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Most importantly, I am grateful to God who in everything has kept me strong and whose constant grace has kept me going.
DEDICATION

To my parents, Brig. Abraham and Racheal Maina Wambugu who have done everything parents can do to ensure that I live a successful and full life.
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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CPA  Concerned Parents Association
CVI  Child Voice International
DDR  Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration
DRC  Democratic Republic of Congo
FPA  Final Peace Agreement
GUSCO  Gulu Support the Children Organisation
HURIPEC  Human Rights and Peace Centre
ICC  International Criminal Court
ICG  International Crisis Group
IDP  Internally Displaced People
ILO  International Labour Organisation
LRA  Lord’s Resistance Army
MDRP  Multi-Country Demobilisation and Reintegration Programme
NRA  National Resistance Army
OECD  Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
SOWAC  School of War Affected Children
SPLA  Sudanese People Liberation Army
SSR  Security Sector Reform
UN  United Nations
UNDP  United Nations Development Programme
UNDPKO  United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations
UNLA  Uganda National Liberation Army
UPC  Uganda’s People’s Congress
UPDA  Uganda Peoples Defence Army
UPDF  Uganda Peoples Defence Forces
INTRODUCTION

I. Definition of the Problem

The central aim of this research is to examine the reintegration process of formerly abducted children in Northern Uganda and the resulting impact of this process on local communities. The nature of violent conflict in the world today has evolved to be more complex in recent years. The results of these evolutions has been the “New Wars” which are often described as internal or civil wars usually carried out by privately organized groups for financial gain and which normally result in large scale violations of human rights (Kaldor, 2001). Unlike the traditional understanding of security where wars were between different states, recent conflicts have been internal and now often target civilians and not necessarily other combatants (Kaldor, 1999; Paris, 2004). It is the complex nature of these wars that has seen rebel armed groups and in particular cases government forces recruit children to be soldiers. Most of these groups have had to increase their militaristic might and capacity and it is the need for more soldiers that has driven them to massively enlist underage children to war. These wars have also had adverse impacts on the local populations’ resident in the conflict torn areas. In most of these areas the communities have been massively displaced from their original homes as a result of the war. A good example of this is the case of Northern Uganda where there has been substantial displacement of the Acholi community from their ancestral villages to Government ordered Internally Displaced Peoples (IDP) Camps (Lehrer, 2008).

The child soldier phenomenon is certainly not a new practice. Throughout history and in many different cultures, children have been extensively involved in military campaigns. In Europe for instance, twelve year-old boys were used as military aides, but did not really participate in active combat (Singer, 2006). A visible role played by young boys in these
times was that of ‘drummer boys’ as they did in the battle of Waterloo. They also formed part of the crew in the navy and were responsible for many things, including bringing powder and shot from the ship’s magazine to the gun crews (Singer, 2006). In the Second World War children fought in the insurrections, examples of this are the Jewish children who participated in a resistance in order to survive, and the ‘Hitler youth’, children who fought for Hitler’s ideology (Singer, 2006). The Vietnam War is also another example of children being equipped to fight. In 1212 there was the Children’s Crusade, in which boys at that time while unarmed marched from northern France and Western Germany in a bid to take back the Holy land by the sheer power of their faith (Singer, 2006). Furley notes that the use of child soldiers in Africa appears to be a very modern post-colonial trend (1995). He however explains that in some African societies in both the pre and post colonial period there were processes of initiation which ushered children into adulthood and it was only then that male children were allowed to become warriors (Furley, 1995). It is important to note that while boys were trained to become warriors, culture did not train them to become violent killers of their own people, a practice that characterises initiation into modern wars, a good example of this being the formerly abducted children in Uganda. The practice was also prevalent in West Africa, where armed groups in Sierra Leone and Liberia were still recruiting children until 2002 and 2003 respectively, often among child refugees in neighbouring countries including Burkina Faso, Côte d’Ivoire and Guinea.

The Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers in 2004 reported that about 28 countries were involved in the use of child soldiers globally (2004). Some of these countries included Colombia, Sierra Leone, Uganda, Liberia, Sudan, Somalia, Burundi and the Democratic Republic of Congo to mention a few. Although there seemingly was a history of child soldiers the incidents were much higher and this was in part due to the nature of this new wars. Children in war are now involved in more complex activities such as planting and
removing mines, fighting in the frontlines, torturing villages and looting. This has consequently had such adverse impacts on children and their childhood. It is interesting to note that whenever armed conflict breaks out, children will in almost all instances become soldiers as was the case in the Central African Republic, Chad, Somalia and Sudan (Darfur) (Coalition to stop the use of Child Soldiers, 2008). Children are now being used as the new tools of war and this is because they are more vicious, loyal and serve as a better force to those who have recruited them. In 2004 the Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers documented that more than 120,000 children under the age of 18 years were participating in conflicts around the world, and that Africa has the highest number of child soldiers (Coalition to stop the use of Child Soldiers, 2004). In 2008 the Coalition records that although it is difficult to accurately ascertain the number of children involved in conflict and armed groups it is highly likely that the number of child soldiers is fewer than in 2004 (Coalition to stop the use of Child Soldiers, 2008). Large-scale recruitment and deployment of children by government forces in countries such as Burundi, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea and Liberia ceased with the end of conflicts in these countries for instance (Coalition to stop the use of Child Soldiers, 2008). Due to increased international pressure and local initiatives, there are armed groups in Côte d'Ivoire and Sri Lanka that have committed implement actions plans that prevent the recruitment of children (Coalition to stop the use of Child Soldiers, 2008). The reason for this is that since then, tens of thousands of child soldiers have been released from fighting forces following peace agreements and with implementation of demobilization programs (Coalition to stop the use of Child Soldiers, 2008). Some of the states that are reported to still have child soldiers operational are Uganda, Sudan, Somalia, Chad, and the DRC (Coalition to stop the use of Child Soldiers, 2008).
In Uganda the Lord’s Resistance Army (LRA) has been fighting the Museveni government for over two decades. The conflict is prominent in the Northern region of Uganda and has adversely affected the Acholi community, and more especially their children. In the 1980s alone about 25,000 children were abducted by the LRA (Coalition to stop the use of Child Soldiers, 2008). The number of abductions rose after 2002, with an estimated 10,000 children abducted between May 2002 and May 2003 alone (Coalition to stop the use of Child Soldiers, 2008). This forced children to become night commuters and to seek security in the town areas of Gulu, Kitgum and Pader so as to reduce the risk of their abduction.  

1 Children abducted by the LRA were often forced to participate in combat activities, carry out raids, to kill and violently injure other children, members of the communities and even members of their families. The killing of family members often characterised the initiation of these recruited children into the LRA (Coalition to stop the use of Child Soldiers, 2008). Girls were also victims of LRA abductions and girls as young as twelve were used in combat and for other military purposes, as well as for sexual slavery (Coalition to stop the use of Child Soldiers, 2008). Many of them were raped and many gave birth to children while in the LRA ranks. These girls were often looked upon as the ‘wives’ of the commanders.

In recent years thousands of children have managed to get rescued by government forces in Northern Uganda and a substantial number have escaped from the LRA ranks. There are however many of those who were abducted who still remain unaccounted for. Many are now believed to have died in battle, to have been killed by their abductors or to have died from injury or illness (Coalition to stop the use of Child Soldiers, 2004; Human Rights

Watch, 2003). The number of the remaining LRA fighters in the bush remains unknown, the Coalition to stop the use of Child Soldiers, estimates that up to 2,000 women and children remain in LRA camps in the eastern DRC and southern Sudan (Coalition to stop the use of Child Soldiers, 2008).\(^2\)

It is this complexity that the Northern Uganda people find themselves in with many of their children having been forcibly recruited to fight within the LRA ranks. Their return back into the community upon their capture or surrender does present even further complexities. It is the process by which these formerly abducted children are restored back to civilian life that is referred to as reintegration. It is therefore the objective of this work to analyse how this process of reintegration is carried out by the different actors in Northern Uganda. This analysis will then enable a discussion on the utility of the process and a further analysis over whether this process is helping to alleviate fear and want. This thesis also makes a significant contribution to analysing the impacts of the reintegration process on the recipient local communities in Gulu, Northern Uganda.

II. Scope of Study and Research Questions

In establishing the main research concerns of this theses the trends of the current research that has been done on child soldiers was carried out. From this exercise it was established that information and data on the issue of Child Soldiers is widely available and acknowledged from different scholars. In 1994 a fundamental book on the issue of child soldiers was published, co-authored by Ilene Cohn and Goodwin Gill, entitled Child Soldiers: the Role of Children in Armed Conflict. This book shed a great deal of light on the widespread use of children as soldiers and put forth a challenge for different academic disciplines to study the issue (Cohn & Goodwin-Gill, 1994).

\(^2\) Ibid
The issue of Child Soldiers embraces a number of humanities and social science disciplines, but most of what has been written is legal discourse surrounding the illegality of using children in war. The Convention on the Rights of a Child and the other international legal provisions address themselves to the question of child soldiers. Different scholars have tried to dig deeper into the problem but there is a great lack of consolidated information and learning of the practice and efforts of the reintegration process. It is hard to access information on ‘what is being done’, ‘what has worked’ and ‘what can be done’ with regard to making the process of reintegration more effective. There is a serious knowledge gap surrounding the information that is available to and provided by the United Nations and NGOs agencies about the reintegration programmes that have been implemented in regards to formerly abducted children. Greater research needs to be carried out to this end.

The limited literature on Child Soldiers has been focused on the causes of recruitment and the likely impacts, but there has been considerable neglect and analysis of the context of reintegration. Returning abducted children often return to weak and fragmented societies, with very limited ways to make a living and under harsh conditions of poverty, yet this crucial dynamic seems to be absent in most reintegration literature. There is however recent publications that have delved into the questions of DDR practice more specifically. In 2007 Gomes Porto, Alden, & Parsons published their book entitled *From Soldiers to Citizens*, which yielded greater discussion of peace building and post conflict reconstruction. This book provided an in-depth analysis of the Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (DDR) process and delved into an even deeper theoretical and empirical conversation of the concept and practice of Reintegration. In 2008, Alpsalan Ozerdem published a book titled, *Post-war Recovery: Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration*, in
which he emphasised the role of DDR in establishing successful post conflict environments and societies.

The literature on post conflict reconstruction seems to be gender-blind and largely does not take into account the different experiences of girl soldiers. Fox explains that girls are given similar consideration to the boys but the gender component to the girls’ experience demands more attention (2004). There is a need for more emphasis to be placed on the research and generation of knowledge and on the protection and reintegration of girl soldiers. McKay and Mazurana did recognize the unique complexity faced by girls in civil war environments in their book, *Where are the girls? Girls Fighting Forces Northern Uganda, Sierra Leone and Mozambique, Their Lives after the War*. There is a realisation in their work that girls do account for a significant proportion of abductees within the LRA (Mckay & Mazurana, 2004).

