. 2000. *Dividends of Kinship: Meanings and Uses of Social Relatedness*. London: Routledge.
- Segalen, Martine and Francoise Zonabend. 1987. "Social Anthropology and the Ethnology of France: the Field of Kinship and Family." in *Anthropology at Home*. (ASA Monograph; 25). Anthony Jackson, ed. Pp. 109-119. New York: Tavistock Publications.
- Shapiro, Michael. 1999. *Solomon's Sword: Two Families and the Children the State Took Away*. New York: Random House.
- Sheehan, Elizabeth A. 1993. "The Student of Culture and the Ethnography of Irish Intellectuals." in *When They Read What We Write: The Politics of Ethnography*. Caroline B. Brettell, ed. Pp. 75-90. Westport, CT: Bergin and Garvey.
- Shore, Cris. 1999. "Fictions of Fieldwork: Depicting 'Self' in Ethnographic Writing (Italy)." in *Being There: Fieldwork in Anthropology*. C. W. Watson, ed. Pp. 25-48. Sterling, VA: Pluto Press.
- Simms, Mark D., Madelyn Freundlich, Ellen S. Battistelli, and Neal D. Kaufman. 2001. "Delivering Health Care and Mental Health Care Services to Children in Family Foster Care after Welfare and Health Care Reform." in *Family Foster Care in the Next Century*. Kathy Barbell and Lois Wright, eds. Pp. 167-184. New Brunswick (USA) and London (UK): Transaction Publishers.
- Simpson, Bob. 1997. "Representations and the Re-presentation of *Family*: An Analysis of Divorce Narratives" in *After Writing Culture: Epistemology and Praxis in Contemporary Anthropology*. Allison James, Jenny Hockey, and Andrew Dawson., eds. Pp. 51-70. New York: Routledge.
- _____. 2001. "Swords into Ploughshares: Manipulating Metaphor in the Divorce Process." in *Inside Organizations: Anthropologists at Work*. David N. Gellner and Eric Hirsch, eds. Oxford: Berg.
- Singer, Merrill. 1995. "Beyond the Ivory Tower: Critical Praxis in Medical Anthropology" in *Medical Anthropology Quarterly*. 9(1) 80-106. Washington, D.C.: American Anthropological Association.

- _____. 2003. "Becoming a North American Anthropologist" in Society for the Anthropology of North America" column in *Anthropology News*. April 2003. p. 47.
- Smith, Eve P. 1996. "Bring Back the Orphanages? What Policymakers of Today Can Learn From the Past" in *A History of Child Welfare*. Eve P. Smith and Lisa A. Merkel-Holguin, eds. Pp. 107-134. New York: Child Welfare League of America, Inc.
- Smith, Eve P. and Lisa A. Merkel-Holguin. eds. 1996 *A History of Child Welfare*. New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers.
- Spencer, C. and H. Woolley. 2000. "Children and the City: A Summary of Recent Environmental Psychology Research." in *Child Care, Health and Development*. Vol 26(3). Pp. 181 – 198.
- Spindler, George D. and Louise Spindler. 1983. "Anthropologists View American Culture." in *Annual Review of Anthropology*. 12:49-78. Palo Alto, California: Annual Review, Inc.
- Stacey, Judith. 1991. *Brave New Families: Stories of Domestic Upheaval in Late Twentieth Century America* New York: Basic Books.
- _____. 1999. "Virtual Social Science and the Politics of Family Values" in *Critical Anthropology Now: Unexpected Contexts, Shifting Constituencies, Changing Agendas*. George E. Marcus, ed. Pp. 29-54. Santa Fe, NM: School of America Research Press.
- Stack, Carol. 1974. *All Our Kin: Strategies for Survival in a Black Community*. New York: Harper and Row. Publications.
- _____. 1996a. *Call to Home: African Americans Reclaim the Rural South*. New York: Basic Books.
- _____. 1996b. "Writing Ethnography: Feminist Critical Practice" in *Feminist Dilemmas in Fieldwork*. Diane L. Wolf, ed. Pp. 96-106. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.
- _____. 1997. "Holding Hands" in *Situated Lives: Gender and Culture in Everyday Life*. Louise Lamphere, Helena Ragone, and Patricia Zavella, eds. Pp. 235-251. London: Routledge.
- Steinberg, Ronnie J. and Deborah M. Figart, special editors. 1999a. *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*. Vol. 561. *Emotional Labor in the Service Economy*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

