

Children of Rebellion

Socialization of Child Soldiers
within the Lord's Resistance Army

Lotte Vermeij



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Districts of Northern Uganda affected by the LRA



Figure 0.1
 Source: www.vormdicht.nl

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Lotte Vermeij

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Acronyms

CAR	Central African Republic
CPA	Concerned Parents Association, Kitgum, Uganda
CPU	Child Protection Unit, Gulu, Uganda
CRC	United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
GUSCO	Gulu Support the Children Organization, Uganda
IDP camp	Internally Displaced People camp
ILO	International Labor Office
LC	Local Council. These councils are introduced in Uganda by President Museveni's government. There are councils at each level of administration, from the village (LC1) to the district (LC5).
LRA	Lord's Resistance Army, Uganda
NAI	Nordic Africa Institute, Uppsala, Sweden
NGO	Non Governmental Organization
NUPI	Norwegian Institute of International Affairs, Oslo, Norway
PRIO	International Peace Research Institute, Oslo, Norway
RUF	Revolutionary United Forces, Sierra Leone
SPLA	Sudan People's Liberation Army/Movement, South Sudan
SWAY	Survey of War-Affected Youth
UPDF	Uganda People's Defence Force, government forces Uganda
WACA	War Affected Children Association, Gulu, Uganda
WFP	United Nations World Food Programme

1. Introduction

Why do child soldiers remain with rebel groups? What exactly induces these children to live under such severe conditions faced when being part of a rebel group? The answers to these questions are far from obvious and appear to be a complex mixture of various motivating factors. As child soldiering is a global phenomenon, scholars have written extensively about the topic. Yet, these studies tend to focus on the processes concerning the recruitment of children as well as on recovering and reintegrating former child soldiers into society. Surprisingly little is known about what happens in the period between joining and leaving a rebel group, thus the period during which children are actively involved within a rebel group.

Once children are recruited to be part of a rebel group, whether this is forced or voluntary, their commanders aim to assure children remain with the rebel group and function as effective soldiers. In this thesis I will argue that in order to achieve this, the process of socialization is a determining factor. Extensive field research I have conducted among former child soldiers in Northern Uganda indicated that socialization represents an essential aspect in creating allegiance. As socialization facilitates bonding within rebel groups it plays a determining role in the creation of loyalty and dependency on a rebel group. However, little is known on how this is actually achieved. What are the methods used in the socialization process to achieve bonding? And how do these contribute to the fact that many child soldiers remain with rebel groups for extended periods of time and form severe threats to regional peace? This thesis will attempt to clarify this process using a case study among former child soldiers and commanders of the Lord's Resistance Army in Northern Uganda.

For more than two decades the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) has been fighting in Northern Uganda. The LRA has relied heavily on the use of child soldiers; interviews with experts and former LRA rebels indicated that 60 to 80% of the group consists of children. Thorough research has been carried out to find out how these children end up with the LRA. This revealed that abduction and the use of force is the main method of recruitment (Blattman, 2007). Still, even though they are forced to

join the group, field research indicated that these children often remain with the LRA for long periods of time. This seemingly contradicting phenomenon raises the question what exactly keeps these children in the group? Allegiance is relatively high among LRA rebels; abducted children often become loyal to the group and decide to stay. Given the fact they are initially abducted, a fundamental puzzle is established. This indicates that the LRA uses efficient mechanisms to engage their members and create allegiance.

By practicing these mechanisms, the LRA has managed to remain a cohesive group which continues its violent struggle. After being chased out from Northern Uganda in 2006, the LRA is now scattered and poses significant security threats to the Central African region. Since December 2008, Operation Lightning Thunder has attempted to put a halt to the LRA's increasingly vicious attacks and aimed to eliminate the entire organization. However, this joint military operation by the government forces of Uganda, DR Congo (DRC) and South Sudan, has not been successful in achieving its goals. The LRA's current presence in South Sudan, eastern DRC and the Central African Republic (CAR), still poses severe threats to civilians and leaves traces of death and destruction all over the region. Moreover, recent months have seen a major re-escalation of atrocities and abductions committed by the LRA, particularly in eastern DRC (International Alert, 2009). The question rises how it is possible for a rebel group largely consisting of abducted children to become this resilient? Drawing from extensive field research, this thesis aims to explain that socialization represents the "glue" that keeps the LRA together as a cohesive group.

In addition to problems tackling the LRA as an organization, the reintegration of former LRA rebels into society turned out to be a highly challenging task too. Rehabilitation programs often mismatch the needs of former rebels, resulting in failing reintegration of these individuals (Borzello, 2007). Field research indicated that former child soldiers are often poorly understood; they become outsiders in their communities, which challenges both their individual development as well as the development of their society. When these children return home, it often seems as if they have changed their identity and abandoned all their societal norms and values. In this thesis I argue that these changes are caused by socialization processes within the

LRA. Previous research on child soldiers has neglected this phenomenon, which has resulted in a failure to generate a broad understanding of child soldiers. Because of this rather limited understanding it has been difficult to effectively target rehabilitation programs, which in turn endangers regional peace. It is therefore of great importance to devote more research to reveal the experiences of child soldiers, and particularly emphasize the socialization processes they undergo within rebel groups. Since the LRA manages to create *allegiance* among their *abducted* recruits, one can assume they use a highly efficient socialization mechanism. Therefore it seems particularly viable to use the LRA as a case study in this thesis.

The main purpose of this thesis is to explore the lives of child soldiers during their active involvement with the LRA. I will focus on the motivating factors for their life as a member of the group and attempt to explain why these children remain with the LRA at all as the majority have been forcefully recruited. As explained above, this is of great significance as there is not much literature available on this subject and reintegration programs mismatch their needs. The shortage of research concerning this issue enables me to contribute to a research environment evolving around an ever growing problem; children embodying the ultimate weapon in war. Due to the proliferation of armed conflict, increasing numbers of children are directly exposed to the effects of war. This indicates that a growing number of children are becoming engaged in conflicts. These children are recruited into armed groups and quickly transformed into soldiers. Unlike other scholars, I argue that one of the most significant processes in the transformation of a child into a soldier is socialization. I will highlight that socialization creates bonding between the members of a group and that it is used as a tool to create allegiance and keep child soldiers with the rebel group, preventing them to escape. As such, this thesis will focus on the rigorous developments coming about during the socialization process used by the LRA. Therefore, the main research question to be addressed will be:

How does socialization motivate child soldiers to remain with the Lord's Resistance Army?

Due to the complexity of the child soldiering phenomenon, this thesis will illuminate the processes preceding the socialization period child soldiers experience. In order to create a broad, well developed understanding of child soldiering I will build on previous research I have done. As such I will focus on the following issues; In the first chapter I will elaborate upon the difficulties in defining a child soldier as well as upon socialization theory. Besides that, I will devote a section to explain the research procedure I followed while conducting my field research. This section will consist of a description of the method I used and emphasize the importance of interviewing former child soldiers in this case. The second chapter will consist of three sections which explain the use of child soldiers in rebel groups, the methods of recruitment, and the process of transforming a child into a soldier. In order to achieve a clear understanding of how children become parts of rebel groups, I will analyze a variety of studies conducted by prominent scholars in this chapter. Examples of these are Blattman (2007, 2008), Gates (2002, 2007, 2009), Machel (2001), Rosen (2005), Singer (2006), and Wessells (2004, 2006). Due to the great variety of views concerning child soldiers, I will analyze the views of a range of scholars with the purpose of creating a wider understanding of this complex phenomenon. Scholars tend to view child soldiers either as victims or perpetrators. These alternative viewpoints will be incorporated in the second chapter in order to address the problem broadly and create a balanced understanding of child soldiering.

Hereafter I will shift my focus to the LRA and elaborate upon the organization and the creation of allegiance among its rebels. I will include fieldwork evidence to create a broader understanding of the organization and illustrate its use of child soldiers. In the final chapter I will illuminate particular processes of socialization child soldiers encounter within the LRA, building on three months of field research I have conducted among child soldiers in Northern Uganda. I will explain how socialization creates allegiance among abducted child soldiers. By doing this, I aim to develop a broader understanding of the lives of child soldiers within rebel groups. This will enable me to indicate opportunities for improvement of reintegration programs for former child soldiers in the conclusion of this thesis.

2. Background and Research Procedure

This chapter will elaborate upon the background of the child soldiering phenomenon. It will highlight the difficulties of defining a child soldier and indicate which challenges this brings along. Hereafter it will focus on socialization theory and explain why socialization processes are used by rebel groups. By elaborating upon childhood socialization it will illustrate why it is useful for rebel groups to use child soldiers. Moreover, process tracing in socialization is explained to build a foundation for the analysis of LRA socialization in later parts of this thesis. Lastly, this chapter will address the research procedure and method issues. It will elaborate upon the three months of field research which were conducted in order to realize this project.

2.1 What is a Child Soldier?

The existence of child soldiers is often considered as an offensive phenomenon which challenges people's basic assumptions about children, good and evil, and humankind. The generally accepted perception of children seems to be that they should not be part of armed groups and deserve protection exercised by adults and societies. This vision is documented in national laws around the world, as well as in internationally ratified legal standards such as the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and the Optional Protocol on Children and Armed Conflict. The Optional Protocol illegitimizes all child recruitment by groups outside official governments and has set the minimum age for participation in combat at 18 years (Wessells, 2006:1-2).

Although these standards are widely recognized, reality undermines these as the use of children in armed conflicts is still a global phenomenon. During the last decade large numbers of child soldiers have directly participated in at least 27 conflicts throughout Africa, the Americas, Asia, Europe and the Middle East (Wessells, 2006:10). This clearly demonstrates the global range of the problem. Still, child soldiering is not something new caused by globalization; it is as old as mankind (Gates and Reich, 2009:2). In spite of a near global consensus that children should not be

used as soldiers, child soldiering is an on-going phenomenon. To illustrate this; the Child Soldiers Global Report 2008 claims that “when armed conflict exists, children will almost inevitably become involved as soldiers” (2008).

The Global Report 2008 advocates the world wide urgency of combating the child soldier problem. Yet, this struggle faces severe constraints; merely defining child soldiers presents a range of challenges. Andvig defines a child soldier as “a child who participates actively in a violent conflict by being a member of an organization that applies violence in a systematic way” (2006:7). Yet, what is a child? Definitions of childhood are culturally established and differ among societies. Whereas most developed countries as well as the CRC define a person under 18 years of age as a child, many developing countries regard a person as an adult once he or she is doing adult work or has completed cultural rituals that lead to man- or womanhood. This implies that cultural phenomena, traditions and social roles in developing countries lead to the perception that children become adults when they are approximately 14 or 15 years of age. Thus, a 15-year-old joining an armed group in a developing country may be perceived as a young adult by his or her own society, while developed countries would consider this 15-year-old as a child and thus a child soldier. Still, despite the different perceptions of when a child reaches adulthood, large percentages of populations in developing nations consider people under the age of 18 too young to join armed groups and refer to them as “underage soldiers” or “minor soldiers” instead of using the rather sensitive term “child soldiers” (Wessells, 2006:5).

The term child soldier does not only refer to uniformed people carrying arms but applies to people with a large variety of roles in armed groups. Examples of these are children involved with armed groups as cooks, escorts, porters, babysitters, sex slaves, bodyguards, spies, human mine detectors or labourers. Next to this, child soldiers are used by a large variety of armed groups, ranging from rebel groups to government forces (Gates and Reich, 2009:3, Human Rights Watch, 2007, and Wessells, 2006:6-7). The lack of verifiable data further complicates the problem, resulting in a series of myths (Gates and Reich, 2009:1).

This thesis will take these considerations into account and therefore adopt a broad explanation of the term child soldiers, including the somewhat arbitrary age

limit of 18 to define the upper limit of childhood. It will draw on Machel's definition which states that; "a child soldier is any child – boy or girl – under the age of 18, who is compulsorily, forcibly, or voluntarily recruited or used in hostilities by armed forces, paramilitaries, civil defence units or other armed groups. Child soldiers are used for forced sexual services, as combatants, messengers, porters, and cooks. Most are adolescents, though many are 10 years of age or younger. The majority are boys, but a significant proportion overall are girls" (Machel, 2001:7).

According to this definition, an estimated 300.000 child soldiers participate in conflicts throughout this world as part of armed groups. Approximately 40% of these soldiers are girls (Human Rights Watch, 2007, Machel, 2001, and Wessells, 2006). Still, Gates points out that this estimate dates from 1994. UN estimates from 2008 calculate the figure to be 250.000 yet one should keep in mind there is no accurate figure available on the exact number of child soldiers (2009:1).

When analyzing the standpoint of the international community on this large number of children involved in armed conflict, it appears that child soldiers have often been portrayed as victims of adults benefiting from the exploitation of children. However, this one-dimensional portrayal recently became the topic of a much heated debate and has been extended by research developments which have established a more anchored, broader understanding of the phenomenon. The fluidity and diversity within the concept of child soldiers has been highlighted, creating a more nuanced view of the problem. This implies that "previous tendencies to infantilize children and to regard them as passive are giving way to a view of children as actors who have a strong sense of agency, participate in the construction of political discourses and social identities, and in some cases lead political action" (Wessells, 2006). Still, in spite of recent debate this is a divided field of inquiry in which scholars tend to be divided into two camps; the one describing child soldiers as victims whom have been intimidated by adults and forced into soldiering; the second describing child soldiers as voluntary, ruthless perpetrators who see violence as a way to obtain respect, social justice, and political and economic opportunities (Bøås and Dunn, 2007:39, and Wessells, 2006:3).

As Gates rightly points out, child soldiers are characteristically depicted as victims yet the complicating feature that they are simultaneously predators is generally

ignored (2009:1-2). This thesis will attempt to show that the reflections of child soldiers as either emotionally crippled victims or predatory killers are over-simplistic and invalid conclusions. With the purpose of contributing to an international community which is attempting to understand and address the problem of child soldiering, it is essential to illuminate the insufficiency of these generalizations. Analyzing the process of socialization within rebel groups will significantly contribute to this and result in a better understanding of the child soldiering phenomenon.

2.2 The Process of Socialization

Little attention has been paid to the social processes in rebel groups. As Elizabeth Wood argues, little “attention has been paid to the social processes of civil war – by which I mean the transformation of social actors, structures, norms, and practices at the local level – that sometimes leave profound social changes at their wake” (2008:540). Wood argues that these processes cause transformations in social networks. “These processes reconfigure social networks in a variety of ways, creating new networks, dissolving some, and changing the structure of others, as when the local clients of a patron are mobilized into an armed network with a new central figure. A social network consists of persons (network nodes) linked by different kinds of relationships (edges)” (2008:540). Wood’s argument indicates that social processes of civil war have a large impact on the construction of society as well as rebel groups. This is also the case when children become part of the LRA; social processes aid their transformation into soldiers. Socialization is an essential aspect of this.

Children abducted to become part of the LRA enter a completely new life from the moment they are taken away from their homes and enter the bush. The shift from “village life” to “bush life” encompasses changes on many levels which require rigorous adjustment of the child to the lifestyle group. Field research I conducted among former LRA child soldiers and commanders indicated that socialization is used to make these children part of the group. As Brim illustrates; “through socialization the individual acquires the culture of his group or groups. This includes two main divisions of culture: the traditional positions, or *statuses*, in the society and the *role*

behaviours associated with them... Consider first the individual who is confronted with a new role and knows virtually nothing about what he should do. In such a case society will require new socialization” (Brim, in: Sills, 1968:555-556).

According to Checkel socialization is “a process of inducting actors into the norms and rules of a given community. Its outcome is sustained compliance based on the internalization of these new norms. In adopting community rules, socialization implies that an agent switches from following a logic of consequences to a logic of appropriateness; this adoption is sustained over time and is quite independent from a particular structure of material incentives or sanctions” (2005:804). Yet, socialization can come about via different pathways. According to Checkel different socialization mechanisms take place and are effective (Zürn and Checkel, 2005:1075). These mechanisms aim for the internalization of values, yet some methods are more effective than others in achieving the goals of socialization. “Effectiveness seems to depend on the nature of the content being transmitted, the characteristics of the persons being socialized, the persons’ relationship to the socializing agent, and similar factors” (Brim, in: Sills, 1968:557).

Checkel (2005) distinguishes between two types of socialization; the former referring to the adoption of new roles, while the latter refers to changes in values and interests. This distinction is well reflected by Bearce (2007). “Socialization is the process by which actors acquire different identities, leading to new interests through regular and sustained interactions within broader social contexts and structures. Concerning socialization depth, constructivist scholars have carefully distinguished between Type I and Type II socialization. The former is relatively shallow and describes the situation in which an actor simply learns to play by the rules of a new social context or institution. Type I socialization clearly implies a change in an actor’s behavior but not necessarily a change in the actor’s interests. Type II socialization is deeper and refers to the situation in which actors take on a new social identity, independent of any material incentives to do so, leading to a demonstrable change in their interests over time” (Bearce, 2007:706). This definition implies that Type II socialization leads to identity change.

Checkel stresses the importance of addressing a threefold analytic challenge

when focusing on socialization. According to his theory, one must; “(1) establish the presence of socialization mechanisms and the conditions of their operation; (2) assess whether internalization (Type I or II) actually occurred; and (3) ask whether socialized actors behave differently than either they did before they were socialized, or than non-socialized actors do” (Checkel, 2005:816). Thus, in order to analyze the socialization process and its effects, one must examine whether a shift has occurred away from a logic of consequences and toward a logic of appropriateness (Checkel, 2005).

Checkel emphasizes the problem that scholars tend not to ask why actors comply with social norms. “Instead, they often focused on later stages of compliance, where internalization (full socialization) was nearly complete. This led many scholars to bracket the process of reaching this end state. At this late stage, however, compliance was not an issue of choice in any meaningful sense; agent behavior was governed by rules and driven by certain logics of appropriateness. The result was a somewhat static portrayal of social interaction, coupled with correlational and structural arguments built on “as if” assumptions at the level of agents” (Checkel, 2001:557). The next chapters will clarify that scholars who conducted previous research on child soldiering indeed bracketed the process pointed out by Checkel. It will become apparent that scholars like Blattman, Andvig and Gates note the importance of socialization yet neglect the key processes of how this takes place. This has resulted in limited understandings of child soldiering as such. In order to avoid this trap, I will analyze the process of socialization within the LRA according to Checkel’s suggestion for a threefold analysis in chapter 5 of this thesis.

Childhood Socialization

As seen in the preceding part of this chapter, socialization is a powerful tool in the creation of a cohesive group by changing and assimilating the identities of individuals. Besides this, socialization turns out to be particularly effective when used on children. “The fact that childhood socialization is usually so much more effective than adult socialization can be explained partly in terms of the different types of relationships that typically obtain between the individual and the socializing agent or agency at different stages in the life cycle. The relationship between child and parent is

a highly affective one; by contrast, the adult socialization context is likely to be far less charged with emotion – in Parsons’ phrase, it is characterized by “affective neutrality”. Moreover, the parent socializing the child is likely to make a far more open and continual use of power, so that the child can hardly avoid realizing that it is the weaker party in the situation. Agents of adult socialization, on the other hand, typically appeal more to the reason and self-interest of the person being socialized, and use power only as a last resort” (Brim, in: Sills, 1968:558). This indicates that the socialization of children is generally not only more effective but also easier to achieve. It may therefore be particularly useful for rebel groups to engage children in their activities.

Brim illuminates the different effects and consequences the use of power has on the socialization of children compared to adults. According to Brim, “there is at least one major consequence of this difference for the results of socialization: adult socialization limits itself, on the whole, to a concern with behaviour rather than with motivation and values. In fact, it is less able to teach basic values and probably requires a relationship paralleling that of childhood to bring equivalent basic value changes. An example is the extreme one of prisoner-of-war camps. Work on “brainwashing” and the breakdown of resistance to enemy values shows the context to be one in which the captors use their extreme power in a deliberate manipulation of the whole range of affect, from rejection and hate, on the one hand, to support and positive sympathy on the other, thus bringing the prisoner into a position similar to that of a child with his parent” (Brim, in: Sills, 1968:558). This argument will be complemented with evidence from field research reflected in later parts of this thesis, showing why it is useful for rebel groups to recruit children from the perspective of socialization.

Since it is easier and more effective to socialize children compared to adults, “it would seem desirable from society’s point of view to be able to socialize an individual in childhood so that he could successfully handle all of the roles he would confront in the future” (Brim, in: Sills, 1968:555). This indicates that by choosing to use child soldiers, a rebel group has to put less effort in creating loyal, allegiant members. These children have not yet gone through the same socialization processes which adults from the same society have experienced. Their sense of identity is relatively weak compared

to adults and it is therefore easier to use socialization as a mechanism to melt their identities into the group identity. This is a more challenging task when it comes to adult recruits since experience limits the effects of socialization. This phenomenon is explained by Brim, arguing that there is a variety of reasons “why the effects of early experience place important limits on later socialization. In the first place, attitudes learned in childhood are especially durable because they are continually being taught and just as continually reinforced. Second, there is good reason to believe that during early socialization the bulk of the unconscious material of the personality is accumulated. The continuity of the individual personality (and probably its characteristic modes of defence as well) is therefore maintained by the inertia, so to speak, of unconscious forces relatively inaccessible to change by later socialization. Finally, it has been suggested that the human life cycle, like that of subhuman species, may contain critical periods at which human beings must learn certain things if they are to develop further. Failure to learn these things during the appropriate period may make it impossible for subsequent learning to take place” (Brim, in: Sills, 1968:558). This explanation clearly shows why rebel groups which recruit child soldiers have an advantage in creating an allegiant, cohesive group through socialization.