There is also very limited research on the health implications of civil wars on children. Many of the child soldiers returning from captivity are often infected with HIV or other sexually transmitted diseases. During the process of reintegration most of children that are plagued with sexually transmitted infections are mostly the girls. There is a tendency for these children to fail to get treatment because of a fear of stigmatisation, lack of knowledge about the disease, denial of the disease or the unaffordable costs of treatment (Hassan, 2008).

There is a significant knowledge gap when it comes to understanding the relationship of local culture and the reintegration process. An informed academic assessment of the cultural norms and value systems on children and war will go a long way in helping the reintegration of children affected by war, preventing their further re-recruitment, and
generally protecting them from the harsh adversities of war. In 2005 Erin Baines published a book looking into the traditional approaches to justice and reconciliation in Acholiland (Baines, 2005). More research of the link between these practices and successful reintegration is imperative.

The practice of reintegration in the Northern Uganda scenario rests on the bedrock of amnesty and on the larger debate of restorative justice. There is need therefore to establish why the Government of Uganda has favoured this mode of justice over retribution. There is also need for this research to ask whether the amnesty alternative to post-conflict reconstruction addresses the fears and wants of the formerly abducted children and communities resident in the North of Uganda. There is also very little documentation on the amnesty packs received during the return process. There has been no research as to whether these amnesty packages serve to stigmatize and increase resentment towards the formerly abducted children. It has been argued that targeting returning children could inhibit their reintegration back into the society and the better approach would be to treat these children no differently to any other vulnerable group such as the internally displaced persons (Gomes Porto, Parsons, & Alden, March 2007).

These gaps in reintegration research and understanding consequently informed the two primary research questions of this thesis:

1. Analyse the reintegration of formerly abducted children in Northern Uganda?
2. Investigate the consequential impacts of the reintegration process on the local communities?
To effectively answer these two questions this thesis will employ the following sub-research questions:

- How is the reintegration process administered in Northern Uganda?
- Is the reintegration process relevant in the manner in which it is administered and in terms of its content?
- To what extent does the reintegration process merge with the long term development initiatives of the communities and the country? The process of reintegration cannot take place in a vacuum and it follows that answers to the underdevelopment and poverty that plague the society will in a way be a vital component of the success of the reintegration process.
- How does the process of reintegration in Northern Uganda founded on the principles of amnesty address issues of justice for crimes committed by formerly abducted children?
- How does the Acholi community grapple with issues of restorative justice?
- Do the programmes give special attention to the issue of gender?
- Do the reintegration programmes alleviate fear and want in both the lives of the returnees and among members of the local community?

III. Aim and Objectives of this Research

Dealing with children affected by war is a multi disciplinary issue. This is because it ranges from: legal argument on the rights and protection of children; cultural practices of the local communities that these children come from; the peace agreements that have been tailored to stop civil wars; the use of child soldiers; the study of reintegration; and the government and international community involvement in restoring children back into their
communities. As such this study will look at the reintegration of child soldiers from different perspectives. From a conflict resolution perspective this thesis will engage with the causes and nature of conflicts that employ the use of children and the current post-conflict reconstruction efforts being implemented in Northern Uganda as a war torn states. This thesis will rely on the human security framework as the theoretical base, and will argue that unless issues of human security are addressed, and fear and want resolved then the reintegration will continue to be ineffective to its objective. The Human Security framework will provide the necessary conceptual framework needed to supplement the deficiency in the legal and trauma oriented literature that exists on war and its resulting impact on children and local communities so as:

- To establish what the real needs of reintegrating child returnees are, as opposed to the presumed needs that now inform reintegration programming.
- To establish best practices for reintegration through the analytical discussion of the programming offered by the various actors at play in reintegration in Northern Uganda.
- To inform policy decisions as concerns the return of formerly abducted children into the community by providing valued opinions and judgements of the reintegration realities in the North.
- To further theorise the human security framework by the constant argument that one can be considered fully secure if they have attained reasonable freedom from fear and want.
IV. Research Methods

The research objectives and questions of any research dictate the research methods employed in that research (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). The key object of this thesis is to analyse the process of reintegration for formerly abducted children and consequently the impact that this process will have on the local community. To be able to achieve these objectives the researcher engaged with different reintegration programmes in Northern Uganda to get information on how reintegration is done. The researcher did also interact and engage with the formerly abducted children themselves to obtain their views on the process of reintegration that they had gone through. To be able to analyse the impact that reintegration has had on the local communities this research had to consult with the different local community members in the North. The methods used to obtain information from these groups were both elite and non-elite interviews. The rationale for carrying out non-elite interviews with the local community members was because it is these individuals who have had to bear the brunt of reintegration for the formerly abducted children. Their views as to what the process has meant to them were vital in any assessment of the impacts of the reintegration process in Northern Uganda. The elite interviews were crucial to checking the information received and to collecting more technical interpretations of the Northern Uganda reality.

This research was both qualitative and quantitative, though qualitative to a larger extent. The qualitative aspect of this research enabled the researcher opportunity to interact with the respondents allowing them to express themselves on the issues of this research so that the researcher could better understand their views and realities. The qualitative aspect of this research allowed the respondents to explain their constructed reality as they experienced it. This therefore ensured that the researcher did not presume to apply her own interpretations of their reality.
This research aimed to investigate whether the assistance given in post-conflict or in-conflict scenarios was relevant to improving the lives of the local people. This could only be done by engaging the subjects of this assistance to get their views on the process and this was done through qualitative enquiry. It is by qualitative research that this work was able to come up with holistic analysis that captured the complex interlinks between the different players and issues in the post conflict contexts (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

The research was also part quantitative. The quantitative nature of the research enabled the researcher to state the research problem in very specific and set terms (Frankfort & Nachmias, 2008). It also ensured that the information gathered was highly reliable by questioning a larger number of respondents and analysing the data in such a way to eliminate and minimise the subjectivity that could easily result from pure qualitative analysis.

To effectively explore the research questions, multiple research strategies were employed. Data was collected through different types of interviews, observation, focus groups and documentary research. The use of multiple research methods ensured that the information collected could easily be validated by ensuring that it could be cross checked by obtaining data from different sources. Data obtained from one source could be complemented by data from another source and where there were gaps in information from one source this could easily be supplemented. To cater for the interviews, focus groups and observation methods a field work trip to Northern Uganda was taken. Fieldwork research was carried in August 2008 to October 2008.
V. Sampling

The sampling method used for this research was a combination of purposive, snowballing and judgement sampling. Since the research questions had been defined prior to the field experience the researcher used purposive sampling to determine the different categories of individuals to question to obtain relevant information for the purpose of this research. The researcher chose to then engage formerly abducted children, members of the local community and officials from selected reintegration initiatives. The researcher selected that in evaluating the reintegration initiatives that she would study government supported initiatives, international organisations initiatives, local/indigenous programmes, programmes run by the Acholi cultural unit and faith based organisations. This sampling was purposive to ensure that information obtained was representative of the different programmes in place in Northern Uganda. The research further developed the sample by using snowball sampling. This involved identifying one person who met the criteria for inclusion in this study. The researcher involved the initial respondent in recommending other persons who would contribute to the research study. Although this method did not ensure representativeness it was the most suitable method for this study. This was because the researcher was not indigenous member of the local community and therefore had limited contacts. The research subject was also sensitive in nature and therefore the subjects were more comfortable discussing the different issues with an individual referred to them by a person they knew or trusted. To ensure representativeness the researcher also used judgement sampling. This involved the researcher evaluating the background of the different research subjects and selecting those interviewed based on the different locations they resided in, their gender and their age at the time of abduction.

A total of 110 interviews were done with the former child combatants, members of the local community and the officials of the different reintegration initiatives in the area. The
respondents were drawn from the four divisions of Gulu district: Laroo; Layibi; Pece; and Bardege.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Formerly Abducted Children</th>
<th>Local Community Members</th>
<th>Reintegration Actors officials</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male Respondents</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female Respondents</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Number of Respondents</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Although this thesis does not make a claim to representativeness, the interviews conducted provided sufficient data to draw a number of conclusions.

VI. Data Collection

Interviews

Primary data was mostly generated through interviews. Interviewing is regarded to be a suitable data collection method in qualitative research. Interviews involve direct interaction between two parties the interviewer and the interviewee (Williamson, Karp, & Dalphin, 1977). The interviews used for this study ranged from in-depth, unstructured and structured interviews.

The in-depth interviews were done with the influential members of the community on a one on one basis to enable the researcher to be able to explore complex issues and to seek answers to some of the research concerns that were core to this thesis. This was also befitting to the whole issue of children because it enabled the researcher to ask complicated and highly sensitive questions and from the responses be able to get accurate findings.
(Wilkinson, 2000). The in-depth interviews were carried out with the more mature members of the local community. These respondents communicated easily, giving much more detail to the issues of discussion in English and in Acholi. The researcher relied on an indigenous field assistant to interpret complex questions to the respondents in Acholi and to explain answers conveyed in Acholi to the researcher in English. Most of the interviewees were however able to communicate their ideas and views in English. These interviews provided an opportunity to probe deeply, uncover clues and to open dimensions of a problem and to secure accurate information in the participants own terms (Burgess, 1982). These interviews perfectly complemented the observation done by the researcher (Burgess, 1984).

The researcher employed the use of structured interviews for the formerly abducted children. This is because the researcher found that contrary to her expectation that it was difficult for many of these respondents to give narrative answers. The alternative adopted then was to create a detailed interview questionnaire to which the respondents would give their answers to. Most of the answers obtained from these children were of the ‘yes’ or ‘no’ nature and it was difficult in most cases for the researcher to interrogate the respondents further. Probing for further details proved to be difficult because of a language barrier and in many instances a shyness on the part of the children to engage in long in-depth discussions about their lives. To resolve the language barrier the researcher had to rely on the field assistant to interpret questions to Acholi and to retranslate the answers back into English. The researcher also opted to create and use a more detailed interview schedule that covered most of the vital issues and that did not heavily depend on the initiative of the young respondents.
For the elite class of respondents the researcher used unstructured interviews. After having a discussion with each of the respondents about what the research was about and the information that the research was looking for, many of these respondents preferred to talk about the different issues arising from reintegration. This was a useful way to ensure that the real issues at play were captured by this research based on the information given from these interviews and not from presumptions made by the researcher. The weakness with the unstructured interviews was that the researcher had to constantly monitor the direction, depth, and detail of the interview, what to include and what to exclude. There were also problems of the interviews taking too long and the ease in which these could digress from the main topic of discussion (Burgess, 1984).

In particular instances the researcher did facilitate self administered interviews for a number of interviewees. Self administered interviews were limited to elite respondents who did not have the time to engage with the researcher in formal interviews and felt that it would be more convenient for them to respond to the research questions at their own convenience.