- _____. 1999b. "Emotional Labor Since the Managed Heart" in *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*. Vol. 561. *Emotional Labor in the Service Economy*. Ronnie J. Steinberg and Deborah M. Figart, special editors. Pp. 8-26. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Stone, Helen, D., dir. 1967. *Reflections on Foster Care: A Report of a National Survey of Attitudes and Practices*. New York: Child Welfare League of America, Inc.
- Stone, Linda. 2001. *New Directions in Anthropological Kinship*. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Inc.
- Strathern, Marilyn. 1987. "The limits of Auto-Anthropology." in *Anthropology at Home*. (ASA Monograph; 25). Anthony Jackson, ed. Pp. 16-37. New York: Tavistock Publications.
- _____. 1992a. *After Nature: English Kinship in the Late Twentieth Century*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- _____. 1992b. *Reproducing the Future: Anthropology, Kinship, and the New Reproductive Technologies*. New York: Routledge.
- _____. 1995. "Displacing Knowledge: Technology and the Consequences of Kinship" in *Conceiving the New World Order: The Global Politics of Reproduction*. Faye Ginsburg and Rayna Rapp, eds. Pp. 346-363. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Sullivan, Kathleen A. 1999. "The Perils of Advocacy: Listening, Labeling, Appropriating" in *Hard Labor: Women and Work in the Post-Welfare Era*. Joel F. Handler and Lucie White, eds. Pp. 191-206. Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, Inc.
- Susser, Ida. 1993. "Creating Family Forms: The Exclusion of Men and Teenage Boys from Families in New York City Shelter System, 1987-91." In *Critique of Anthropology*. 13 (3): 267-283.
- _____. 1996. "The Construction of Poverty and Homelessness in US Cities." in *Annual Review of Anthropology*. 25:411-35. Palo Alto, California: Annual Review, Inc.
- Testa, Mark F. and Rolock, Nancy. 2001. "Professional Foster Care: A Future Worth Pursuing?" in *Family Foster Care in the Next Century*. Kathy Barbell and Lois Wright, eds. Pp. 107-123. New Brunswick (USA) and London (UK): Transaction Publishers.
- Thomas, Nicholas. 1991. *Entangled Objects: Exchange, Material Culture, and Colonialism in the Pacific*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