Process Tracing of Socialization

Socialization is not only leading to compliance, it also builds bridges between the individual and the group. Membership of the group evokes the socialization of actors which in turn provides them with a new understanding of their interests and identity. Zürn and Checkel stress the importance of establishing “how socialization happens (identify the socialization mechanism) and under what conditions (identify the scope conditions)” (2005:1049). As part of this process, Checkel emphasizes the necessity of exploring “complex social learning, a process whereby agent interests and identities are shaped through and during interaction” (2001:561). A useful method to achieve this is process tracing.

In his work on social learning Checkel uses process tracing “to document the processes and motivations through which agents comply with norms”. Through process tracing Checkel seeks “to investigate and explain the decision process by

which various initial conditions are translated into outcomes [compliance in this case]” (2001:565). This method has proved to be able to identify the causal mechanism leading to socialization. According to Checkel “the term causal mechanism refers to the intermediate processes along which international institutions may lead actors toward accepting the norms, rules, and modes of behaviour of a given society. Mechanisms connect things; they link specified initial conditions and a specific outcome...A causal mechanism that leads to socialization will be triggered under certain circumstances” (Zürn and Checkel, 2005:1049). This can also be applied to identify how the use of socialization by the LRA creates allegiance among its rebels. Therefore, one of the central concerns of this thesis is to specify the mechanisms of socialization used by the LRA. It will illuminate the conditions under which these mechanisms lead to the internalization of new roles and interests. As such, process tracing will be used to illuminate how socialization contributes to the creation of sense of community and belonging, and thus allegiance within the LRA.

2.3 Research Procedure

In analyzing the child soldier phenomenon, it is essential to include child soldiers themselves in research. Only “few researchers have made a consistent effort to include the thoughts, feelings, experiences, and specific statements of children in their empirical investigations” (Zwiers, 1999:127). Yet, only children themselves can help us explaining the exact reasons for participation in rebel groups and why they remain with these groups. By adopting the strategy of including the voices of former child soldiers, one avoids the bias faced when solely using the opinions of scholars and humanitarian organizations. The benefits of including former child soldiers can be seen in recent developments regarding the study of child soldiering, highlighting that these children are not mere victims but that there is also a darker side to the phenomenon. I argue that the inclusion of former child soldiers in research enables the creation of a broader understanding of the undermined complexity and multi-faceted character of the phenomenon. When trying to combat the child soldier problem, this is an essential development as, first of all, the roots of the problem need to be understood

before one can reach solutions for this complex issue. As Hughes and Baker argue; “if one wants to understand a child's beliefs, perceptions, reasoning ability, attitudes and affective experiences that have relevance to the child's current circumstances, it is logical to ask the child to report on these self-processes” (1990). Therefore, this thesis uses a micro perspective, focusing on the individual perspective of former child soldiers attained through personal interviews.

Chapter 3 of this thesis will mainly be based on analyses of previous literature regarding the phenomena of child soldiering, rebellion and socialization. Hereafter, the main research method to be used will be interviewing. Due to the limited availability of studies regarding socialization processes within rebel groups, and particularly regarding socialization of child soldiers in rebel groups, field research has been the main method used to answer the research question. Besides interviewing, I have used other streams of data such as surveys carried out by other researchers. I have largely used qualitative methods and interviews in order to conduct the essential part of my research regarding socialization within the LRA. In order to achieve valid, reliable results, several factors have been taken into account when designing and carrying out the interviews. The interviews have been designed in such a way that they take major guidelines into account which are established by amongst others Adcock and Collier (2001), Frey (1995), Gerring (2007), Rubin and Rubin (1995), and Silverman (2003).

Field Research

During the field study, 65 semi-structured, in-depth, qualitative interviews were conducted with former child soldiers as well as with LRA commanders. These interviews were conducted in Gulu District, Northern Uganda. This particular area is considered to be one of the most severely hit areas by the LRA and its population has suffered numerous abductions. Abduction is the main method of child soldier recruitment by the LRA. Given this fact, the influence that the process of socialization has on a child's decision to eventually remain with the LRA is particularly interesting to analyze in-depth.

The interviews carried out aimed to reveal what happens during the process of socialization in rebel groups and how this leads to the fact that many child soldiers

remain with rebel groups in spite of the conditions they face. As this field has received very little attention, interviewing turned out to be a major need in order to get insight into the problem. Considering the shortage of information on socialization of child soldiers, the depth of the responses attained were of key importance. Therefore, the interviews were conducted in a semi-structured manner and consisted of thirteen open-ended questions in order to give the interviewee the opportunity to answer into detail. Interviewees were selected according to age of recruitment, gender, length of involvement with the LRA, whether they had a frontline or support role at the LRA, and whether they had participated in any rehabilitation programs. Given that these factors influence the experiences and roles of child soldiers which may have affected their socialization it was significant to interview a large range of people and to analyze all oral accounts separately. Key informants identified potential interviewees and were used to check their backgrounds and I used triangulation to cross-check all stories.

The interviews were conducted on an individual basis yet in most cases with the presence of an interpreter. This was decided as most interviewees preferred to tell their story in Acholi, the local language. In case interviewees preferred to do the interview in English, I did the interviews by myself without the presence of a third person. I decided to work with two interpreters, Mr Victor Oloya and Ms Jennifer Watmon. Both had extensive experience in working with child soldiers, interviewing, and psycho social counselling of former child soldiers. Working with both Mr Oloya and Ms Watmon had several advantages. It gave me access to different age groups of former child soldiers. Besides this, female child soldiers and particularly young children seemed to prefer talking with a female interpreter. Male child soldiers on the other hand responded well to Mr Oloya, a former child soldier himself. Both Mr Oloya and Ms Watmon had access to large groups of former child soldiers, yet located in different areas of Gulu District.

Follow-up interviews have been conducted with some of the interviewees who had a particularly detailed insight into the LRA. During the interviews notes have been taken with the consent of the interviewees. In addition, 47 interviews have been recorded with a voice recorder. Each of these interviews has been fully written up after

completion. The reason for writing up the results right away was to indicate where data coverage was still weak. These suggestions were then used in future interviews.

The place of the interviews was determined upon arrival in the region. The majority of interviews were conducted in three major IDP camps throughout Gulu District, Northern Uganda. These were Awach, Patiko Ajulu, and Lalogi Opit. Besides that, several interviews were conducted at boarding schools throughout the district while others were conducted in Gulu town. All interviews in the IDP camps and schools were conducted in a space determined by the interviewee and interpreter to create trust and comfort. The interviews in Gulu town were conducted in places I discussed with the interviewee, which they then approved. Permission to interview my informants was given by the Local Council (LC) of the particular sub-county, and by the administration of the school which the interviewee attended.

As most of the interviewees were former child soldiers, particular guidelines for interviewing children who have experienced traumatic events have been taken into account. Besides this, it was of great significance to take into account that “information that pertains to adult-focused interviews cannot be applied wholesale to children. Just as cross-cultural research reveals differences in thinking across peoples, developmental psychology has demonstrated that many adult assumptions regarding thinking cannot be generalized to children” (Zwiers and Morrissette, 1999:128). Therefore, guides on interviewing children written by Bourg et al. (1999), Faller (2007), Morrison and Anders (1999), Wilson and Powell (2001), and Zwiers and Morrissette (1999), were consulted when preparing and establishing the interviews. In addition, the book “Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences” by George and Bennett (2005) has served as a guide to design this study.

Data Collection

The locations in which data was collected were chosen due to the fact that the relevant interviewees are located in these areas. Northern Uganda is a particularly important place to evaluate the impacts of child soldiering; after two decades of war there is a large group of ex-combatants residing in this area. Moreover, approximately 2/3 of the recruits of the LRA were children, so there is a large pool of potential

interviewees present in Northern Uganda. Besides this, the current relatively safe situation combined with the contacts established created the possibility to conduct field research in the area of choice.

Several individuals served as gatekeepers during the field research. They assisted in identifying and gaining access to relevant individuals and organizations. Besides this, these people helped arranging transport to the interview sites and interpreted interviews. These include amongst others: Victor Oloya, Richard, Nelson and Geoffrey at the War Affected Children Association in Gulu, Uganda; Frank Velthuizen at War Child Holland in Uganda; Jennifer Watmon in Gulu; and Benjamin Anker at the Netherlands Embassy in Kampala, Uganda. As the majority of interviews would be conducted with former child soldiers I consulted with local organizations and professionals on how to proceed once I arrived in Gulu, Northern Uganda. People I consulted are involved with or knowledgeable about child soldiers and the LRA. Their advice has been truly helpful in deciding how to go about the topic.

During the field research two particular methods of sampling have been used: convenience and snowball sampling. In addition, a list of potential interviewees identified by gatekeepers was used. The research aimed to interview a wide range of people in Northern Uganda in order to offset bias and to highlight a wide range of perspectives. I therefore spent three months in the region as this enabled me to get access to the right interviewees, create trust, to set up meetings with them for follow-up interviews, and to travel within Gulu District in order to conduct additional in-depth interviews. Internal validity and thus credibility has been aimed for by interviewing a wide range of former child soldiers and commanders. In order to increase credibility and to confirm findings, data sources were cross-checked and triangulated, and follow-up interviews were conducted. Besides this, in order to ensure the replicability and reliability of the study, detailed records of the interviews have been kept and are accessible.

Informed Consent and Treatment of Data

Participants in this research have been informed “as fully as possible about the goals of the research, the necessity for the research, the manner in which the research

will be conducted, and any possible negative or positive effects” (Zwiers, 1999:139). Participants have been advised that there would be no negative consequences should they decide not to participate, and the possibility to withdraw from the interview at all times has been pointed out. Besides this, interview participants have been able to ask questions about the research (Zwiers, 1999:139). Participants were explained orally or provided with a document explaining these matters before the interview took place (see appendix I). All interviewees gave their consent that the interviews could be used for this study. In case the interviewee was under 18 years of age, clearance for the interview was given by parents, guardians, the school administration, or rehabilitation centre. In addition, the LC gave permission to conduct interviews in IDP camps.

The identity of participants has been protected in a variety of ways. Code numbers were used to identify age, gender, location, the length of the period spent with the rebel group, and participation in rehabilitation programs. Transcripts of the interviews only carry the assigned codes. All documentation is kept in secure locations; raw data and transcripts are kept separately from code sheets and permission forms. When quotes are used, possible identifying information has been altered to protect the identity of the participant. Since the research collected sensitive data, confidentiality of identity and thus anonymity within the research report has been guaranteed. The research information and raw data will be available if requested, yet confidentiality of participant identity and data will be ensured in these cases (Zwiers, 1999:140; Brett and Specht, 2004:144).

Challenges and Limitations

Interviewing children may be problematic, yet “interviews provide the most direct way to evaluate children's inner perceptions of reality” (Zwiers, 1999:128). The fact that the interviews were carried out in a post-conflict situation created several challenges. Memory, potential trauma and mental difficulties of the interviewees bring about potential bias and consequences for reliability. Cultural matters also played a role in the decisions of how to conduct the interviews and in the design of the questions. Some of the most important factors that were considered in this research are ethical aspects and working according to the “do no harm” principle (Wilson, 2001).

To overcome these challenges, I have used other case studies in post-conflict areas as guidelines for my research. An example of this is the work done by Elizabeth Wood (2000, 2003 and 2008). Besides this, I have gathered advice on how to interview former child soldiers through conversations with researchers and professionals working with child soldiers. In addition, I have approached people at local NGOs in Northern Uganda for advice on how and who to contact for interviews. During the interviews I have been sensitive to the feelings of the interviewees. If the interviewee tended to become slightly agitated we broke off the interview and talked about different things. It was up to the interviewee if he or she wanted to continue the interview at a later point in time or quit the interview process. This freedom to stop the interview was thoroughly explained to every interviewee.

The well-being of people involved with the research was the first consideration during the entire research process. Research has potential to disrupt the life of children as they “may have strong feelings or disturbing thoughts stirred up by questions asked during the interview. Once the interview is concluded, children may continue to be affected by the experience and may harbour negative feelings and thoughts” (Zwiers, 1999:136). For this reason I chose to work with two interpreters who both had extensive experience working with former child soldiers, interviewing and psycho social counselling. Thereby, possible detrimental psychological effects were taken into consideration. For this reason, all people who were interviewed will remain anonymous in order to prevent negative long-term effects and impact on their relation with society (Zwiers, 1999:137).

Process Tracing

Process tracing has been used as a tool to analyze the interviews and discover how socialization plays a role within the LRA. Checkel used process tracing to study causal mechanisms in international socialization (2008). According to Checkel “process tracing means to trace the operation of the causal mechanism(s) at work in a given situation” (2008:115). George and Bennett define process tracing as tracing “the links between possible causes and observed outcomes. In process-tracing, the researcher examines histories, archival documents, interview transcripts, and other

sources to see whether the causal process a theory hypothesizes or implies in a case is in fact evident in the sequence and values of the intervening variables in that case” (2005:6). Moreover, “the process-tracing method attempts to identify the intervening causal process – the causal chain and causal mechanism – between an independent variable (or variables) and the outcome of the dependent variable (George and Bennett, 2005:206). Process tracing can be used to “focus on whether the variable of interest was causally linked to any change in outcome and to assess whether other independent variables that change over time might have been causal” (George and Bennett, 2005:221).

According to George and Bennett, “process tracing is particularly useful for obtaining an explanation for deviant cases, those that have outcomes not predicted or explained adequately by existing theories” (2005:215). Looking at the lack of theories on socialization within the LRA, process tracing seems a particularly valid method to use in this case and hence aims to contribute to the development of a theory on socialization within rebel groups. However, in order to fully understand the use and influence of socialization within rebel groups, it is necessary to understand why and how children become involved with rebel groups. Therefore, the next chapter will elaborate upon the use of children in rebel groups and create the basis from which I will analyze socialization within the LRA. The results of the interviews conducted with former LRA child soldiers and commanders will then reveal how socialization plays an essential role in creating allegiance among LRA rebels.

3. Rebel Groups and Child Soldiers

This chapter will provide an analysis of previous research focusing on the child soldiering phenomenon. It will particularly highlight the reasons why rebel groups recruit child soldiers, and which methods they use in doing so. Moreover, this chapter will address methods used by rebel groups to transform children into soldiers and evidence from field research will be used as illustrations to these theories. It will illuminate the views of prominent scholars, analyze their standpoints, and address the weaknesses of their theories. In addition, it will underline the lack of focus on socialization processes within rebel groups. As such, it will clarify why previous research is indeed moving forward in understanding the child soldier phenomenon, yet ignores the essential influence of socialization processes. This implies that this chapter will highlight the limited understanding of the entire child soldiering problem caused by neglecting the socialization aspect.

3.1 Using Child Soldiers within Rebel Groups

A number of scholars, such as Collier (2004), have addressed the phenomena of rebel groups. Yet, a particularly interesting view has recently been developed by Jeremy Weinstein which is reflected in his book “Inside Rebellion”. Weinstein takes an alternative approach to rebellion. According to Weinstein there are two general types of rebel groups, which are distinguished by the availability of resources. He argues that rebel groups either fight for economic endowments (such as resources), or social endowments (such as beliefs). Weinstein claims that this availability of resources is a key factor in determining the character and levels of violence to be employed. In the case of an abundance of natural resources or external support, rebel groups tend to carry out high levels of indiscriminate violence. Indiscriminate violence includes “exterminating particular groups, displacing people, plundering goods, or demonstrating a group's power and ability to hurt another group” (Kalyvas, 2006:147). In resource-poor contexts on the other hand, rebel groups resort to selective and strategic violence. Selective violence “entails the personalization of violence and

requires information that is asymmetrically distributed between political actors and individual civilians” (Kalyvas, 2006:173). Weinstein argues that looking at the distinctive levels and characteristics of violence used by rebel groups one can distinguish between activist and opportunistic rebellions. Activist rebellions attract committed investors, participating despite risks and few short-term gains. Participation in opportunistic rebellions on the other hand, involves immediate rewards and fewer risks and thus attracts consumers (Weinstein, 2007:7).

In establishing and maintaining an organization able to fight for its causes and carry out violence, rebel groups face several difficulties. For instance, the types of individuals to be selected to join the rebel group, strategies of violence, civilian support, and resource availability are all examples of what should be considered by rebel leaders. Yet, one of the most significant challenges is participation of individuals in rebel groups as this represents one of the fundamentals of a rebel group. According to Gates a rebel army’s ability to succeed depends “on its ability to recruit and motivate its soldiers to fight and kill” (Gates, 2002:112). It is a challenge to attract recruits for the difficult and dangerous tasks one gets involved in when joining a rebel group. Potential recruits will weigh the costs and benefits of high-risk collective action and often have to be motivated to join a rebel group. Therefore, Weinstein argues that rebel groups attempt to establish motivation by offering selective incentives in the case of access to economic resources, and by creating appeal around a set of ideas and promises in case of constrained resources. By doing this, they intend to obtain high-quality recruits (Weinstein, 2007:8-12).

Besides this challenge of motivating recruits, rebel groups attract different types of individuals. High-commitment individuals can be considered as investors, being dedicated to the cause and willing to make investments for future rewards. Low-commitment individuals on the other hand, can be considered as consumers who merely seek short term gains from getting involved with a rebel group (Weinstein, 2007:9-10). As rebel groups do not have access to the actual motivation of potential recruits, they run the risk of including the wrong people in their group which can possibly undermine its existence. The third participation challenge faced by rebel groups is how to ensure their orders will be followed without destroying the support of

participants. Internal discipline needs to be maintained in order to sustain the rebel group. Structures of internal control enable the creation of disciplined behaviour by members of the rebel group yet these need to be carried out carefully. This also contributes to overcome the fourth challenge which is the difficulty to achieve resilience and maintain rebel membership over time (Weinstein, 2007:9-10).

As one can derive from these challenges, rebel groups face significant difficulties in achieving sufficient recruitment, control and resilience. In order to recruit the right people, potential recruits need to be screened. For instance, rebel groups need to gather information about the backgrounds of potential recruits and evaluate their level of commitment (Weinstein, 2007:104-105). Thereby, in order to achieve sustained cooperation of rebel members, sufficient training and preparation for combat is necessary as well as realizing the expectations created before the recruit joins the rebel group. Moreover, in order to realize common objectives, rebel leaders need to demonstrate responsible behaviour and cooperate. Thus, if leaders are rewarded despite violating their code of conduct, other rebel group members are unlikely to continue their cooperation (Weinstein, 2007:137). These are difficult and costly processes to carry out. In addition to this, most rebel groups “lack the formal structures and territorial control required to make threats of punishments credible” (Weinstein, 2007:158). Thus, according to Weinstein, it is a significant challenge for a rebel group to be successful, especially when this group consists of individuals weighing their costs and benefits.

The Benefits of Using Child Soldiers

When rebel groups use child soldiers, they avoid many of these difficulties. Singer argues that “as a new source of fighters, children multiply the potential military capacities of groups...this eases the difficulties groups often face in force generation” (2006:94). Rebel groups can thus become more successful in combat, securing their survival. Rebel leaders generally consider the lives of children cheaper compared to adults and thus riskier tactics can be used. This implies that when child soldiers are involved with rebel groups, conflict situations tend to emerge easier, are more difficult to end, and result in greater casualty numbers (Singer, 2006:95). Thus, child soldiers

are used in 60% of rebel groups as a means to overcome their weak starting point regarding recruitment and organization (Singer, 2006:95). In addition, “groups lacking a clear ideological basis may find it easier to maintain the loyalty, and participation, of children” (Andvig and Gates, 2007:2). This way of reasoning was supported during my personal interviews with a former LRA commander. He stated that “it was easy to make the newly abducted children participate with us. We taught them to become loyal and do what we said. They listened. This was difficult with the grown ups; we could not change their minds easily, they were always thinking about going home to their families. It was much easier to make the children become good, integrated rebels”.