**Focus Groups**

Focus group is identified as a carefully planned discussion designed to obtain perceptions in a defined area of interest and in a non-threatening environment (Krueger & Casey, 2000). This method of data collection was relevant to gaining information as to how people think, and to explain different perceptions of an event, idea or experience (Wilkinson, 2000). The focus groups therefore tended to involve different groups in discussing thematic issues related to the research questions with a view to gaining a diverse array of responses. At times interviewing more than one person at a time can prove to be
very useful especially when dealing with young people who may need the company of their peers to encourage conversation and talk (Glesne & Peshkin, 1982). The main problem with this method was that it was difficult to document the information in a way that allowed for the identification of individual speakers and the differentiation between statements of several parallel speakers (Flick, 2002). The researcher carried out two focus groups for female formerly abducted children. In carrying out the research the researcher observed that the female returnees preferred to be involved in a focus group discussion while the male ex-child combatants were comfortable with one on one interviews. This method was therefore very instrumental to getting different points of view in an environment in which these girls did not feel threatened or uneasy.

**Secondary Data Analysis**

The researcher also used supplementary data sources such as newspapers, reports, government papers, independent sources, academic information, and documentary TV programmes. Secondary data analysis has a rich intellectual tradition in the social sciences (Frankfort & Nachmias, 2008). The researcher decided to use secondary data because in some instances and for specific issues it was the only data was only available for the study of certain research problems. This data could also be used in instances of comparison of the different organisations in this study. Secondary data saved the researcher’s time allowing the researcher to conduct specific research personally and to rely on data gathered by other researchers to enable and improve the results attained from the research. Secondary data did also save on the research costs, primary researching is extremely expensive and it was therefore considerably cheaper to use data gathered by other researchers than to undertake to obtain new data (Frankfort & Nachmias, 2008).
Participant Observation

This involved gathering data by participating in the daily lives of the people. It had to do with frequent contact with the specific people under investigation. It involved watching the subjects of study to be able to see the process of reintegration in play. This also allowed for conversations with some of the participants, in this case the case workers, members of the local community, some of the formerly abducted children and other workers in the field. In this method the researcher was the primary tool of the investigation (Burgess, 1984). It involved the collection of data on social interaction, on situations as they occur rather than in artificial social interaction. This involved the researcher being stationed in the natural setting of the research (Burgess, 1984).

In this case, it involved seeing how the reintegration programmes were administered on a day to day basis by the organizations being studied. This method demanded that the researcher form trust relationships within the society that was being investigated. To enhance the researcher’s observation of the programmes, the researcher was resident in St. Monica’s, one of the organisations analysed for this study. The researcher lived in the same accommodation as the girls in this institution and shared in their daily routine. This did enable the researcher form friendships with the formerly abducted girls that were receiving training at this institution. The researcher’s insight about the challenges of the reintegration process for women was well informed by the relationships the researcher formed during her stay at St. Monica’s.

On the whole the weakness with this method of data collection was that the researcher’s own ethical dilemmas as discussed below came into play; it was also difficult not be viewed as an outsider, because of the language barrier and physical differences that existed. There were clear differences in perception and the manner in which the researcher perceived
reality in comparison to how the subjects of the study viewed life. There was a need for other modes of data collection to validate all the information that had been gathered from the field in this manner. It was sometimes difficult for the researcher to define her role as an observer, the more unstructured a programme was the easier it was to take a role that was not conspicuous and that did not influence the results obtained in the field (Flick, 2002).

VII. Data Documentation

All the primary data collected by the researcher during the fieldwork through interviews, and observations were documented through note taking. The reason for selecting this method of recording was necessitated by the respondents’ hesitation to tape recording. The researcher also decided not to tape record since most of the interviews held were highly sensitive and the respondents were not keen on their stories being on tape. Note taking ensured that there was an informal and relaxed environment in which all of the subjects felt at ease and had no fear responding to the questions asked. In some cases some respondents were uneasy about notes being taken during the interview and in these cases the researcher tried to converse more and not concentrate on taking notes. In these instances the researcher did a minimum number of interviews in a day, mostly one interview a day. The researcher would thereafter make notes of the interview and the discussions had during the interview before forgetting any of the crucial details. Having taken notes of the interviews in the course of the day, the researcher made electronic copies of the interviews as well as analytical notes and observations in the evenings.

VIII. Data Analysis and Interpretation

Data collected was analysed both quantitatively and qualitatively. This established a validation and cross checking method, to ensure that the researcher’s interpretations were
always balanced and to ensure a generation of rich detailed information and contextualized analysis.

Processing of the data was done through thematic coding and content analysis. Thematic coding was a process of coding qualitative information into relevant and important themes. This method was used during analysis to cross check the information obtained during an interview (Patton, 2002). The researcher manually created the codes to label the findings from the interviews carried out. Content analysis was a complementary analysis method to thematic coding. This tool was used to determine the presence of certain words or phrases within the interview notes documented. This process extracted thematic data from the text materials, in this case the interview materials (Silverman, 2005). The researchers then quantified and analyzed the presence, meanings and relationships of such words and phrases and then made inferences as to what these meant.

A good example of this analysis is in the results displayed in Chapter 5. In discussing the implications of reintegration on the local communities five different thematic codes were developed:

- The economic implications of reintegration
- The social and psychological implications of reintegration
- The implications of reintegration on gender
- The implications of reintegration on justice and peace.

Each of the above variables constituted sub-themes in the discussion of implications of reintegration on the local community. To compare the severity of the implications the
responses received from the interviews about each of the themes were counted and simple percentages were presented.

Interpretation and analysis in this research was done through triangulation and interpretivism. Triangulation implied that more than one method was used to analyse the data in a study so as to double check the results. This method is also referred to as "cross examination". The researcher was more confident of the results because the different methods used led to the same result. The advantage of triangulation, in this case employing multiple research methods to study the object, is that it surmounts the intrinsic and obvious weaknesses of the different methods used to collect the data (Denzin & Yvonna, 2000).

The analysis in the study was guided by the interpretivist tradition which aims to construct theory by understanding and interpreting the phenomena under investigation through the interaction processes between people. In this attention was paid to the research subjects’ behaviour, actions and interpretations drawn based on the respondents being studied (Geertz, 2000; Fay, 1987). Therefore this meant that to understand one’s research subject then one had to understand why they did what they did, or how they interpreted their reality (Fay, 1987).

The main advantage of this method was that it gave voice to those being researched on, giving meaning to their perspectives and what they thought of their experiences (Rabinow & Sullivan, 1979; Geertz, 2000). Interpretivism has however come under criticism for being too descriptive, subjective and erroneous in its assumption that interpretations only consisted of how others see the world. To counter this criticism the researcher did ensure that the information derived from the respondents interviewed could be used to cross
checked by interviewing another group of respondents to verify the information obtained. A good example of this was the information received from the different reintegration actors could be verified by asking a significant number of formerly abducted children whether this information was true.

The researcher did also incorporate quantitative data analysis of the information to complement the qualitative interpretations made. This was done through the Microsoft excel software package and the information was presented in the form of graphs or pie charts in detailed discussion of the research findings.

 IX. Methodological and Ethical Constraints

Nearly all social researchers face the issue of access to the research subjects (Williamson, Karp, & Dalphin, 1977). This is of course compounded when the researcher is going to a high risk area, as did the researcher in this case, researching on the reintegration experience in Northern Uganda. Access to this area was limited especially by the fact that the researcher was not from the area and had to rely on local contacts to get around. Due to the sensitive nature of the research questions the organisations that were the researcher’s primary contact placed many restrictions on the researcher. Since the research sought to question the programming offered by most of these organisations the assistance initially offered was often revoked by the organisation’s head office. The agenda of those providing access was a great issue that the researcher was faced with upon arrival in the country of study.

There was also the question of social acceptance by members of the local community. To be able to carry out the interviews the researcher had to establish trust with the respondents. Trust was particularly hard to establish because past researchers who
interviewed the target respondents in Gulu had often deceived and manipulated them so as to obtain their information. It was also the case that many of the interviewees felt that they did not want to participate if there was no monetary gain for them. Most interviewees expected some sort of reward for participating in the research and having to explain that this research could not afford to do so was a constraint. To ensure social acceptance the researcher used gatekeepers and the snowballing sampling method to introduce the research and request for interviews in the field.

In any research that involves human subjects, there is a high likelihood of ethical conflict. This research involved formerly abducted children, and this brought to play three different components; there is the researcher, the subjects of the research in this case the children and the society in which these children belong to or are being reintegrated back into. Any ethical issues in any research could come about as a result of conflicts arising between the different factions involved in this work. For the researcher the environment of the research was not what the researcher had expected. The reality of dealing with communities that had been devastated by war, that live in impoverished and dilapidated IDP camps was difficult. The ethical dilemma of interviewing children who had been disabled or had been robbed out of a childhood by the war, was a difficult endeavour for the researcher. To engage respondents in interviews over their impossible realities, and to get them conversing over the reasons that explain their reality of life was a difficult but necessary task.

Ethics must be employed to sustain and encourage good research and credible knowledge. Whenever there is contact in the course of research it is essential to establish what the interests of both parties are and to ensure that at all times that both interests are served. The researcher needed to constantly ensure that they abide to the ‘no harm’ principle and beneficence (Hill, Glaser, & Harden, 1995). This involved ensuring that the questions the
researcher asked the respondents did not leave them worse off than they were before the interview. The researcher did not ask any questions that would further traumatise the respondents based on the consideration that she was not a counsellor and therefore did not have the skills to support or attend to the respondents in the event they broke down or were adversely affected by the discussion. The process of carrying out scientific investigations can easily harm those who participate, the investigators and those being investigated. In order to protect the respondents the researcher completely trained on anonymity and confidentiality, knowing full well that this could be the only way that the respondents could be protected. In planning the researcher completed a risk assessment form from the University and ensured that she only travelled to safe areas and accessible areas (Sieber, 1992).

Ensuring the privacy and freedom of the respondents was also a critical constraint that the researcher had to take into consideration at every level. In addressing this issue the researcher ensured that she explained that all information gathered would be kept in the strictest of confidence. This also meant that where respondents wished to remain anonymous the researcher did not record their names but respected their privacy since any action contrary to that will be a violation of their freedom (Bulmer, 1982). It is for this reason that the names used to refer to most respondents through this thesis are not real identities.

X. Definition of Terms

This thesis will define a child as any person under the age of 18 years. It therefore follows that a ‘formerly abducted child’ is a person under the age of 18 years who was abducted from their local community and was engaged in deadly combat support as part of an armed force or group (Singer, 2006). Due to the complex dynamics of war many children
abducted and recruited into the LRA have been forced to serve under the LRA from the
time they were younger than 18 years to when the law would consider them adults.
Therefore in questioning children involved in war this thesis will making reference to those
individuals who were abducted prior to their 18th birthday. To refer to this group of
persons this thesis will refer to them as ‘formerly abducted children’ or ‘child soldiers’
interchangeably. From time to time the author will use the word ‘returnee’ to refer to
individuals who have escaped and returned back into the local community.

Reintegration in this thesis refers to the process of establishing a civilian life. Reintegration
programs need to support the child in constructing a new, positive course of development.
This process of establishing a new identity as a civilian is what is referred to as reintegration.

