



DEFINING THE INTOLERABLE

Child work, global standards and cultural relativism

BEN WHITE

Institute of Social Studies, The Hague

Key words:
child labour, children's rights, cultural
relativism, International Labour Office

Mailing address:
Institute of Social Studies, PO Box
29776, 2502 LT The Hague,
The Netherlands
[email: ben.white@iss.nl]

Childhood [0907-5682(199902)6:1]
Copyright © 1999 SAGE Publications
(London, Thousand Oaks and New Delhi)
Vol. 6(1): 133–144; 007069

This article explores some of the unresolved tensions between 'universalistic' and 'relativistic' approaches in the establishment of standards and strategies designed to prevent or overcome the abuse of children's capacity to work. Global standards (on children's rights, on unacceptable or intolerable forms of children's work, etc.) require universal notions of (ideal, normal or 'tolerable') childhood, while cultural relativism stresses the idea that notions of childhood are themselves socially constructed and therefore specific to time, place, nation and culture. These tensions are discussed in the context of current discussions on the ILO's proposed new international convention on the 'prohibition and immediate elimination of the worst forms of child labour'.

States parties recognize the right of the child to be protected from economic exploitation and from performing any work that is likely to be hazardous or to interfere with the child's education or to be harmful to the child's health or physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development. (UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989: Article 32)

All over the world, work of some kind is (and has always been) part of most children's lives, as may be seen from the Introduction and many articles in this special issue of *Childhood*. At certain times and places, and in certain forms and relations of work, the exploitation and *abuse* of children's capacity for work becomes a serious social problem. It is in this sense – the *abuse* of children in work, rather than the fact of their involvement in work – that the 'child labour' problem should be understood.

Although this statement¹ may seem obvious and uncontroversial to many readers, most public discourse and policy intervention on the child labour problem has in fact started from a different set of assumptions, which define the problem (in this author's view incorrectly) as one of work itself, rather than of the various kinds of abuse or harm that may stem from

children's involvement in work. The ILO's Convention 138 (1973) on 'Minimum Age for Admission to Employment' (like many national 'minimum age' laws which have modelled themselves on this, or earlier, ILO conventions) is founded on the idea that children should not be involved in 'work or employment' of any kind below a certain age, normally defined as the age at which compulsory education ends; 'work' and 'education' are therefore mutually exclusive in the lives of children, and the 'child labour' problem is to be solved by a blanket prohibition on 'work or employment' below a certain specified minimum age (see also Myers, this issue, pp. 13–26). Work thus becomes a 'pathology' when associated with childhood, and this 'pathological model' of 'work harming development' has also tended to dominate research on child labour issues (Woodhead, this issue, pp. 27–49); the legacy of this way of thinking is an unrealistic and essentially child-unfriendly model of childhood which, as Nieuwenhuys (1996: 242, 246) has eloquently argued, sets children aside as 'a category of people excluded from the production of value'; bases itself on 'the sanctity of the family on the one hand, and the school on the other, as the only legitimate places for growing up', and also denies children's agency (both in the creation of value, and in its negotiation and in the struggle to improve their own lives).

If we accept the serious limitations of this approach – which Myers (this issue, p. 17) argues is indeed being increasingly questioned in both research and policy circuits – more realistic, child-centred attempts to address the 'child labour problem' will necessarily involve discussion about which kinds of children's work are more abusive, harmful, 'intolerable' or simply 'worse' than others; such judgements, and particularly efforts to establish them internationally as the ILO is currently planning to do, inevitably confront issues of cultural relativism. On the one hand, the more we learn about the problems of children and child workers from research, from practical experience and from listening to children themselves, the more we have to recognize the enormous diversity of children's lives and problems; child abuse or exploitation, child work, childhood and its problems are not unitary, constant or homogeneous, they differ from place to place, from time to time and also according to gender and other factors. In contrast, official policies at international and national levels are often based on static and universalizing models of childhood. Attempts at global standard-setting, such as the UN Convention on Rights of the Child (CRC) or the ILO's existing or planned conventions on child labour, seem to represent the antithesis of cultural relativism and of principles of recognizing and respecting differences; comprehensive global standards on children's rights (as in the CRC) or unacceptable forms of children's work (ILO) explicitly strive to establish rights or norms valid for and to be adhered to by all the countries of the world – something therefore that is seen as really, intentionally, *literally* 'universal', in short: a relativist's nightmare.