Training of child soldiers is cursory; they learn basic combat techniques but are not taught to protect themselves. Short term, inadequate training in which children are just taught to shoot, operate their gun, ambush, and use grenades is often the norm. This training overlooks the inability of many children to appreciate the risks of combat and understand their mortality (Wessells, 2006:67-68). Interviews with former LRA rebels indicated this is indeed often the case. Vincent, a former LRA abductee, expressed that “sometimes we had no time for training. The UPDFs were chasing us and the rebels only showed us how to operate the gun. Then we went to the battlefield and had to shoot everything around us. We had to run and never stop to hide. The rebels said the bullets would not find us if we were brave. So we ran and shot”. This indicates that the life of a child is considered cheap, they learn about mortality and combat skills on the battlefield since losing a child is not as costly for a rebel group as losing an adult fighter. This makes it very beneficial for rebel groups to deploy child soldiers instead of adults. As such, children in rebel groups are indoctrinated and manipulated, securing their commitment to the group. This indicates that recruitment, control, and resilience are more easily achieved with children compared to adults. Thus, the use of child soldiers contributes to overcome some of the numerous challenges faced by rebel groups and is therefore beneficial. This explains why large numbers of child soldiers are recruited. Moreover, “such large proportions of young children indicate that they are employed as substitutes for adults and not as complements” (Andvig and Gates, 2007:4).

As Weinstein assumes, adults are rational and “their actions reflect deliberate decisions designed to maximize payoffs” (Weinstein, 2007:40). This implies that it is a difficult task to engage and recruit adults. This is not to say that children are in principle irrational actors, but rebel groups often use forced recruitment of children which is accompanied by a thorough process of indoctrination. When children are abducted, they can more easily be shaped into rebels compared to adults who are less easily influenced and overpowered. This argument was indeed supported during field research among former LRA rebels. Furthermore, child soldiers are known for their resilience and ability to continue fighting for a longer period of time compared to adults. Whereas adults have lives to return to and often join rebel groups for a period of time to gain income, child soldiers are often deprived of other beneficial opportunities and thus stay with rebel groups, as a means to survive (Wessells, 2006:41).

This argument is also reflected in a prominent study carried out by Christopher Blattman (2007). His paper proposes an economic rationale for recruitment of children by rebel groups, based on evidence from the LRA. Blattman argues that “when rebel groups are constrained in the number of feasible recruits (e.g. due to resource constraints or supervision costs) they will target individuals offering the highest expected net benefit” (2007:1). Interviews with rebel leaders indicated that the costs and benefits of recruits differed systematically with age, and that the recruitment of adolescents yielded the largest expected net gain. Furthermore, Blattman emphasizes that “while adults appear to have been skilled guerrilla fighters, they were also the most likely to desert. Young children were most easily indoctrinated and disoriented (and thus likely to stay) but were relatively ineffective as fighters. Adolescents, however, appear to have offered the optimal combination of military effectiveness and ease of retention” (2007:1). The strong evidence Blattman presents explains the economic incentives for rebel groups to prefer the recruitment of children compared to adults. This is supported by Andvig and Gates who indicate that “desertion is a potential problem facing any army and children often find it harder to desert than adults. To discourage desertion further, some groups force children to commit atrocities in their home villages, thus severing former bonds and limiting the child’s

options” (2007:2). Later chapters of this thesis will provide examples drawn from my own field research in Uganda that indeed support these arguments.

Child soldiers are considered as serious or even preferred players on the battlefield due to their ability to fight effectively by using small arms. Nowadays, most wars are fought in developing countries. Due to a proliferation of small, lightweight arms such as the AK-47 and the related reduction of costs, small weapons have become readily available and shape contemporary warfare. During the 1990s, 46 out of 49 conflicts involved only small arms (Wessells, 2006:18). Moreover, small arms have turned out to be most deadly causing 90% of all casualties in recent armed conflicts (Singer, 2006:46). The technological developments in this area of weaponry have made it possible to turn large pools of child recruits into capable soldiers. Small arms such as rifles, light mortars, land mines, grenades and light machine guns have become “child-portable”. The fact that these can easily be carried and operated by children makes child soldiers effective fighters just as lethal as adults (Singer, 2006:46).

Next to that, while troop losses cannot endlessly be replenished by adult recruits, there is often an abundance of children available as they compose about half of the population in developing countries. Recruiters often promise money as a trigger for children to join armed groups. Still, this promise is generally just a trick and once the children are in the group they are intimidated so they will not dare to ask for money. Thereby, brutality and forced recruitment is frequently used as terrorized children do not have to be paid and are easily manipulated. Another motivation for the recruitment of children is their shock value; the purpose of their use is confusion and terrorizing the opponent. Opposing groups are often reluctant to kill children. Additionally, child soldiers are pliable, easily manipulated and controlled, flexible, exploitable, effective, and expendable. The use of child soldiers is particularly effective because “through violence or threat of violence, young children can be trained to obey commands that many adults would contest or find ways around” (Wessells, 2006:34-35).

This indicates that the use of child soldiers is the result of deliberate choices made by leaders of armed groups. Children in conflict zones are often recruited due to convenience, impunity and low costs. According to Singer “conflict group leaders now

see the recruitment and use of children as a low-cost and efficient way for their organizations to mobilize and generate force” (2006:38). It is cheap and easy to include children in rebel groups and thereby the costs are generally outweighed by the benefits. Thus, significant amounts of force are generated with little investment. Thereby, rebel groups who face difficulties in mobilizing support can vastly expand their power by using child soldiers. This is especially the case for groups fighting for social endowments which include few rewards, as indicated by Weinstein. Additionally, children are rarely paid, “they are cheaper than adults, and they can be drugged or conditioned more easily into violence and committing atrocities” (Singer, 2006:52-55). This demonstrates that rebel groups fighting for economic endowments benefit from using child soldiers as well since children do not get paid the same way as adults do and thus rebel leaders can keep most of the profits gained. These factors have contributed to the fact that children are often systematically preferred as soldiers in today's armed conflicts. As Singer describes, “despite their smaller physical size and development, child soldiers are serious players on the modern battlefield” (2006:83). Andvig and Gates use a quote from a Congolese rebel leader explaining why child soldiers were particularly useful; “they obey orders; they are not concerned with getting back to their wife and family; and they don't know fear” (2007:4). Considering the previously named factors that make it beneficial for rebel groups to use child soldiers, it becomes apparent that the use of children indeed seems to have a comparative advantage over adults.

However, this argument is not complete. The theories on recruitment, motivation, control, and resilience within rebel groups put forth by Weinstein and other scholars, lack the inclusion of socialization processes. Socialization plays an essential role within rebel groups as it creates interests and hereby significantly contributes to motivation, control, resilience, and allegiance among rebels. This indicates that the theories developed by Weinstein and others are too reductionist. In later chapters of this thesis I will explain why socialization is an essential mechanism for rebel groups. These chapters will illuminate that socialization processes need to be part of research concerning rebel groups and therefore show in detail why the approach of scholars like Weinstein is too reductionist.

3.2 Forced versus Non-Forced Recruitment

Forced Recruitment

Recruitment of children into rebel groups is a carefully planned process which may include force and thus take place through, for instance, abduction. Due to their small size and the ease with which they can be intimidated, children are particularly susceptible to forced recruitment (Wessells, 2006:37). In addition, the lower mobility of children compared to adults makes them more exposed which makes it easy to catch them (Andvig, 2006:20). In case of forced recruitment, recruiters typically target places where children are most vulnerable and gathered in greatest numbers, such as schools, orphanages, refugee camps, stadiums and churches (Machel, 2001:10, Andvig, 2006:20). During these recruitment operations, children are assessed on their physical condition and size. The suitable children are often abducted, accompanied by rape, severe beatings and killings of relatives to intimidate them. In case children oppose or thwart these abductions the recruiters threaten to kill them, and thus the children are left with no choice but to join the rebel group as a new recruit (Singer, 2006:57-61).

Other examples of forced recruitment are press-ganging and recruitment by quota. Press ganging is a form of group abduction and is used for mass recruitment. In these cases rebel groups raid schools or sweep streets or marketplaces. Other sites which frequently become sites for recruitment are refugee and internally displaced people camps. Yet, dispossessed children in general run a great risk of forced recruitment. As Wessells argues, “before war erupts, children from lower socio-economic classes carry a heavy burden of poverty and social exclusion” (2006:41). This makes them particularly vulnerable to become prey for rebel groups. On the other hand, when recruitment by quota is used, any child may become a target of forced recruitment. Rebel groups use this method to recruit children from villages. They require a particular number of recruits from the village, threatening that if these children are not delivered the whole village will be attacked. In these cases parents have no choice; they often hand over their children to the rebels to avoid a wave of death and destruction inflicted on the village (Wessells, 2006:42).

Previous research as well as field research indicated that the LRA makes use of abduction as the main method of recruitment. Walter, a former LRA lieutenant, expressed during one of our interviews that; “we would go to the schools to find new children. And many times when we were looting villages, we had to bring new recruits to the bush. When we were on a mission, we were all ordered to bring 5 children back to the bush. We had to catch the right ones. The small ones were not useful; they were too weak to walk for long. But the 12 year olds were good; they were strong enough to work hard and walk far. But we could also work their minds so they will be integrated rebels. The bigger boys were sometimes also taken but they are stubborn. If they did not listen we called the new recruits and let them finish the stubborn ones. They learned to be good rebels”.

These strategies of abduction, press ganging and recruitment by quota are commonly used among rebel groups and large numbers of children end up in rebel groups through forced recruitment. Yet, there are several other motivations which fuel the decision of children to join rebel groups. The question concerning the motivation for children to enter rebel groups is surrounded by a variety of narratives. The former description coincides with a narrative merely focusing on forced recruitment and abduction, portraying child soldiers as victims of the brutality of adults. According to Wessells “this narrative is comforting in its depiction of wicked people as the cause of children becoming soldiers” (2006:31). Yet, this view is rather one-dimensional as it does not consider the possibility of children joining armed groups without being forced.

Non-Forced Recruitment

Contrary to the previous narrative, a second narrative portrays child soldiers as active agents with a significantly developed sense of agency. As opposed to the image sketched by numerous humanitarian organizations, research has shown that large numbers of children choose to join armed groups voluntarily or without force. According to Singer “the rough trend line seems to be that roughly two of every three child soldiers have some sort of initiative in their own recruitment” (2006:61). For instance, numbers of the International Labor Office show that 64% of all children

participating in armed groups in Central African countries have joined these groups under no threat of violence (ILO, 2003). These examples crush the image of children as innocent and passive victims; it portrays child soldiers as active agents, as actors who can exercise choice and who have a strong sense of agency. Armed conflict is in these cases perceived “as a source of opportunities for children, who willingly join armed groups to obtain things – protection, a sense of family, education and training, power, money, or a sense of purpose, among others – denied to them in civilian life” (Wessells, 2006:31). Scholars disagree greatly about the motivations of children to join rebel groups and particularly about the perception of them being active agents. In an attempt to explain the complexity of what motivates children to join and remain with armed groups, this chapter will continue analyzing the variety of factors contributing to this decision.

Marginal Backgrounds and Divided, Violent Societies

Many child soldiers emerge from marginal backgrounds which provide few or no opportunities for upward social mobility or progress. At the same time, conflict situations damage the state as well as its inhabitants, fuelling discontent and unemployment among youth who are dreaming of another life. This marginalization of young people in conflict situations creates a “vast pool of recruitment potential”. By joining rebel groups, factors such as personal gain, respect, survival, recognition, and the possibility to create new meanings of self appear to be within reach of the barrel of a gun. Thus, rebel groups are often voluntarily joined by children in order to become “someone”. For instance, this may be particularly important for African boys since they gain rights when they become a man and can then start a family (Bøås and Dunn, 2007:42-51). This way of achieving social recognition is also emphasized by Münkler, who claims that children join rebel groups “in the prospect of an otherwise unattainable social reputation” (2004:77-78).

Wessells, Brett and Specht argue that children who are raised in violent, divided societies have an abundance of reasons to become fighters for their group (2006, 2004). These children have often been victimized themselves and may perceive violence as a way to liberate their people or gain revenge. As Wessells claims;

“children who have lost their parents may decide to join the struggle to avenge their loss, to protect their villages, or to seek protection and access to necessities such as food and health care. War crushes children's hope by destroying the schools, markets, health posts, and other structures children need in order to have a positive future. As the war continues, children may see life inside an armed group as their best option” (2006). Thus, children's decision to become warriors can be a rational choice, based on hate or necessity, but often on a combination of these.

Children may choose to participate in the violence in order to get revenge and pay back the pain which has been inflicted on them and their families. The loss of parents is the greatest loss a child can suffer as their main source of care, protection and love disappears. It puts children at great risk by creating heavy emotional burdens and significantly increasing vulnerability and poverty. As a means of survival, these children may join armed groups (Wessells, 2006:25). The decision to participate in armed groups is thus a gradually evolving process; achieved “through a slow accretion of smaller decisions and gradually increased engagement with members of an armed group” (Wessells, 2006:32).

Moreover, Wessells argues that children run a particular risk becoming soldiers in divided societies for their parents and leaders teach them to continue the struggle. During the 1994 genocide in Rwanda some 800.000 Tutsi were killed, organized by the Hutu regime. Large numbers of children joined the paramilitary groups that were responsible for the killings as they had been taught to see themselves as Hutu but also as opposed to the demonized Tutsi. “Also, communities in divided societies teach their children the key wrongs done by the Other, stirring a desire for revenge and the fear that motivates pre-emptive action. This poisonous mixture of fear and hate heightens perceptions of evil and wrongdoing by the Other and strengthens children's own sense of victim-hood, motivating attacks and encouraging ongoing cycles of violence” (Wessells, 2006:22).

In these cases, dehumanization often plays a crucial role in the choice of becoming a child soldier. Dehumanization of opponents makes it easier to disregard the moral implications of murder (Kressel, 2002). This is for instance achieved by media distortion and propaganda. The spread of lies contributes to the dehumanization

of the opponent and gives meaning and direction for the actions of child soldiers. Furthermore, peer pressure may play a significant role in the decision for children to join armed groups. Children who have already joined the armed group often approach their peers wearing new uniforms and the like. This makes it very tempting to join for children in deprived situations (Singer, 2006:67-68).

In addition, as a result of armed conflict many people are displaced, leading to immense refugee flows. According to Wessells; “refugees lack basic materials and a cultural identity, and suffer discrimination, alienation, and difficulties earning a livelihood and negotiating the complexities of their new social system. Refugee camps, with their arduous living conditions, frequently become political hotbeds where radicalized youths fuel continued armed conflicts” (2006:25). Not surprisingly, large numbers of children are recruited in refugee camps.

Poverty

Other scholars, like Singer, argue that voluntary participation in armed groups is a misleading claim. This view highlights the inability of children to make mature decisions and to oversee the consequences of joining armed groups. Children are merely driven by forces that are beyond their control when they voluntarily join armed groups, for instance by economic factors. Due to hunger and poverty children may decide to join any group, particularly as a means to survive (Singer, 2006:62). Machel agrees with this, arguing that “rather than exercising free choice, these children are responding more often to a variety pressures – economic, cultural, social, and political” (2001:11). Furthermore, Machel argues that poverty is one of the main pressures for children to become soldiers. They join rebel groups for protection or their parents even “sell” them into the army (Machel, 2001:12).

Boothby also addresses poverty as one of the main causes of child soldiering. This perspective highlights the need for food, health care, and protection. Children in war zones frequently seek money to fulfil these needs and if they live with poor families, becoming a child soldier is perceived as a means to fulfil their family responsibilities (Boothby et al, 2006:181). Rebel groups provide child soldiers with food and protection, thus children suffering from poverty gain as individuals from

joining rebel groups. Münkler touches upon this motivation, stating that children join rebel groups in return for a form of livelihood (2004:77).

Bøås and Dunn argue that potential child soldiers can be found in every slum or forgotten place. These youths see “little if any opportunity to make the transformation from their present state of despair and exclusion into something else and better. All it takes is one individual with an idea about something else and the means to transform his ideas into action – call it resistance, call it revolt, call it violence, robbery – and they are game, eager to settle the score of humiliation and marginalization” (2007:52). Opportunities for looting when joining a rebel group makes it possible for these children to acquire possessions and physically take them out of their state of despair.

Lack of Education, Unemployment, and Political Radicalization

According to Bøås and Dunn, many children who become part of armed groups have dropped out of school. Using Sierra Leone as an example, children dropping out of school are generally part of poor families. School fees are too expensive and children going to school leads to a loss of income as they are not working for the family. As such, children are often taken out of school in these cases so they can generate income for the family (Bøås and Dunn, 2007:41). It is not rare that these children end up being part of rebel groups, as some are even stimulated by their parents to join rebels as a means to generate income for their family (Wessells, 2006:43). Dropping out of school limits these children’s future opportunities and joining rebel group may thus be an opportunity to create meaning in their lives.

Additionally, Bøås and Dunn describe the fact that there is little left to do in conflict stricken societies as one of the causes of child soldiering. This is especially the case for young men joining rebel groups. The authors state; “so few alternatives seemed viable, and this realization must have led some, obviously not all, to develop a mindset of hatred against their society, their communities, their elders, even their parents, that was unleashed in anger when a gun came within their reach. The gun became their tool, their personal revolution, and by killing they could finally prove that even they mattered. These young men are the creation of damaged and broken societies, where there is little left to do” (2007:46).

Boothby addresses the lack of educational opportunities, unemployment and failed expectations that are characteristic for war zones as breeding grounds for child soldiering in rebel movements. Hopelessness and futility, as well as the desire to change failed political systems makes children eager to join rebel groups. Children often make up for half the population in developing countries and this may significantly contribute to the force of rebel groups. As seen in the previous chapter of this thesis, teenagers are regarded as adults in most developing countries and as such they are attempting to define their place in society. With high unemployment numbers in war zones (up to 80%) children become motivated to join rebel groups as this will provide them with at least status. Additionally, it will teach them skills that may be important in their eyes (2006:183-184).

Multiple Causation

In general, poverty plays a significant role as poor children are overrepresented in armed groups. In addition, revenge for their personal experiences of extreme violence and the loss of relatives, political marginalization, unemployment and the lack of education tend to be factors contributing to the motivation to join armed groups. The status and power that comes with joining rebel groups is a trigger to participate for many children in otherwise desperate conflict situations. In some cases family matters like domestic exploitation drive children into the arms of armed groups. Next to this, armed groups offer membership, acceptance and honourable roles (as soldiers or leaders) for children in floundering situations, something very seductive for children feeling powerless or victimized. The promise of rewards for fighting with a rebel group also convinces children it is worth joining (Singer, 2006:62-67). This implies that non-forced recruitment is often triggered by an interplay of multiple factors and situational influences; it seldomly reflects one motive. As Wessells argues “the causes of soldiering are contextual, vary across individuals, and are embedded in wider systems of exploitation and violence” (2006:55).

As seen throughout this section, all children are different and their decision to join rebel groups depends highly on the situation and environment they live in. Therefore, one cannot draw general conclusions about the motivations for children to

get involved with rebel groups. For instance, the RUF in Sierra Leone created a viable fighting force by a combination of recruiting youth voluntarily and through force and coercion. By tapping into sentiments of social exclusion, youth often voluntarily joined the rebels. In cases of forced recruitment, youths had to participate in severe violence against local populations and leaders (Bøås and Dunn, 2007:48). Thus, in many cases rebel leaders add force to their group through a combination of forced and non-forced recruitment of children.

3.3 Creating a Child Soldier

Once children are recruited to become part of a rebel group, they undergo a variety of intensive training programs and methods in order to convert into effective soldiers. These programs are designed to create dependency on the rebel group. By achieving dependency, rebel leaders aim to prevent attempts to escape from the group (Singer, 2006:57). One of the essential parts of the transformation into a soldier is indoctrination. Indoctrination provides child soldiers with a new perspective of the world which creates and sustains combat motivation. This type of motivation is supposed to keep child soldiers in the rebel group in spite of the risks during battles. Besides these, rebel leaders use coercive, remunerative, and normative motivators to keep child soldiers in the group and make them use violence which would be rejected under normal circumstances. Coercive motivators, based on physical punishment, are particularly popular among rebel leaders. It rapidly enables the use of children as soldiers as high levels of obedience are achieved by using brutality, fear and psychological manipulation (Singer, 2006:71). This is also elaborated upon by Kressel, who argues that threats, manipulation and persuasion contribute to obedience and the creation of brutality (2002).

The result of the process of indoctrination is that child soldiers quickly become dependent on their leaders for protection and needs. Simultaneously, terror and propaganda are used in order to stimulate the children to identify themselves with the goals of their rebel group and realign their allegiances and worldview. This process contributes to the creation of moral disengagement from the violence they will use as

soldiers. For instance, by dehumanizing the targets of the rebel group, children perceive these targets as the enemy who is righteously attacked. This implies that any sense of responsibility for violence inflicted upon the “enemy” is diffused (Singer, 2006:71-73). The resulting “us versus them” strategy is frequently used in collective action of armed groups. As Vetlesen argues, the individual agent, in this case the child soldier, perceives himself as acting on behalf of his group. This individual agent is a representative of his group and acts for reasons shared with his fellow group members. Thus, the agent thinks, feels, and acts in a manner giving primacy to his relationship with his fellow group members over his relationship with his victims. The connection with the group prevails to such an extent that the connection with the victim is effectively cancelled out (Vetlesen, 2005). This provides a justification for the continuation of attacks targeted at the enemy. Therefore, indoctrination plays a significant role in the violence carried out by child soldiers but it also provides them with a new identity.

