Culture and Gender Appropriate Responses in Child Friendly Spaces

An Ecological Comparative Analysis of Guidelines and Manuals

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Abstract

Children around the world suffer greatly due to conflicts. One of the most common interventions to support children affected by conflicts are Child Friendly Spaces (CFSs). Implemented within different cultural contexts, CFSs aim to be both culturally sensitive and contribute to gender equality, an interaction that can be complex. Previous research regarding CFSs is limited. As CFSs are commonly used in Humanitarian Action, further knowledge is central.

This thesis aims to explore and compare how culture and gender appropriate responses in CFSs guidelines and manuals are expressed in order to gain an increased understanding of how these guidelines handle the interaction between gender norms in different cultures. In this study I discuss six CFSs guidelines and manuals by conducting comparative analysis and applying the Ecological Resilience Framework.

The result suggests that culture and gender appropriate responses are central in all guidelines and manuals but emphasized in different ways. The participation of children, families and communities, as well as the adaption of activities, are all strategies aimed at cultural sensitivity. The result also entails that the equal inclusion of all children is a general gender appropriate approach. In addition, I claim that the main intervention, aiming to be both gender and culture appropriate, is separated groups between boys and girls. Finally, I argue that gender and culture may clash due to different perceptions of gender and culture appropriate responses.

Keywords: Humanitarian Action, Child Protection, Social Work, Conflict, Child, Child Friendly Spaces, Safe Spaces, Culture Appropriate, Gender Appropriate, Ecological Resilience, Sweden, Sudan, the Philippines, UNICEF, Rädda Barnen, Save the Children, World Vision, Red Cross & Red Crescent
Table of Contents
List of Abbreviations ........................................................................................................... 5
1. Introduction ......................................................................................................................... 5
   1.1 Child Friendly Spaces ................................................................................................. 5
   1.2 Gender and Culture .................................................................................................... 5
   1.3 Rationale for Research and Relevance to Humanitarian Action ......................... 8
   1.4 Aim and Research Questions .................................................................................... 8
   1.5 Thesis Outline ............................................................................................................ 9
   1.6 Previous Research - Child Friendly Spaces ............................................................. 9
   1.7 Methodology ............................................................................................................. 11
   1.8 Limitations ................................................................................................................ 12
2. Theoretical Framework - Ecological Resilience ............................................................... 13
3. Empirical Data .................................................................................................................... 16
   3.1 The International Guideline ....................................................................................... 16
   3.2 The Swedish Manual ................................................................................................ 17
   3.3 The Sudanese Manual ................................................................................................ 18
   3.4 The Filipino Guideline ............................................................................................... 19
   3.5 The World Vision, Red Cross & Red Crescent Guideline ........................................ 20
   3.6 The World Vision, Red Cross & Red Crescent Manual ........................................... 21
4. Discussion .......................................................................................................................... 23
   4.1 Culture and Gender Appropriate Responses ............................................................ 23
   4.2 The Separation of Boys and Girls ............................................................................. 26
   4.3 Clashes between Culture and Gender Appropriate Responses ......................... 27
   4.4 Culture and Gender Appropriate According to Who? ............................................ 29
5. Conclusion .......................................................................................................................... 31
6. References ........................................................................................................................ 32
7. Appendix: Codes and Themes ......................................................................................... 36
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AUW</td>
<td>Ahfad University for Women</td>
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<td>CFSs</td>
<td>Child Friendly Spaces</td>
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<td>CPWG</td>
<td>Child Protection Working Group</td>
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<td>DRC</td>
<td>Democratic Republic of Congo</td>
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<td>NCCW</td>
<td>Government of Sudan National Council for Child Welfare</td>
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<td>UN</td>
<td>United Nations</td>
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<td>UNICEF</td>
<td>United Nations Children's Fund</td>
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1. Introduction

1.1 Child Friendly Spaces

“From widespread killing, maiming, abduction and sexual violence to recruitment into armed groups and strikes on schools and hospitals, as well as essential water facilities – children living in conflict zones around the world continue to come under attack at a shocking scale” (UNICEF 2018, paragraph 1).

In 2017, almost one in five children worldwide, a total over 420 million, lived in a conflict zone (Save the Children, 2019, p.16). One of the most common interventions in conflict zones in order to protect and support children is to set up Child Friendly Spaces (CFSs) (Fernando & Ferrari. eds., 2013, p.120). CFSs are also used as an intervention to support children affected by crisis, e.g. in Sweden (Ali & Claesson 2018, p.6). According to Global Protection Cluster, et al. (2011, p.3), there is no management system regarding CFSs that is universally accepted. However, the IASC Reference Group on Mental Health and Psychosocial Support in Emergency Settings, the global Child Protection Working Group, and the global Education Cluster, in 2011, developed “The guidelines for Child Friendly Spaces in Emergencies” in order to create consensus regarding CFSs. According to those guidelines, the aim of CFSs is to “support the resilience and well-being of children and young people through community organized, structured activities conducted in a safe, child friendly, and stimulating environment.”, focused on “educational, protection, and psychosocial needs of children” (Global Protection Cluster, et al., 2011, p 2). Among the many CFSs guidelines and manuals, there are also those related to a specific country such as, for example, the Philippines, Sudan and Sweden, as well as more general – such as, for example, World Vision International and Red Cross and Red Crescent (Council for the Welfare of Children, et al., 2017; AUW, et al., 2016; Ali & Claesson, 2018; Snider & Ager 2018a; Snider & Ager, 2018b). Therefore, for the purpose of this thesis, the above mentioned guidelines and manuals will be used as data in the analysis.

1.2 Gender and Culture

The definition of culture as well as that of gender is complex. According to Chuang, Green, and Moreno (2018, p.2), there is no consensus regarding the concept of culture. The concept of gender, referring to Starr and Leaper (2018, pp.2-7), includes many different dimensions that interact in defining an individual. However, this thesis does not aim to explore the varieties of definitions of culture and gender further than suggesting the following perception in order to understand culture as “a set of shared values, beliefs,
and practices created by a group of individuals to guide their social relationships and shape their developmental pathways” (Chuang, Green, & Moreno, 2018, p.2); while gender defined as “the socially constructed differences between women and men throughout their life cycle” which “may change over time and within and across cultures and context” (Sphere, 2018, p.14); and transgender as a gender identity that is different from the identification “assigned at birth” (Starr & Leaper, 2018, p.2).

In humanitarian action, the respect for culture as well as promoting gender equality are stressed as important factors in interventions in general, as well as in CFSs particular. In terms of culture, the Sphere Handbook states that “we shall respect culture and custom” (Sphere, 2018, p.6) and in relation to CFSs, it is stressed that CFSs should be “contextual and culturally appropriate” (Global Protection Cluster, et al., 2011, p.2). In regard to gender, the UN sustainable development goal number five is to “achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls” (UN, 2019). Furthermore, the Sphere Handbook points out that “crises can be an opportunity to address gender inequalities and empower women, girls, boys and men” (Sphere 2018, p.14). Moreover, in relation to CFSs it is said that the “Guidelines for Child Friendly Spaces in Emergencies” shall be “implemented with sensitivity to child development and the distinct needs of girls and boys” (Global Protection Cluster, et al., 2011, p.3).