Recruitment will refer to both abductions and voluntary enlistments of children into the
warring factions.

The term ‘local’ will be used in reference to members of the local community in the North
that were respondents to this research. Also in reference to the general opinion of the local
people in the North of Uganda.

The term ‘bush’ will be used in reference to the experiences of the returning children in
captivity. The bush will therefore mean time that was spent with the LRA.

The term ‘child mothers’ refers to those girls who were captured and impregnated in their
time of captivity. These girls will have returned back with children upon their capture or
escape from the LRA ranks.
The research will often make reference to ‘the Government’ which would be in reference to the current government of Uganda.

This work will often use the phrase ‘the North’ to refer to Northern Uganda.

Amnesty in this work refers to exemption from retributive punishment.

The word ‘organisation(s)’ will also be used to refer to the government, non-governmental, international, faith based, and local indigenous arrangements that enable the reintegration of formerly abducted children.

**XI. Thesis Structure**

Chapter one of this thesis delves into the foundations and theoretical underpinnings of the study. The human security framework eluded to earlier will guide the statistical relationships that will be investigated in this research. A discussion over the current debates on the human security concept will be made. The role of international law in enforcement of the human security of formerly abducted children and local indigenous communities will also be discussed in this chapter. Since research instruments cannot be divorced from theory this chapter will be concerned with giving intellectual authority to this piece of research (Hughes & Sharrock, 1997).

The second chapter of this thesis details the political history of the Ugandan state. This chapter discusses the post-colonial Ugandan state tracing its activities to the current political situation in the country. The history of the conflict in the North, the different initiatives taken to end it and the driving ideology explaining why it has been difficult to stop this war will also be discussed. This part of the thesis will set the scene to
understanding the environment in which reintegration takes place and the history that has resulted into the present crisis.

Chapter three entails a detailed discussion of the DDR process in general. This thesis rests on the understanding that DDR is a crucial component of sustainable peace. This chapter will therefore offer discussion on the core objectives of this process as stipulated by the United Nations. The inherent limitations of the DDR component will be discussed with the notion of reintegration being questioned. This chapter will provide a theoretical foundation upon which the empirical assessment and analysis of the reintegration process will be made.

Chapter four will analyse the different actors of reintegration in Northern Uganda and their commitment to restoring the Acholi community in the North. This chapter will on the basis of a larger discussion on amnesty and restorative justice, discuss the government’s role in reintegration of formerly abducted children through the UPDF and the Amnesty commission. A study of a government supported initiative, the School of War Affected Children (SOWAC), will also be made. International organisations studied will be World Vision and Child Voice International (CVI). This will seek to establish what programmes and activities these organizations are running in Northern Uganda, what challenges they face and what successes these programmes have had over the years. The final part of this chapter will look at the indigenous non-governmental organizations, looking to how they administer DDR and their successes and challenges in implementing reintegration for formerly abducted children. This exercise will involve a study of locally set up reception centres, Concerned Parents Association (CPA) and the Gulu Support the Children Organisation (GUSCO); St Monica’s a local religious initiative; and the Ker Kal Kwaro, a cultural institution that is involved in the reintegration process. This Chapter
will make a comparative analysis of the programmes to establish what good practice is, and how the reintegration programmes can benefit from borrowing one from another.

Chapter five will analyse the impact the reintegration process has on host communities. It will seek to address how the local communities respond to the returning children. This chapter will discuss the capacity of local communities to handle and provide for the formerly abducted children, the socio-economic impact of reintegration and the gender realities of the reintegration process. This chapter will also engage in the larger debate on peace and justice in post conflict realities.

Drawing from the discussions made throughout the thesis Chapter seven will seek to conclude by analysing the utility and relevance of the process of the reintegration process which is the objective of this study. This concluding chapter will seek to discuss the significant contributions that this work makes to the exercise of post conflict reconstruction. This chapter will also seek to establish areas potential development areas in the understanding and practice of reintegration pointing to areas for further research and future study.
CHAPTER ONE

THE HUMAN SECURITY AND INTERNATIONAL LEGAL PROTECTION
OF CHILDREN AND LOCAL POPULATIONS

1.1 Introduction

Modern day conflicts are no longer between states and most of the current wars now are within closed borders; intra-state conflicts (Kaldor, 2001). The levels of human casualties and suffering as a result of most of these wars are quite high. This thesis seeks to question the post conflict interventions with particular focus on formerly abducted children in Northern Uganda. To carry out this discussion this thesis engages the human security framework as the theoretical basis for this study. This conceptual framework informs the research of the key variables to be identified and measured. The theoretical framework also guided the statistical relationships investigated for the purposes of the research. This study is premised on the fact that following civil wars many organisations and the international community at large always rush in to assist and to restore societies, but there is a need to find out whether what is being done by these organisations is actually useful and whether these actions will play a crucial part in averting future conflicts in many of these post war societies. The human security theory which has in its objective the purpose of making the individual the primary concern of security will provide a most useful benchmark for this research to be able to analytically address the practice of reintegration for formerly abducted children.

To be able to effectively set in place the theoretical foundations of this research on the post conflict interventions aimed at restoring formerly abducted children, it is essential that this
work gives context to the impact of war concept of childhood. The term child is defined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of a Child (CRC) as every human being who is aged below eighteen years. Though this Convention has been widely ratified by all member states of the United Nations with the exception of the United States and Somalia, it does not follow that these states are adhering to its principles (Brownlie, 1990). It is important to note that the concept of childhood is not independent of culture, tradition, politics, economy and history and this differ from one community to another (Panter-Brick, 1998). The manner in which children are regarded in the West may therefore not be applicable to other countries and cultures especially in areas of extreme poverty (Boyden, 1997). The social constructionists will be quick to argue that childhood is a product of social interactions in different communities and therefore varies from one community to another depending on how infants are socialised into the community. James and Prout argued that ‘[I]t is biological immaturity and not childhood that is universal and that the view of childhood varies cross-culturally although it does not form a specific structural and cultural component of all known societies’ (James & Prout, 1997).

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child does also take into consideration the importance of traditions and cultural values in the development of the child (UN, 2000). Childhood is socially constructed and the attitudes of childhood have therefore through time varied from one culture to another. Boyden makes note that the needs and wants in the different countries are largely different and therefore it is wrong to force a western notion of childhood on everyone (1997). Cultural practices have an influence on the how childhood is perceived and might have an influence on: the age of marriage; the gender specific role socialization; and the rites of passage, which dictate the passage of a child into an adult. Passage into adulthood therefore is a social religious dynamic in any given community and this differs with every other community but for the sake of uniformity in
the application of the law the UNCRC has set this at the age of 18 years, which is subsequently the standard adopted for the purpose of this thesis.

It therefore follows that a ‘child soldier’ or a ‘formerly abducted child’ is a person under the age of 18 years who is engaged in deadly combat support as part of an armed force or group (Singer, 2006). A young person of less than 18 years who is recruited for military service is also considered a child soldier (Barnitz, 1999). In making reference to child soldiers two major words are involved in the term. One is ‘Child’ and the other is ‘Soldier’. The Concise Oxford English Dictionary defines a ‘child’ as ‘a young human being below the age of full physical development’ and ‘soldier’ as ‘a person who serves in an army’ (2004). All external armed conflict, internal civil strife, conducted by national military, paramilitary groups or guerrilla organizations are all opportunities in which children can be induced into military service. Jane-Fox notes that, although there is a legal definition of who is a combatant; none exists for a child soldier per se (United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), 1994). The UNICEF and the Cape Town Principles however have defined the child soldier as ‘any person under 18 years of age who is part of any kind of regular, irregular armed force or armed group in any capacity, including but not limited to cooks, porters, messengers, and those accompanying such groups other than purely as family members’ (UNICEF, 1997). This provision broadens the definition of child soldiers to include different categories of children, serving during war. This is especially useful in our case study context in which most children have been abducted to join the Lord Resistance Army (LRA). Not all the children will have served in active combatants and therefore their inclusion into what would be defined as a ‘child soldier’ is thus very critical. This definition does therefore legalistically cover all the formerly abducted children.
This chapter will engage with the theoretical framework which informs this study. To be able to understand the human security framework and its application to this work it is essential to discuss the origins of the human security concept, and will consequently make discussion on the different understandings and debates on the definition and the limits of human security as understood by different scholars. Here this chapter will analyse the different arguments levelled to broadening our consideration of human security and of narrowing our application of the human security paradigm to physical security and violent threats. This chapter will lend itself to engaging with how international law serves to promote the human security agenda. While focussing on the subject of this thesis, the formerly abducted children, this chapter will discuss how human security expresses itself in international humanitarian law, human rights law and international criminal law provisions. This chapter will also engage with the understanding of human security as regards Internally Displaced People (IDPs) who form the second subjects of this study. This will then lead to a discussion on who is responsible for human security concerns thus establishing a theoretical base for which we can be able to analyse the activities of not just the state but also of organisations working within the borders of a state on behalf of the international community. This chapter will also take notice of the fact that despite the protection that is guaranteed by both international law and municipal law, children are still victims of war. This chapter will therefore be foundationally crucial in offering this thesis a basis in which to analyse and to judge the usefulness of the programmes being carried out in Northern Uganda as concerns formerly abducted children. This discussion will enable us to ask and consequently answer in the different chapters of this thesis what we are reintegrating the children back into, and whether what we are doing is significant for lasting peace in the region.
1.2 Human Security: A Theoretical Framework

The Human Security framework enabled the researcher to identify the key variables to be measured and the statistical relationships to investigate. In answering the question as to where the research will begin, it is imperative that this research establishes the questions it seeks to answer. This research seeks to analyse the reintegration programmes for formerly abducted children in Northern Uganda and the consequential impacts of the reintegration process on local populations.

The simplest definition of security is “absence of insecurity and threats”. The basic definition of human security refers to the security of the individuals as opposed to traditional security which would refer to the security of the states (Tadjbakhsh, 2005; Owen, 2003). There is no consensus as to the exact definition of human security, there is however a general understanding that it goes beyond traditional notions of security to focus on issues such as development and respect for human rights, and it represents a shift from state-centred security to people-centred security. The UNDP defines human security as the freedom from fear and want (United Nations Development Report, 1994). In this new view of security the concern is not limited to the security between the different states rather it has its basis on the social contract agreement between the state and its citizens in which the citizens have traded in their rights for the guarantee of protection by their Leviathan from acts of war (Hobbes, 1985)). This new idea of security encompasses two ideas, the idea of safety, which goes beyond the concept of physical security in the traditional sense and the other idea is that of “social security” ensuring that people’s livelihoods are guaranteed from sudden disruptions (Tadjbakhsh, 2005).
1.2.1 Origins of Human Security

The concept of Human Security grew well after the Cold War period. The end of the Cold War was seen by many to be the era of unparalleled peace and prosperity (Owen, 2004a). There was enormous optimism that the international community released from the superpower rivalry would turn its focus to the global problems like poverty, environmental issues and population growth (Axworthy, 1997). Lloyd Axworthy in his arguments advocating for human security in the 51st United Nations General assembly said that security was more than the absence of a military threat; it was also security against economic privation, an acceptable quality of life, and guarantees of fundamental human rights (Axworthy, 2001).