One of the most significant factors contributing to the transformation of children into soldiers is re-identification, also referred to as the construction of identity. Re-identification assures the child no longer identifies with his past but becomes a devoted member of the rebel group. The re-identification alluded to above takes place through a range of methods such as the shaving of a child soldiers' head or even branding the skin with the group's name or insignia. Arms, chests or foreheads of child soldier recruits are frequently carved with sharp objects so that the resulting scars will identify them as a member of a particular rebel group. In addition, the creation of alternative personas is a significant step in the transformation from a child into a soldier and rebel group member. The creation of alternative personas enables a complete split with the prior self of the child and thereby neutralizes the consequences of the violence that rebel groups try to indoctrinate. Furthermore, child soldiers are generally renamed and use a special war- or jungle name. The use of nicknames dissociates children from the violence they carry out and makes it possible for them to function as killing machines without remorse (Singer, 2006:73). This clarifies why names like “Blood Never Dry”, “Laughing and Killing”, “The Castrator” or “Bad Pay Bad” are not uncommon among child soldiers.

A common preparation of the mass violence which is to be carried out in the future is the forced killing of people. Preconditions for mass violence are achieved through three specific mechanisms. The first step to convince child soldiers to use violence against the target is authorization. This includes approval, explicit orders, and encouragement by an authority figure, in this case the rebel leader. The second step which assures the continuation of violence is routinization; when the use of violence against people becomes a routine this makes it easier to continue using violence. The third step to mass violence is dehumanization which enables the perception of victims as less worthy and inhuman and thus enables child soldiers to disregard the moral implications of the violence inflicted (Kressel, 2002). By switching off the emotional burden of inflicting violence on others, dehumanization establishes the fundamentals for the ruthless and fearless image child soldiers are often associated with.

A complementary tactic to make child soldiers participate in mass violence is forcing them to participate in ritualized killings shortly after their recruitment. Child soldiers are not left with the choice whether to participate or not; in case they refuse they are killed themselves. During these rituals, child soldiers are forced to kill children who attempted to escape the rebel group. Besides this, it is not uncommon that child soldiers have to kill their relatives or community members, a ritual which generally takes place in public places. This implies that the child's home community witnesses the killing. This prevents the child from escaping the rebel group as he or she cannot just return home anymore; in most cases there is nothing left to return to (Singer, 2006:74). Intimacy is an essential aspect of violence in civil war and is frequently used by rebel groups to define the new identity of a child soldier. In general, people are reluctant to exercise these extreme forms of violence against people they know. As Kalyvas claims, it is easier to “kill men who are strangers, to obliterate faces which have not smiled on one in recognition, and to burn houses which have never welcomed one as a guest” (2006:331). The intimate character of the violence child soldiers are forced to use, naturally goes against their norms and causes a rupture with their home communities. The ritualized killing makes children therefore cross the ultimate moral boundary and is considered as a defining moment in breaking the resistance to the rebel group. Due to their frequent exposure to extreme violence

children become desensitized to suffering. Rebel groups use this in order to harden the child and “make it easier to sever links with the rest of society” (Machel, 2001:14). This indicates that child soldiers become reliant on the rebel group as the child's home community vehemently disapproves what the child has become.

This chapter highlighted a range of organized strategies, demonstrating how children are turned into soldiers by breaking down their defences and memory. This process results in the fact that child soldiers often only have two anchors left; their fellow rebel group members and their guns. Due to the achievement of moral and psychological disconnections, compliance to orders will therefore generally be near total after the indoctrination process (Singer, 2006:75). The relation between these tactics of creating child soldiers is obvious as they both complement and reinforce each other. Still, there is more to the creation of a child soldier than the analyzed theories in this chapter. Field research has indicated that socialization plays an essential role in the creation of a child soldier. Therefore, in the following chapters I will use the previously analyzed theories as a starting point and additionally investigate how the process of socialization contributes to the creation of a child soldier. I will argue that socialization further reinforces the previously mentioned methods that accompany the transformation of children into soldiers. By analyzing the socialization processes used by the LRA, I will address how socialization convinces child soldiers to remain within rebel groups.

4. Resilient Rebellion: The Lord's Resistance Army

This chapter will provide an analysis of the background of the LRA and the conflict in Northern Uganda. In addition, it will elaborate upon tactics used by the LRA to create allegiance among its rebels. As such, it will emphasize which factors are important in creating allegiance within a rebel group. Moreover, evidence from my field research will be used to illustrate the use of child soldiers by the LRA.

4.1 The Lord's Resistance Army

During recent years child soldiers have been portrayed as a new source of fighters who increasingly become increasingly involved in conflicts. This assumption is particularly due to the changing nature and proliferation of conflicts, combined with global monitoring, reporting and transmission. The public has become more aware of the phenomenon. Besides that, the flourishing commercial and illegal trafficking in small arms has enabled children to participate in armed conflict as more efficient combatants. Still, as Gates argues, child soldiers “have been with us from time immemorial” (2009:3). However, the widespread availability of lightweight weapons which are easily maintained and operated, has significantly contributed to the roles of child soldiers becoming increasingly violent and destructive (Rosen, 2005:14). Combined with issues like poverty, discrimination, and vulnerability, children are soft targets for recruitment into armed groups (Redress, 2006:5). Not surprisingly, this “leads to vicious cycles of violence and insecurity, prolonging suffering and obstructing post-conflict reconstruction” (Machel, 2001:119).

Singer argues that “children multiply the potential military capacities of groups that choose to adopt the child soldier doctrine” (2006:94). As rebel groups often face challenges in force generation, the use of child soldiers allows a proliferation of such groups. The relatively weak starting point of rebel groups is overcome by using the child soldier doctrine. Child soldiers are either forcefully or voluntarily recruited to become part of armed groups due to the relatively small investments that groups have to make for their recruitment, training, and arming (Redress, 2006:5). This is

accelerated by the flourishing small arms industry which has allowed children to become highly effective fighters. One of the rebel groups who multiplied their fighting numbers through this strategy is the Lord's Resistance Army in Northern Uganda which is led by Joseph Kony. The LRA started out as a group of 200 core members but swiftly transformed into an army of 14,000 soldiers once they implemented the use of child soldiers (Singer, 2006:95). This has resulted in the fact that the LRA has stayed in being since they started waging war in the north in 1987 (Behrend, 1998).

Since 1987 Northern Uganda has been suffering from a violent conflict involving three main parties; the central government, the LRA, and the local population which mainly consists of the Acholi tribe. "Abductions, including the kidnapping of children, have been common, and hundreds of people have been compelled to kill and maim or be killed and maimed themselves. Victims have had lips, hands and fingers cut off. Some have been forced to slaughter their own parents, or drink the blood of those they have murdered. Several massacres of civilians have occurred, and hundreds of thousands of people are living in displacement camps, where conditions are often appalling" (Allen, 2006:1).

The LRA is often portrayed as a barbaric and insane cult by Ugandan and international media. One of the reasons for this is that the LRA, led by self-proclaimed prophet Joseph Kony, is known to target children in order to increase its forces; it has abducted more than 60,000 Northern Ugandan children, with a particular preference for young adolescents. Research has shown that a 14-year old child is three times as likely to be recruited compared to a 9 or 23 year old (Blattman, 2007). Due to its practice of kidnapping children, the LRA is often portrayed as a barbaric, irrational group. Thousands of children have been kidnapped by the LRA to become soldiers, porters or wives for LRA commanders. Estimates claim that approximately 70% to 80% of the LRA is made up of child soldiers; this explains why the LRA is often characterized as an army of children (Bøås and Dunn, 2007:131, and Redress, 2006:8).

Most child soldiers fighting for the LRA have become part of the rebel group after being abducted from their homes, schools, or villages. Due to the numerous abductions of children by the LRA, a phenomenon of "night commuters" has erupted in Northern Uganda. These night commuters are thousands of children who leave their

homes every night to walk to larger towns and sleep in shelters or on the streets in order to prevent possible abduction by the LRA (Bøås and Dunn, 2007:131). This phenomenon has subsided during recent years, yet according to Bøås and Dunn “resolution of the conflict remains highly elusive” (2007:131). Yoweri Museveni, the Ugandan president, has promised to end the war and has proclaimed that peace was near on numerous occasions. Yet, the LRA stepped up each time Museveni claimed they were on the road to peace, and instead increased its attacks on the civilian population. This has resulted in more than half of the Acholi population in Northern Uganda living in Internally Displaced People (IDP) camps whilst children have been abducted throughout Northern Uganda on a daily basis until 2006 (Bøås and Dunn, 2007:132). As elaborated upon in the introduction of this thesis, the LRA is at the time of writing scattered throughout the Central African region. This resulted in drastically decreasing rates of abduction in Uganda, yet led to numerous abductions in South Sudan, DRC, and CAR (International Alert, 2009).

Why fight?

During the two decades of conflict in Northern Uganda, it has remained unclear what the exact roots and causes of the continuing violence are. “Twenty years after its birth, the strategy, organization and motives of the Lord’s Resistance Army remain shrouded in mystery and supposition. What little we know is drawn almost entirely from interviews with former participants, commanders, and civilian victims. What emerges is a patchwork of motives, methods, and structure, with different accounts sometimes in direct conflict” (Blattman and Annan, 2008:7). One of the reasons for this is that Joseph Kony has refused to speak with representatives from the international community until the 2006 peace talks. This was due to his suspicion of their motives and fear of being captured (Borzello, 2007).

Due to a lack of systematic and representative information the LRA and its use of child soldiers is poorly understood. To illustrate the complexity of the conflict; Bøås and Dunn developed five main theories about the nature of the conflict of which none has proven to be true. First of all, some believe Joseph Kony is engaging in an irrational campaign of terror and violence without a purpose or ultimate goal and acts

likes a madman. Secondly, it is believed that the conflict resulted from legitimate and serious complaints of the Northern Ugandan population against the central government of Museveni. A third explanation argues that the conflict is a by-product of “the larger geopolitical rivalry between the Sudanese government and Uganda”. If this is indeed the case, the LRA would be used by the Sudanese government as a rental army to destabilize Uganda. Fourthly, the government of Museveni and its army are believed to have no interest in combating the LRA. From this perspective, the conflict is exploited for political purposes to disadvantage the Northern Ugandan population. Lastly, it is believed that Northern Uganda has become subject to political economy of conflict. This view implies that various actors are benefitting economically from continuation of the conflict and thus have no interest in finding a solution (Bøås and Dunn, 2007:132-146).

This complex variety of perspectives on the Northern Ugandan conflict indicates that the relationship between the LRA and the people of Northern Uganda is not clear-cut, but one of a complex, multidimensional nature. The LRA, which has been fighting the Museveni government in Kampala since 1987, is claimed to mainly draw its strength from the largest tribe in Northern Uganda; the Acholi. The Acholi people in Northern Uganda mistrust the government in Kampala due to a history of conflict and exploitation. This feeling of mistrust was enhanced when the Museveni government started disadvantaging the Acholi due to the belief that the people of Northern Uganda supported the LRA. This belief was initially incorrect yet resulted in the government inflicting severe violence and human rights abuses on the Northern region and relocating the Acholi into displacement camps. As a result, the people of Northern Uganda developed deep rooted feelings of resentment towards the Museveni government. The Acholi claim that the Museveni government deliberately relocated them and by doing this allowed the LRA to weaken the Acholi in order to undermine political challenge. This resentment caused many Acholi to join the LRA as a last resort to fight for their rights. This contributed to the fact that the Acholi people eventually did make up most of the LRA's rebels (Redress, 2006:9).

However, the people of Northern Uganda, including the Acholi themselves, have been subject to numerous atrocities committed by the LRA. The reason for this is

that “Kony claimed that Acholi society had to be purified by violence” (Allen, 2006:40). As such, 70 to 80% of the LRA rebels are child soldiers whom are mainly abducted from the Acholi tribe. Bøås and Dunn argue that the LRA has created a historical trap through this behaviour. Due to the fact that the LRA committed numerous atrocities and kidnapped thousands of children, they have lost the support of the Northern Ugandan population and nowadays seem to continue fighting solely for survival (2007:147). Today the LRA is mainly abusive of the Acholi and uses terrorisation to acquire sufficient supplies of resources and human capital (Redress, 2006:9). Kony still uses large numbers of child soldiers, among other reasons because the LRA “need them in their ranks to avoid defeat” and because of the belief “they can negotiate an amnesty on this matter in agreeing to a ceasefire” (Gates, 2009:4). While this explains part of the reasons why the LRA aims to hold on to its child soldiers, the question rises why the Acholi children still remain with the LRA after experiencing such severe violence and exploitation, and not escape to their villages instead?

Spirituality and Fear

Part of the answer to this question can be found in the importance of spirituality for the Acholi population. Joseph Kony, who was born in the early 1960s, dropped out of school during his primary education and was trained as an *ajwaka*; a spirit medium. He became possessed by a variety of spirits and started recruiting followers near Gulu in Northern Uganda to establish the LRA in 1987. By 1990 the LRA had become the most significant armed unit fighting in Northern Uganda. Drawing from field research, Kony has always received information and instructions from his spirits through which he still leads the LRA. He is believed to be possessed by 13 different spirits, coming from Uganda, Sudan, Italy, America, China, and Korea. This group of spirits is headed by Juma Oris, his Sudanese spirit, and include one woman who is in charge of LRA operations; Silly Silindi (Borzello, 2007:394). Interviews with former rebels indicate an incredibly strong belief in Kony’s spirits among LRA rebels; none of them denied the existence of the spirits and all acted accordingly to their orders and believed Kony could predict the future. This is also highlighted by Borzello who explains; “Kony can see the future: some of his prophecies are specific (predicting that the UPDF will

attack at a certain time), while others are more opaque (that he is ‘like Moses’ and will ‘never see the promised land’”) (2007:394). The strong spirituality of the Acholi resulted in relatively low numbers of defection among LRA rebels. As Borzello explains; “Kony appears to have a genuine hold over his followers. It is rare to meet former rebels who do not believe that he has real spiritual power” (2007:394). The spiritual dimension of the LRA instils fear and respect among its members. This either makes the rebels believe that Kony can read their minds and will kill them if they think about escaping, or they awe at his remarkable capacities (Allen, 2006:38-43).

Besides spirituality, fear plays a significant role in achieving compliance among LRA rebels. The use of violence creates high levels of fear among rebels which encourages compliance with the LRA. This is clearly illustrated by Allen: “a key strategy of the LRA has been to abduct young people, including children, and to educate them to be part of a new society, using forms of abuse that are hard to believe. Many recruits become sexual slaves or are deployed as combatants. Some are required to perform atrocities against civilians in order to punish them for accepting President Museveni’s rule, demonstrate their loyalty and make it difficult for them to return home because of the fear of reprisals. At peace talks in 1994, Kony justified LRA actions to those present as follows: "If you pick up an arrow against us and we ended up cutting off the hand you used, who is to blame? You report us with your mouth, and we cut off your lips. Who is to blame? It is you! The Bible says that if your hand, eye, or mouth is at fault, it should be cut off’.” (Allen, 2006:42).

Rational Decisions and Terror as a Strategy of Choice

Even though the LRA generally tends to be depicted as an irrational, barbaric cult because of this behaviour, this picture is challenged by an emerging literature about the LRA. “In the absence of a public face and (until very recently) an active political arm, the LRA’s activities, motives, and structure have been defined by external actors, from Western academics and journalists to the Ugandan military and government... What has often emerged is a picture of the LRA as a primal force – illogical, barbaric, and cultlike” (Blattman and Annan, 2008:1). Blattman and Annan have done extensive research in Uganda which has shown that “the LRA turns out to

be a much more strategic and conventional military organization than often supposed, however terrible its violence” (2008:7). Allen extends this argument, stating that LRA leaders have made a more coherent political argument than is portrayed and “desire to make a case to the Acholi population as a whole” (2006:44). An example of this can be found in the LRA’s statements of demands. These call for: “(a) an all-party ‘National Conference’ followed by general elections; (b) creation of a Religious Affairs Ministry to ‘see an end to the use of witchcraft and sorcery by promotion of the Ten Commandments’; (c) rehabilitation of the economy and rehabilitation of the country’s infrastructure; (d) national unity (through inter-tribal marriages and language instruction); (e) education for all; (f) policies encouraging foreign investments; (g) the independence of the judiciary; (h) the formation of an ethnically balanced national army; (i) improved diplomatic relations with neighbouring states; and (j) relocation of Uganda’s administrative capital to Kigumba in Masindi district” (Allen, 2006:43).

The picture portrayed by Allen contradicts “assertions that the rebels are all deranged and unaccountable for their actions. There are aspects of the LRA which draw on local understanding of the spirit world, and resonate with perceptions of ‘the bush’ (*olum*) as a place of unpredictable and amoral phenomena. But rational decisions have been made about politics, and terror has been a strategy of choice” (Allen, 2006:44). Yet, due to their use of extreme violence, it has become increasingly difficult for the LRA to get support and recruit their forces voluntarily. Therefore, they resorted to forced recruitment of children, providing them with the possibility to remain a cohesive group. The following section will entail a more detailed explanation how the use of child soldiers contributes to allegiance within the LRA.

4.2 Allegiance within the Lord’s Resistance Army

Previous chapters outlined a variety of tactics used by rebel groups in order to create child soldiers. In addition to those, rebel groups employ tactics to make their members loyal and allegiant to the group. Allegiance is essential in order to maintain a cohesive rebel group as defection of its members will significantly undermine its success. As Andvig and Gates point out “the incentive to exit for an individual will

increase with the number of others exiting” (2007:10). Yet, “what motivates a person to risk his life in armed rebellion? Why continue to expose oneself to life in the bush where one may be killed at any minute without home, family, or other comforts? Or, from the perspective of the rebel group, how does a rebel group maintain organizational cohesion and deter defection? How does a rebel group sustain itself?” (Gates, 2002:111). These questions are of essential importance to analyze allegiance within rebel groups.

Gates (2002) examines the organizational structure of rebel groups in order to understand patterns of recruitment and allegiance. In this analysis Gates focuses particularly on three factors which significantly influence the likelihood of military success, defection, and help shape recruitment; geography, ethnicity and ideology. “Even for the most blatant loot-seeking groups, ethnicity, ideology, and geographical proximity play a direct role in shaping the pattern of compliance and enforcement in a rebel army. Likewise, ideologically and ethnically motivated groups do not motivate their members exclusively with non-pecuniary awards” (Gates, 2002:113-114).

According to Gates, “geography is a fundamentally important variable for understanding the supervision, oversight, and control of a rebel organization...Military tactics and strategies must address geographical issues, shaping the nature of engaging the enemy in battle, supplying troops, and the supervision, control, and recruitment of the troops” (2002:113). This implies that the geographical distance between commanders and soldiers is a determining factor in creating allegiance. Looking at the LRA and its recruitment by abduction, geographical distance indeed seems an important influence in creating allegiance. Are the newly recruited LRA rebels not to be supervised and controlled in close proximity to their commanders, one may expect a high chance of defection since they are initially forced to be with the LRA.

Gates’ concept of distance can also be applied to ethnicity. As Gates argues “ethnic distance constitutes the sense of group identity that an ethnic or national group feels with respect to one another and to other groups. An ethnically homogenous rebel group with a clear sense of group identity, therefore, exhibits narrow ethnic distances, whereas an ethnically diverse group possesses great ethnic distance” (Gates, 2002:113). The majority of the LRA consists of rebels coming from the Acholi tribe in

Northern Uganda. According to Gates' explanation this contributes to the creation of a group identity. This is enhanced by the fact that the LRA is fighting the Ugandan government forces (UPDF) which represent different tribes. Moreover, the people of Northern Uganda have been in conflict with the central government for decades. Thus when adopting Gates' theory on allegiance, recruiting people from Northern Uganda is likely to enhance allegiance within the LRA due to narrow ethnic distance.

Thirdly, Gates argues that ideological distance influences allegiance within rebel groups. Gates states that "ideological distance can be represented in terms of mapping preferences in an issue space as used in spatial models of elections and committees" (2002:113). The distance between ideal points affects allegiance in a similar way compared to ethnicity; if rebels share the same ideology, the likelihood of allegiance is higher. Looking at the LRA this is a tricky subject. Since the majority of LRA recruits are abducted and forced to participate, it may not seem likely that the same ideology is shared. This impression may even be further enhanced by the commonly sketched image of the LRA as a brutal organization without clear goals. Still, if one takes the analyses by Blattman (2008) and Allen (2006) into account to which I referred to earlier, the LRA does seem to have an ideology and fights for its Acholi people in Northern Uganda. This indicates that there may not be such a large ideological distance among LRA rebels as one would expect. The LRA's ideology may therefore contribute to allegiance.