A second issue concerns the problem of implementing either universalizing or relativizing principles when the current state of knowledge gives us no firm basis for doing so. We are confronted on the one hand with the enormous diversity of children's lives and problems and the need to make this diversity a foundation for effective policy and practice (Edwards, 1996: 815), and on the other hand with the very weak state of knowledge and understanding of the causes of abuse, exploitation and harm in work situations, of the impact of different kinds of work on children in different societies. Good research, anyway, tends to raise as many new questions as it answers old ones; we will therefore never have all the answers, while at the same time the persistence and, in many regions, the increase of truly extreme cases of abuse of children's capacity to work forces upon concerned individuals and agencies the need to act, on the basis of this imperfect knowledge and understanding. That is one reason why most interventions in this field, whether at global, national, local or even household level, are not based firmly in scientific knowledge but rather on politics, on negotiation and consensus. In that case, it becomes a question of trying to improve the quality, relevance, fairness and child-centredness of these negotiations.

This article explores some of these unresolved tensions in the context of current discussions on the ILO's proposed new international convention on the 'prohibition and immediate elimination of the worst forms of child labour'. The following section argues that principles of relativism, while important in giving local content to global standards, are more usefully seen as tools of discovery and understanding rather than as grounds for legitimation. Some relevant features of the proposed new convention are then outlined, and the concluding section explores how far and in what ways it succeeds in addressing the issue of cultural relativism.

Relativism and universalism: a necessary tension

The problem of cultural relativism in relation to child work and exploitation issues is part of the more general issue raised in many debates on universal (children's or human) rights and universal norms or standards: can one defend the principle of universality in international conventions and debates, while at the same time promoting openness, flexibility and sensitivity to different cultural contexts in the implementation of standards (Alston, 1994)? Should rights be recognized as different in different cultural settings? 'Intervention in the lives of others always raises serious ethical questions. . . . Interventions across borders, across cultures, and across political worlds raise even more questions' (Kent, 1995: 80). The tension between universalizing (or 'globalizing') and relativizing ('localizing') principles has been quite extensively discussed in the context of international conventions on human rights and children's rights,² though less frequently in the specific context of child work.³ Most authors agree that the tension between the two

principles is both real and necessary (Donnelly, 1984); that it reflects a debate which will never be resolved (Alston, 1994: 16), and that development and human rights practice essentially has to learn to operate in the middle ground, to look for 'approaches which involve neither the embrace of an artificial and sterile universalism nor the acceptance of an ultimately self-defeating cultural relativism' (Alston, 1994: 2); in short,

. . . in seeking to promote children's well-being and welfare across the world, there is no escape from treading the difficult path between the globalizations of cultural imperialism and the cultural relativism of localized conceptions. (Burman, 1996: 45)

In that case, it may be suggested, the issue concerns not so much how to 'solve' the relativism/universalism problem, as how to embrace and make productive use of it. In this light, it may be useful to distinguish three different kinds of 'cultural relativism', which are sometimes confused.⁴ First, cultural relativism as a theoretical position in the philosophy of the social sciences holds that different cultures in principle cannot be compared, because cultures can only be understood in their own terms. The discipline of cultural anthropology has persistently got itself entangled in this ultimately self-defeating notion, particularly in the United States (Fernandez, 1990; Heller, 1984; Messer, 1993); cultural relativists in this sense of the term tend to find themselves marginalized in human rights debates (Messer, 1993: 223). Second, we may recognize cultural relativism as a moral and political doctrine, which holds that culture is the sole source of validity of a moral right or rule, and that therefore cultural variations in moral rules and social institutions are exempt from legitimate criticism by outsiders (see especially Donnelly, 1984). When cultural-relativist arguments of this kind are transferred to the international political arena, general principles of cross-cultural understanding and respect for the ways of life of others are often misused, hijacked by governments who wrongly translate them into an idea that 'nations' must be immune to external criticism. A powerful example of this position was seen at the World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna (1993) when a number of governments (prominently China, Indonesia, Malaysia and Iran) raised serious objections to the idea of universal human rights; their attack on universalism was considered by most participants (and also by the Asian NGOs who were meeting in parallel session in Bangkok) as 'a rather thinly disguised objection to external criticism of serious human rights violations' (Boyle, 1995: 87; cf. Christie, 1995). It is one thing to accept that normative universality in human rights cannot be taken for granted, quite another to abandon the whole notion of universality in the face of claims of contextual specificity or cultural relativity (An-Na'im, 1994: 79). Halliday notes that while diplomatic and liberal considerations 'have allowed the discussion of human rights to work with such categories as "Islamic", "African" and "Asian" codes of human rights, . . . in each case this involves a simplification, naive when not manipulative' (Halliday, 1995:

159); cultural relativism in this sense is based on the underlying idea that ‘there are distinct, historically constituted cultures, of equal ethical and political worth’, and ignores the many moral, historical and social objections to this notion (Halliday, 1995: 162). Cultural and religious traditions, of course, reflect ‘a diversity of views and interpretations not a single body of thought’; in the case of ‘Islamic tradition’ (for example)

... what we are dealing with is not an established, perennial, tradition ... but a set of discourses and interpretations that are created by contemporary forces and for contemporary needs. (Halliday, 1995: 156, 159)

Finally, a third and much more useful and productive kind of cultural relativism (which some authors call ‘relativity’ to distinguish it from relativism as doctrine) is that which insists we remain sensitive to differences simply as a practical analytical tool. Relativism then becomes, in addition to the general principle of respect for the ways of life of others, a tool of learning and understanding, a useful corrective to pseudo-universalist notions, a way of shaking up and questioning supposed universalist ideas and opening up the possibility of others; in other words, a way of opening our eyes to the variety of human ideology and practice, but not a basis for legitimizing whatever we may see when we do this.

‘Targeting the intolerable’? ILO’s proposed new convention

In March 1996 the ILO decided to include child labour on the agenda of the 1998 session of the International Labour Conference, with a view to the adoption (in 1999) of a new international convention to prohibit what were then called the ‘most intolerable forms of child labour’. As is discussed later, among the ‘intolerable’, ‘most extreme’ or ‘worst’⁵ forms of child labour to be targeted (using criminal law where appropriate) are child slavery and all forms of bonded and forced labour, child prostitution, the employment of children under 18 in ‘hazardous work’ and the employment of ‘younger’ children.

The proposed new convention, if adopted, will oblige its signatories to take measures, including where appropriate the provision and enforcement of criminal sanctions, ‘to secure the prohibition and immediate elimination of the worst forms of child labour’ (ILO, 1998b: 9).⁶ After considering the results and conclusions of a questionnaire sent to all member governments, the June 1998 International Labour Conference approved the proposals for a convention and recommendation on child labour whose current texts define these ‘worst forms’ (to use the terminology now current) as follows:

1. some forms of work which are considered intolerable because of the work relationships involved: ‘all forms of slavery or practices similar to slavery, such as the sale and trafficking of children, forced or compulsory labour, debt bondage and serfdom’;

2. some forms of child work which are considered intolerable because of the nature of the work itself: 'the use, procuring or offering of a child for prostitution, for the production of pornography or for pornographic performances' and 'the use, procuring or offering of a child for illegal activities, in particular for the production and trafficking of narcotic drugs'; and
3. finally a third, more open category of 'any other type of work or activity which, by its nature or the circumstances in which it is carried out, is likely to jeopardize the health, safety or morals of children' (ILO, 1998b: 10).

The signatory states would be required themselves to define the kinds of work to be included under category (3) above:

National laws or regulations or the competent authority shall, after consultation with the organizations of employers and workers concerned, determine the types of work or activity referred to [as in (3) above] and identify their existence, taking into account relevant international standards. (ILO, 1998b: 10)

The draft recommendations proposed to supplement the new convention recommend that ratifying member states include under this category of prohibited 'hazardous' types of work under (3) above, among others:

1. 'work and activities which expose children to physical, emotional or sexual abuse';
2. 'work underground, under water, or at dangerous heights';
3. 'work with dangerous machinery, equipment and tools, or which involves the manual handling or transport of heavy loads';
4. 'work in an unhealthy environment which may, for example, expose children to hazardous substances, agents or processes, or to temperatures, noise levels, or vibrations damaging to their health'; and
5. 'work which is done under particularly difficult conditions such as for long hours or during the night or work which does not allow for the possibility of returning home each day' (ILO, 1998b: 12)

While these provisions and prohibitions are intended to apply to all children under the age of 18, the proposed recommendation also calls for 'special attention to younger children . . . the problem of hidden work situations, in which girls are at special risk [and] other groups of children with special vulnerabilities or needs' (ILO, 1998b: 12).