However, Fernando & Ferrari. eds., (2013, p.22) argue that there can be an opposition when interventions in humanitarian action aim to advocate “gender equity and inclusion of children” at the same time as advocating “community-initiated approaches and traditional practices”, due to the fact that traditional practices may be established “in processes of exclusion such as patriarchy and ethnic discrimination”, “reinforcing stigma and marginalization rather than fostering psychosocial well-being for war-affected children, especially girls” (Fernando, & Ferrari, eds., 2013, p.22). Furthermore, Lensu (2003, p.234) stresses the complexity of culture and its connection to gender when discussing that values regarding gender and gender roles differ both between and within different cultures. Additionally, Lensu (2003, p.184) states that “it is especially in relation to the treatment of women that many humanitarian practitioners are in practice likely to experience problems with respect for culture.”

Therefore, this thesis intends to explore the complexity between culture and gender appropriate responses in different CFSs guidelines and manuals aimed for a nonspecific cultural context as well as for specific cultural contexts such as: Sudan, the Philippines and Sweden. The thesis conducts a comparative analysis, using the Ecological
Resilience Theoretical Framework, where both resilience and risk factors in different socio-ecological layers can be explored in a culturally sensitive way (Fernando & Ferrari. eds., 2013, pp.293-294).

As mentioned above, the way gender is perceived depends on the cultural context and the perception of gender differs between Sudan, the Philippines, and Sweden. According to OECD (2010a, p.266), Sudan is mainly characterized by Islamic laws and traditions, where Sharia law directs family matters. In Sudan, the rights for men and women differ in many ways and women’s rights are limited (OECD, 2010a, p.266). For example, according to Amnesty International (2019, paragraph 5), “Sudanese women face a daily risk of being arbitrarily arrested in public or private places for ‘indecent or immoral behaviour or dress’. Public Order Police Officers in Sudan have the power to decide what is decent and what is not. In most cases women are arrested for wearing trousers or knee length skirts.” According to UN General Assembly (2016, p.5), “numerous manifestations of violence against women and girls existed and remained widespread. In addition, girl children are further exposed to harmful cultural practices, including female genital mutilation and early marriage.” However, in the Philippines, there has been a constitution that “affirms equality for all citizens” since 1987 (OECD (2010b, p.44). Based on the global gender gap report from 2017, Wood, J. (2018, paragraph, 4) argues that “as the only nation from the region to make it into the global top 10, the report’s findings place the Philippines as the most gender equal nation in Asia.” Moreover, in the global gender gap report from 2018, the Philippines ranked number 8 in the world (World economic forum, 2018, p. 10). Finally, Sweden, it is stated that, “the overarching Swedish principle for gender equality is that everyone, regardless of gender, has the right to work and support themselves, to balance career and family life, and to live without the fear of abuse or violence” (Swedish Institute, 2019, paragraph 1). Withal, in the global gender gap report from 2018, Sweden ranked as number 3 in the world (World economic forum, 2018, p. 10).

Furthermore, cultural and gender norms might be observed and taken into consideration in the manuals and guidelines of different non-profit organizations. For the present study, I have selected the following organizations: UNICEF, The World Vision, Red Cross and Red Crescent, and Save the Children, for the purpose of analysing culture and gender appropriate responses in their CFSs guidelines and manuals. In regard to gender equality, UNICEF (2017, p.3) emphasizes that “childhood investments in gender equality contribute to lifelong positive outcomes for children and their communities.”
According to the IFRC (2017, p.1), the Red Cross and Red Crescent focusing on a gender perspective in their interventions in order to determine that “there is no sex-based discrimination in the allocation of resources or benefits, or in access to services.” World Vision (2019, paragraph 2) stress gender inequality “by working with entire communities — women, girls, men, and boys — to transform discriminatory practices together.” In addition, Save the Children (2017, p.5) states, “it is critical to directly address gender discrimination and promote gender equality in order to ensure that no harm comes to children.”

1.3 Rationale for Research and Relevance to Humanitarian Action

CFSs play a vital role in humanitarian action and child protection around the world, aiming to increase the resilience among children in a culture and gender appropriate way. Furthermore, as a social worker in humanitarian action with experience of child protection, I find it important to explore the theoretical knowledge from guidelines and manuals in relation to the practical dilemmas that can arise in the field. Therefore, I suggest that increased knowledge regarding CFSs guidelines and manuals as a tool for implementing CFSs in a culture and gender appropriate way is central for humanitarian action and child protection.

1.4 Aim and Research Questions

The aim of this thesis is to explore and compare how culture and gender appropriate responses in CFSs guidelines and manuals are expressed in order to gain an increased understanding of how these guidelines handle the interaction between gender norms in different cultures. The present study poses and answers the following questions:

- How are culture and gender appropriate responses expressed in CFSs guidelines and manuals (International, Swedish, Sudanese, Filipino, and World Vision, Red Cross & Red Crescent), and how do these approaches interact with each other?
- What are the similarities and the differences between the guidelines and manuals approaches to culture and gender appropriate responses?
- In which ways do the guidelines and manuals express a local adaption in their culture and gender appropriate responses?
- Are there any clashes between the culture and gender appropriate responses in and among the different guidelines and manuals?
1.5 Thesis Outline
The overall structure of this study takes the form of five chapters where chapter one provides an introduction, presents the background regarding CFSs as well as gender and culture concepts, a rationale, the aim, the thesis outline, and previous research regarding CFSs, methodology, and limitations. The second chapter presents the ecological resilience framework. The third chapter presents the empirical data of guidelines and manuals. The fourth chapter discusses the data in relation to the theory and previous research. Finally, the fifth chapter provides the reader with concluding remarks and my reflections in relation to the research questions.

1.6 Previous Research - Child Friendly Spaces
CFSs were established in 1991 by UNICEF during the Kosovo war (Stuart, et al., 2014, p.26) and are now one of the most used child protection interventions for children affected by conflicts (Fernando & Ferrari. eds. 2013, p.120). In 2011, the “Guidelines for Child Friendly Spaces in Emergencies” were released as a step to create consensus among all actors implementing CFSs around the world (Global Protection Cluster, et al. 2011, p.2). However, the evidence base regarding CFSs is still limited (Fernando & Ferrari. Eds. 2013, p.120; Ager & Metzler 2012, p.3; Wessells & Kostelny 2013, p.37; Metzler, et al. 2015, p.4; Bermudez, Williamson & Stark, 2018, p.2).