Owen argues that the debate over the referent object of security traces back to early thinkers (2004a). Many of the basic arguments of human security are crude reflections of Montesquieu, Rousseau and Condorcet, with individuals like Condorcet arguing that if freedom from fear was not guaranteed then individuals could not be effective members of a political relationship (Owen, 2004a). Adam Smith argued that security meant the protection of an individual from sudden or violent attack on one’s person or property and this security was most important for a good society (Owen, 2004a). These views were however not popular with many arguing that individual security could be achieved along with the security of the State (Bajpai, 2000; Owen, 2004a). Security was then viewed as protection from any invading armies and the presence of standing armies to protect from external forces or armies and this was the prominent view up until the end of the Cold War (Owen, 2004a). It was in the period after the cold war that the views of early liberal thinking began to manifest again. The term “Human Security” appeared in the development circles through the United Nations Development Programme’s 1994 Human Development Report which to date is considered a milestone publication in the field of
Human Security. This report states that human security rests on two pillars; the freedom from want and the freedom from fear (United Nations Development Report, 1994).

1.2.2 The Human Security Debate

In discussing human security it is imperative that we note that there are those who have argued that Human Security represents a very attractive idea but it is void of analytical rigour. These scholars in arguing against human security state that shifting the focus from state-centred security to concentrate on people does nothing to render analysis and increasing the number of elements labelled as threats only makes it more difficult to study the inter-connections between them. These scholars in effect fail to see the utility and contribution of the human security framework.

Attempts to operationalise the human security agenda have led to the emergence of two schools of thought within the theory. These are the Narrow and the Broad schools of thought based on the fact that some argue that security should be broadened as a concept to include underdevelopment as a threat while the narrow thinkers argue that the definition should be solely focussed on violent threats.

The Former Secretary General of the United Nations, Kofi Annan, in his address to the General Assembly stated that, ‘Security can no longer be narrowly defined as the absence of armed conflict, be it between or within states. Gross abuses of human rights, the large-scale displacement of civilian populations, international terrorism, the AIDS pandemic, drug and arms trafficking and environmental disasters present a direct threat to human security, forcing us to adopt a much more coordinated approach to a range of issues’ (United Nations, 1994, pp. 43 - 44). This statement is the spirit of the broad conception of
Human Security. The United Nations definition of the term Human Security rests on the two pillars, freedom from want and freedom from fear (United Nations, 1994). Jorge Nef in his book, Human Security and Mutual Vulnerability, describes the five interconnected areas of human security; the economy, the society, the polity, culture and the ecosystem, their interconnectedness to him is what defines the nature of systematic balance (Nef, 1999).

Advocates of the broad conceptualisation of Human Security argue that security means more than safety from violent threats. The argument raised in this conceptualisation is that vulnerability is both broad in nature and structurally dependent and we must not just address threats but also society’s ability to counter these threats (Owen, 2003). It is in observing the things that challenge most people that human security gives a voice to those who would normally be marginalised (Hampson & Hay, 2002; Amartya, 1990). Other advocates of this school of thought such as Caroline Thomas argues that human security refers to the provision of basic material needs and the realisation of human dignity including emancipation from oppressive power structures be they global, national, or local in origin and scope (2000).

The broad conceptualisation of human security has three main attributes. Firstly it is broad in its definition as is clear from the UNDP definition (United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), 1994). Secondly the threats are divided into components, as seen in the UNDP definition and Jorge Nef’s framework of Human Security (Nef, 1999). Finally the third attribute is the focus on the vital core of the individual (Alkire, 2003; Commission on Human Security, 2002). The Commission of Human Security established by the

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3 This definition includes threats in seven areas; economic security, food security, health security, environmental security, personal security, community security and political security
government of Japan argued that although institutions cannot be expected to protect people from all harms they should at least address those that unnecessarily take lives (Commission on Human Security, 2002). Scholars like Tadjbakhsh argue that the lack of an rigidly agreed on definition is not a conceptual weakness but it represents a refusal to succumb to the dominant political agenda, and that a broad definition is critical to transforming the ethos and engaging in the “political” act of raising questions that are currently peripheral to security studies, encouraging measures that can be applied to improve the everyday lives of people (2005).

Scholars of the Narrow school of thought advocate for human security but argue for the need to narrow its scope and focus. Barry Buzan argues that there is a threat in excessively broadening the understanding of security issues and treating human rights issues as urgent security concerns (Buzan, 2002). Krause argues that in broadening the definition of human security the concept loses its clarity and analytical rigor; he further argues that there is a danger in militarising problems of social welfare (1998). Others have argued that any definition that conflates dependent or independent variables renders causal analysis virtually impossible, and the act of making everything a security threat in effect prioritises nothing (Mack, 2004). Paris makes the case that because of the expansive and vague nature of the concept of human security then there is very little guidance given to policy makers on how to prioritize the competing policy goals and academics little sense of what exactly is to be studied (Paris, 2001). Many of the narrow school of thought advocates argue that the definition of human security should be restricted to only violent threats so that it can be an effective instrument of policy (Owen, 2004a). Proponents from this school of thought make arguments that human security should be narrowed for pragmatic and methodological reasons. Further to that they stipulate that the UNDP’s annual
Human Development Report already covers the freedom from want side of the spectrum, so they feel that to include that in human security would be redundant (Owen, 2004a).

While criticisms levelled against the broad thinking of human security and the arguments which form the basis of narrow school of thought make logical sense the conceptual and practical difficulty of using human security is not a good enough reason for narrowing its definition (Owen, 2003). Realities do not conform themselves to theories rather conceptual thought exists to explain those realities for people to be able to understand their everyday realities better, and for scholars to come up with ways in which we can better edify the lives of those harshly affected by different forms of insecurity. ‘If the human security concept does not radically deviate from the current understandings of traditional security or development then it is of little utility’ (Owen, 2004a, p. 19). Owen argues that there is a need for a hybrid definition which is both broad and concise. He argues that if something could have been avoided and causes great harm to an individual or a community of people then it falls into the definition of human security (Owen, 2003). A good example of this is preventable diseases or the poorly implemented reintegration programmes that could lead communities to reversion to war.

There is recognition that varying harms will require different responses, but any threat must be assessed on the basis of its harshness (Owen, 2003). Only when a threat is considered to be extremely severe will it then be considered a human security threat, the threat must be to vital core, which core is the human life (Alkire, 2003). Therefore from this definition, one can safely state that out of all human threats it is only those that are considered to threaten human lives that would be included, and this is the threshold paramount to human security (Owen, 2004a).
1.3 Justification for Using the Human Security Framework

Human security provides a basis in which we are able to analyse the root causes of a particular conflict situation. To be able to meaningfully address a problem one has to fit that problem into a context, any other interpretation that renders itself to the present and does not look back in retrospect to ensure that the past has been understood will only inform unsustainable resolutions. Every present situation has a history, in the case of Uganda, if a solution is to be found there is a great need to consider why there has been civil conflict for over twenty years. Ignoring the root causes of this conflict will see these societies go back to war in years to come. Evidence of this is seen in the same country which has been mired by conflict, and excessive coup de tats. If historical injustices are not addressed then the problem will only be partially solved.

The human security paradigm carries within it the notion that a sovereign state has the monopoly over the use of violence and the defence of their territory from external threats, but in juxtaposition states also have a responsibility to empower their citizenry (Tadjbakhsh, 2005). The recognition of people as the referent object of security then places some sort of responsibility on individuals as well. If people are to be empowered, then it is their obligation to be able to fend for themselves in future days. To determine whether the reintegration process is useful it will be important to determine how much energy is devoted to empowering people to enable survival.

Human security is the responsibility of the state first and foremost (Tadjbakhsh, 2005). This argument of state responsibility streams from the social contract theory in which citizens living in a state of nature agreed to combine forces to create one more unified force that would counter the adversities and the obstacles of nature (Rousseau, 1973). The State is therefore meant to play a great role in the social economic and even political
development of its people (Tadjbakhsh, 2005). Threats to security however are interconnected and as a result of this it is possible for these threats to spill over from the borders of one region to another. The world, it follows, is extremely interconnected as well and as such what affects people in one part of the world will eventually affect people in another part of the world. This then clearly provides that insecurity in any given region is the concern for all and that everyone must be involved in the service of restoring security. This then becomes the mandate of the International Community and would explain the presence of international organisations in Northern Uganda helping with critical situations of reintegrating formerly abducted children. So where a state fails to provide for its people, human security allows for the international community to step in and supplement the efforts of the state. Human Security is a public good and it touches on issues that concern the capacity of states to act and the legitimacy and effectiveness of interventions sponsored by international institutions and nongovernmental organisations (Tadjbakhsh, 2005). On this basis the Human security framework enables this research to critically and legitimately assess the services being provided to abducted children not only by the government but also by the international community.

Human security in this research will place emphasis on humanitarian values and ideals making an argument for the socio-economic security of people which will not seek to replace traditional security but will place other critical concerns such as hunger, health, internal security at par with the state security (UNHCR, 1997). It is impossible for the state to be secure without its citizens having a degree of security in their recourse to basic needs such as food, shelter, and employment. Even in the conception of human security the reality is that it cannot be used to address every threat to every individual and in this case to every formerly abducted child, or every member of the local community. Human security is however capable of protecting communities from the most serious harms that threaten
their purpose and their course of living. The human security framework therefore provides the necessary components to analyse and study the reintegration exercise and how the same contributes to ensuring sustainable peace.

1.4 The Expression of Human Security in International Law

International law has traditionally been defined as the body of laws that are responsible for governing the relations between nations. Customarily international law has always been responsible for regulating the actions between states, but since the end of the Second World War there has been a shift with international law now regulating the activities of international organisations, corporations, and individuals (Freeman, 2002). Individuals are now been able to make claims against the instrument of states using a branch of law that is referred to as international human rights law (Van Bueren, 1998).

International law can be seen to be either a critical tool or an obstacle to the promotion of the human security agenda (Von Tigerstorm, 2007). Human security thrives in the promotion of the rule of law, the enforcement of international law and in legal accountability (Von Tigerstorm, 2007). Various developments and initiatives undertaken by international law have been seen to advance the values of the human security theory (Von Tigerstorm, 2007). While the promotion of human security principles appears apparent with the evolution of international law there are those who have argued that human security does challenge the structures of international law (Oberleitner, 2005). Traditionally international law has been strictly concerned with the actions and non-actions of states and the relationships between states (Freeman, 2002). This therefore implied that it was states that were subjects of international law and individuals were only the objects (Van Bueren, 1998; Falk, 1998). Individuals therefore had to rely upon states to bring
actions on their behalf (Van Bueren, 1998). This was an especially problematic position in instances when the state itself was the aggressor against its own people. The evolution of human rights meant that the law now considered the individual a subject of international law and provided recourse in instances when the individual was the victim of a state. It is in this development of international law that there is expression of principles of human security which seek to edify the individual and not to merely concentrate on the welfare of states.