- Thorne, Barrie and Marilyn Yalom, eds. 1982. *Rethinking the Family: Some Feminist Questions*. New York: Longman.
- Tocqueville, Alexis de. 1945 [1835]. *Democracy in America Vol. I and II*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf.
- Tokar, Richard Michael. 1993. *Traditionalism among Chinese American Married Women and Their Families: Immigrants and Native-Born*. Ph.D. diss., City University of New York.
- Toth, Jennifer. 1997. *Orphans of the Living: Stories of American Children in Foster Care*. NY: Simon and Schuster.
- Traube, Elizabeth G. 1996. "'The Popular' in American Culture" in *Annual Review of Anthropology*. 25:127-51. Palo Alto, California: Annual Review, Inc.
- Trencher, Susan R. 2000. *Mirrored Images: American Anthropology and American Culture 1960-1980*. Westport, CT: Bergen and Garvey.
- Trouillot, Michel-Rolph. 1991. "Anthropology and the Savage Slot: The Poetics and Politics of Otherness." in *Recapturing Anthropology: Working in the Present* Richard Fox, ed. Pp. 17-44. Santa Fe, NM: School of America Research Press.
- Turner, Victor. 1979. "Foreword." in *Number Our Days*. Barabara Myerhoff. Pp. ix-xiii. New York: E.P. Dutton.
- United Nations. 1996. *Family: Challenges for the Future*. New York: United Nations Publications.
- United States Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Region II. 2002. *Final Report of the Child and Family Service Review of New York State*. <http://www.nysccc.org/CFSR_REPORT.htm>. accessed June 25, 2003.
- Usher, Charles L., Judith B. Wildfire, and Deborah A. Gibbs, 2001. "Measuring Performance in Child Welfare: Secondary Effects of Success." in *Family Foster Care in the Next Century*. Kathy Barbell and Lois Wright, eds. Pp. 29-49. New Brunswick (USA) and London (UK): Transaction Publishers.
- Uttal, Lynet and Mary Tuominen. 1999. "Tenuous Relationships: Exploitations, Emotions, and Racial Ethnic Significance in Paid Child Care Work" in *Gender and Society* Vol 13 (6).758-780.
- VanderVen, Karen. 1994. "USA: New Trends and Radical Changes in Extrafamilial Care" in *Recent Changes and New Trends in Extrafamilial Child Care: An*

- International Perspective*. Meir Gottesman, ed. Pp. 158-164. Whiting & Birch Ltd. in association with FICE.
- Vogt, Martha Nelson and Christina Vogt. 1995. *Searching for Home*. Hillsboro, KS: Triumph Press.
- Ward, Sally. 2003. "On Shifting Ground: Changing Formulations of Place in Anthropology." in *Australian Journal of Anthropology*. Vol 14(1) Pp. 80-97.
- Warner, Lloyd W. and Paul S. Lunt. 1941. *Yankee City Series, Vol. 1 The Social Life of a Modern Community*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Warner, Lloyd W. with others. Various dates. *Yankee City Series, Vol 1-6*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Waterston, Alisse. 2002. "A Farewell and a New Welcome" Society of an Anthropology of North America column in *Anthropology News* May 2002. p. 51.
- Watson, C. W., ed. 1999. *Being There: Fieldwork in Anthropology*. Sterling, VA: Pluto Press.
- _____. 1999. "Introduction: The Quality of Being There" in *Being There: Fieldwork in Anthropology*. C. W. Watson, ed. Pp. 1-24. Sterling, VA: Pluto Press.
- Watts, Michael J. 1992. "Space for Everything (A Commentary)." in *Cultural Anthropology*. Vol 7(1). Pp. 115-129.
- Wegar, Katarina. 1997. *Adoption, Identity, and Kinship: The Debate Over Sealed Birth Records*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Weil, Shalva in collaboration with Michael Weil. 1987. "Anthropology Becomes Home: Home Becomes Anthropology." *Anthropology at Home*. (ASA Monograph; 25). in Anthony Jackson, ed. Pp. 196-212. New York: Tavistock Publications.
- Weiner, Annette. 1992. *Inalienable Possessions: The Paradox of Keeping While Giving*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- _____. 1994. "Cultural Difference and the Density of Objects." in *American Ethnologist*, Vol. 21, No. 2. Pp. 391-403. Washington, DC: American Anthropological Association.
- _____. 1995. "The Sibling Incest Taboo: Polynesian Cloth and Reproduction." in *Cosmos and Society in Oceania: Their Interrelations or Their Coalescence in Melanesia*. Daniel de Coppet and Andre Iteanu, eds. Pp. 275-326. Oxford: Berg Publishers, Incorporated.