As a response to the limited evidence base regarding CFSs, World Vision and Colombia University, together with UNICEF and Save the Children implemented a research project during 2012-2014. In this project, the existing evidence base was reviewed by Ager and Metzler (2012, p.3) where literature and data regarding CFSs impact and outcomes during the last fifteen years were examined. In their study, Ager and Metzler (2012, p.6) find ten relevant studies, indicating “positive psychosocial outcomes for children and/or the wider community.” However, only one of these studies could be “reliably attributable to CFS” (Ager and Metzler 2012, p.6). Additionally, the scholars point out the lack of gender perspectives in the CFSs research where they only find one study that suggests that girls are more limited to access support from CFSs due to activities that were not culture appropriate. Ager and Metzler (2012, p.8) suggest that, “given the widespread use of CFSs as an intervention strategy to address children’s needs in humanitarian emergencies, the review indicates a remarkably small evidence-base.” The fact that only ten relevant studies were found also indicates a “failure either to commit to conducting evaluations indicating impacts in the lives of children and their families or
to disseminate such evaluations to the broader humanitarian community, or both” (Ager & Metzler 2012, p.8).

In the research project, six studies in five different countries were conducted, aiming to increase the evidence base regarding CFSs (Metzler, et al. 2015, and pp.4-5). These studies, conducted in Ethiopia, Uganda, Iraq, DRC, and Jordan, suggest that CFSs can contribute to a positive support to children, however, the impact varies largely. The studies also suggest that a main challenge is to increase the CFSs programming quality in order to “provide activities that fit local circumstances with respect to both the general context and the specific risks faced by children” (Metzler, et al. 2015, p.20). Additionally, the studies indicate that CFSs contributing mostly to younger children, wherein strengthened support to older children are recommended. In addition, that the programing evaluations regarding CFSs long term impact of children needs improvement (Metzler, et al. 2015, p.20).

In 2017, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies presented their case study report “Child Friendly Spaces in Emergencies”, covering “thirteen National Societies from the Africa, Americas, Asia Pacific, Europe, and Middle-East and North Africa (MENA) Regions”, with “experiences from 600 child friendly spaces that have reached at least 645,415 children” (International Federation of Red Cross & Red Crescent Societies, 2017, p.5). The report emphasizes that it is important to carefully choose and educate volunteers in order to have professional interventions and that collaborating with other organizations is valuable. It also points out the importance of awareness regarding issues connected to gender and culture, especially the importance of promoting the participation of teenage girls. As in the case of South Sudan were the involvement of teenage girls was low due to security risks, “risk of violence against girls” and, parents “being protective because girls of this age group are considered ready for marriage according to the local cultural beliefs” (International Federation of Red Cross & Red Crescent Societies 2017, p.14).

Concerning gender and culture, I have not found any research regarding culture and gender appropriate responses related to CFSs. Safe spaces for girls is another research area related to CFSs as girls affected by armed conflicts as well as displacement suffer enlarged distress of violence due to e.g. gender norms (Falb, et al. 2016, p.10). The scholars find a connection between safe spaces and CFSs, suggesting that “it remains unclear if safe space programming confers additional protection against the unique risks
of violence that adolescent girls face”, since “most child friendly spaces do not have tailored programming by gender” (Falb, et al. 2016, p.10).

Overall, I find that the evidence base regarding culture and gender in CFSs are limited. And, I suggest that no previous study has investigated culture and gender appropriate responses in CFSs. Therefore, I wish to argue that this thesis has its uniqueness as it focuses on how gender and culture are expressed and interact in CFSs guidelines and manuals.

1.7 Methodology
In order to answer the research questions, I use a qualitative comparative method to compare CFSs guidelines and manuals. According to Bryman (2016, p.107), a comparative design can be used as a tool in order to compare and discuss contrasts in two or more cases.

For the purpose of analysis, relevant and reliable data is crucial. Gibbs (2007, p.2) argues that qualitative data can be any type of human communication “written, audio, or visual-behaviour, symbolism or cultural artefacts.” In this thesis, the selection of material is based on the legitimacy of the organizations working with child protection as well as when the material is dated in order to use up-to-date data. The data analysed in this thesis represent six guidelines and manuals:

The data is coded in relevant categories, such as Culture (culturally, *kultur*, religion, ethnicity) and Gender (sex, girl and boys, genus, *kön*, him/her, men/women, male/female) and then thematised (appendix, 7.). Gibbs (2007, p.53) argues that coding is an important part in qualitative studies as it helps to identify themes in the text.

I then discuss the data in order to answer the research questions. According to Gibbs (2007, pp.77-78), novice researchers are all too often satisfied with just identifying main themes and subgroups in their data. However, the scholar stresses that so much more can be done with coded data, such as finding patterns, making comparisons, and suggesting explanations. Gibbs claims that “we can examine retrieved coded text to look for the ways that things are different and the ways they are similar, and explain why there is variation and why there is not” (Gibbs 2007, p.78).

Further, in order to, find patterns and discuss the coded data, the theoretical framework “Ecological Resilience” and the different levels: micro-, meso-, exo, and macro systems were applied which helped me to understand the data in relation to perspectives of culture and gender.

Finally, I find it important to reflect on my role as a researcher when conducting this study. As I grew up in Sweden, Swedish gender norms may affect my perception of gender, and as a social worker I am trained to see guidelines and manuals from a practical point of view, something that may influence my writing.

### 1.8 Limitations

Among the limitations of this research, constraints on time and scope of the project meant that I had to delimit my sample size in order to conduct the study. Several ideas regarding how this study could be carried out have been taken into account.

One option I see could be to choose fewer guidelines and manuals, something that might contribute to a more in-depth analysis. Another path could be to use old and new versions of guidelines where expressions of culture and gender appropriate responses over time might emerge. A third way may be to conduct interviews with CFSs workers as well as CFSs participants, and compare those interviews with the guidelines, something that might contribute to knowledge regarding how the documents work in practice.

However, I find that analysing guidelines and manuals from various organizations linked to specific cultural contexts, as well as more general cultural contexts, was a viable option for this thesis in order to be able to explore and compare views of culture and gender appropriate responses in CFSs.
2. Theoretical Framework - Ecological Resilience

In this thesis I apply the Ecological Resilience Theoretical Framework as a lens in order to explore and compare in which way culture and gender are expressed and interact in CFSs guidelines and manuals. Ecological Resilience is a combination of the concept of resilience and Bronfenbrenner’s ecological approach, meant to focus, not only on individual factors, but also on how resilience interacts at different contextual levels (Fernando & Ferrari. eds. 2013, p.13). Furthermore, Fernando and Ferrari. eds. (2013, p.293) use this theoretical framework in relation to children affected by war and define ecological resilience as “assets and processes at all socio-ecological levels associated with good developmental outcomes after exposure to situations of armed conflict.”

In broad terms, the concept resilience can be defined as “the capacity of a dynamic system to adapt successfully to disturbances that threaten system function, viability, or development” and can be used and interact in many different systems and on different levels, “both living and non-living, such as a microorganism, a child, a family, a security system, an economy, a forest, or the global climate” (Masten 2014, p.6). One area where the concept of resilience is used is in the research field of child development, where war and disasters played a key role in the early development of the concept (Masten 2014, p.7). According to Masten (2014, p.9), over time, the concept of resilience has become increasingly dynamic and has, among other things, integrated ideas from the ecological system theory.