Using (Non-)Pecuniary Rewards to Create Allegiance

In addition to these factors, the provision of benefits also contributes to allegiance among members of a rebel group. Gates focuses on the principal agent model, arguing that "agents of a military organization (that is soldiers) when recruited on a voluntary basis, have to receive sufficient utility by joining that they do not run away (the participation constraint). Furthermore the leadership (the principal) must be able to find a way to reward the soldiers so that they choose to act in a way that will produce the maximum increase of the probability of winning (or sustaining a "profitable" conflict) with the lowest financial cost (incentive compatibility constraint)" (Andvig and Gates, 2007:7). In addition, non pecuniary rewards can be

used to meet the participatory and compatibility constraints (Gates, 2002). Non pecuniary benefits (such as the belief to fight the good fight) “can be created by the group and can be used to motivate members instead of material benefits. Leaders have an incentive to inculcate a sense of membership and solidarity and thereby construct an identity for their organization” (Andvig and Gates, 2007:9).

Gates acknowledges that “the nature of benefits will vary considerably across different kinds of rebel groups. Loot-seeking groups will rely on wages and other pecuniary rewards distributed from their rent-seeking activities. Ideological groups anchor the other extreme, relying on the non pecuniary rewards of fighting the ‘good fight’. All groups distribute benefits that exhibit a mixture of pecuniary and non pecuniary rewards” (Gates, 2002:114). Andvig and Gates state that the LRA, as a religious mystical group, uses a mix of functional and solidarity benefits to create allegiance among its members (2007:9). In addition, punishment and the use of force are often used as means to encourage compliance and control the behaviour of rebels within the group. “The leader of a rebel group can offer an incentive scheme to a subordinate agent through a benefit stream for compliance and punishment for defection” (Gates, 2002:116).

Gates argues that “compliance depends on a minimal allocation of pecuniary rewards, but the fact remains that non pecuniary benefits go far in maintaining allegiance to a rebel army” (Gates, 2002:120). An interesting finding is that non pecuniary benefits seem to be more influential for children than adults. Thereby, Blattman (2007) argues that children have a greater tendency towards bonding to a group and altruism, which may imply that it takes less effort to create solidarity norms for children within the organization. Moreover, children bond more tightly to a group (Andvig and Gates, 2007:9-10). This may explain part of the reason why the LRA resorted to the recruitment of children as the main source of their fighters; it seems the chances for allegiance would be significantly higher among child soldiers compared to adult fighters. As Gates points out, “children offer a possibility for rebel groups to meet the reservation level of benefits and the compatibility constraint that they might not be able to meet with adult recruits” (2002:128).

When analyzing the LRA as an organization, it turns out compliance is relatively high yet there is hardly any allocation of pecuniary rewards, except for commanders who generally receive all the looted goods. Interviews with former LRA fighters and commanders have shown that pecuniary rewards are generally not used to motivate the rebels. Besides that, the LRA is not particularly driven by ideological or ethnic factors. Punishment and force on the other hand, are regularly used to maintain allegiance of the rebels. However, one should take into account that the spill-over effect of the use of force creates general fear among LRA rebels. According to Andvig and Gates this may lead to either increased obedience or desertion (2007). This highlights that the factors indicated by Gates (2002, 2007) do to a certain extent play a role in the creation of allegiance; however interviews undertaken for this thesis have shown that these are not the most essential factors. The question rises as to what actually creates allegiance within the LRA? What is the actual glue that keeps the LRA together? The LRA consists mainly of abductees who are forced to become part of the group and stay in the bush. The lack of both pecuniary and non pecuniary rewards would make one assume that non compliance and defection is high among LRA rebels. Yet this is not the case and the LRA still exists after more than two decades of fighting. Gates points out that a rebel group needs organizational abilities to ensure allegiance of its troops (2002). How does the LRA manage to remain such a cohesive body?

Neglecting Socialization

The factors pointed out by Blattman, Andvig, and Gates indeed play a significant role in deterring defection and creating allegiance. Yet, an important contributing factor which is neglected by these scholars is the process of socialization. Interviews with former LRA child soldiers and commanders have revealed that socialization plays an essential (if not the most significant) role in this. Blattman indicates that child soldiers often encounter possibilities to run away from rebel groups, yet decide to stay (2007, 2008). Furthermore, he points out that in order to maintain allegiance among forcefully recruited children, indoctrination and socialization play a fundamental role (2007). Even though he makes a significant

move forward with his research on why and how children end up with the LRA, he does not answer the burning question why child soldiers remain with the LRA for such long periods of time. Blattman indicates socialization has something to do with it, yet fails to explain how the process of socialization leads to allegiance. Thus, Blattman notes the importance of socialization yet neglects the key processes of how this takes place. This is the exact trap Checkel emphasized upon in his research and to which I referred earlier (2001:557, see chapter 2.2 of this thesis). Simultaneously, Gates and Andvig progress with their theory on allegiance yet do not reflect the whole problem either. Their research focuses on non-material incentives which, to some extent, play a role in the process of creating compliance and allegiance within the LRA. According to Andvig and Gates “members of a military group are kept attached to the organization through three forms of incentives: force; non pecuniary benefits (which are often linked to ideology, religion, or ethnicity); and economic incentives (2007:10). This theory is moving forward in understanding the mechanisms used by rebel groups yet it does not explain the entire problem. Again, research conducted by Andvig and Gates does not feature explanations of how socialization contributes to allegiance; they fail to analyze the in-depth processes. As socialization creates interests, they neglect an essential aspect of the problem in their attempts to better understand rebel groups and child soldiers. However, Blattman, Andvig and Gates all acknowledge that socialization is a significant contributing factor in the development of interests and allegiance. This stresses the importance of research focusing on socialization processes within rebel groups.

Wood (2008) addresses some fundamental aspects of socialization and emphasizes the lack of research regarding social processes of civil war. Research has particularly failed to address how socialization is accomplished within rebel groups. In order to fill this gap in the research, chapter 5 of this thesis will illustrate how socialization is an essential, determining factor in the creation of allegiance, interests and deterring defection within the LRA. Since the LRA recruits the majority of its members by force yet manages to efficiently control them, it is particularly interesting to analyze to which extent socialization plays a role in this. Socialization may represent the glue which holds the group together. For this reason chapter 5 will

primarily build on the 65 in-depth interviews I conducted with former LRA child soldiers and commanders. Only their accounts of the socialization processes within the LRA can solve the puzzle and give us the answer how socialization facilitated them with the motivation to stay. As a preparation for this chapter, the following section will provide figures that reflect an overview of the conducted field research.

4.3 Fieldwork Evidence

The following table and figures illustrate the findings from 65 interviews which were conducted during field research in Gulu District, Northern Uganda (see appendix III for further information). One should keep in mind that it is difficult to make generalizations from these results as it is a relatively small sample. Still, the results support general patterns indicated during personal interviews with former child soldiers and commanders. Besides this limitation, many LRA rebels remain in the bush. As such, these figures only indicate average ages of rebels who have returned from the bush. One can imagine that the average age and time spent with the LRA is expected to be much higher if the group remaining in the bush was to be included in this research.

	Boys	Girls
Average age of abduction	14.6 years	12.6 years
Average age of return to society	17.5 years	17.6 years
Average period within the LRA	2.9 years	5 years
Proportion participating in rehabilitation programs	56%	43%
TOTAL NUMBER OF ABDUCTIONS	36	30*

Table 4.3.1 Average numbers of child soldiers within the LRA

* one girl was abducted twice; hence the total number of abductions is 66 instead of 65

Table 4.3.1 shows the average age of abduction, the average age of return to society, the average the number of years spent within the LRA, and the percentage of returnees who participated in rehabilitation programs after their return from the bush. In order to see whether there are differences in recruitment patterns of boys and girls, these are divided into different categories. The table shows that the average age of girls at time of recruitment was significantly lower than the average age of recruitment of boys. This can be explained by the fact that many young girls are recruited to become servants to older female rebels. They are particularly targeted during recruitment missions to help these women with domestic tasks and babysitting. Still, the average age of return to society was comparable for boys and girls. This indicates that girls remain with the LRA for longer periods of time. A possible explanation for this is that they are given to male rebels to be their wife. Because of this, girls often give birth to several children in the bush which makes it more difficult to leave the LRA. Interviews indicated that the LRA is particularly interested to raise these children who are born in the bush; they are “real” rebels and only know “bush life”. Since the girls have to take care of their children, it is more difficult to leave the LRA.

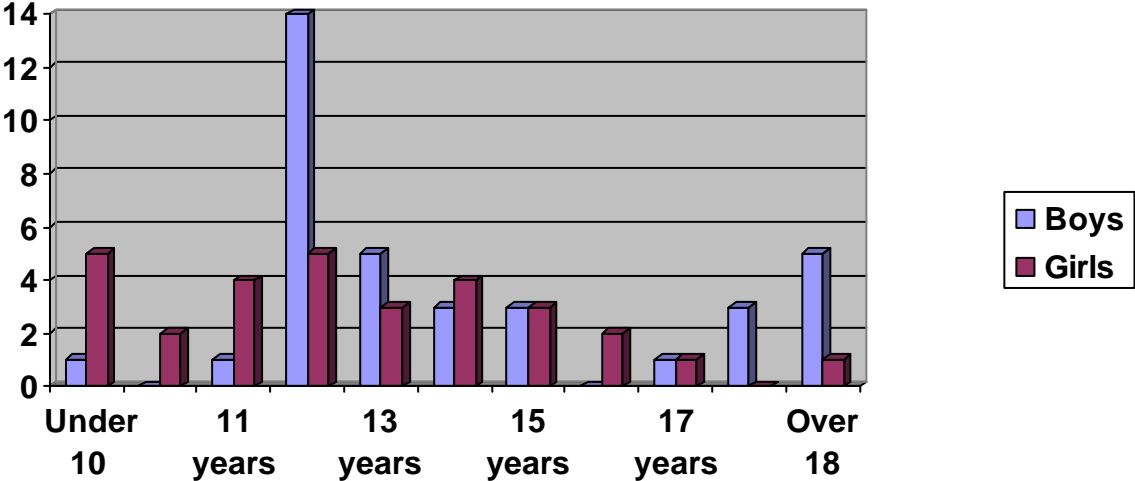


Figure 4.3.1 Age of abduction by the LRA

Figure 4.3.1 indicates that the majority of child soldiers were recruited between the age of 12 and 15. This supports Blattman’s theory that young adolescents are preferred by the LRA (see chapter 3.3 of this thesis). The horizontal axis shows the age of abduction, the vertical axis shows the number of children abducted at this age.

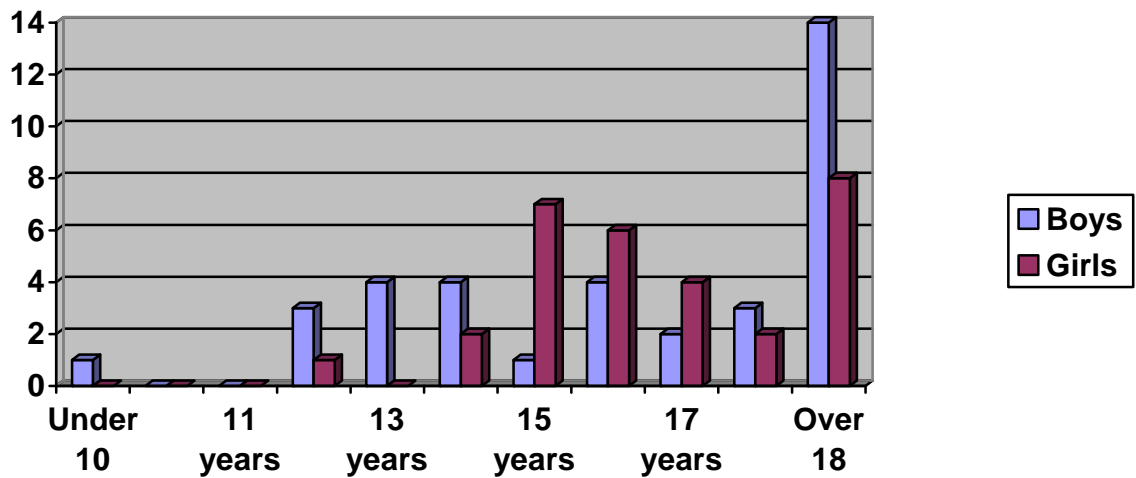


Figure 4.3.2 Age of return to society

Figure 4.3.2 indicates that the majority of child soldiers return to society when they are over 18 years of age. The horizontal axis shows the age of return to society while the vertical axis shows the number of children who returned at this age. It indicates that it is very difficult for younger children to leave the LRA which I addressed in earlier parts of this thesis. Young children are generally more dependent on fellow group members and it is relatively easy to disorientate them. This illustrates it is difficult for them to leave the bush on their own; their only chance to exit the LRA is being rescued by the UPDF. The only boy in this sample who did manage to exit the LRA under the age of 10 was indeed rescued after a severe battle with the UPDF.

Figure 4.3.2 also indicates that child soldiers are most likely to exit the LRA when they are older than 18. Drawing from field research, a possible explanation for this is the fact that child soldiers get more freedom within the LRA once they have become integrated rebels and stayed with the LRA for a longer period of time. New recruits are heavily monitored by senior rebels and commanders for several months up to years, yet if they give a continuous impression of being well integrated into the group, they are given more freedom. This implies that they are no longer strictly supervised; they can for instance fetch water or hunt on their own. Given these conditions, this increases their chances to escape and leave the bush.

5. Socialization within the Lord's Resistance Army

This chapter will emphasize the socialization processes used within the LRA by focusing on military and organizational socialization. It will highlight how these processes create allegiance among LRA rebels by using evidence from field research. In addition, Checkel's threefold analysis of socialization will be used to see to what extent socialization leads to internalization within the LRA, and thus creates allegiance.

5.1 Socialization Processes within the Lord's Resistance Army

“The LRA's almost total reliance on forced recruitment distinguishes it from the majority of rebel movements in Africa and elsewhere. Nevertheless, the LRA, like any other rebel force, has to motivate its recruits not only to participate (i.e. not run away) but also to carry out their dangerous duties” (Blattman and Annan, 2008:7).

This chapter will illustrate how the LRA motivates and controls its members, yet most importantly; it will highlight the role socialization plays in achieving this. This section will particularly reflect the first processes of socialization used within the LRA. It will illuminate the role of initiation rituals, training, violence and hazing, and how these contribute to socialize and hereby motivate new abductees. Blattman and Annan (2008) argue that their interviews with rebel commanders and abductees have revealed which methods the LRA employs in order to create motivation for abductees to participate and perform. According to their results, the provision of material incentives and rewards did not play an important role in creating this motivation. There was little to give so instead promises were made that upon victory the rebels would receive material rewards and high positions in the army or government. Besides this, the main methods of control turned out to be violence and the threat of punishment. “Real and threatened death and injury were among the primary means of dissuading escape and motivating performance”. Moreover, control was achieved by ordering “the forcible commission of violence (typically killing or the desecration of

dead bodies) as a key feature of initiation into the group, one that serves several purposes: terrorizing the youth to break down his psychological defences, raising the spectre of punishment by his community if he were to return, and desensitizing the recruit to violence” (Blattman and Annan, 2008:7). Indeed, these tactics contribute to the creation of motivation and control among child soldiers with the LRA. Yet, Blattman and Annan miss out on the essential role socialization plays in the creation of *allegiance*.

Formal and Informal Socialization

Although there is little known about socialization within rebel groups, these processes seem to play a significant role in the creation of a cohesive unit. Wood highlights this in her work, arguing that “the consequences of military socialization for combatants are not well documented, but they surely include the effects of recruitment and training processes as well as the effects of witnessing and wielding violence. Whether recruits of armed groups are volunteers or have been coerced, they have to be socialized in the use of violence for group, not private, purposes, if group leaders are to control the violence deployed by their combatants, typically through the building of strongly hierarchical organizations. Training and socialization to the armed group take place both formally, through the immersion experience of “boot camp”, and informally, through initiation rituals and hazing. The powerful experiences of endless drilling, dehumanization through abuse at the hands of the drill sergeant, and degradation followed by “rebirth” as group members through initiation rituals typically melt individual recruits into a cohesive unit in which loyalties to one another are felt to be stronger than previous loyalties, such as those to family” (2008:546).

Military socialization as Wood describes it certainly takes place within the LRA. Abductees are socialized in the use of violence for group purposes resulting in a strong hierarchical organization. This process of formal and informal socialization starts from the moment children are abducted by the LRA. Formal socialization is achieved by “boot camp”; an intense military training which drills the newly abducted children as soldiers. They are generally taught how to dismantle and operate guns, how to march, how to patrol areas to detect UPDF forces, how to dodge UPDF soldiers, and

learn about fighting tactics. This process can take several days up to some months, depending on the LRA's position and the intensity of attacks by the UPDF. Generally, training seemed to be most intense when the rebels were located in camps throughout South Sudan. There were few confrontations with the UPDF which gave the LRA more time to sufficiently train their new recruits. As Margaret, a former LRA rebel, expressed during interviews; "after I was abducted, the rebels took me to Sudan. We had to walk for 4 days without food and did not rest. When we came to Sudan we were taken to the LRA camp. Then the training started. The rebels taught us how to dismantle the gun and how to shoot and march. I also learned how to move through the bush without leaving traces for the UPDF. The rebels told me how to use tactics to attack the enemy. We were 12 people in the training. We all came from different places in Gulu, Pader, and Kitgum district. The rebels trained us for 2 months so we would be good rebels and could be selected to go fight in Uganda. The training was difficult but we wanted to be selected to fight for the LRA. I tried to become a good rebel and I can shoot the gun very well. I killed many UPDFs when I was selected to go back to Uganda".

In addition, informal socialization takes place through a "welcome ceremony" of initiation rituals and hazing. The initiation ritual of the LRA is used to register its new members. As a means of registration, newly abducted children on average receive 50 to 150 caning strokes. If they cry the number of strokes is increased, often until they lose consciousness. Alternatively, they are beaten with the flat side of a *panga*, a machete, to be registered as a group member. In addition, a ritual with shea nut butter is performed. The butter is smeared on the head, chest, back, and hands of the abductees. Filda, a former LRA child soldier, explained that "the rebels told us that the shea butter will protect us from UPDF attacks. The bullets would not be able to find us. They also told us that they would always know where we were because of the shea butter. If we would escape they would always get us...and then they would finish us".

After completing the shea butter ceremony, boys are not allowed to wash themselves for three days and girls cannot wash themselves for four days. During these three or four days, the newly abducted children are guarded and have to eat and sleep separately from the rebels which have stayed in the bush for longer periods of time.

This has an important symbolic value in Acholi culture; when a baby is born it is not taken to the outside world until it is three (in case it is a boy) or four days old (in case it is a girl). This implies that the shea nut butter ritual leads to the “rebirth” of abductees as group members. According to LRA terms the civilian spirit is erased and the children become “integrated rebels”. As one boy expressed “they chased away the civilian spirit by performing the rituals. You become a real integrated rebel after that and you are accepted as a member of the group by the commanders. You are no longer a civilian, the rebels are your new family”. These formal and informal socialization processes within the LRA show the beginning stages of how individual recruits are melted into a cohesive unit.

Experiencing Violence

During and after the registration process LRA abductees generally experience extreme forms of violence. This is commonly used within rebel groups as described by Wood; “once deployed, combatants experience (to widely varying degrees) violence as perpetrators, as witnesses, and often as victims. Combatant memoirs consistently report the traumatizing effects of watching the death or injury of fellow combatants, as well as the harrowing effects for many of using violence themselves. Among the psychological mechanisms possibly at work in these processes of socialization to group membership and the wielding of violence are compliance, role adoption, internalization of group norms, cognitive dissonance reduction, habituation to violence, diffusion of responsibility onto the group, deindividuation, and dehumanization of the victimized group” (2008:546). Through these processes, children become part of the violent culture of a rebel group.

The profound effects that a combination of these processes exerts on LRA child soldiers are sharply illustrated by their allegiance to the group and the extreme violence they deploy. Young abductees are often forced by LRA commanders to exert lethal violence, in many cases against family or village members. Besides that, violence and fear are used to control the behaviour of new recruits. Suffered and observed violence create high levels of fear among abductees. This was strongly indicated during field research. As Paul explained; “one day I was going to town with

my friends to get sugar, salt and cassava. On the way back I was walking in front because my friends were tired of carrying the sugar. I met the rebels on the road. They came out of the bush and asked me where I was going. I told them I was going home. They asked if I was alone so I told them I was with my 3 friends. They ordered me to wait in the bush with them until my friends came. I could not run; they had guns. When my friends came they took them too. Then something bad happened. Two of my friends tried to run away. The rebels shot one and captured the other one. They told me and my other friend to kill him. They gave us the panga (machete) but we could not do it. They got angry and were yelling that they would kill us all if we would not do it. They started beating my friend so we had to kill the other one, I was fearing them. After we had finished him, the rebels told me to open his skull. I had to eat his brain and drink the blood. I could not go home, I was covered in blood. The rebels told me I was becoming a real rebel now and we started walking into the bush. I never went back home”. This account is just one of many cases in which children are forced to exert lethal violence on their relatives and friends. However dramatic this may seem, it often results in strong allegiance to the group.