Despite these developments in the understanding of international law and security there have been significant concerns by different actors over the principle of state sovereignty (Von Tigerstorm, 2007). There have been those who have argued that the individual is the ultimate beneficiary of the international legal system and that there was no need for the law to be more human centred (Van Bueren, 1996). Similar arguments have been levied against the human security agenda with some advocates of traditional security arguing that the ultimate beneficiary of the traditional security was the individual (Macfarlane & Weiss, 1994). Von Tigerstorm however argues that the human centred focus of international law, inherent in human security demands that attention is devoted to the needs and interests of individuals over those of the states (2007). This therefore implies that individuals will have more say over what happens and will have opportunity to participate in being part of the solution (Von Tigerstorm, 2007). Human security therefore serves to challenge the international legal order and more especially the concept of state sovereignty (Owen, 2004).

A significant development in regards to human security in international law has to do with the interpretation of threats to international peace and security within the UN Charter. The Security Council is now mandated to evaluate and act on issues of international peace and
security under Chapter VII\textsuperscript{4} of the Charter and this definition is now inclusive of non-military threats, situations of armed conflict, humanitarian crisis and gross violations of human rights (Von Tigerstorm, 2007).

1.4.1 The Human Security of International Humanitarian Law in the Protection of Children

The Protection of civilians in armed conflict is a central objective of international humanitarian law. The special vulnerability of children has been carefully articulated by this law and is relied on to address the needs of particular special groups when it comes to armed conflict. The human security agenda embraces these humanitarian efforts and advocates for the action of various actors to ensure protection and lessen vulnerabilities.

With regard to formerly abducted children, international humanitarian law provisions have not been effective in curbing the recruitment of children combatants. The real force of humanitarian intervention lies in the post conflict arena and in its ability to address and punish wartime human atrocities (Wells, 2004). International humanitarian law establishes in it a set of rules that limit the effects of armed conflicts by protecting persons participating in hostilities and by restricting the methods of warfare, since it only applies within a conflict and is binding to all parties including insurgent groups who do not have the legal capacity to sign the Geneva conventions (Escobar, 2003).\textsuperscript{5} The core and most distinguished contribution to humanitarian law as relates to warfare today are the Geneva Conventions.\textsuperscript{6} It is important to note that the drafters of these provisions did not provide

\textsuperscript{4} Article 39 of the UN Charter.

\textsuperscript{5} The rules and norms of international humanitarian law may be found in agreements between states, in customary rules based on state practice, ‘opinio juris’ and in general principles (ICRC 2002).

\textsuperscript{6} The conventions were drafted in the aftermath of World War II and were adopted in 1977.
for the recruitment of children and this was viewed as an internal matter of the state (Happold, 2005). It was through the Additional Protocols of the Geneva Conventions that the international community began to regulate the participation of children in armed conflict. The protocols provided that in the event of war, States must take all feasible measures to guard against the recruitment of underage children (Sheppard, 2000).

International Humanitarian Law as expressed in the Geneva Conventions and Additional Protocols has been criticised for its failure to properly articulate and define a child. The conflicting provisions on the age of majority can be said to be a weakness of these statutes in as far as protecting children from the insecurities of war or conflict. The protocols provide that States shall take ‘all feasible measures…that children under the age of fifteen years do not take a direct part in hostilities…’ This places obligation on the state to ensure that children are not recruited into the armed forces, and this the government can do by legislating and regulating and controlling the recruitment of armed forces personnel. This provision however also lays it on the shoulders of the States to ensure that children are not by any other means recruited into armed groups and factions, this would then include groups that are not under the control of the Government. This raises the question as to whether States would have control over these groups, and if it was reasonable to place this responsibility on the States. The failure in assertiveness of humanitarian provisions is also a criticism to the protection accorded by these provisions to ensure freedom from fear and want.

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7 These two protocols were negotiated during the 1974-77 Diplomatic Conference on the Reaffirmation and Development of International Humanitarian Law Applicable in Armed Conflicts.

8 Provisions that address children within the protocol are contained in the third section of the protocol and specifically within Article 77.
The Conventions and Protocols only legislate against children taking a direct part in hostilities. This provision has come under great criticism and questions have been raised as to whether this provision is adequate in protecting children involved in the indirect activities of war such as gathering information, or spying which can also place them in grave danger. More specific to this study, the Additional Protocol makes provision for non-international armed conflicts or internal conflicts above a certain level of intensity. This protocol therefore can only be applied to conflicts of highest intensity meaning that though the protocols represent development from the traditional notions of security they still failed to protect vulnerable groups from situations that could foster fear and want.9 International Humanitarian law provisions provide legal protection for children by providing that children should in no way be recruited into armed forces or groups or allowed to take part in hostilities, this provision allows for no exceptions to the proscribed conduct (Happold, 2005). This extends its recruitment restrictions to armed groups other than the armed forces of a state and this provision therefore by its expression can be used in the case of the Lord’s Resistance Army.

International Humanitarian Law has added value to the protection of children in situations of international and non-international wars. The protocols have given more consideration to issues of human security and the protection of children especially as concerns the fear of recruitment. These provisions have however been criticized for having a banning nature and doing very little to regulate the participation of children in hostilities (Wells, 2004).

9 Article 4 provides that Children shall be provided with the care and aid they require, and in particular: (c) children who have not attained the age of fifteen years shall neither be recruited in the armed forces or groups nor allowed to take part in hostilities; (d) the special protection provided by this Article to children who have not attained the age of fifteen years shall remain applicable to them if they take a direct part in hostilities despite the provisions of subparagraph (c) and are captured.
Merely banning a practice is unrealistic if we are to protect children, the vulnerabilities of children must be addressed, calling for the law to make detailed provisions of these practices and not just mere banning them (Wells, 2004). It is also the case that in modern warfare the distinctions between civilians and combatants are becoming blurred as children and women are joining combatant groups to be able to survive and there may be a need to extend protections to these vulnerable groups of people (Gardam & Jarvis, 2000).

The norms and provisions of International Humanitarian Law are not adequately equipped to fully address the realities of today’s hostilities and the new evolving nature of conflict renders the protections of the constrained humanitarian law provisions less useful for protecting vulnerable groups of people like the children. The fact that they had not been universally ratified also greatly limits their application in protecting children. In light of these limitations of the humanitarian law, the International Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) seemed to be better placed to accord children better protection. While the CRC is a human rights instrument and as such formally binds different parties to itself, the inclusion of Article 38 which provides for children in hostilities, has been regarded as extremely significant because it brought together elements of International human rights law and international humanitarian law showing their complimentarity (Machel, 2001).

International Humanitarian Law advocates for a broad scope of amnesty to persons who have been involved in hostilities. This is inclusive of children or child soldiers who have committed grave atrocities in the course of civil or international wars. This provision has within it the desire for reconciliation and the need to restore society back into a normal life. Reintegration is in this sense implied in within the international humanitarian provisions.

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10 When serving as combatants it is possible that they are vulnerable to abuse and as such certain protections should then be extended to combatants.
where the provisions seek to restore an already damaged society. It follows that general amnesty that is limited to placing children in a rehabilitative, educational program to enable their reintegration is in line with international humanitarian law and takes into account the limited resources that exist after a conflict to engage in an endless process of prosecuting children (Happold, 2005). It is on the basis of this amnesty that international organisations in Northern Uganda are specifically able to address the plight of a community victimised by war. It is this amnesty that is extended to soldiers of war and those formerly abducted children that have returned to the safety of their communities. It is in this manner that human security forms a baseline for humanitarian assistance and intervention which is the general focus of this thesis.

1.4.2 The Human Security as the Spirit of the Human Rights Movement

International Human Rights Law developed from the belief that human beings, both individually and collectively, have inherent rights and freedoms which nobody, no organisation and no state is entitled to violate (Freeman, 2002; Van Bueren, 1998). Human Rights Law developed on the belief that states had a responsibility to protect these rights and freedoms of individuals. The first responsibility of human rights lies with the state, to which an individual belongs. In instances where a state is unable to effectively protect then one can look to the United Nations and the regional human rights bodies (Van Bueren, 1998).

When dealing with children the CRC is considered to be the paramount source of international law which provides for the protection of children. The CRC is considered to be an international human rights instrument because of the obligations that are assumed by state parties to be owed to children in different jurisdictions. States are therefore
responsible for protecting child rights from incursion by armed groups operating within their boundaries (Sheppard, 2000). The CRC was unanimously adopted by the General Assembly and entered into force in 1990. This Convention places the responsibility for its implementation squarely on the State Parties.\textsuperscript{11} The CRC specifically deals with the issue of children in hostilities and provides that States both respect and ensure their protection by regulating the activities and operations of armed groups.\textsuperscript{12}

The CRC provides that persons under the age of 15 should not take part in hostilities. This provision has come under severe criticism as it seemingly undermines the minimum age established for the protection of children. The CRC does also provide that State parties should take ‘feasible measures’ to ensure that children under the age of 15 are not recruited, leaving out any non-state actors and also it only precludes direct participation in hostilities which is contrary to the provisions of the second protocol banning all forms of participations in conflict (Happold, 2005).

To reinforce the protection granted to children the CRC provides that where higher standards of protection exist, then such standards should be enforced in preference over the CRC. The reasons for these weaknesses in the CRC is evidence of the prosaic nature of the drafting exercise, where states argue and debate over provisions, and stronger states are able to push forth their agenda.\textsuperscript{13} Though many governments and international organizations wished to see the minimum age of recruitment as 18, this has failed to happen because the creation of International Human Rights Law is a process of diplomatic

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\textsuperscript{11} See Article 4 of the CRC

\textsuperscript{12} See Article 38 of the CRC

\textsuperscript{13} UN Doc. E/CN.4/1989/48, para. 607. Sovereign interests played a pivotal role in the taking of positions by states with respect to the text of the adopted Optional Protocol.
negotiations and it is difficult to ascertain the real reasons behind the adoption and acceptance of particular provisions.

Given the failure of ensuring protection of all children under the age of 18 the UN embarked on various initiatives aimed at looking at the conditions of children in armed conflict: the commissioning of the Machel Report; the establishment of the working group charged with drafting the Optional Protocol to the CRC on the involvement of children in armed conflict; and finally the adoption of the Optional Protocol to the CRC (Brett, 1996). It is clear that majority of the States in recognition of the child soldier problem following the Machel report advocated for taking a holistic approach to the child soldier problem and proposed the raising of the minimum age of participation and recruitment as a key component of any plan to eradicate the practice.  

Those sceptical of raising of the minimum age argued as to the utility of this action if the current minimum age was not being respected. Cohn and Goodwin argue that there is a need to dovetail the minimum age of recruitment with the age of participation in the political process, this being because it is at this age that a community recognizes the intellectual maturity of any individual (1994).