The ecological approach presented by Bronfenbrenner in 1979 is a theoretical perspective that conceptualizes the interaction between the environment surrounding a human and the development of humans (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, p.3). Bronfenbrenner takes the example of Russian dolls when explaining the environment as ecological with structures connected to each other, connections that together interact with the development of a person. He (1979, p.22) refers to these structures as the “micro-, meso-, exo-, and macrosystems.” The author defines the microsystem as a person’s “interpersonal relations” (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, p.22). The mesosystem as the “interrelations among two or more settings” where the person is participating actively, e.g. in “home, school, and neighbourhood peer group” (Bronfenbrenner 1979, p.25). The exosystem as a context that affects the person, but where the person does not participate actively (Bronfenbrenner 1979, p.25). Finally, the macrosystem consist of “the level of the subculture or the culture as a whole” (Bronfenbrenner 1979, p.25).
In the picture below depicting the “ecological resilience framework for children affected by war”, Fernando and Ferrari. eds. (2013, pp.12-23) illustrate how they apply different resilience factors, primarily in relation to adolescents and children living in a context of political violence, in Bronfenbrenner’s ecological system. According to Fernando and Ferrari. eds. (2013, pp.293-294), an ecological resilience perspective can contribute to a broader focus on resilience and the impact of different contexts and “promote mental health and psychosocial wellbeing for children affected by armed conflict, while incorporating cultural systems within which they are embedded.”

Additionally, in the aim to support children’s resilience at the different levels, Fernando & Ferrari, eds. (2013, p.294), point out that the family plays an important role in the microsystem, while the providing of good schooling or CFSs is important in the mesosystem and traditional beliefs are important in the macrosystem. Moreover, the different ecological systems are not isolated from each other, but interact and are “different lenses through which to view children’s participation in culture” (Fernando & Ferrari. eds. 2013, p.294). Therefore, due to the fact that the understanding of risk and resilience differs in different cultures, the understanding of the macrolevel needs to be culturally sensitive and the macrolevel can accentuate cultural factors that both contribute to risks and resilience. Furthermore, Fernando and Ferrari. eds. (2013, p.294) state that the cultural factors expressed in the macrosystem, such as ideological and religious views can “be a two-edged sword, both helping people because they are personally meaningful,
but also trapping them when, for example, gender inequality is considered integral to accepted cultural practices.”

According to Brown and Kelly (2017, p.4), cultural factors at the macro level contribute to how children learn about gender. Yet, the influence of the family and children’s home, the micro level, also contributes to children’s gender development as “parenting styles are culturally specific and shape gender development” thus “reinforcement, role models, and approval and disapproval by significant adults encourage a gender identity that is congruent with the larger society and culture” (Brown and Kelly, 2017, p.4).

Overall, the use of the Ecological Resilience Theoretical Framework as a lens in this thesis heightens the awareness of how resilience and risk factors interact on different contextual levels regarding children, e.g. in CFSs, something which can contribute to a culturally sensitive analysis since different cultural contexts have different views on children’s development.
3. Empirical Data

For the sake of the reader, the titles of the guidelines and manuals in the empirical data and discussion are simplified, termed as follows:

1) The *International* guideline (Global Protection Cluster, et al., 2011).
5) The *World Vision, Red Cross & Red Crescent* guideline (Snider & Ager, 2018a).

3.1 The *International* Guideline

The *International* guideline - “The Guidelines for Child Friendly Spaces in emergencies”, presents principles regarding CFSs and how these principles can be implemented around the world (Global Protection Cluster, et al., 2011).

During the coding process, themes regarding both gender and culture appropriate responses emerge in the guideline. In regard to culture, a theme of culturally sensitive responses emerges, stressing the importance to be culture appropriate, e.g. expressing that “in using the Guidelines, it is essential to take an approach that is contextual and culturally appropriate” (Global Protection Cluster, et al., 2011, p.2). As a part of being culturally sensitive, a theme of cultural activities appeared. For example that CFSs shall provide “play and recreational activities for children, such as sports, arts and cultural activities provided in a structured manner to restore a sense of predictability and continuity” (Global Protection Cluster, et al., 2011, p.10). In addition, that it is important that “toys and activities are culturally appropriate” because “use of culturally inappropriate activities and toys may dissuade parents from sending their children to the CFS” (Global Protection Cluster, et al., 2011, pp.7-8). Additionally, a theme of involvement emerges, underlining the importance of local participation from parents and the local community (Global Protection Cluster, et al., 2011, p13).

When coding gender, a theme of gender sensitive responses emerges, stressing the importance to meet the special needs of both boys and girls, e.g. that the guideline should be used “with sensitivity to child development and the distinct needs of girls and boys” as well as the “distinctive needs of girls and enabling their full participation” (Global Protection Cluster, et al., 2011, p3).
The importance of involvement appears also in relation to gender where it is stressed that the participation of both girls and boys, their families and the community is important when implementing a CFSs in order to promote equality (Global Protection Cluster, et al., 2011, p3, 5). A theme of gender awareness also emerges, e.g. to “promote positive behaviours among adolescent girls and boys around issues of gender and sexual and reproductive health” (Global Protection Cluster, et al., 2011, p7). Moreover, as a part of the theme of separate gender, the guideline mentions that it is important that “female and male latrines are available at the CFS site” (Global Protection Cluster, et al., 2011, p.7).

Furthermore, the guideline expresses responses that include dimensions of both gender and culture sensitivity, e.g. to “organize diverse activities, appropriate for girls and boys” and to “ensure that the toys and activities are culturally appropriate” (Global Protection Cluster, et al., 2011, pp.7-8). Moreover, that there can be cultural differences in regard to gender and culture, e.g. “note that there may be locally defined social categories of vulnerable children that are not apparent to outsiders” (Global Protection Cluster, et al., 2011, p.9). In addition, a theme of cross culture appears, expressing the multicultural complexity, e.g. “if the participating children come from multiple religious or ethnic groups, make sure that each sub-group has its own prayers and activities and that CFS workers show respect for all orientations or ethnic groups” (Global Protection Cluster, et al., 2011, pp.6-7).

3.2 The Swedish Manual

The Swedish manual - “Lek med oss” (Eng. Play with us), provides guidance when implementing a CFS as well as concrete instructions for various activates (Ali & Claesson, 2018). The Swedish quotes used are translated from Swedish by me.

In the manual, culture as well as gender sensitive responses emerge as themes. In regard to culture, both cultural sensitivity and cultural activities occur. It is to be found that the knowledge about different cultural views is important and that adaption of activities may be needed due to the children’s culture; “have an understanding of the customs in different cultures” (Ali & Claesson, 2018, p.7). Furthermore, the parents’ participation is stressed as important in order to know if activities are appropriate (Ali & Claesson, 2018, p.7). The theme of cross-culture also appears, emphasize activities that contribute to build positive connections between children from different countries (Ali & Claesson, 2018, p.18).
In regard to gender, the theme of separate gender emerges in the manual, expressing that it can sometimes be good to have gender divided activities if the children or the adults so desire (Ali & Claesson, 2018, p.7). Furthermore, the manual mentions gender based violence, stressing the risks of child marriage where sexual violence against girls may occur (Ali & Claesson, 2018, p.23). The manual also uses the Swedish gender neutral pronoun “hen” at two occasions (Ali & Claesson, 2018, p.11).