Moreover, the rebels tell new recruits they will be killed if they try to escape and thus the majority stays with the group. Children that do try to escape are often caught and killed. Anna’s experience with attempted escapes is just one of many. She tells: “one of the girls was sent to fetch water when she tried to escape. The rebels caught her and she was given to the other abductees to be killed. There were ten newly abducted children. The rebels put the girl in the middle of the group. The new abductees were all standing around her and the rebels ordered them all to touch and beat the girl. The abductees started beating her until she did not move anymore”.

Interviews with former LRA child soldiers revealed that the use of violence had become normal for them; all constraints disappeared due to the exposure to constant violence. This may explain why the LRA has become more and more violent towards civilians over the years. In her analysis of military socialization within the RUF in Sierra Leone, Wood identifies a similar phenomenon. Wood explains that “the frequently observed widening of repertoires of violence over the course of the war likely reflects the ongoing effects of these underlying mechanisms, particularly

dehumanization, diffusion of responsibility, habituation, and deindividuation, all of which are likely to undermine constraints on violence” (2008:547). As elaborated upon in chapter 3, this indicates violence is a powerful tool to turn children into effective soldiers.

Violence wielded, suffered, and observed turns out to be an integral part of the process of socialization of LRA combatants. As a result of this traumatic socialization, many child soldiers started viewing the LRA as their family and their commanders as father figures. As one of the LRA child soldiers expressed: “when we were living in the bush, there was a lot of violence. The UPDF attacked us and we had to fight them back. Some of the children did not listen and were punished. They were properly caned and the rebels would say this is what happens when you do not listen. But when I was a good rebel and killing many UPDFs, the rebels were good for me. I was not caned anymore and I got a rank of sergeant. I had my gun in the bush and the rebels protected me from UPDFs. They were my family, this was now my life. I wanted to fight, I was not thinking of home anymore”.

As this account indicates, the LRA displaced and transformed the socialization processes of civilian life. As Wood argues; “recruits’ socialization into military life reshapes social networks in many ways. Rather than transitioning to adult life through traditional cultural rituals of maturation, apprenticeships to particular occupations, and participation in migrant labour networks, young recruits are socialized to adulthood through their integration into armed groups and the wielding of violence. In Uganda, former child soldiers were significantly disadvantaged by their loss of schooling and skill development, and a minority was significantly traumatized as well. An overarching pattern is the substitution of complex everyday ties, shaped by multiple overlapping networks of family, employment, and community, by ties with the members of the armed group” (2008:547). In many cases ties with the LRA became so strong that it replaced family ties. During interviews former child soldiers often expressed a sense of belonging to the LRA. They had friends and a new family in the bush, and could loot whatever they wanted. They had gotten guns now which gave them power, while at home they did not have anything. They were living and fighting

together as a group; they were taking care of each other and there seemed no point to return home.

The strong ties among LRA rebels deter defection. One of the first stages in the development of these new ties is the restraining of mobility. Children are forced to publicly kill in front of their family and neighbours and are then taken away to unknown areas. Most children are taken to Sudan and separated from children from their home village. This keeps them from running away; the killing has burned the bridges with their home community and if they still want to return they do not know the way. This is particularly effective on very young children as seen in figure 4.3.2. As a result they start developing new ties with the rebel group. Also, a buddy system is established. Child soldiers monitor each other and are punished in case their buddy misbehaves or tries to escape. This prevents defection. This illustrates how fear is indeed a cause for joining as well as staying with the LRA as indicated earlier by Blattman and Gates. Brim argues that the use of “group interaction as the context for learning and group interchange is the most effective method. This follows from the fact that the adult is not a *tabula rasa* and that the educational problem is one of change, of erasing what exists and substituting something new” (Brim, in: Sills, 1968:557). By letting these children kill their relatives and burn the bridges with their past, the LRA aims to erase their civilian spirit and substitute it with the identity of a rebel.

Child soldiers within the LRA developed personal ties to each other, their commanders and even to Joseph Kony. This makes the character of the LRA as an organization rather personalized and indicates that children became loyal to their superiors not only because of their position, but also because of their personality. As Andvig and Gates reason; “children’s need for security, to have someone to love and respect may be – rather perversely many would feel – transferred to military commanders” (2007). This is indeed the case; many former LRA child soldiers explain that the LRA has become their new family and their commanders became their new fathers. Many even seem to have had a special connection to Kony himself. They used to be in training camps in South Sudan and Kony would come to the camp every once in a while. He would come to preach to the rebels but afterwards, when all children

had returned to their barracks, Kony would pay them a visit and have a chat with them. They would talk about general things, about life in the camp and Kony would make jokes. During personal interviews, many children expressed feelings of affection and appreciation towards him. This seems extremely contradictory looking at the fact they were abducted and forced to join the LRA. This indicates how powerful the process of socialization within the LRA is and highlights the importance of researching this phenomenon in order to better understand child soldiers.

5.2 Organizational Socialization within the Lord's Resistance Army

Socialization is used by the LRA to remain a cohesive body. It is amongst other things used to achieve internalization of the norms and values by their new members. Yet, “practices, norms, and preferences are not only internalized by individual actors, but, because they are shared by many, also characterize and shape the identity of larger social aggregates” (Beyers, in: Bearce, 2007:707). This implies that internalization leads to a cohesive body; it can be seen as the glue that keeps a group together. Through interaction on a regular, sustained basis new identities and interests are taken on among the members of a group (Bearce, 2007). This leads to interest convergence and building bridges within the LRA, aiming for an effective organization and high allegiance among its rebels.

According to Van Maanen socialization processes necessarily involve the transmission of information and values. Organizational socialization consists of six different tactics and refers to “the process by which one is taught and learns “the ropes” of a particular organizational role. In its most general sense, organizational socialization is then the process by which an individual acquires the social knowledge and skills necessary to assume an organizational role” (1977:3). Moreover, “organizational socialization refers to the fashion in which an individual is taught and learns what behaviours and perspectives are customary and desirable within the work setting as well as what ones are not” (Van Maanen, 1977:4). Socializing agents employ different tactics when socializing their new recruits into the organization.

Collective Socialization

The first of six potential tactics is collective socialization. This “refers to the tactic of taking a group of recruits who are facing a given boundary passage and putting them through a common set of experiences together. A good example of this process is basic training or boot camp in military organizations” (Van Maanen, 1977:38). Moreover, Van Maanen argues that “collective socialization programs are usually found in organizations where there are a large number of recruits to be processed into the same organizationally defined role; where the content of this role can be fairly clearly specified; and, where the organization desires to build a collective sense of identity, solidarity, and loyalty within the cohort group being socialized” (Van Maanen, 1977:41). A clear example of this can be found within the military training of the LRA. After groups of children have been abducted the rebels usually order all new abductees to gather for military training. They are shown how to dismantle the gun and told what all the gun parts are called. After this demonstration the new abductees are given guns and have to repeat what they have learned. The ones who fail are punished and usually caned until they manage to complete the training properly.

However, Van Maanen acknowledges that collective socialization may provide a potential basis for resistance among new recruits. As the new recruits may face common problems overcoming the presented boundary passages, they may look for solutions as a group. Thus, the likelihood of rebellion within a collectively socialized group is relatively high, which may lead to collective deviation (Van Maanen, 1977:42). Yet, any form of resistance or deviation is efficiently tackled by the LRA through the use of extreme forms of violence against deviating members. An example of this is witnessing or carrying out the killing and beating of misbehaving fellow group members, either by integrated rebels or new recruits. This discourages other rebels from deviating as they fear the same punishment. According to LRA standards, a rebel misbehaves not only when he or she attempts to escape, but also when this person thinks about home. This is sharply illustrated by the account of a former LRA child soldier: “there was one young boy who was always sitting alone. He was not active and very quiet. One day, the rebels ordered me to get him. I brought him to the group and they gave me the panga (machete). In front of everyone they said: “this one

is trying to escape. He is sitting alone and thinking about home. We don't want that, you have to be active! We are your family and you will stay with us in the bush! You know what happens to betrayers? We finish them! You first kill this boy!" They pushed me to the boy. He looked at me with big eyes. I did not want to but I had to do it. If I did not finish him they would kill me too".

This example shows that LRA commanders tackle potential deviation by spreading fear and carrying out punishments en public. Besides that, collective deviation is avoided as child soldiers within the LRA are strictly supervised and are not given the opportunity to discuss discomforts among themselves. Their behaviour is thoroughly analyzed and if rebel commanders are not satisfied with their attitude they are heavily punished. In most cases, fellow child soldiers are ordered to carry out the punishment. The inclusion in these punishments prevents them from non compliant behaviour. This high level of surveillance significantly limits possibilities for collective deviation.

Formal Socialization

In addition to collectively socializing new recruits, the LRA utilizes a formal socialization process; the second organizational socialization tactic described by Van Maanen. "Formal socialization refers to those processes in which a newcomer is more or less segregated from regular organizational members while being put through a set of experiences tailored explicitly for the newcomer" (Van Maanen, 1977:43-44). The segregation from regular organizational members, in this case "integrated" rebels, is an important aspect of the socialization process practiced by the LRA. During their initiation period child soldiers stay separated from integrated rebels, sleep in different places, eat different food, and are not allowed to approach integrated rebels. As explained in the previous section of this chapter, they go through a set of experiences which is especially designed for new recruits in order to integrate them within the group. These include severe caning of each new recruit as a means of registration, the ritual in which new recruits are smeared with shea butter, the task of carrying out violence, and a strict training regime. This is done to teach the new recruit his or her new role and to feel and think like an LRA member. As Van Maanen describes it;

formal socialization is typically found in organizations “where it is deemed important that a newcomer learns the “correct” attitudes, values, and protocol associated with the new role. To put the matter bluntly, the more formal the process, the more concern there is likely to be shown for the recruit’s absorption of the appropriate demeanour and stance associated with the target role” (1977:45). Formal periods of socialization “serve to provide an intensive period in which others in the organization can rather closely judge the newcomer’s commitment and deference to the critical values of the occupation” (Van Maanen, 1977:46). During this period commanders closely monitor and supervise newly abducted children. As explained earlier, those who do not adhere to the demands of the commander face severe punishment and are likely to be killed.

Random Socialization

The processes practiced by the LRA can also be identified as random socialization; the third tactic of organizational socialization. “Random socialization occurs when the sequence of steps leading to the target role is unknown, ambiguous, or continually changing... Thus, in random processes, while there may be a number of steps or stages leading to the taking of certain organizational roles, there is no necessary order specified in terms of the steps that are to be taken” (Van Maanen, 1977:51). Within the LRA there is no specific order of steps to be taken in order to achieve a particular organizational role. There is a clear hierarchical system within the organization, consisting of military ranks which distinguish between the status and roles of rebels. Yet it there is no structured path leading to the achievement of a rank or important role.

For instance, staying with the LRA for many years does not imply one is ever granted a military rank. New recruits may receive a rank much earlier than integrated rebels, all depending on their behaviour and the personality of their commanders. The distribution of ranks can therefore vary greatly between LRA battalions. Generally speaking, if rebels are actively engaged with LRA activities, they earn the appreciation and respect of commanders. In some cases rebels will be given a rank for this reason which will give them the responsibility for their own group of soldiers. Whether ranks are distributed in this way seems to depend on which battalion they are part of and

particularly under which commander they fight. However, if a rebel manages to achieve something significant, a rank is generally immediately given to this person, no matter how long he or she stayed with the LRA. Examples of achievements which generally lead to the provision of a military rank are: killing an important UPDF official, shooting UPDF vehicles, looting important supplies like weapons and bullets, and abducting a large number of children.

The front page of this thesis shows a good example of the distribution of ranks. The picture shows two of Kony's bodyguards during the 2006 peace talks in Sudan. Interviews indicated that being a bodyguard implies that these two boys are both well integrated rebels; Kony does not allow newcomers close to him as he is afraid to be killed and needs to be surrounded by people whom are capable to protect him. Therefore, they need to be well trained and integrated; showing that they have become real rebels. Even though the boys on the picture are both real rebels, they have different ranks. The one in the background does not wear a uniform and does not show signs of having a rank which indicates he is a "normal" integrated rebel. The boy in front however, has an important rank within the LRA which indicates an extraordinary accomplishment. Looking at the uniform he is wearing, one can see this is a uniform from the Ugandan government forces; the UPDF. Wearing this uniform indicates he has killed a UPDF soldier and was able to take the uniform of his victim. Besides this, the blue and pink ropes on the left side of his body indicate he has achieved a rank; for instance by killing a high UPDF official, stealing their arms and radios, or shooting their vehicles. Given one cannot plan these achievements on the battlefield this indicates the LRA uses random socialization.

Variable Socialization

As a fourth tactic of organizational socialization Van Maanen describes variable socialization processes which "give a recruit few clues as when to expect a given boundary passage" (1977:55). According to Van Maanen "variable socialization processes are most likely to produce custodial responses. The logic behind this proposition is simply that a variable situation leads to maximum anxiety and this anxiety operates as a strong motivator toward conformity... Variable socialization

processes keep a recruit maximally off balance and at the mercy of socialization agents” (1977:58-59). This is indeed the case within the LRA whose entire existence may be perceived as a variable situation. As a rebel group they are chased by the UPDF and thus are constantly on the run throughout the region. This variable situation creates maximum anxiety for LRA recruits; they are taken far away from home, are constantly moving and generally do not know where they are. They have lost the sense of security they used to have at home and the only thing they have left is the LRA. This indeed leads to conformity. Many child soldiers indicated during interviews that they had no idea where they were during most of their time with the LRA. A lot of time was spent in South Sudan and it was impossible to escape from there. Besides that, the UPDF was following them all the time. Being with the LRA they had the opportunity to defend themselves. They did not know where to turn if they wanted to leave the LRA and were scared of being killed by the government forces or civilians. For these reasons, many LRA rebels decided to stay with the group. This indicates the effective use of a variable socialization tactic by the LRA.

Serial Socialization

The fifth tactic of organizational socialization elaborated upon by Van Maanen is serial socialization. “A serial socialization process is one in which experienced members of the organization groom newcomers who are about to assume similar kinds of positions in the organization. In effect, these experienced members serve as role models for recruits” (Van Maanen, 1977:59). According to serial socialization, integrated LRA rebels and commanders would serve as role models for new recruits. This is indeed the case as new recruits are groomed by these integrated rebels and commanders as they will have to assume similar positions within the group. An example of this is the teaching of new recruits how to operate guns so they can participate in fighting like integrated rebels do.

According to Van Maanen “serial socialization is most likely to be associated with inclusionary boundary passages. This association results because to become a central member of any organizational segment normally requires that others consider one to be affable, trustworthy, and, of course, central as well. This is unlikely to occur

unless these others perceive the newcomer to be, in most respects, similar to themselves. Recruits must at least seem to be taking those with whom they work seriously or risk being labelled deviant in the situation and hence not allowed across inclusionary boundaries” (1977:62). This is extensively tested among new recruits within the LRA. Newcomers have to identify with and act as an LRA rebel rather quickly. Integrated rebels and commanders test this development by asking new recruits questions which are often symbolic.

A former LRA rebel explains how commanders used to talk to newly recruited children in order to measure if they could be considered a real LRA member:

“Commanders would often come talk to us, especially if we sat alone. The commanders would say they were thinking about home and ask if we felt the same. They did that to test us. If someone said he was thinking about home they would get really angry and cane him. If someone said he wanted to go home, we were told to finish him because he was not a good rebel”. Another boy tells about a more symbolic type of questioning: “there was a boy in my group who was quiet. One day the commander asked him why he was so quiet. He said he did not know. Then the commander asked him if he liked turtles or scorpions better. The boy said he liked turtles. The commander got very angry and he yelled at the boy. He said that the turtle was like the UPDF; slow, stupid and useless. The scorpion was like Kony; mysterious, smart, fast, and poisonous. The commander yelled that the boy was a betrayer because he chose for the UPDF and not for Kony. Then he told us to chop him in pieces with the panga because we do not want betrayers”. This shows the importance of serial socialization and the consequences of not assimilating with integrated rebels.

Divestiture Socialization

As a final tactic of socialization Van Maanen elaborates upon divestiture socialization processes. These “seek to deny and strip away certain personal characteristics of a recruit” (1977:64). This type of socialization is “organized explicitly to disconfirm many aspects of the recruit’s entering self-image, thus beginning the process of rebuilding the individual’s self-image based upon new assumptions. Often these new assumptions arise from the recruit’s own discovery,

gradual or dramatic, that they have an ability to do things they had not thought themselves able to do previously” (Van Maanen, 1977:65). This type of socialization is used by the LRA when it seeks to erase the civilian spirit from its recruits and turns them into integrated rebels. Children enter the LRA with a self-image which is completely rebuilt by the socialization process they undergo within the LRA. During the time they spend with the rebels, new recruits discover they are able to carry out extreme types of violence, kill people, loot villages and so on.

Furthermore, “in extreme circumstances, recruits are forced to abstain from certain types of behaviour, must publicly degrade themselves and others, and must follow a rigid set of rules and regulations. Furthermore, measures are often taken to isolate recruits from former associates who presumably would continue to confirm the recruit’s old identity” (Van Maanen, 1977:66). “Divestiture processes are most likely to be found (1) at the point of initial entry into an organization or occupation, and (2) prior to the crossing of major inclusionary boundaries where a recruit must pass some basic test of worthiness for membership in an organizational segment” (Van Maanen, 1977:67). This is clearly seen when children are abducted by the LRA. From the moment they become part of the group they are not allowed to greet their family anymore and have to pretend they do not know them. They are removed as far as possible from their old identity, by burning all bridges with their past. They are often forced to kill in front of their village members when they enter the organization. Then, to become an integrated rebel, they have to pass the questions of commanders and are ordered to perform certain tasks (like killing or looting) as a test of worthiness of the group.

This highlights that “divestiture processes, in effect, remold the person and, therefore, are powerful ways for organizations and occupations to control the values of incoming members. It is such processes which lie at the heart of most professional training thus helping to explain why professionals appear to be so deeply and permanently socialized. For, once a person has successfully completed a difficult divestiture process and has constructed something of a new identity based on the role to which the divestiture process was directed, there are strong forces toward the maintenance of the new identity” (Van Maanen, 1977:67). This explains why

organizational socialization is used by the LRA; it leads to high levels of allegiance because their recruits take on new identities and become loyal to the group.

Van Maanen's theory of these six different processes of socialization shows that "these tactical dimensions are associated with one another and that the actual impact of organizational socialization upon a recruit is a cumulative one, the result of a combination of socialization tactics which perhaps enhance and reinforce or conflict and neutralize each other. It is also obvious that awareness of these tactical dimensions makes it possible for managers to design socialization processes which maximize the probabilities of certain outcomes" (Van Maanen, 1977:68). Looking at the tactics used by the LRA one can indeed derive that these reinforce and enhance each other, assuring that new recruits are subject to effective organizational socialization which creates motivation, loyalty, control, resilience and allegiance to the LRA. In order to analyze this process more in-depth, the next section of this chapter will further elaborate upon socialization processes found within the LRA.

5.3 LRA Socialization: A Threefold Analytical Challenge

As mentioned earlier in this thesis, Checkel stresses the importance of utilizing a threefold analytic challenge when focusing on socialization (2005). In order to breakdown the socialization processes practiced by the LRA, this section will use Checkel's theory. This will enable me to identify the exact mechanisms of socialization used by the LRA, assess which type of internalization occurs among its rebels, and reveal whether socialized LRA rebels demonstrate different behavior. This threefold analysis will provide a clear overview of the effects and consequences of socialization within the LRA. As such, it will reveal whether a shift occurs away from a logic of consequences and toward a logic of appropriateness.

1. Which socialization mechanisms were present and what were the conditions of their operation?

Socialization is a highly efficient tool to engage children with the LRA. In comparison to adults, children are generally considered to be vulnerable, naïve and

susceptible to outside influences. Thus, when growing up within the LRA, socialization teaches them to become part of the group and creates a sense of belonging. A variety of socialization mechanisms are used to achieve this. According to Grusec and Hastings “socialization refers to processes whereby naive individuals are taught the skills, behaviour patterns, values and motivations needed for competent functioning in the culture in which the child is growing up. Paramount among these are the social skills, social understandings, and emotional maturity needed for interaction with other individuals to fit in with the functioning of social dyads and larger groups. Socialization processes include all those whereby culture is transmitted from each generation to the next, including training for specific roles in specific occupations” (2007:13).

This definition will be used in order to answer which mechanisms were present within the LRA and under which conditions they operated. Thus, I will analyze which skills, behaviour patterns, values and motivations are taught to child soldiers within the LRA. In addition, I will highlight which methods are used to achieve this.

Skills

As Grusec and Hastings emphasized, socialization processes transmit culture from each generation to the next, for instance by training for specific roles in specific occupations. This can be seen in the particular types of training carried out by the LRA. Abductees are grouped and trained in different fields in order to eventually carry out a variety of roles. This is an important part of the socialization process.