- Weis, Lois, and Michelle Fine. 2000. *Construction Sites: Excavating Race, Class, and Gender among Urban Youth*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Weismantel, M. 1995. "Making Kin: Kinship Theory and Zumbagua Adoptions" in *American Ethnologist*. 22(4):685-709. Washington, D.C.: American Anthropological Association.
- Weston, Kath. 1991. *Families We Choose: Lesbian, Gays, Kinship*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- _____. 2000. "The Virtual Anthropologist" in *Is Academic Feminism Dead?: Theory in Practice*. The Social Justice Group at the Center for Advanced Feminist Studies, University of Minnesota, ed. Pp. 137-167. New York: New York University Press.
- Wharton, Amy S. 1999. "The Psychosocial Consequences of Emotional Labor" in *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*. Vol. 561. *Emotional Labor in the Service Economy*. Ronnie J. Steinberg and Deborah M. Figart, special editors. Pp 158-176. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Williams, Brett. 1997. "Reinventing the South" in *Situated Lives: Gender and Culture in Everyday Life*. Louise Lamphere, Helena Ragone, and Patricia Zavella, eds. Pp. 175-191. London: Routledge.
- Williamson, Judith. 1994. "Family, Education, Photography" in *Culture/Power/History: A Reader in Contemporary Social Theory*. Nicholas B. Dirks, Geoff Eley, and Sherry B. Ortner, eds. Pp. 236-244. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Wojcicka Sharff, Jagna 1998. *King Kong on 4th Street: Families and the Violence of Poverty on the Lower East Side*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.
- Wolf, Eric. 1972. "American Anthropologist and American Society" in *Reinventing Anthropology*. Dell Hymes, ed. Pp. 251-263. New York: Pantheon Books/Random House.
- Wolcott, Harry F. 1981. "Home and Away: Personal Contrasts in Ethnographic Style" in *Anthropologist at Home in North America: Methods and Issues in the Study of One's Own Society*. Donald A. Messerschmidt, ed. Pp. 255-265. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Wozniak, Danielle F. 2002. *They're All My Children: Foster Mothering in America*. New York and London: New York University Press.
- Wright, Susan. 1994. *The Anthropology of Organizations*. New York: Routledge.

Yanagisako, Sylvia J. 1979. "Family and Household: A Review of the Anthropological Literature on Domestic Groups. in *Annual Review of Anthropology*. 8:161-205. Palo Alto, California: Annual Review, Inc.

_____. 1987. "Mixed Metaphors: Native and Anthropological Models of Gender and Kinship Domains." in *Gender and Kinship: Essays towards a Unified Analysis*. Jane Collier and Sylvia J. Yanagisako, eds. Pp. 86-118. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

_____. 1995. "Transforming Orientalism: Gender, Nationality, and Class in Asian American Studies." in *Naturalizing Power: Essays in Feminist Cultural Analysis*. Sylvia J. Yanagisako and Carol Delaney, eds. Pp. 275-298. New York: Routledge.

Yanagisako, Sylvia J. and Jane Collier. 1987. "Towards a Unified Analysis of Gender and Kinship" in *Gender and Kinship: Essays towards a Unified Analysis*. Jane Collier and Sylvia J. Yanagisako, eds. Pp. 14-50. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Yanagisako, Sylvia J and Carol Delaney, eds. 1995. *Naturalizing Power: Essays in Feminist Cultural Analysis*. New York: Routledge.

_____. 1995. "Naturalizing Power" in *Naturalizing Power: Essays in Feminist Cultural Analysis*. Sylvia J. Yanagisako and Carol Delaney, eds. Pp. 1-22. New York: Routledge.

Zavella, Patricia. 1991. "Mujeres in Factories: Race and Class Perspectives on Women, Work, and Family." in *Gender at the Crossroads of Knowledge: Feminist Anthropology in the Postmodern Era*. Micaela di Leonardo, ed. Pp. 312-336. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Zukin, Sharon. 1991. *Landscapes of Power: From Detroit to Disney World*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Documentary Films

Dworkin, Jennifer, producer/director. 2003. *Love and Diane*. New York: Women Make Movies Release.

YO-TV Productions. 2003. *Not Me, Not Mine: Adult Survivors of Foster Care*. New York: Education Video Center.