Although some degree of caution or even cynicism regarding the impact of a new convention is justified (given the ineffectiveness of previous conventions), there are some important new features emerging in the long and complex process of worldwide consultation, lobbying and conferencing leading up to the 1999 conference at which the convention is likely to be adopted. First, the proposed convention represents formal recognition and

embodiment of the principle that it *is* both helpful and possible to differentiate between more and less ‘intolerable’ or ‘extreme’ forms of children’s work – to many, an apparently self-evident notion but one which is still opposed by some agencies and which until recently would have been opposed by the ILO itself. This departure is a necessary precondition for the broad acceptance and basic functioning of the proposed new convention, which can be seen as an attempt to agree on priorities, and thereby to focus interventions on the most serious forms of abuse; although the ILO’s old ‘abolitionist’ Convention 138 will of course never be abandoned (as emphasized in all official statements and documents), the new convention may potentially promote a more flexible, differentiated and child-friendly approach to children’s employment than the more rigidly exclusionary interpretations of Convention 138. At the very least, it forces campaigns and lobbies against ‘child labour’ to consider more carefully what exactly it is that they want to abolish, as happened recently with the organizers of the well-publicized Global March against Child Labour.⁷

Second, it is apparently intended that the new convention will abandon the old distinction between paid and unpaid forms of child work; keeping a child at home (and out of school) for full-time domestic work then is no less a ‘worst form of child labour’ than full-time paid employment in factories, plantations or sweatshops. This new step thus potentially – if it survives the process of consultation and redrafting leading up to adoption in mid-1999, and if national governments and concerned agencies take it seriously in subsequent implementation efforts – means good news for girls.

Finally, and to the surprise of many, representatives of working children’s organizations have managed to achieve some degree of participation in the discussions leading up to the convention. The ILO – which for nearly 80 years has correctly insisted that workers be represented in its tripartite deliberations by their own elected representatives, but has so far applied this principle only to adult workers – has for the first time been confronted with organized working children demanding to be included in the process of consultation. Largely through the efforts of NGO networks (in particular, the International Working Group on Child Labour and the Save the Children Alliance), representatives of organized working children from Asian, African and Latin American countries have participated vocally in all three international conferences held in 1997 (in February in Amsterdam, June in Trondheim and October in Oslo) aiming to provide inputs for the ILO’s 1998 conference. Anyone who saw these young people in action at these conferences, alongside the government delegations, employers’ organizations, national and international workers’ organizations, NGOs and international organizations, should now be convinced that ‘children’s participation’, even at the level of international conferences, can have more than symbolic value. This could be seen for example in the eloquent and forceful ways in which many of the children defended the principle: ‘we are against exploitation at

work, but we are in favour of work with dignity and appropriate hours, so that we have time for education and leisure' and 'we are against the boycott of products made by children' (two points from the 'Kundapur Declaration'; see IWGCL, 1996: 17), in the face of some diehard NGO and trade union abolitionists who still insist that all forms of children's work are intolerable and thereby threaten to sabotage or dilute the ILO's new initiative. These and other children really have important things to tell us, if we are willing to listen.