Children who have become involved with the LRA are taught a large variety of skills. They generally undergo an intense military training through which they are taught how to operate and dismantle arms, lay land mines, learn how to target the enemy and how to march. In case children are selected to become bodyguards for commanders, they are taught the skills to protect their superior. Besides that, child recruits are taught about military strategies and tactics. Children who are not selected to become combatants are taught a variety of different skills. Integrated rebels teach them a range of skills needed for escorting, porting of looted goods, cooking, nursing, and babysitting. In addition, a selected group of rebels is trained to become medical

personnel within the LRA. Commanders assess the intelligence of their recruits and the ones who seem capable are sent to do medical training at “sickbay” (a place where sick and wounded rebels are sent to in order to recover). The assignment of tasks is discussed by commanders; they decide what kind of role a newly abducted child will perform and which skills they are to be taught. This is a common process within rebel groups which is also described by Andvig and Gates who describe that “officers of an armed force that employs children assess the relative capabilities of children and adults both in their recruitment and when allocating tasks” (Andvig and Gates, 2007:4). By assessing their capabilities and allocating the tasks, commanders assure that recruits are taught the right skills and perform maximally.

Behavioural patterns

Teaching new recruits appropriate behavioural patterns is an important aspect of socialization within the LRA. New recruits are taught a large set of rules when they become part of the group in order to make sure they behave correctly. The 65 interviews I conducted among former child soldiers and commanders in Northern Uganda revealed that the LRA top designs specific rules to control behaviour of their recruits. Examples of these rules are the following:

- LRA rebels are prohibited to escape,
- Rebels are prohibited to have any form of contact with civilians,
- Rebels are prohibited to eat food prepared by civilians, this will poison them,
- In case family or village members are recognized these people are to be ignored,
- During training in Sudan girls are prohibited to have contact with the Arabs,
- Rebels should at all times cooperate with fellow group members,
- Rebels should at all times protect fellow group members,
- It is prohibited to think about or discuss their earlier homes,
- It is prohibited to discuss ideas to escape with other rebels,
- Solitary behaviour is not allowed, one should at all times engage in activities,
- One must engage in group prayers which are held on a weekly basis,
- It is prohibited to drink alcohol,

- It is prohibited to smoke because this enables the UPDF to detect them,
- In order to prevent tensions amongst rebels, it is prohibited to fall in love with fellow group members unless women are given to a male rebel to be his wife,
- It is prohibited to withdraw from fighting the UPDF,
- Recruits must stay in the bush because people from their village and even family will reject and kill them if they return,
- Looting and killing is only allowed when this is ordered by Kony or his commanders,
- If Kony decides they enter a period in which killing of civilians is not allowed, this rule should be adhered to until Kony says otherwise,
- When rebels are looting they should avoid red and white things because the enemy will detect them,
- When girls menstruate they are to stay separate from the group until “they are clean again”,
- New recruits are to stay separate from the group until they are initiated and become real rebels,
- When new recruits enter the group they should address all integrated rebels as “teacher”,
- It is prohibited to use a bicycle or vehicles, rebels always have to go on foot,
- Rebels are prohibited to use looted goods for themselves, everything is to be given to the commander who may divide it amongst them,
- Rebels have to be “strong hearted” and fight to take over the government,
- Rebels who are active and perform well will receive a rank,
- Newly abducted children are to be divided into different groups and cannot stay with people abducted from the same village,
- Groups of four newly abducted children are given to an integrated rebel who has the responsibility of supervising them,
- When attacking a village, each rebel has to abduct a specific number of people,
- It is prohibited to eat on the battlefield,
- Whatever Kony’s spirits say, all rebels must comply with its orders.

Values

As explained earlier in this thesis, newly abducted children are registered as LRA members by caning and several spiritual rituals. Kony is believed to be a disciple from God and thus all LRA members are to follow his orders. The orders come from several spirits by which Kony is possessed. Most importantly, it is believed by LRA rebels that Kony possesses a Holy Spirit which tells the LRA what to do and gives directions and orders. Rebels are to obey all orders given and express a sincere belief in Kony's spirits. Interviews have revealed that the LRA becomes the abductee's new family; it will take care of abductees, and gives them a new outlook on life. Former rebels express the importance of avoiding tension within the group. Tension among rebels is not allowed and should be solved right away in order not to form a threat to group cohesion. The rebels become each other's brothers and sisters and should treat each other like that; they must protect and take care of each other.

New abductees are at the bottom of the hierarchical system and should always show respect to integrated rebels. The integrated rebels will show them how to live in the bush. Once newly abducted children become real integrated rebels (by showing correct behaviour) they are given their own group of new abductees which they are supposed to integrate in the LRA. Respect for each other is a key factor and rebels who do not behave according to expectations are to be reported and punished. There is a relatively high social control among the rebels which, in combination with their shared values, melt them into a cohesive group.

Motivations

Looking at the circumstances of their recruitment into the LRA, it may be hard to imagine child soldiers become motivated to fight with the rebels. Andvig claims that "intrinsic motivation cannot be either bought or forced, it is either present or not" (2006:32). This assumption is incorrect. Socialization within the LRA has made child soldiers change their norms, values, and even identities to such a large extent that their motivations have become intrinsic, even after being forced to become part of the LRA. The LRA has created a sophisticated socialization mechanism which creates allegiance and fierce loyalty among many of its rebels. For instance, LRA rebels are generally

motivated to remain part of the group by promises of Kony and their commanders. One of the most important motivators is the promise they will get a position within the government once the Ugandan government is overthrown by the LRA. As these rebels come from very poor backgrounds and miss out on education during their stay in the bush, this seems the most viable option for most of them. The rebels are promised that if they fight hard, they will get money when they overthrow the government and that they will rule the country together in order to realize better life standards for the Acholi population in the north. This motivates them in their struggle with the UPDF and contributes to a shared feeling of “us vs. them”.

Another significant factor contributing to motivation is the achievement of ranks. Getting a rank will give a rebel control and power; he or she will be given an own group of soldiers. These soldiers have to fight for the rebel and carry out tasks like cooking, washing, and fetching water. This gives the rebel a sense of power which is not likely to be experienced in their old village. In addition, male rebels are given wives. They start a new family within the LRA, have children and establish friendships. This contributes to the development of strong ties among LRA rebels. Besides that, the rebels have an almost constant access to food and other supplies since they loot what is needed in the bush. The fact that everything is “free” in the bush turns out to be a significant motivating factor to remain with the LRA. Overall, many child soldiers express the feeling that life in the bush had significant advantages from life in their villages or IDP camps. At home they simply did not have anything due to high levels of poverty. There were little future expectations and opportunities, which made staying with the rebels a good alternative. They were not that hungry anymore and believed they would take over the government one day. This would provide them with a much brighter future compared to when they would stay at home. Therefore, many former child soldiers expressed high levels of motivation when they were part of the LRA. This shows the efficiency of socialization within the LRA; it turned many scared, abducted children into motivated, allegiant fighters.

Means of teaching

Several means of teaching are used in order to create the necessary social skills, social understandings, and emotional maturity among child soldiers within the LRA. An often described example of this is the use of fear. In addition to this, punishment is an important means of teaching within the LRA. If child soldiers do not successfully acquire the skills they are taught, they are heavily punished by caning or strokes with a machete. Yet most of the time they are killed to set an example of what happens if you are not a “good” rebel. The same types of punishment are carried out when rebels break the rules they are taught or show a lack of motivation. For instance, it is common to kill a couple which fell in love in front of their group as this is inappropriate behaviour. Also, commanders have rebels killed who do not show active behaviour and do not eagerly fight the UPDF. This sets examples for other group members who adjust their behaviour in order to avoid punishment. In addition, rebels are told they will be punished anyhow, even if their misbehaviour is not discovered by fellow rebels. They are told that the bullet will find them at the battlefield and they will be killed by the UPDF.

Although these are prominent factors, fear and punishment are not the only important means of teaching. The LRA uses group meetings, assemblies, and spiritual beliefs as well. Each battalion of the LRA has its regular group meetings. These often take place when they have received a message from Kony on how to proceed with their struggle. All the rebels are informed of the new expectations and are supposed to act accordingly from that moment on. If they fail to do this, punishment will follow. Rebels are called to gather in certain areas for an assembly whenever the LRA is either unsuccessful or successful in its achievements. If they have failed in battles with the UPDF and have lost many of their combatants, Kony generally calls for an assembly to discuss what has happened. Failing tactics are pointed out as well as other areas of improvement. Kony instructs his rebels how to proceed and gives his commanders orders to closely supervise their rebels. If the rebels have been very successful and won important battles, Kony calls for an assembly to emphasize this. According to former child soldiers these meetings motivated the rebels to continue the fighting and be “good” rebels, aiming to destroy the enemy.

Since these children are growing up in the violent culture of the Lord's Resistance Army, these means of teaching ensure they are competent in functioning as full members of the rebel group. As Grusec and Hastings argue, social skills, social understandings, and emotional maturity are of essential value for the interaction with fellow group members in order to fit in with the functioning of the entire group. The aims to achieve this can clearly be seen within the LRA by the presence and operation of a variety of socialization mechanisms.

2. Did internalization (Type I or II) actually occur?

According to Checkel socialization leads to Type I or II internalization. The first type refers to “learning a role – acquiring the knowledge that enables them to act in accordance with expectations – irrespective of whether they like the role or agree with it. The key is the agents knowing what is socially accepted in a given setting or community. Following a logic of appropriateness, then, means simply that conscious instrumental calculation has been replaced by conscious role playing” (Checkel, 2005:804). “On the other hand, following a logic of appropriateness may go beyond role playing and imply that agents accept community or organizational norms as “the right thing to do”. We call this Type II internalization/socialization, and it implies that agents adopt the interests, or even possibly the identity, of the community of which they are part. Conscious instrumental calculation has now been replaced by “taken-for-grantedness”” (Checkel, 2005:804).

Interviews have revealed that socialization within the LRA has indeed led to internalization, both Type I and II. Still, which type of internalization has occurred varies from person to person. It turns out that children who have been abducted at a very young age (under 12 years of age) are most likely to reach the stage of Type II internalization. This can be explained by the fact they have experienced less socialization processes as a civilian and it is therefore less complicated to socialize them within the LRA compared to older recruits. Recruits who were over the age of 18 turned out to be most difficult to socialize and generally reached Type I internalization. According to LRA commanders it seemed more difficult to make them adopt the identity of the LRA. This was particularly due to the fact that they often had

wives and families at home. This made it more difficult for them to forget about civilian life and erase the civilian spirit.

Gender also seems to play a role in whether Type I or II internalization is achieved by LRA socialization. Girls more often expressed feelings of wanting to go home, particularly because they were given as wives to male rebels. They had no choice of who would become their “husband” which initially made it more difficult for them to consider the LRA as their new family. They performed their roles because it was expected but generally did not adopt the LRA identity. This seemed to change when the girls got pregnant and gave birth to the rebels’ children; bush children. Once they had children girls seemed to adapt more easily to the group and started considering it as their new home. Male abductees on the other hand, seemed to have less problems achieving Type II internalization. Having access to a gun, food, clothes, and eventually getting a wife and children in the bush, gave them a strong sense of agency and power. Boys generally expressed strong motivation to remain with the LRA to fight for its goals. Moreover, they clearly expressed that they felt life in the bush was better than life in the camps. They had no future in the camps and were suffering from poverty, and felt the LRA offered them a better alternative. This made them feel part of the LRA community and they generally perceived themselves as real rebels.

Overall, a clear majority of the total number of interviewees reached Type II internalization while they were with the LRA. They expressed feelings that they were indeed doing the right thing by fighting with the LRA. They particularly expressed the motivation to be fighting for a better future for the Acholi. Still, after these child soldiers had returned to society, Type II internalization eventually started to diminish. The majority speak of severe problems when they returned from the bush. Many of them were rescued by the UPDF and placed back into society involuntarily. This has led to numerous escalations and violent encounters. Anna, who had spent 8 years with the rebels, was rescued by the UPDF when she was 17 and brought back to her home community. She did not understand the way of life in her village and according to which standards people behaved towards each other. She explains: “after the UPDFs brought me home, I was living with my family. It was very difficult. I was not used to

them and I did not like it in the village. People looked at me and they did not want to talk with me. They were making fun of me. I wanted to go back to the bush, back to my friends and fight. One day my father was angry at me because I wanted to go back. He did not understand being a rebel is good. My mother took me into the hut and we started cooking. She asked me to go out and get some cassava from the field. She gave me the panga (machete). When I came out of the house my father was sitting there. He made me so angry. I took the panga and cut his head. He fell on the ground and I finished him. People were screaming and crying. My mother cried and yelled to me. She said I had to stop. She asked me what I was doing. I did not understand why all these people screamed so much, this is what we do in the bush. He was not a good man and I am a good rebel”.

This account explains why many former child soldiers were looked upon as dangerous criminals by their communities and often felt rejected. For this reason former child soldiers often moved to different communities. Yet, when becoming part of a new community, they describe feelings of slowly starting to see they were not fighting for the right thing with the LRA. This indicates the extremely strong effects of socialization within the LRA, particularly when Type II internalization is achieved.

3. Do socialized actors behave differently than they did before they were socialized, or than non-socialized actors do?

Looking at the outcomes of socialization processes within the LRA, they turn out to be truly effective. Child soldiers who have experienced socialization processes within the LRA indeed show behaviour which is very different from actors who have not been subject to LRA socialization. Andvig and Gates argue that “organizations that have developed sophisticated socialization mechanisms are likely to handle collective actions better and therefore rely less on force as long as the members stay strongly motivated. That motivation embraces not only direct military task solving, but also the motivation to monitor and discipline the other members” (2007:16). Andvig and Gates fail to analyze the exact processes through which these developments come about, but taking the LRA as an example this is rightly indicated by them. New recruits suffer

from a lot of violence when they first enter the LRA. Yet, once they start adapting the identity of the LRA the extent of violence they are exposed to significantly starts to decrease. Many child soldiers express that when they acted according to the expectations of their commanders, they were not caned anymore. They became good rebels which gave them more freedom. They did not get punished as much anymore and they were allowed to walk freely without the strict supervision of their commanders. Still, this stage was only achieved after they were heavily tested as to whether they indeed had become integrated rebels.

This indicates that the behaviour of child soldiers changed during the period they were part of the LRA. During their first weeks with the LRA punishment was severe as they did not yet act as a good rebel. But as soon as they changed their behaviour and started adopting the LRA identity, they were treated differently and considered as part of the group; as new family members. Thus, integrated rebels who had experienced thorough socialization processes clearly showed different behaviour compared to new recruits who had not been socialized yet. This shows the enormous impact socialization has within the LRA and how it significantly contributes to allegiance among its rebels.

One should keep in mind their allegiance was not achieved by pecuniary rewards; it is purely a result of non pecuniary rewards and socialization. As Blattman pointed out, pecuniary rewards were basically absent in the LRA and “indoctrination into the LRA was a complex process of spiritual training, misinformation, and the strategic use of fear and violence” (2007:18). This shows how powerful socialization mechanisms can be in changing behaviour and even identity; within the LRA these mechanisms changed abducted children into motivated rebels with high allegiance to the group. Gates argues that “the more a rebel leader can appeal to the provision of non pecuniary rewards, the better he is able to recruit and maintain the allegiance of his rebel soldiers” (2002:127). This is certainly the case with Kony as the leader of the LRA. Once his soldiers are going through the socialization process, interests and motivations are being created to remain with the group. Their behaviour shifts from a civilian child to that of a well trained rebel.

This shift in behaviour and identity also clarifies why it is impossible to purely

identify child soldiers as victims or as perpetrators. The LRA practices one of the most extreme tactics to recruit its rebels, namely abduction, which can make one perceive these children as victims. Yet, when these children are changing their identity within the group and become ruthless killing machines it seems more viable to classify them as perpetrators. The LRA case clearly shows that none of these two classifications is correct; it is a mix of the two. The only conclusion we can draw from this is that socialization turns out to be a powerful mechanism which changes *children* into *soldiers*.

In addition, this development has serious consequences for the reintegration of former child soldiers. Given the fact that children change their identity within the LRA due to socialization processes, these children will not be the same person if they return from the bush. They have drastically changed from the abducted child they once were. This indicates the importance of rightly targeting rehabilitation and reintegration programs. These programs need to address the personality changes coming about during the period spent within the LRA. Drawing from field research, this is currently not sufficiently taken into account which results in limited success or even failure of attempts to reintegrate former child soldiers. As Catherine expressed; “our future is already spoiled, we do not have opportunities to develop. The rehabilitation only helped us in the beginning; they gave us food and a place to sleep. But now we have nothing. They did not integrate us in the village. People do not understand us, we missed out on school and our communities are afraid of us. There is no job for us. We do not have a future, we can only hope for our children. This is the only reason why we are still alive; we have to try to make the future of our children brighter”. This account illustrates that our limited understanding of the child soldiering phenomenon is failing to offer these returnees opportunities to become well integrated in their communities again. Therefore, further research on socialization processes within rebel groups is necessary and needs to be included in the design of such programs. May it contribute to a better future for the regions suffering from insecurity caused by rebel groups using child soldiers.

6. Conclusion

As underlined in the introduction, this thesis has aimed to explain how the process of socialization facilitates child soldiers with the motivation to remain with the Lord's Resistance Army. Unlike other scholars, I have argued and analyzed that one of the most significant processes in the transformation of a child into a soldier is socialization. Socialization implies that individuals acquire the culture of their group. The process inducts actors into the norms and values of the community and results in sustained compliance. This indicates that actors acquire new identities through socialization, leading to new interests. By emphasizing this, I highlighted the ways in which socialization creates bonding between the members of the LRA. Moreover, I demonstrated it is used as a tool to create allegiance and keep child soldiers within the rebel group, preventing them to escape. As such, this thesis underlined the rigorous developments coming about during the socialization process used by the LRA.

This thesis also highlighted the challenges brought along by the child soldiering phenomenon. In the first chapters, we have seen it is rather difficult to define a child soldier and that the phenomenon is surrounded by a variety of myths. Besides that, the variety of views on rebellion and child soldiers put forth by prominent scholars was analyzed. This analysis of previous research focusing on the child soldiering phenomenon particularly highlighted the reasons why rebel groups recruit child soldiers, and which methods they use in doing so. Moreover, it addressed methods used by rebel groups to transform children into soldiers and create allegiance. By analyzing this variety of views, it became apparent child soldiers cannot be classified as either victims or perpetrators. Yet, this analysis also indicated the weaknesses of previous research and how this limits our current understanding of the child soldiering phenomenon. It underlined the lack of focus on socialization within rebel groups, resulting in a gap in the literature concerning the phenomenon and, perhaps more seriously, resulting in mismatching reintegration programs for former child soldiers.

Because of this, the concept of socialization was introduced in this thesis, showing its powerful capacities within rebel groups. Extensive field research had to be

conducted to realize this project as only former LRA rebels can explain us what they experienced within their organization. For this reason, 65 interviews were conducted with former LRA child soldiers and commanders. It gave them a voice and revealed how socialization plays an essential role in creating allegiance among LRA rebels. The interviews indicated that the LRA relies heavily on well-developed, efficient socialization processes; these processes indeed represent the (social) glue through which the LRA manages to remain a cohesive body. Moreover, the interviews clarified why previous research is indeed moving forward in attempting to understand the child soldier phenomenon yet fails to grasp the whole problem; it neglects the essential influence of socialization processes. This neglect has resulted in a limited understanding of the entire child soldiering problem which has dramatic consequences for rehabilitation programs designed for former child soldiers; they mismatch their needs as there is too little known about what these children experience in the bush and how their gradually change their identities. In order to rehabilitate and reintegrate these children in society, one has to have extensive knowledge about the mechanisms used to create child soldiers. This thesis has shown that socialization is an essential aspect of this which can no longer be ignored.

Analyzing the role of socialization within the LRA has clarified that the reflections of child soldiers as either emotionally crippled victims or predatory killers are over-simplistic and invalid conclusions. Socialization manages to mould children into soldiers and melts their identity into the group identity of the LRA. By analyzing this, it may have become obvious that the change of identity is one of the most important developments needed in order to create allegiance among child soldiers within rebel groups. By focusing on the LRA, which manages to make its *abducted* recruits *allegiant* to the organization, this thesis sharply illustrated the powerful, life changing effects of socialization. As seen throughout this thesis there are several contributing factors that influence allegiance of child soldiers within the LRA. Yet, the large extent to which the process of socialization is responsible for allegiance among child soldiers has become clear. Socialization processes drastically change the behaviour and identity of child soldiers by teaching them new skills, roles, norms, values, motivations, and rules. Moreover, by using Checkel's threefold analysis, the

large extent to which socialization leads to internalization within the LRA was highlighted. Internalization transforms them into members of the LRA with a sense of belonging in the bush. This illustrated the alarming effectiveness and efficiency of socialization processes; children change their identities into those of rebels. Interviews indicated that their new identities persist once they have left the LRA. Thus, if socialization within the rebel group is not targeted when attempting to rehabilitate and reintegrate former child soldiers, this may erupt in severe problems for the child as well as its community.