Moreover, in regard to both gender and culture, a theme of gender awareness emerges as the manual puts emphasis on “encourage reflection on traditional gender roles and shows other ways of looking at gender” (Ali & Claesson, 2018, p.17). In addition, positive role models for both boys and girls from different ethnic minorities are being emphasized (Ali & Claesson, 2018, p.17).

3.3 The Sudanese Manual

The Sudanese manual - “Psychosocial Support for Children and Adolescents in Emergency Settings - Sudan: Minimum level of intervention skills for facilitators” is designed to be used in the training program of CFSs workers, and provides both general knowledge and concrete suggestions for activities (AUW, et al., 2016).

In the manual, cultural sensitive responses as well as gender sensitive responses emerge as themes. In regard to culture, the theme of cultural activities underlines the fact that activities should be appropriate for the culture, e.g. during activities “the facilitator should ensure that the groups are sensitive to local culture and use suitable and appropriate approaches” (AUW, et al., 2016, p.37). Furthermore, the theme of involvement appears and the participation of the families and communities is stressed (AUW, et al., 2016, p.23). In addition, a theme of concrete cultural adaption arises as the manual mentions country specific activities, in the annex with local games (AUW, et al., 2016, p.61), and in the activity “Celebration of Puberty” which is “based on particular cultural customs in Sudan” (AUW, et al., 2016, p.40). A theme concerning cultural challenges for international staff also emerges, to be found in AUW, et al., (2016, p.47), where the complexity of being international staff in a local cultural context is highlighted.

As a part of gender sensitive responses, the theme of equality appears in the manual, e.g. “in all games, remember to include girls, boys and disabled children. We must all play!” (AUW, et al., 2016, p.34), and the importance to “ensure that girls have equal opportunity to play as boys” (AUW, et al., 2016, p.27). Furthermore, the theme of clashes between gender emerges, e.g. to “avoid activities that make boys uncomfortable
in the presence of girls and vice versa. As a facilitator, you should be a role model of good behaviour and healthy social skills and be sensitive to the different needs of each gender” (AUW, et al., 2016, p.36). In addition, the theme of separate gender occurs, where it is stressed that boys and girls should be separated during some of the activities, e.g. “make sure boys and girls play separately” (AUW, et al., 2016, p.30).

3.4 The Filipino Guideline

The Filipino guideline - “Philippine National Implementation Guidelines for Child Friendly Spaces in Emergencies” both present principles and guiding regarding implementation of CFSs (Council for the Welfare of Children, et.al., 2017).

In the coding, themes of both cultural and gender sensitivity emerge. In relation to culture and activities, it is important to “ensure that toys and activities are culturally appropriate” (Council for the Welfare of Children, et.al., 2017, p.6). It is also stated that one purpose of the activities is to contribute to a situation where the child “appreciates local culture and tradition” (Council for the Welfare of Children, et.al., 2017, p.38).

In regard to gender sensitive responses, the theme of equality appears, e.g. to “provide activities that engage ALL children as active participants”, as well as “provide activities that are attractive for girls and boys of all ages” (Council for the Welfare of Children, et.al. 2017., p.42). Furthermore, girls needs are given special attention, e.g. to “ensure the participation of all groups of children, especially the most vulnerable, including girls” (Council for the Welfare of Children, et.al., 2017, p.39). The theme of separate gender also arises, e.g. that there should be separate toilets for boys and girls (Council for the Welfare of Children, et.al, 2017, p.14). Moreover, that “CFS can be divided and cordoned off according to ages, gender, specific areas or the types of play” (Council for the Welfare of Children, et.al., 2017, p.15).

The sensitivity both to gender and culture also arises, e.g. that CFSs shall support “all children and for promoting equity and inclusion” and “meet the distinctive needs of girls and boys according to their different age groups, ethnic background, religion, living situation, disabilities and other factors” (Council for the Welfare of Children, et.al., 2017, p.6). All children, regardless of gender and cultural background should be included in CFSs; “lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) children” (Council for the Welfare of Children, et.al., 2017, p. 11). Additionally, the theme of gender based violence occurs where it is stated that gender based violence could be, among other things “rape, domestic violence, sexual assault and harassment, trafficking of women, girls and
boys and several harmful traditional practices, including female genital mutilation/cutting, early marriage, and bride inheritance” (Council for the Welfare of Children, et.al., 2017, p.8). Furthermore, the theme of cultural activity in combination with involvement emerges e.g., that both children, parents and the community should be involved in traditional activities and games (Council for the Welfare of Children, et.al., 2017, p.18). In addition, the theme of separate gender appears, e.g. that “CFS activities will vary according to the local culture (e.g., separate CFS for Muslim girls and boys)” (Council for the Welfare of Children, et.al., 2017, p.17). These activities should also be “separated by sex and culturally sensitive when appropriate” (Council for the Welfare of Children, et.al., 2017, p.42).

3.5 The World Vision, Red Cross & Red Crescent Guideline

The World Vision, Red Cross & Red Crescent guideline - “Operational Guidance for Child Friendly Spaces in Humanitarian Settings” is a guideline with principles as well as approaches regarding implementation of CFSs (Snider & Ager, 2018a).

In the coding, themes regarding both gender and cultural sensitive responses emerge. In relation to culture, the sensitivity is expressed, e.g. to “take into account the social and legal norms that influence children’s lives and circumstances” (Snider & Ager 2018a, p.50). Furthermore, in relation to the theme of cultural activities, it is stressed to “use play items made by children themselves or local artwork that is culturally appropriate and familiar to children and their caregivers” (Snider & Ager 2018a, p. 21). In addition, it is stated that “programme activities are contextually appropriate and relevant to needs of children, adults and communities” (Snider & Ager 2018a, p.64). Moreover, the theme of involvement arises in the guideline, where we find that parents and the community can help “with cultural activities for children, such as cultural or religious celebrations, traditional dance or song, or making traditional handicrafts” (Snider & Ager 2018a, p.47). Additionally, the theme of cross culture occurs in the discussion about positive discipline; “positive discipline may be a new concept in certain cultures that usually use punishment as a way to discipline children” (Snider & Ager 2018a, p.38).

In regard to gender, the theme of involvement emerges, e.g. that “planning, development and support to safe spaces fully involves women, girls, boys and men” (Snider & Ager 2018a, p.64). This is also seen in the desire to “discuss with the community the number of boys and girls in different age categories who may attend, and how to best target children most in need,” something that might help “how best to
schedule sessions according to children’s ages and gender” (Snider & Ager 2018a, p.18-19). Moreover, the involvement of staff is expressed in the words about training them “how to communicate and work with children of different ages, genders and abilities” (Snider & Ager 2018a, p.24). Furthermore, the theme of gender based violence appears several times (Snider & Ager 2018a, pp. 9-20). In addition, the theme of transgender and intersex occurs in relation to the support of vulnerable children such as “lesbian, gay or transgender children” (Snider & Ager 2018a, p.12). Additionally, the theme of separate gender emerges, stated in the desire for “separate, secure bathroom facilities for boys and girls” (Snider & Ager 2018a, p.20).