A fundamental provision of the CRC to the central quest of this thesis and as regards formerly abducted children is Article 39. This provision stipulates that, ‘States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to promote physical and psychological recovery and social reintegration of a child victim of: any form of neglect, exploitation, or abuse; torture or any

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14 Other suggested initiatives included the establishment of birth registration procedures (to deter underage recruitment) and launching initiatives aimed at attacking the root causes of voluntary enrolment for example poverty, efforts towards demobilisation.

15 To this the Human Rights Watch has responded that it is possible for a military commander to pass-off a 13 year old for a 15 year old but a 13 year old cannot be mistaken for an 18 year old.
other form of cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment; or armed conflicts. Such recovery and reintegration shall take place in an environment which fosters the health, self-respect and dignity of the child. This provides that in the event that children have been exposed or involved in war it is the responsibility of the State to reintegrate them back into a life of normalcy. This provision embraces the two pillars of human security: freedom from fear and freedom from want. This legal provision places responsibility of caring for formerly abducted children on the states and obligates them to protect and re-establish the child back into their community. UNICEF provides that there is a need to rehabilitate to prevent children from drifting into a life of further violence, crime and hopelessness (UNICEF, 1996).

The greatest weakness of this convention is that this law is not suited to modern realities of conflict. The monitoring mechanism that is set up in the CRC, which is the Committee on the Rights of the Child, is not able to respond in situations of emergency, and cannot hear individual complaints, or impose sanctions on offenders or order compensation (Harvey, 2001). The CRC does not deal directly with recruitment and participation of children in non-state armed groups, since only state parties are bound to respect the provisions of the convention. Though this Convention is the most ratified provision of International Law it is also the most violated provision, during instances of conflict though in theory the rights of a child exist it is clear that some rights are upheld at the cost of others, the right to survive, development and health are prioritized and other rights often ignored completely by both states and humanitarian agencies (Harvey, 2001).

The failures and anomalies in these laws led to the development of a new legal instrument, responsible for dealing with children below the age of 18 and this was the Optional Protocol to the UN CRC on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict of 2000. This Protocol provided
three main amendments to the main CRC provisions: firstly, that persons who have not yet attained the age of 18 could be admitted to the armed force; secondly the protocol took the view that all forms of hostilities should be prohibited as there was very little difference between direct and indirect participation in hostilities; thirdly that the prohibition of recruitment should be to all armed groups whether they were governmental or non-governmental. This protocol is considered to have been a huge step in eradicating inhuman practices, curbing child soldiering and alleviate the ambiguities in the provisions of the CRC and the protocols.

Some of the challenges of enforcing these provisions of the protocol are similar to those of the CRC; the lack of a robust system of reporting and following up of the violations that are being committed weakens the ability of any form of intervention (Happold, 2005). The enforcement tools of international law are limited. The ability to be able to hold to account all or different parties involved in the recruitment of child soldiers has proved to be difficult.

Regional organisations have also embraced this human centred law in protection of children. The African Union has established the Africa Charter on the Rights and Welfare which came into force in 1999. This was the first regional charter adopted with specific reference to the problem of child soldiers.

The human rights movement has continued to put the notions of human security at the centre of its agenda. There has been a growing recognition that people’s rights are as important as the rights of states (Axworthy, 2001). Human rights law have been described often as being significantly different from classical international law when it comes to addressing the needs of the individual (Higgins, 1994). Human rights treaties such as one discussed on children recognise the rights of individuals and do impose on the state
responsibilities and obligations to fulfil those rights (Von Tigerstorm, 2007). Von Tigerstorm argues that this unprecedented recognition of individuals is reflective of the worth of human personality as the ultimate unit of the law (2007). Reisman goes further to argue that the shift to the protection of people and not states implies qualitative changes in virtually every component of international law (Reisman, 1990). Human rights principles have challenged fundamental principles of international law and in particular as relates to sovereignty and non-intervention. It is these principles that also necessitate the shift from the traditional thinking of security to a security that is more embracing of human needs and fears.

1.4.3 Human Security in International Criminal Law

One of the most significant ways in which the law can be used as an instrument of ensuring human security is in the establishment of international criminal tribunals such as the International Criminal Court (Von Tigerstorm, 2007). ‘Since the Cold War the proliferation of international criminal tribunals, humanitarian interventions and the application of the principle of universal jurisdiction in various domestic courts has shown that international criminal law is moving towards effective enforcement’ (Diaz, 2005, p. 17).

The Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC) was established with the sole purpose of ending impunity and trying those individuals who were charged with war crimes, genocide and crimes against humanity. This statute has made an in important contribution in law to protecting children by holding liable those who conscript or enlist children under the age of 15 years into national armed forces or armed groups or using them actively in hostilities. Unlike the International Court of Justice (ICJ) that handles
interstate cases, the ICC specialises in intra-state cases of individuals who have carried out acts of genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity within a state.\footnote{Good example of this being the prosecution of former President Charles Taylor and Thomas Lubago for enlisting child soldiers in wars.} This implies that the individual is the central concern of this treaty which intervenes to hold individuals liable for atrocities within their own states. The Rome statute codifies customary law and it is this law that prohibits recruitment of any children who have not attained the age of 15 years (Happold, 2005). The intervention of the ICC into the war in Northern Uganda is significant in establishing the importance of people in international law.

\subsection*{1.4.4.1 Can Child Soldiers be Held Liable for Crimes Committed?}

The liability of children to crimes committed during war is a subject of noteworthy debate. There have been fundamental arguments over the provisions of the CRC, which enshrines both protectionist and participation rights. There are provisions that stipulate that a child is a normal thinking human being capable of making decisions. There are those provisions on the other hand that guarantee the protection of children whether under the age of 15 or 18. It seemingly follows that the provisions of the CRC embody conflict, giving rights on one hand and being protective on the other hand. Consequently this raises an interesting argument that if children can be considered responsible enough to make their own decisions should they then be held accountable for the crimes they committed during the war.

David Rosen discusses these issues as the politics of age, the use of age categories by different international, regional, and local actors to advance particular political and ideological positions (Rosen, 2005). He states that it is the politics of age that causes
complex struggles over the recruitment of child soldiers and the whole debate on who
should be considered a child and who should not. The different representations of
childhood are constructs that support the legal and political agendas of the day (Rosen,
2005). It is on this premise that if we consider child soldiers as children then they cannot
be held responsible for the war crimes which they have committed because they are
deemed not to have any legal capacity to commit these crimes. This view however is very
devoid of reality in which child soldiers are the perpetrators of the most inhumane acts of
war to local communities (Rosen, 2007).

The question therefore is what do we do with children accused of committing atrocious
human rights violations. What is their criminal responsibility to these crimes? In Rwanda
after the genocide, when dealing with this issue the Rwandans were of the opinion that if a
child was able to kill then a child was able to discriminate between two ethnic communities,
and therefore why should that child be considered differently from their adult counterpart?
It was argued that the punishment should be the same (Hackel, 1995). This opinion in
Rwanda was what carried the day.\(^{17}\)

Children who participate in non-international armed conflict are subject to penalties for
participation under the municipal laws of their countries (Reis, 1996 - 1997).\(^{18}\) The language
of the Protocol as concerns the involvement of children stipulates that children who are
not yet 15 should not be allowed to take part in hostilities or recruited into armed forces or
groups, this prohibition also covers voluntary enlistment of children, a child cannot be said
to have enlisted themselves or even remotely participated in any activity that has to do with

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\(^{17}\) Children, Genocide and Justice: Rwandan Perspectives on Culpability and Punishment for Children.
Convicted of Crimes Associated with Genocide (Final Report of the Save the Children Federation)

\(^{18}\) Casse (1979, 491) argues that, “for the most part, civil wars remain within the province of municipal law,
of course much to the benefit of the incumbent authorities.”

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the hostilities. This language then shifts the responsibility from the child to those who allow the child to participate.

The CRC also makes a useful contribution to the question of liability on the part of the child soldier by providing that if at the time of committing these acts there was no criminal responsibilities for children under local law and the requisite intent was missing for liability under international law then there can be no prosecution of children.\(^\text{19}\)

In many post conflict scenarios it seems to be the practice to adopt Article 6 (5) of the Additional Protocol II which states that ‘at the end of hostilities, the authorities in power shall endeavour to grant the broadest possible amnesty to persons who have participated in the armed conflict, or those deprived of their liberty for reasons related to the armed conflict whether they are interned or detained’. The object of this provision is to make attempts at reconciling and re-establishing normalcy to a nation divided by war. This provision and those discussed before raise issues as to what justice is and how it can be achieved; this move to rehabilitate does raise a fundamental debate over the desire for justice and reconciliation that promotes impunity.

It is clear from these arguments that there is no legal basis in international law to prosecute children, trying them does not further the objectives of the rule of law. Although Uganda is a signatory to all these provisions of international law there has recently been a proposal tabled before parliament on prosecuting children. This proposal is in the Uganda’s ICC bill currently being debated in Parliament. The proposal is to try the children for some of the crimes they committed in the course of their recruitment (Monitor Online, 2008). This Bill has however not passed as law and the current standing of law is applicable. The suggestion to forego amnesty and prosecute children is one that could greatly hamper the

\(^{19}\) Article 40 (2) (a) of the CRC
process of reintegration and adversely impact on the local communities responsible for
formerly abducted children. Responsibility for crimes should be placed squarely on those
who recruit children or induce them to fight. A clear objective of criminal law has always
been deterrence, and it does not make sense to deter a child from an activity that they have
no proper understanding of, this would however not be the case when deterring adults
from recruiting children to commit war crimes or from committing those crimes
themselves. It is important that children are rehabilitated in accordance to both
humanitarian and human rights law and this in itself would be an alternate form of justice.
It is in this rehabilitation and reintegration that the principles of human security which aim
to alleviate fear and want can be realised.

1.5 Law and the Security of Children in War

Despite these protections articulated by law to offer the security to children, the reality is
that many children do end up getting involved in violence and war during conflict. While
discussing the issue of child soldiers it is important that we place in context the manner in
which children join insurgent forces to fight. The Child Soldiers Global Report categorizes
three different means of recruitment, through which people become members of armed
forces or groups: compulsory, voluntary, and forcible (or forced) (Coalition to stop the use
of Child Soldiers, 2004). Compulsory recruitment is defined as the procedure for
conscription into a country’s armed forces and is therefore obligatory. Voluntary
recruitment is usually regulated by law or policy and occurs without compulsion. Forcible
(or forced) entails the use of force, for instance in the form of abduction or the use of
other forms of duress during recruitment (Coalition to stop the use of Child Soldiers,
2004).
Singer in discussing the practice of child soldiering identifies forced recruitment as the major form, with most children being abducted to become soldiers (2006). A good illustration of this is the Lord Resistance Army in Uganda (LRA), which does its recruitment by sending out raiding parties into villages to recruit children. Children are chosen on the basis of their physical size and their ability to bear an arm. Other groups such as the Sudan People’s Liberation Army (SPLA) used to check for the presence of two molar teeth to determine if a child was ready to serve (Singer, 2006). Singer further explains that those children who were too small were often killed to intimidate the local communities and to initiate the newly recruited children (2006). Some rebel groups use indoctrination and violence and this motivates many children to join the armed groups so as to be able to survive (Brett & Specht, 2004).