The proposed new convention is thus an important new departure, although certainly not without problems. First, in contrast to the CRC, it lacks in its current draft version any obligatory reporting mechanism; second, even if such a mechanism is included it will only be effective if it defines clearly and unambiguously – or insists that individual member states do so – what is 'extreme' and 'hazardous'. There is still the possibility that 'fundamentalist' efforts could force the broadening of the definition so far that the convention becomes little more than a restatement in different form of Convention 138. Insofar as a definition is proposed, the current version omits some forms of child employment which many would consider unambiguously 'hazardous work', for example the use of children in armed conflict; the Global March Against Child Labour's International Steering Committee's position statement of September 1998 has noted with concern that ' "hazardous work" has not been defined to include the most hazardous form of all, armed combat' (Global March, 1998: 2). It also omits what many would consider an important, relevant and practical way to characterize 'harmful' child work (which might also make some of the others less necessary), namely work which systematically deprives the child of access to basic education (Global March, 1998:1); education is barely mentioned at all in the current version. In other areas, it goes into what many would consider unnecessary detail; for example the recommendation that member states should include in the category of hazardous work, 'under particularly difficult conditions', 'work which does not allow for the possibility of returning home each day' is quite hard to justify when we recall that 'child' in this context is defined as all those under 18 years.⁸ Finally, it is worth pointing out (as has been done by Global March, 1998: 1–2) that in one respect the proposed convention does not comply with the terms of the CRC, since there is no provision for 'children's participation' in its implementation.

The relative in the universal: subjective elements in universalizing discourse

If local people and local governments have no objection to child prostitution, should outsiders leave them alone? (Kent, 1995: 80)

Both the proposed new ILO convention and the CRC, although by definition committed to the search for universal principles and standards, actually embody many notions which are relative and subjective in nature. Examples are the notion of ‘exploitation’ (the central notion in CRC’s ‘Child Labour’ Article 32 as quoted at the beginning of this article); ‘extreme’ or ‘worst’ forms of child labour (what has to be defined as the target of the proposed new ILO convention); ‘hazardous’ or ‘harmful’ work (that which ‘is likely to jeopardize the health, safety or morals’ of children, in both the CRC and proposed new ILO convention); and even the notion of ‘the best interests of the child’ (enshrined in Article 3 of the CRC as the cornerstone of all decisions affecting children). All of these notions, to be implemented or realized, require us to make judgements, most or all of which cannot be made on purely scientific or technical grounds. How are such judgements to be made, and priorities set?

Here it is useful to recall the answer given by Bequele and Myers (1995):

How does one decide whether one kind of work is more detrimental to children than another? . . .

Experience shows that questions of this sort have no purely technical solution, and must be resolved by agreement rather than by formula, reflecting realities and cultural values, and therefore differing from place to place. What is important is that concrete, feasible decisions be made about which work problems require the most urgent attention, and that these decisions enjoy at least a modicum of social credibility and legitimacy. It is a question more successfully lived through in practice than intellectually agonized over beforehand. (Bequele and Myers, 1995: 26–7)

As we have seen, the proposed new convention, after itself defining some relatively unambiguous and uncontroversial targets for ‘immediate elimination’ (primarily child slavery, child prostitution and the involvement of children in drug trafficking),⁹ then leaves to individual governments the potentially much more controversial obligation to define precisely what (other) kinds of work are harmful or hazardous to children. It embodies to some extent the principle outlined by Bequele and Myers, by not itself attempting to define precisely and universally what are ‘hazardous’ forms of child work, but by requiring instead that each member state define and determine these in its national law and regulations. It appears therefore to represent an attempt to incorporate relativist principles in a global standard-setting exercise, and therefore perhaps to have side-stepped the issue of cultural relativism.

This approach however leaves a number of questions unanswered. First, how is this locally specific process of arriving at consensus to happen? Who should be involved? Should children be involved (according to Articles 12, 13, 14 and 15 of the CRC they have the right to be involved, and to enjoy freedom of expression and association in making their views heard)? And, if so, how should they be involved? This issue simply cannot be

avoided, if we are to move away from 'child as victim, child work as pathology' notions and to listen seriously to what children have to tell us:

Are working children as defenceless as baby seals? Why not listen to what they have to say themselves, let them choose, support their decisions? What is the point in giving more and more rights to the children while forbidding them to work? (ENDA, 1997: 45)

Second, the problem of cultural specificity is not automatically solved by shifting the location of decision-making and consensus from global to national level, and may not even be solved by shifting it from national to regional or even to local level. It may now be generally taken for granted that 'western' values (like 'Asian' and 'African' values) are not universal, and that different 'cultures' have different values; but there is less willingness to recognize that different social groups *within* 'cultures' have different values, and that in fact this is what culture is all about: 'cultures' are areas of contestation, in which dominant views and values are continually countered by dissenting currents (and this in turn is the source of fluidity and change, of the dynamics of culture). It therefore becomes exceptionally relevant to be aware of the possibility of important tensions and differences between the norms and values, within 'national cultures', of (to mention a few examples) elite and mass; urban and rural people; men and women; older and younger generations; rich children and poor children, and in all questions of cultural relativity to be ready to ask: whose culture are we talking about? Certainly, scientists and activists should never allow concepts of culture and values to be hijacked by national governments; neither should they feel that problems are solved by giving precedence to 'local' values.