In relation to both themes of culture and gender sensitivity, Snider and Ager (2018a, pp, 11-49) emphasize that it is important that all children from different cultures shall be able to take part in CFSs, e.g., that “all children should have the opportunity to participate in a CFS, regardless of their gender, age, ethnic background” (Snider & Ager 2018a, p.14). In addition, the theme of both involvement and transgender and intersex emerges (Snider & Ager 2018a, p.12). Furthermore, involvement also appears regarding the participation of boys and girls, as well as “caregivers, grandparents, religious leaders, local government officials, women and men, youth, and various subgroups in the community” in order to, among other things, to ensure “that vulnerable or marginalised children are identified and included, and that CFS activities are culturally appropriate” (Snider & Ager 2018a, p.14). The involvement of local staff is also stressed as beneficial (Snider & Ager 2018a, p.23). The theme of cross culture also emerges, e.g., that “CFS staff must show respect for all children, regardless of their religious or ethnic affiliation, gender or sexual orientation” (Snider & Ager 2018a, p.12). The theme of separate gender appears, e.g. that “in some cultural contexts, separate spaces or activity schedules may be needed for boys and girls so that girls can fully participate and have their distinct needs met” (Snider & Ager 2018a, p.12).

3.6 The World Vision, Red Cross & Red Crescent Manual
The World Vision, Red Cross & Red Crescent manual - “The Activity Catalogue for Child Friendly Spaces in Humanitarian Settings” is connected to the “Operational Guidance for Child Friendly Spaces in Humanitarian Settings” and aims to provide materials in order to implement activities in CFSs (Snider & Ager 2018b).

In the coding, both themes of cultural and gender sensitivity emerge in various ways. In regard to culture, the manual stresses the importance of play, e.g. by expressing
that “play enables children to find their place in a culture, and it can provide temporary relief from the hardships they face in day-to-day life” (Snider & Ager 2018b, p.11). Additionally, the use of local toys and activities connected to culture was stressed (Snider & Ager 2018b, p.27). The theme of involvement appeared, stressing the inclusion of children in the choice of activities (Snider & Ager 2018b, p.12). In addition, the involvement of family and community is stressed, e.g. to “look for local caregivers and community members who would be willing to share special skills or tell stories and sing songs in the CFS” (Snider & Ager 2018b, p.27).

In regard to gender, the theme of gender sensitive emerges, e.g. stressing the importance of inclusion; “it is very important to take account of the gender, age and abilities of the children who attend CFS” (Snider & Ager 2018b, p.12). The theme of separate gender also is recurrent, e.g. “it may be best to have separate time slots for girls and boys to attend the CFS. This may be more appropriate in certain contexts and will ensure that girls feel comfortable to join and fully participate in the activities” (Snider & Ager 2018b, p.12).

In relation to both culture and gender, the theme of sensitivity is stressed, e.g. to “remember to take account of children’s age, gender, culture and abilities so that everyone can participate comfortably” (Snider & Ager 2018b, p.26). The theme of cross culture emerges, e.g. in order to promote inclusion, “mix people from different groups (such as ethnicities, social groups or gender) in the same team as much as is culturally and socially acceptable” (Snider & Ager 2018b, p.13). In addition, it is considered important to realize that cultures differ from each other, e.g. that “body language, including eye contact and how close or far apart people stand while talking, will vary by culture, age and gender of the people communicating” (Snider & Ager 2018b, p.89). Moreover, the theme of separate gender appears, e.g. that “it is important to have separate groups in cultures where girls (especially adolescent girls) and boys are not permitted to be together” (Snider & Ager 2018b, p.80).
4. Discussion

In the discussion, I will firstly compare and discuss similarities and differences regarding how culture and gender appropriate responses are expressed in the guidelines and manuals. Secondly, I will explore how groups where girls and boys are separated emerge as a local adaption in relation to gender and culture appropriate responses. Thirdly, I will discuss clashes between culture and gender appropriate responses that emerge in this study. Fourthly, I will conclude my discussion with some remarks.

4.1 Culture and Gender Appropriate Responses

The first thing I find interesting to note in regard to culture appropriate responses, is that in all six cases of this study, the involvement of children, their caregivers, and the local community emerges as essential in relation to culture appropriate responses in the implementation of CFSs. For example, in the International guideline, The Global Protection Cluster, et al., (2011, p.13) stresses the importance of engagement of “parents and girls and boys in all key decisions regarding CFSs” as well as the local government and the use of local staff (Global Protection Cluster, et al., 2011, p.5). In The World Vision, Red Cross & Red Crescent guideline, Snider and Ager (2018a, p.14) underscore the involvement of boys and girls as well as “caregivers, grandparents, religious leaders, local government officials, women and men, youth, and various subgroups in the community.” Additionally, in the World Vision, Red Cross & Red Crescent manual, Snider and Ager (2018b, p.13) want to “engage communities, parents and girls and boys in all key decisions regarding CFSs.” Moreover, in the Swedish manual, the involvement of children, parents as well as the local community is mentioned (Ali & Claesson. 2018, pp.4, 7, 28). In addition, the Sudanese manual, AUW, et al., (2016, pp.23, 25) stresses the participation of children, the family and community. Furthermore, in the Filipino guideline, The Council for the Welfare of Children, et.al, (2017, p.18) highlights the participation of both children, family and the community.

Furthermore, one theme that appeared in all manuals and guidelines was the cultural adaption of activities, accentuating the fact that activities should be culture appropriate regarding the children’s cultural context. In addition, in all guidelines and manuals except the Swedish one, examples of cultural activities were expressed, e.g. local toys, traditional dance, cultural songs, and traditional games. From an ecological resilience perspective, I suggest that the cultural adaption of activities is one way to contribute to the children’s resilience, both on an individual, micro, meso/exo, and macro
level. On an individual level, since cultural activities may contribute to resilience for individual children, e.g. that “play and recreational activities for children, such as sports, arts and cultural activities provided in a structured manner to restore a sense of predictability and continuity” (Global Protection Cluster, et al., 2011, p.10). For the micro and meso/exo system, since the parents cultural perception regarding the activities contributes to whether the activities have the potential to be a risk or a source to resilience for the children, e.g. “use of culturally inappropriate activities and toys may dissuade parents from sending their children to the CFS” (Global Protection Cluster, et al., 2011, p.7-8). Moreover, on the macro system since the adherence to the overall cultural context, e.g. “local songs contain cultural and historical values and can be used to discuss specific issues, or to entertain children and help them relax at home and in the workshops” (Ali & Claesson 2018, p.10).

As argued by Metzler, et al. (2015, p.20), there is a need for CFSs to improve the local adaption of activities in order to suit the children’s specific needs depending on their context. Therefore, I wish to suggest that the involvement of different ecological systems can contribute to the ability to be culturally sensitive in the implementation of activities. Different system, e.g. the individual (the child), the micro system (the family) and the meso/exo system (the community) may put words on their cultural views, and knowledge about their macro system can be reviled, for example, when it comes to cultural views of factors for resilience.