This thesis addressed the significance of including socialization processes in future research concerning child soldiers. Revealing how socialization mechanisms work within the LRA contributed to a broader understanding of the child soldier phenomenon. Although one cannot generalize from this case, it is very likely that the same mechanisms apply in other rebel groups. Unfortunately, other research considering socialization within rebel groups is still rather limited. If socialization is addressed at all, it is often covered superficially and research fails to analyze the in-depth processes which are essential to understand the whole problem. Just as Checkel argued before, scholars tend to overlook and bracket the process which leads to internalization. It is of great importance to avoid this trap in future research and to increase our efforts to understand what processes take place within rebel groups. It is of essential value to further research these phenomena and analyze the influence of socialization on child soldiers within other rebel groups. One of the main reasons for this is the current mismatch and failure of rehabilitation programs. Looking at the enormous influence socialization has on child soldiers both while they are part of the group but also once they have left the group, it is of great significance to consider socialization within rebel groups in programs which are designed to reintegrate former child soldiers. Only then these programs may be able to achieve what they are designed for and work towards a brighter future for these children and their communities.

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Appendix I: Informed Consent Interviews

Research Project: Socialization of Child Soldiers in Rebel Groups

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Field research period Uganda: 5 January until 29 March 2009

Overview of the Project

This project analyzes the socialization of child soldiers involved with the Lord's Resistance Army in Uganda. The project first examines general motivations for child soldiers to remain with the rebel group. It then aims to examine the particular role socialization plays in this decision. The objective is to create a broader understanding of the child soldiering phenomenon and to illuminate the processes child soldiers encounter while being part of a rebel group. This can offer an opportunity for improvements of reintegration programs as it may highlight specific areas which need to be addressed in these programs. The following research questions will be addressed:

1. How and why do child soldiers become involved with rebel groups?
2. What happens once child soldiers have become part of a rebel group?
3. Which mechanisms contribute to the decision to remain with a rebel group?
4. What role does socialization play in the decision to remain with a rebel group?
5. How does this strengthen the ties to a rebel group?

Method and Output

Data will be gathered through interviews conducted in Northern Uganda during Spring 2009. Academic publications will be produced in 2009 using the data collected. The project aims to return the results to Uganda for use by international organizations, non-governmental organizations, institutions of higher education, and government entities.

Interviews

The researcher involved with this project will ensure that all interviewees have the following rights:

- To decline to participate in the study and interview, and to participate voluntarily,
- To withdraw from the interview and the study at any time,
- To ask the researcher questions at any time,
- To consent to any note-taking and audio recording by the researcher, and to all forms of information given to the researcher,
- To have identity remain anonymous, and any personal details to remain confidential,
- To understand the risks of participation in the study.

Appendix II: Interview Questions

General information

1. Name
2. Gender
3. Age of abduction
4. Age of return
5. Length of stay with the LRA
6. Participation in rehabilitation/reintegration program

Questions

1. Could you tell me how you were abducted?
2. When coming to the bush, how did the rebels try to make you part of the group?
3. Did you receive any training? If yes, what kind of training was this?
4. What kind of rules did the rebels teach you? How did they teach you these rules?
5. What roles did you perform when you were in the bush?
6. What did you like about being a rebel? What did you dislike about being a rebel?
7. What was the relationship among rebels?
8. What roles did punishments and rewards play when you were in the bush?
9. Which factors motivated you to remain in the bush?
10. Did you feel as if you were a member of the group?
11. Could you identify with the group?
12. Why did you eventually leave the LRA?
13. How did you escape?

Appendix III: List of Interviewees

This list includes former LRA child soldiers and commanders who were interviewed for this project. Their names have been altered in order to protect their identity.

<p>Name: Anna A. Age: 24; Gender: Female Site of interview: Awach IDP camp Date: 3-2-2009 Age of abduction: 10; Age of return: 17 Time spent with LRA: 7 years → 1995-2002 Rehabilitation: No</p>	<p>Name: Anna K. Age: 16; Gender: Female Site of interview: Patiko Ajulu IDP camp Date: 30-1-2009 Age of abduction: 12; Age of return: 15 Time spent with LRA: 3 years → 2005-2008 Rehabilitation: Yes, 2 months at Gusco</p>
<p>Name: Anna O. Age: 28; Gender: Female Site of interview: Patiko Ajulu IDP camp Date: 28-1-2009 Age of abduction: 12; Age of return: 17 Time spent with LRA: 5 years → 1993-1998 Rehabilitation: No</p>	<p>Name: Bosco A. Age: 21; Gender: Male Site of interview: Awach IDP camp Date: 1-2-2009 Age of abduction: 12; Age of return: 18 Time spent with LRA: 6 years → 2000-2006 Rehabilitation: Yes, 2 months at Gusco</p>
<p>Name: Bosco O. Age: 34; Gender: Male Site of interview: Awach IDP camp Date: 2-2-2009 Age of abduction: 29; Age of return: 29 Time spent with LRA: 4 months → 2004 Rehabilitation: Yes, 2 weeks at Gusco</p>	<p>Name: Catherine A. Age: 24; Gender: Female Site of interview: Apac village, Gulu District Date: 21-3-2009 Age of abduction: 11; Age of return: 24 Time spent with LRA: 13 years → 1996-2009 Rehabilitation: Not yet</p>
<p>Name: Catherine C. Age: 17; Gender: Female Site of interview: Gulu Date: 24-2-2009 Age of abduction: 10; Age of return: 16 Time spent with LRA: 6 years → 2002-2008 Rehabilitation: No</p>	<p>Name: Charles O. Age: 25; Gender: Male Site of interview: Lalogi Opit IDP Camp Date: 19-2-2009 Age of abduction: 12; Age of return: 14 Time spent with LRA: 3 years → 1996-1998 Rehabilitation: Yes, 4 months at World Vision</p>
<p>Name: Charles V. Age: 22; Gender: Male Site of interview: Awach IDP Camp Date: 19-1-2009 Age of abduction: 12; Age of return: 17 Time spent with LRA: 5 years → 1999-2004 Rehabilitation: No</p>	<p>Name: Christine A. Age: 29; Gender: Female Site of interview: Awach IDP Camp Date: 29-1-2009 Age of abduction: 13; Age of return: 15 Time spent with LRA: 2 years → 1993-1995 Rehabilitation: Yes, 1 week at the CPU</p>
<p>Name: Christine O. Age: 16; Gender: Female Site of interview: Awach IDP Camp Date: 29-1-2009 Age of abduction: 11; Age of return: 14 Time spent with LRA: 3 years → 2004-2007 Rehabilitation: Yes, 1 month at World Vision</p>	<p>Name: Concy A. Age: 34; Gender: Female Site of interview: Awach IDP Camp Date: 29-1-2009 Age of abduction: 16; Age of return: 18 Time spent with LRA: 2 years → 1991-1993 Rehabilitation: No</p>

<p>Name: Dennis O. Age: 25; Gender: Male Site of interview: Awach IDP camp Date: 29-1-2009 Age of abduction: 18; Age of return: 20 Time spent with LRA: 2 years → 2002 – 2004 Rehabilitation: Yes, Gusco, CPA Kitgum</p>	<p>Name: Dennis O. Age: 22; Gender: Male Site of interview: Lalogi Opit IDP Camp Date: 19-2-2009 Age of abduction: 15; Age of return: 16 Time spent with LRA: 1 year → 2002-2003 Rehabilitation: Yes, 1 month at World Vision</p>
<p>Name: Evelyn A. Age: 24; Gender: Female Site of interview: Awach IDP Camp Date: 5-2-2009 Age of abduction: 15; Age of return: 15 Time spent with LRA: 3 weeks → 2000 Rehabilitation: No</p>	<p>Name: Evelyn O. Age: 23; Gender: Female Site of interview: Patiko Ajulu IDP Camp Date: 28-1-2009 Age of abduction: 11; Age of return: 16 Time spent with LRA: 5 years → 1996-2001 Rehabilitation: Yes, 3 months at World Vision</p>
<p>Name: Evelyn V. Age: 19; Gender: Female Site of interview: Awach IDP Camp Date: 6-2-2009 Age of abduction: 8; Age of return: 16 Time spent with LRA: 8 years → 1998-2006 Rehabilitation: Yes, 4 months at World Vision</p>	<p>Name: Filda A. Age: 32; Gender: Female Site of interview: Awach IDP Camp Date: 29-1-2009 Age of abduction: 14; Age of return: 16 Time spent with LRA: 2 years → 1991-1993 Rehabilitation: No</p>
<p>Name: Filda C. Age: 15; Gender: Female Site of interview: Awach IDP Camp Date: 29-1-2009 Age of abduction: 9; Age of return: 14 Time spent with LRA: 5 years → 2003-2008 Rehabilitation: Yes, 2 months at Gusco</p>	<p>Name: Francis O. Age: 19; Gender: Male Site of interview: Lalogi Opit IDP Camp Date: 19-2-2009 Age of abduction: 12; Age of return: 13 Time spent with LRA: 1 year → 2001-2002 Rehabilitation: Yes, 1 month at World Vision</p>
<p>Name: Francis O. Age: 27; Gender: Male Site of interview: Awach IDP Camp Date: 29-1-2009 Age of abduction: 12; Age of return: 13 Time spent with LRA: 1 year → 1994-1995 Rehabilitation: No</p>	<p>Name: Fred O. Age: 33; Gender: Male Site of interview: Awach IDP Camp Date: 2-2-2009 Age of abduction: 18; Age of return: 18 Time spent with LRA: 1 month → 1994 Rehabilitation: No</p>
<p>Name: Geoffrey O. Age: 18; Gender: Male Site of interview: Lalogi Opit IDP Camp Date: 19-2-2009 Age of abduction: 14; Age of return: 15 Time spent with LRA: 1 year → 2004-2005 Rehabilitation: Yes, 1 or 2 months at Gusco</p>	<p>Name: Grace A. Age: 26; Gender: Female Site of interview: Patiko Ajulu IDP Camp Date: 28-1-2009 Age of abduction: 8; Age of return: 15 Time spent with LRA: 7 years → 1991-1998 Rehabilitation: Gusco</p>
<p>Name: Grace O. Age: 16; Gender: Female Site of interview: Lalogi Opit IDP Camp Date: 19-2-2009 Age of abduction: 9; Age of return: 15 Time spent with LRA: 6 years → 2002-2008 Rehabilitation: Yes, 3 months at World Vision</p>	<p>Name: Irene A. Age: 22; Gender: Female Site of interview: Patiko Ajulu IDP Camp Date: 28-1-2009 Age of abduction: 11; Age of return: 20 Time spent with LRA: 9 years → 1990-2007 Rehabilitation: Yes, 2 months at World Vision</p>

<p>Name: Irene K. Age: 20; Gender: Female Site of interview: Gulu High School, Gulu Date: 17-2-2009 Age of abduction: 12; Age of return: 15 Time spent with LRA: 3 years → 2000-2003 Rehabilitation: Yes, 1 year at Gusco</p>	<p>Name: Irene L. Age: 28; Gender: Female Site of interview: Patiko Ajulu IDP Camp Date: 28-1-2009 Age of abduction: 9; Age of return: 20 Time spent with LRA: 11 years → 1990-2001 Rehabilitation: Yes, 3 months at Gusco</p>
<p>Name: Janet L. Age: 23; Gender: Female Site of interview: Lalogi Opit IDP Camp Date: 17-2-2009 Age of abduction: 17; Age of return: 17 Time spent with LRA: 4 months → 2003 Rehabilitation: Yes, 1 month at World Vision</p>	<p>Name: Janet O. (Abducted twice) Age: 25; Gender: Female Site of interview: Lalogi Opit IDP Camp Date: 17-2-2009 Age of abduction: 12 and 16; Return: 12 and 16 Time spent with LRA: 1 week in 1996, 2 months in 2000 Rehabilitation: No</p>
<p>Name: Jennifer O. Age: 20; Gender: Female Site of interview: Awach IDP Camp Date: 19-2-2009 Age of abduction: 13; Age of return: 16 Time spent with LRA: 3 years → 2002-2005 Rehabilitation: No</p>	<p>Name: Jennifer W. Age: 23; Gender: Female Site of interview: Patiko Ajulu IDP Camp Date: 15-3-2009 Age of abduction: 12; Age of return: 17 Time spent with LRA: 5 years → 1998-2003 Rehabilitation: No</p>
<p>Name: Kony's wife Age: 28; Gender: Female Site of interview: Gulu Date: 17-2-2009 Age of abduction: 14; Age of return: 28 Time spent with LRA: 14 years Rehabilitation: Not yet</p>	<p>Name: Latest W. Age: 25; Gender: Male Site of interview: Lalogi Opit IDP Camp Date: 17-2-2009 Age of abduction: 19; Age of return: 20 Time spent with LRA: 7 months Rehabilitation: Yes, 2 months at Gusco</p>
<p>Name: Margret L. Age: 33; Gender: Female Site of interview: Awach IDP Camp Date: 5-2-2009 Age of abduction: 15; Age of return: 19 Time spent with LRA: 4 years → 1991-1995 Rehabilitation: No</p>	<p>Name: Margaret A. Age: 36; Gender: Female Site of interview: Lalogi Opit IDP Camp Date: 17-2-2009 Age of abduction: 22; Age of return: 22 Time spent with LRA: 6 months → 1988 Rehabilitation: No</p>
<p>Name: Margret K. Age: 32; Gender: Female Site of interview: Gulu Date: 15-3-2009 Age of abduction: 14; Age of return: 28 Time spent with LRA: 14 years → 1991-2005 Rehabilitation: No</p>	<p>Name: Margret O. Age: 26; Gender: Female Site of interview: Patiko Ajulu IDP Camp Date: 12-2-2009 Age of abduction: 15; Age of return: 21 Time spent with LRA: 6 years → 1998-2004 Rehabilitation: Yes, 2 months at World Vision</p>
<p>Name: Martine T. Age: 17; Gender: Male Site of interview: Patiko Ajulu IDP Camp Date: 30-1-2009 Age of abduction: 12; Age of return: 12 Time spent with LRA: 7 months → 2003 Rehabilitation: No</p>	<p>Name: Michael O. Age: 20; Gender: Male Site of interview: Lalogi Opit IDP Camp Date: 19-2-2009 Age of abduction: 12; Age of return: 16 Time spent with LRA: 4 years → 2001-2005 Rehabilitation: Yes, 2 months at World Vision</p>

<p>Name: Milly Grace L. Age: 30; Gender: Female Site of interview: Patiko Ajulu IDP Camp Date: 28-1-2009 Age of abduction: 14; Age of return: 15 Time spent with LRA: 1 year → 1994 Rehabilitation: No</p>	<p>Name: Moses O. Age: 24; Gender: Male Site of interview: Patiko Ajulu IDP Camp Date: 30-1-2009 Age of abduction: 8; Age of return: 9 Time spent with LRA: 1 year → 1992-1993 Rehabilitation: No</p>
<p>Name: Nancy A. Age: 24; Gender: Female Site of interview: Awach IDP Camp Date: 5-2-2009 Age of abduction: 13; Age of return: 18 Time spent with LRA: 5 years → 1997-2002 Rehabilitation: No</p>	<p>Name: Nelson O. aka Norman in Aboke Girls Age: 26; Gender: Male Site of interview: Gulu Date: 12-2-2009 Age of abduction: 12; Age of return: 14 Time spent with LRA: 2.5 years Rehabilitation: 9 months at World Vision</p>
<p>Name: Patrick B. Age: 19; Gender: Male Site of interview: Awach IDP Camp Date: 2-2-2009 Age of abduction: 12; Age of return: 12 Time spent with LRA: 1 month → 2001 Rehabilitation: Yes, 1 month at Gusco</p>	<p>Name: Patrick O. Age: 35; Gender: Male Site of interview: Lalogi Opit IDP Camp Date: 17-2-2009 Age of abduction: 23; Age of return: 26 Time spent with LRA: 3 years → 1997-2000 Rehabilitation: Yes, 2 months at World Vision</p>
<p>Name: Paul O. Age: 25; Gender: Male Site of interview: Gulu Date: 11-2-2009 Age of abduction: 11; Age of return: 16 Time spent with LRA: 5 years → 1994-1999 Rehabilitation: No</p>	<p>Name: Peter A. Age: 24; Gender: Male Site of interview: Patiko Ajulu IDP Camp Date: 25-2-2009 Age of abduction: 17; Age of return: 20 Time spent with LRA: 3 years → 2002-2005 Rehabilitation: No</p>
<p>Name: Peter O. Age: 27; Gender: Male Site of interview: Awach IDP Camp Date: 5-2-2009 Age of abduction: 19; Age of return: 19 Time spent with LRA: 1 month → 2001 Rehabilitation: No</p>	<p>Name: Richard K. Age: 23; Gender: Male Site of interview: Lalogi Opit IDP Camp Date: 17-2-2009 Age of abduction: 13; Age of return: 21 Time spent with LRA: 8 years → 1999-2007 Rehabilitation: Yes, 2 months at Gusco</p>
<p>Name: Richard O. Age: 36; Gender: Male Site of interview: Lalogi Opit IDP Camp Date: 17-2-2009 Age of abduction: 25; Age of return: 26 Time spent with LRA: 9 months → 1998 Rehabilitation: Yes, 2 months at World Vision</p>	<p>Name: Salvatore L. Age: 40; Gender: Male Site of interview: Awach IDP camp Date: 5-2-2009 Age of abduction: 18; Age of return: 27 Time spent with LRA: 9 years → 1987 -1996 Rehabilitation: No</p>
<p>Name: Samuel A. Age: 21; Gender: Male Site of interview: Awach IDP camp Date: 13-2-2009 Age of abduction: 15; Age of return: 19 Time spent with LRA: 4 years → 2004-2008 Rehabilitation: No</p>	<p>Name: Samuel K. Age: 19; Gender: Male Site of interview: Gulu Date: 2-2-2009 Age of abduction: 12; Age of return: 14 Time spent with LRA: 2 years → 2002-2004 Rehabilitation: Yes, 4 months at Gusco</p>

<p>Name: Samuel K. Age: 24; Gender: Male Site of interview: Gulu Date: Several in February/March 2009 Age of abduction: 12 Age of return: 19 Time spent with LRA: 7 years → 1997-2004 Rehabilitation: No</p>	<p>Name: Simon K. Age: 19; Gender: Male Site of interview: Gulu Date: 2-2-2009 Age of abduction: 12 Age of return: 14 Time spent with LRA: 2 years → 2002-2004 Rehabilitation: Yes, 4 months at Gusco</p>
<p>Name: Simon O. Age: 18; Gender: Male Site of interview: Awach IDP Camp Date: 2-2-2009 Age of abduction: 12; Age of return: 12 Time spent with LRA: 1,5 months → 2003 Rehabilitation: Yes, 1 month at Gusco</p>	<p>Name: Simon O. Age: 24; Gender: Male Site of interview: Awach IDP Camp Date: 5-2-2009 Age of abduction: 15; Age of return: 19 Time spent with LRA: 4 years → 2000 – 2004 Rehabilitation: Yes, 3 months at Gusco</p>
<p>Name: Steven O. Age: 33; Gender: Male Site of interview: Lalogi Opit IDP Camp Date: 19-2-2009 Age of abduction: 13; Age of return: 19 Time spent with LRA: 6 years Rehabilitation: No</p>	<p>Name: Victor O. Age: 29; Gender: Male Site of interview: Gulu Date: 17-2-2009 Age of abduction: 14; Age of return: 18 Time spent with LRA: 4 years Rehabilitation: No</p>
<p>Name: Vincent O. Age: 21; Gender: Male Site of interview: Patiko Ajulu IDP camp Date: 30-1-2009 Age of abduction: 12; Age of return: 13 Time spent with LRA: 1 year → 1999-2000 Rehabilitation: Kitgum</p>	<p>Name: Vincent O. Age: 20; Gender: Male Site of interview: Gulu Date: 12-2-2009 Age of abduction: 13; Age of return: 16 Time spent with LRA: 2,5 years → 2002-2005 Rehabilitation: No</p>
<p>Name: Walter A. Age: 29; Gender: Male Site of interview: Awach IDP Camp Date: 28-3-2009 Age of abduction: 14; Age of return: 26 Time spent with LRA: 12 years → 1994-2006 Rehabilitation: Yes, 2 months at Gusco</p>	<p>Name: Walter K. Age: 18; Gender: Male Site of interview: Patiko Ajulu IDP Camp Date: 26-1-2009 Age of abduction: 13; Age of return: 17 Time spent with LRA: 4 years → 2004-2008 Rehabilitation: No</p>
<p>Name: Walter O. Age: 26; Gender: Male Site of interview: Lalogi Opit IDP Camp Date: 19-2-2009 Age of abduction: 13; Age of return: 13 Time spent with LRA: 4 months → 1996 Rehabilitation: No</p>	