Notes

1. While various recent publications have expressed similar views (e.g. IWGCI, 1998), this particular version is from White (1997: 11).
2. Some recent contributions, relatively accessible to the non-specialist are: on the issue of universal human rights, Bayalama (1993), Boyle (1995), Christie (1995), Halliday (1995), Messer (1993) and Pereira (1997), and on the specific issue of universal children's rights, Alston (1994), An-Na'im (1994), Boyden (1990), Burman (1996), Freeman (1997), Goonesekere (1998), Rwezaura (1994) and Stephens (1995).
3. Bequele and Myers (1995) and Nieuwenhuys (1996) are important exceptions.
4. The remarks in this section have been influenced by discussions at the Keele University Seminar on Childhood and Cultural Relativism (March 1997) and particularly the contributions of Alan Prout.
5. In referring to the forms of child work to be targeted in the new convention, ILO documents shifted in usage between 1997 and 1998, dropping the terms 'intolerable' and 'most intolerable' and replacing them with 'extreme' and 'most extreme' (ILO, 1998a); after the discussions at the June 1998 ILO Conference, these terms have been dropped in favour of the term 'worst forms of child labour' (ILO, 1998b).
6. The wording of the proposed convention and recommendation used in this article is based on the text as modified and circulated after the International Labour Conference 86th Session, June 1998 (ILO, 1998b).

7. Plans for the Global March, already quite advanced in early 1997, were threatened by wide differences of opinion among the various NGO participants, who eventually after a process of dialogue succeeded in identifying common ground and a shared 'mission' for the March (Anon., 1997). From this point onward, the Global March was not in fact officially against the employment of children (whatever the media and some participants may have thought) but had the more carefully defined aim

. . . to mobilize worldwide efforts to protect and promote the rights of all children, especially the right to receive a free, meaningful education and to be protected from economic exploitation and from performing any work that is likely to be damaging to the child's physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development. (Anon., 1998: 9; see also the March's website at <http://www.global-march.org>)

8. While many forms of child employment in which children are not permitted to return home are certainly harmful and abusive, the impossibility of daily returning home is not necessarily or in itself harmful; if that could be proven, the institutions of boarding school, summer camps, etc. should also be 'immediately eliminated'. For many teenage children who experience abusive circumstances in their own homes the possibility of living and working far away from home may represent more a solution than a problem.

9. Even these, on closer examination, are not free of ambiguities. In the case of 'child prostitution' for example, Black has noted the problems involved in the blanket use of the term to cover all forms of sexual commerce engaged in by children of all ages up to 18: 'the predicament of an eight-year old girl held captive in a brothel . . . cannot be seen in the same light as that of a teenager trawling the beach in Mombasa as a possible opener to sexual commerce, or a young "hostess" entertaining customers in a Manila bar', particularly when we recall that in most countries the legal age of sexual consent is far below 18 (Black, 1995: 63).