When I explored how gender views are expressed in the guidelines and manuals, I could establish how their views on “gender appropriate” are expressed. One interesting finding is that in all the guidelines and manuals, it appeared that the inclusion of all children’s participation in CFSs is stressed in different ways. In the international guideline, the equal participation, and the distinct needs of boys and girls are stressed, e.g. “enable girls and boys participation, which is essential for promoting inclusion and equity” (Global Protection Cluster, et al., 2011, p.5) and “the Guidelines should also be implemented with sensitivity to child development and the distinct needs of girls and boys” (Global Protection Cluster, et al., 2011, p.3). In the World Vision, Red Cross & Red Crescent guideline, the equal participation of all children is stressed as well as the specific needs of boys and girls, e.g. to “be inclusive of all children. This includes girls and boys” (Snider & Ager, 2018a, p.11). Furthermore, “all children should have the opportunity to participate in a CFS, regardless of their gender.” In addition, “it is also vital to design activities and schedules to meet the distinct needs of girls and boys” (Snider & Ager,
2018a, p.14). Also in the *World Vision, Red Cross & Red Crescent* manual, the equality between girls and boys is stressed in the activity “what we expect from each other, expressing that “boys and girls are equal” (Snider & Ager, 2018b, p.34).

In a similar way, the *Sudanese* manual, stresses the participation of all children, including the participation of both girls and boys, e.g. “in all games, remember to include girls, boys and disabled children. We must all play!” (AUW, et al., 2016, p.34). Furthermore, the equal participation of girls is stressed especially, e.g. to “ensure that girls have equal opportunity to play as boys” (AUW, et al., 2016, p.27). In the *Filipino* guideline too, the participation and needs of all children, boys and girls, and especially girls are stressed, e.g. to “provide activities that engage ALL children as active participants” (Council for the Welfare of Children, et.al., 2017, p.42); “promote equal participation by boys and girls” (Council for the Welfare of Children, et.al., 2017, p40). In addition, “meet the distinctive needs of girls and boys” (Council for the Welfare of Children, et.al., 2017, p.6). As well as to “ensure the participation of all groups of children, especially the most vulnerable, including girls” (Council for the Welfare of Children, et.al., 2017, p.39).

One interesting finding is that the *Filipino* guideline also stresses the participation of “transgender and intersex (LGBTI) children” (Council for the Welfare of Children, et.al., 2017, p.11). The same idea is to be found in the *World Vision, Red Cross & Red Crescent* guideline, which mentions transgender children as extra vulnerable and in need of support (Snider & Ager, 2018a, p.12).

Moreover, it emerges that the *Swedish* manual speaks less about gender than the other guidelines and manuals. Girls and boys are mentioned one time in relation to the context of providing good role models (Ali & Claesson, 2018, p.17). In addition, girls are mentioned one time in the context of sexual violence (Ali & Claesson, 2018, p.23). Otherwise, “girls and boys” are not mentioned. Instead the manual uses the term “children”, e.g. that all children shall have the opportunity to take part in activities on their own conditions. Furthermore, the *Swedish* manual uses the term “hen”, a gender-neutral pronoun, at one point when talking about how a skilled staff should act.

Overall, I wish to suggest that a “gender appropriate” view implies the equal participation of all children, as stressed in all guidelines and manuals. Further, in most cases, the equal participation of both boys and girls and their specific needs are emphasised. However, I would argue that the *Swedish* manual differs from the other guidelines and manuals in its limited focus on boys and girls, while instead focusing on
children in general. I also discovered that the World Vision, Red Cross & Red Crescent guideline stresses the support to transgender children. In addition, the Filipino guideline stresses the support for transgender and intersex children, something that I did not find in the other guidelines and manuals.

4.2 The Separation of Boys and Girls

In regard to how gender appropriate responses are expressed in relation to cultural appropriate responses in the guidelines and manuals, I discovered that the most common intervention in the guidelines is to separate boys and girls, mentioned in some way in all guidelines and manuals. However, it appeared that the different guidelines and manuals stress the separation of boys and girls to varying degrees and in different ways. The International guideline, does not express any recommendation regarding dividing groups by gender, except separate latrines for males and females (Global Protection Cluster, et al., 2011, p.7). The Swedish manual mentions that it on some occasions it can be appropriate to have gender-divided groups if the children or adults around them especially ask for it (Ali & Claesson, 2018, p.7). In addition, the Filipino guideline states that CFSs can be divided by gender if it is appropriate in regard to the cultural context (Council for the Welfare of Children, et.al., 2017, p.42). It is also said that “CFS activities will vary according to the local culture (e.g., separate CFS for Muslim girls and boys)” (Council for the Welfare of Children, et.al., 2017, p.17). In addition, the guideline also points out that there should be separate toilets for girls and boys (Council for the Welfare of Children, et.al., 2017, p.14). The World Vision, Red Cross & Red Crescent guideline also suggests that gender separated groups may be needed in some cultures, e.g. “in some cultural contexts, separate spaces or activity schedules may be needed for boys and girls so that girls can fully participate and have their distinct needs met” (Snider & Ager, 2018a, p.12). Furthermore, the need of separate bathroom for girls and boys is stressed as important (Snider & Ager 2018a, p.20). Moreover, the World Vision, Red Cross & Red Crescent manual stresses the importance of gender divided groups in some cultural contexts e.g. as seen in the following passage: “it is important to have separate groups in cultures where girls (especially adolescent girls) and boys are not permitted to be together” (Snider & Ager, 2018b, p.80). Finally, the Sudanese manual, points out that in regard to some of the activities boys and girls must be separated e.g. to “make sure boys and girls play separately” and “males and females should be completely separated during
this exercise to ensure comfort and freedom of expression” (AUW, et al., 2016, pp.31, 41).

Taken together, a range of views emerge in regard of the separation of boys and girls. From the international guideline, which only mentions that toilets should be separated between boys and girls to the Swedish, Filipino, and the two World Vision, Red Cross & Red Crescent guidelines/manuals, which point out that under certain circumstances it may be appropriate to have separate groups of boys and girls. And further on the Sudanese guideline, which explicitly emphasizes that during certain activities, girls and boys should be in separate groups.

I wish to suggest that one explanation of the fact that all of the guidelines and manuals are in favour of some kind of separation between girls and boys is connected to their aim to be both gender and culture appropriate. Furthermore, in order to be culturally sensitive, it is reasonable to argue that the intervention needs to be flexible, as different macro-, as well as meso/exo-, and micro-systems, can differ in their perception of gender due to their cultural context. However, as claimed by Falb, et al. (2016, p.10), girls surrounded by armed conflicts can be extra vulnerable for violence. Therefore, I would suggest that one possible explanation for why the Sudanese manual differs from the others by giving more clear directives could be related to the situation for women in Sudan, as stressed by Amnesty International (2019, paragraph 5) and UN General Assembly (2016, p.5), in order to be culture and gender appropriate. However, the results of this study do not explain how the separation of girls and boys may affect the individuals and their resilience. Nor, how transgender and intersex children are treated. I therefore believe that these issues can form the basis for future research.

4.3 Clashes between Culture and Gender Appropriate Responses

I wish to argue that there may be clashes between gender and culture appropriate responses in CFSs. I have previously discussed how CFSs aim to be culture appropriate by working together with the children, families and community as well as adapting activities to the local context. I have also discussed the separation of boys and girls in order to be gender appropriate. However, already in a context that seems to be culturally coherent, it is reasonable to argue that clashes between gender norms and culture views can appear, as culture norms and views can be different in different ecological systems. At the macrolevel, e.g. in a cultural context of a country or region, there can be certain dominant cultural views, which may be due to a specific religion. Never the less, at the
same time different groups within that country or region can have other cultural views. Different communities (meso/exo system), or families (micro system), provide their own cultural view (macro system), which may differ from the overall dominant cultural view (someone else’s macro system). In other words, if different cultural views coexist, for example in regard to gender and cultural appropriate responses, a clash may arise.

A good illustration of when a clash may appear is when different individuals, children as well as adults, from different cultural contexts share the same CFS. For example, the World Vision, Red Cross & Red Crescent guideline stresses that “CFS staff must show respect for all children, regardless of their religious or ethnic affiliation, gender or sexual orientation” (Snider & Ager 2018a, p.12). Furthermore, the international guideline, states that children from different cultural views shall be respected to “ensure that children’s religious preferences are respected by, for example, enabling girls and boys to dress in the manner that is appropriate to their religious orientation. If the participating children come from multiple religious or ethnic groups, make sure that each sub-group has its own prayers and activities and that CFS workers show respect for all orientations or ethnic groups” (Global Protection Cluster, et al., 2011, pp.6-7). However, in the interaction between people with different views, clashes may appear. Such a case is for example pointed out in World Vision, Red Cross & Red Crescent guideline, where it is said that “there may be tensions among different ethnic groups” something that “must be taken into account when bringing children together in activities” (Snider & Ager, 2018a, p.19). In other words, as I understand it, the aim is to respect all children’s different cultural views in order to contribute to their resilience. Thus, due to the fact that different individuals have different cultural understanding of what contributes to resilience, their macro system may clash.

Another example is when a CFS intervention endeavours to be both culture appropriate in the cultural context and at the same time, promotes an alternative understanding of “gender appropriate”. For example, the Swedish manual encourages reflection on traditional gender roles and how gender can be understood in new ways (Rädda Barnen 2017, p. 17). Furthermore, when the international guideline stresses the importance to “promote positive behaviours among adolescent girls and boys around issues of gender and sexual and reproductive health” (Global Protection Cluster, et al., 2011, p.7). Overall, this suggests the potential clash between different cultural perceptions regarding what can be seen as gender “appropriate.”
To conclude, as gender is understood in different ways around the world, both on macro-, meso/exo-, and micro levels, the interaction between different ecological systems may clash. I wish to suggest that this clash will always be present in CFSs as different individuals and cultures joins together. Hence, who are the ones to decide what is appropriate or not?

4.4 Culture and Gender Appropriate According to Who?

The guidelines and manuals seem to be limited with few concrete suggestions of how to adapt CFSs to a specific cultural setting. The closest adaptation to a specific cultural context is to be found in the *Sudanese* manual where cultural activities connected to a specific cultural context are presented, both in the form of local games from Darfur State, emphasizing that the “games can assist in linking together the community of children in the CFS and create a spirit of solidarity among them” (AUW, et al., 2016, p.61) and in the “Celebration of Puberty”, an activity “based on particular cultural customs in Sudan” (AUW, et al., 2016, p.40). Furthermore, as discussed earlier, the *Sudanese* manual adapted the activities to their cultural context by pointing out that some of the activities should be differentiated among girls and boys. Otherwise, I find very few concrete suggestions for culture and gender appropriate adaptations to a specific cultural context.

However, I want to argue that the guidelines and manuals are neither neutral nor indifferent. As discussed above, all guidelines and manuals stress the importance of local involvement of children, families and the community as well as the cultural adaption of activities in order to be culture appropriate. Furthermore, all guidelines and manuals emphasize the equal participation of all children in order to be gender appropriate. In addition, they suggest that groups may be divided between girls and boys in order to be gender appropriate in relation to the cultural context. Therefore, I claim that all guidelines and manuals aim to be both culture and gender appropriate when aiming to include all children in an equal way, as well as respecting the local culture. Moreover, as mentioned in the background, the guidelines and manuals adhere to values stressing the importance of both the respect of culture and gender equality, something that may explain this result.

Nevertheless, as stressed by both Fernando & Ferrari. eds. (2013) and Lensu (2003), and illustrated above, different ecological systems, micro, meso/exo-, and macro-systems, hold different perspectives of what can be seen as gender as well as culture appropriate. Sometimes, these different perspectives may clash. Thence, does this mean
that the guidelines and manuals should have clearer directives regarding what is culture and gender appropriate?

Due to the complexity of gender and culture issues and their connection to children’s resilience, I wish to suggest that, instead of finding simple answer, as argued by Fernando & Ferrari. eds. (2003), an ongoing culturally sensitive analysis is important in order to reveal both risk and resilience in different cultural contexts. Thus, the question remains: Culture and Gender Appropriate according to who?
5. Conclusion

In this thesis I set out to explore and compare how culture and gender appropriate responses in CFSs guidelines and manuals are expressed in order to gain an increased understanding of how these guidelines and manuals handle the interaction between gender norms in different cultures. To conduct the study I applied the ecological resilience framework in a comparative analysis, when discussing the research questions.

To conclude and answer the research questions, I suggest that culture and gender appropriate responses are pointed out as important in all guidelines and manuals. In relation to culture appropriate responses, I discovered that the participation of children, families and the community, as well as the cultural adaptation of activities are stressed as important. Furthermore, this interaction and adaption may contribute to cultural sensitivity on different ecological levels. Moreover, regarding to gender appropriate responses, children’s equal participation appeared as central. However, the different guidelines and manuals vary in their focus on girls, boys, transgender, intersex, and children.

Further, I argue that separate groups between boys and girls during activities is the most common intervention mentioned in relation to the interaction between gender and culture in order to be gender and culture appropriate. Additionally, I suggest that the Sudanese manual differs from the other guidelines and manuals, something that may be linked to local cultural adaption. Moreover, this study demonstrates that the Sudanese manual mentions specific local activities, something I did not find in the other guidelines and manuals, as they were more general.

In regard to clashes between culture and gender appropriate responses, I wish to suggest that clashes may arise when different individuals come together in CFSs due to their different cultural views on gender. Moreover, clashes may occur when CFSs interventions try to promote a different gender view to what is locally appropriate. Finally, I suggest that the main clash occurs because of the complexity of different perceptions of culture and gender appropriate responses in CFSs. Thus, who has the right to make that decision?
6. References


## 7. Appendix: Codes and Themes

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