References

- Alston, P. (1994) 'The Best Interests Principle: Towards a Reconciliation of Culture and Human Rights', in P. Alston (ed.) *The Best Interests of the Child: Reconciling Culture and Human Rights*. Oxford: Clarendon Press/UNICEF.
- An-Na'im, A. (1994) 'Cultural Transformation and Normative Consensus on the Best Interests of the Child', in P. Alston (ed.) *The Best Interests of the Child: Reconciling Culture and Human Rights*. Oxford: Clarendon Press/UNICEF.
- Anonymous (1997) 'Plans for Global March Against Child Labour', *Anti-Slavery Reporter* VIII.3(2): 4.
- Anonymous (1998) 'Global March Against Child Labour', *Anti-Slavery Reporter* VIII.4(1): 6–9.
- Bayalama, S. (1993) 'Universal Human Rights and Cultural Relativism', *Scandinavian Journal of Development Alternatives* 12(2–3): 131–45.
- Bequele, A. and W. Myers (1995) *First Things First in Child Labour: Eliminating Work Detrimental to Children*. Geneva: UNICEF/ILO.
- Black, M. (1995) *In the Twilight Zone: Child Workers in the Hotel, Tourism and Catering Industry*. Geneva: ILO.
- Boyden, J. (1990) 'Childhood and the Policy Makers: A Comparative Perspective on the Globalization of Childhood', in A. James and A. Prout (eds) *Constructing and Reconstructing Childhood: Contemporary Issues in the Sociological Study of Childhood*. London: Falmer Press.
- Boyle, K. (1995) 'Stock-taking on Human Rights: The World Conference on Human Rights, Vienna 1993', *Political Studies* 43: 79–85.

- Burman, E. (1996) 'Local, Global or Globalized? Child Development and International Child Rights Legislation', *Childhood* 3(1): 45–66.
- Christie, K. (1995) 'Régime Security and Human Rights in Southeast Asia', *Political Studies* 43: 204–18.
- Donnelly, J. (1984) 'Cultural Relativism and Universal Human Rights', *Human Rights Quarterly* 6(4): 400–19
- Edwards, M. (1996) 'New Approaches to Children and Development: Introduction and Overview', *Journal of International Development* 8(6): 813–27.
- ENDA (1997) *Working Children and Youths of West Africa Get Organized*. Dakar: ENDA Tiers-Monde Jeunesse Action.
- Fernandez, J. (1990) 'Tolerance in a Repugnant World and Other Dilemmas in the Cultural Relativism of Melville J. Herskovits', *Ethos* 18(2): 140–64.
- Freeman, M. (1997) 'Children's Rights and Cultural Pluralism' in M. Freeman (ed.) *The Moral Status of Children: Essays on the Rights of the Child*. The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff.
- Global March (1998) 'Position on the Proposed ILO Convention on the Worst Forms of Child Labour', adopted by the Global March against Child Labour International Steering Committee, London, 25 September.
- Goonesekere, S. (1998) *Children, Law and Social Justice: A South Asian Perspective*. New Delhi: Sage/UNICEF.
- Halliday, F. (1995) 'Relativism and Universalism in Human Rights: The Case of the Islamic Middle East', *Political Studies* 43: 152–67.
- Heller, A. (1984) 'Can Cultural Patterns be Compared?', *Dialectical Anthropology* 8: 269–76.
- ILO (International Labour Organization) (1998a) *Child Labour*, International Labour Conference, 86th Session, 1998, Report VI(2). Geneva: International Labour Office.
- ILO (International Labour Organization) (1998b) *Child Labour*, International Labour Conference, 87th Session, 1999, Report IV(1). Geneva: International Labour Office.
- IWGCL (International Working group on Child Labour) (1996) 'Have We Asked the Children?', discussion paper. Amsterdam and Bangalore: IWGCL.
- Kent, G. (1995) *Children in the International Political Economy*. London: Macmillan.
- Messer, E. (1993) 'Anthropology and Human Rights', *Annual Review of Anthropology* 22: 221–49.
- Nieuwenhuys, O. (1996) 'The Paradox of Child Labour and Anthropology', *Annual Review of Anthropology* 25: 237–51.
- Pereira, W. (1997) *Inhuman Rights: The Western System and Global Human Rights Abuse*. Goa: The Other India Press.
- Rwezaura, B. (1994) 'The Concept of the Child's Best Interest in the Changing Economic and Social Context of Sub-Saharan Africa', in P. Alston (ed.) *The Best Interests of the Child: Reconciling Culture and Human Rights*. Oxford: Clarendon Press/UNICEF.
- Stephens, S. (1995) 'Children and the Politics of Culture in "Late Capitalism"', in S. Stephens (ed.) *Children and the Politics of Culture*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- White, B. (1997) 'Child Labour in the International Context', in S. McCloskey (ed.) *No Time to Play: Local and Global Perspectives on Child Employment*. Belfast: One World Centre for Northern Ireland.