Honwana talks in her book of less than voluntary recruitment, in which she explains that not all children are forced into soldiering and that many of them do actually choose to fight (Honwana, 2006). Singer in his book says that in a survey of four different countries about 64% of the children volunteered (2006). This however cannot be considered to be volunteering because children are not considered to be capable of making the choice to be involved in armed conflict. The reason why children join would be because of factors beyond their control such as hunger and poverty (Singer, 2006). A human security crisis could as a matter of fact be a push factor for children joining or staying within armed groups.

Brett & Specht discuss the fact that armed groups take advantage of adolescent children who are still in the defining stages of their identity and they present utopia perceptions of being soldiers (2004). This representation of the rebel lifestyle only serves to unduly influence young children who in many cases feel ignored and neglected (Brett & Specht,
Anthony Kellet in his book on combat motivation stipulates that there are three types of motivators for children in war, coercive motivators, remunerative motivators, and normative motivators. To him terror and propaganda make children very impressionable (Kellet, 1982). Once recruited children are given basic infantry skills to become merciless killers mostly under the influence of drugs and alcohol which serves to strengthen their fearlessness and desire for acceptance (Singer, 2006).

1.5.1 Causes for Child Soldiering

There is a wide range of literature that seeks to explain why children are considered to be effective tools of war. These reasons are critical to explaining why children are recruited to war, join or stay within armed factions. The reasons for recruitment can be classified into push and pull factors. Push factors being conditions within society that prompt children to join armed forces such as; poverty, insecurity, broken families and social structures among other factors. Pull factors on the other hand are characteristically those factors that make armed forces attractive to children. These factors could be the hope of survival, a hope for community, a possible place of refuge (Somasundaram, 2002; Francis, 2007).

There are various pull factors that encourage the involvement of children in war and enhance their recruitment. Singer argues that the existence of technological improvements now permit children to be effective and deadly participants in war (Singer, 2006). Different authors link the increase in the use of child soldiers to the affordability and large supply of small and light weapons (Blattman, 2007; Machel, 2001).

Singer attributes recruitment to a change in the nature of armed conflicts in which social traditions that in former times separated the combatants from civilian populations have
been severely weakened and acts of terrorism and fighting between groups seeking for national power have become more common making civilian and child casualties approximately 85% in modern day conflicts (Singer, 2006). Honwana argues that it is the erosion of social norms that has led to the increase in child soldiering (2006). There have been arguments therefore for increased social judgement over their use of child soldiers from the international community and also locally so as to reduce chances of child soldiering (Blattman, 2007; Tadjbakhsh, 2005).

Another reason that would explain child soldiering is the fact that children are immature and they can be easily physically and emotionally intimidated (Singer, 2006). Blattman refers to this as the ‘exploitability of children’, in which he argues that children are more malleable, can easily be deceived and are less likely to question authority (Blattman, 2007). For the children recruited into the LRA it has been found that they have been heavily indoctrinated. Most of these children have been forced to kill their family members, members of their societies and as such are too afraid to go back to those communities. In Dodge’s book Reaching Children in War he states that often children feel guilty (1991). The fear of what might happen to them or even the fear of what may happen to the communities they return to, often can force children to remain within armed groups.

Identity is also a crucial factor explaining why most children choose to continue fighting. Children in their adolescent years seeking for an identity and recognition always obtain these from the ideologies propagated by warring groups and sects and as such these children join believing in the cause (Brett & Specht, 2004; Cohn & Goodwin-Gill, 1994).

Another pull factor to the involvement of children in war is the influence of what Cohn and Goodwin refer to as the ‘child’s social ecology’. The social, community and family
values influence the child’s decision as to whether or not to join participate in hostilities. How a community values the reasons for a conflict in terms of social justice, religion or ethnic purification will play a central role as to whether a child joins an armed group or not (Cohn & Goodwin-Gill G, 1994).

The realities of most conflict torn societies are difficult making survival almost impossible for most children. It is these economic and survival realities that act as push factors to children becoming child soldiers. Economic opportunities available to those joining armed groups through looting and pillage can be a factor. War has often been used as a source of personal enrichment and empowerment, and though this factor cannot be considered on its own it seems clear that when the society and structure of normal life seems to disintegrate in the light of war then poverty pushes children now forced to provide for their survival into soldiering (Francis, 2007). It is also a fact that many of those who become child soldiers are indeed from poor and disadvantaged sectors of society (Brett & Specht, 2004). Hunger, poverty and lack of educational opportunities are motivating factors for children to engage in child soldiering (Honwana, 2006). Children are inexpensive to hire because they fight for basic survival and require little material recompense (Machel, 2001; Honwana, 2006). Faulkner in discussing conditions for child recruitment states in recruiting children, armed groups choose children with little or no education, children from most disadvantaged socio-economic groups, children separated from families, usually in the fog of conflict good examples being orphans, street children, refugees, the internally displaced, and children from disrupted backgrounds (2001).

Some other push factors that cause children to join warring factions are the militarization of daily life, the excess physical and structural violence (Cohn & Goodwin-Gill G, 1994). The environment of war perpetuates the joining of armed factions by children and the
imagined form of power to which they grow accustomed to forces most of them to remain in armed factions (Francis, 2007).

Another significant reason why children either join armed factions or stay within armed factions is because for many becoming a child soldier is a better of the bad alternatives. For refugee children, internally displaced children, and orphans who look to armed groups as their surrogate families life within rebel factions is the best alternative (Cohn & Goodwin-Gill G, 1994).

Finally in explaining the push towards child soldiering Blattman in argues that the relative supply of children is a causal factor for the practice (2007). In many developing states there is a huge youth population with many adults dying as a result of diseases or war (Machel, 2001; Cohn & Goodwin-Gill G, 1994). The resulting impact of this demographic shift is that children are prone to child soldiering.

A different combination of these reasons will explain why children are involved in war. In most instances it is as a result of both push and pull factors that make it almost impossible for the children to resist the opportunity when they are recruited.

1.5.2 Implications of War on Children

War is probably the greatest violator of children’s rights. The use and abuse of children in times of war is not a new phenomenon; however, it is only recently that serious efforts have begun to address and redress that plight (Maslen & Islamshah, 2000). Children who are victims of murder, torture, and detentions are not uncommon; so too is the rape of girls, and displacement of families. Reality of armed conflict is that children are not only on
the receiving end of the horrors of modern warfare; they are also its active instruments. There have been over two million children killed in armed conflicts in the last decade, ten million rendered homeless (Maslen & Islamshah, 2000, p. 28). It is however a fact that for most recruited children, they enjoy greater personal security in within the armed forces as compared to orphans, street children, refugees and displaced civilians (Cohn & Goodwin-Gill G, 1994). A good example of this are children who joined the Ugandan NRA in the mid 1980’s, they had been driven from their homes, lost their families to the rampaging of government troops, most of these children were adopted by the NRA (Singer, 2006). The Commanders of rebel groups are very paternalistic and therefore children tend to feel safer and well catered for. It is therefore true to state that in some cases one of the implications of child soldiering is greater physical security.

A negative impact would be that children are subjected to long term detentions and torture during armed conflict. A child like any adult can be detained for suspicion in rebel activity and in this case children are treated like prisoners of war as has happened in Iran and Ethiopia (Cohn & Goodwin-Gill G, Child Soldiers: The Role of Children in Armed, 1994). Children can be detained and tortured for information and secrets in times of war. It is also true that child soldiers do sustain great physical injuries as a result of the fighting (Singer, 2006).

There are psychosocial consequences of participation by children. The CRC guarantees a child’s protection and care of his/her well being as a duty deposited on the State. However in many cases the State is unable to fulfil this requirement and children go through a lot of mental abuse once they are recruited. Many children have had to kill

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20 See Convention on the Rights of a Child (CRC)
people as part of their initiation to rebel groups; some have gone as far as kill members of their family. As a result of war many children have suffered trauma and many of them have frequent nightmares, disruption of sleep patterns, flashbacks in which the mind replays painful experiences (Wessells, 2004). The ability of children to recover from this psychological trauma then is greatly diminished (Cohn & Goodwin-Gill G, 1994). Many child soldiers have high levels of fear, guilt and fear that their communities and families would reject them. Even though children are able to cope with large amounts of stress, it is at a great psychological cost and since this is not immediately visible then it is often underestimated (Dodge & Raundalen M, 1991).

Child soldiers also lose out on their opportunity to develop which is provided for in the CRC. Due to their involvement in fighting most children lose out on school time and forego educational opportunities entirely (Singer, 2006). Many children return from the bush after succumbing to a drug habit as a result of the large intakes of drugs. They do also have a higher prevalence of Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs), for example in repatriation camps in Uganda 70 to 80% of girl soldiers tested positive for STDs and about 60% of the male child soldiers tested positive for one or more STDs (Singer, 2006).

When girls join the armed forces, they are subject to brutal treatment, they are often forced to become wives of commanders, many are raped and in the process, end up pregnant, give birth in harsh conditions and even face the possibility of being dumped along the way and left to die if they are unable to cope with the armed groups’ conditions. They also risk and many of them contract STDs, HIV/AIDS and do not get treated hence this greatly affects them (Fox, 2004).

Many girl ex-combatants face stigma from society. The commanders they marry in the bush are many times unwilling to release them, tainting their lives forever. For others when
it comes to the end of the conflict, the very men who might have earlier on taken them in as wives may denounce them leaving them with nowhere to go to. Some may even have babies and other children whom they have to raise under harsh circumstances. Some have henceforth resorted to prostitution, or stealing in search for a means of survival after being demobilized from armed forces (Kostelyn, 2004).

The most pervasive effect of child soldiering is the destruction of childhood, which is characterized by the losses a child faces when he or she is thrust into the realm of war. This could be a loss of self, of family, of community, of health, of security, of recreation and the most important of all their future (Schaller, 1995). It follows that the use of children in war breeds the conditions for future wars. A society that mobilizes and trains its young for war weaves violence into the fabric of life, increasing the likelihood that violence will be in its future (Wessells, 1997). Even after a conflict ends the use of child soldiers can haunt societies for generations to come, child fighters suffer the most as a result of the war and they have the least capacity to recover (Singer, 2006). The psychosocial effects of losing their childhood and the impact on communities are immeasurable and the future of the entire society is jeopardized. Children who have fought are victims of stress and other psychological problems and most of these children lack capacity impeding their reintegration back into the communities. Law therefore exists to provide for the protection of these children in instances of war by prohibiting the recruitment of children and by providing for their reintegration upon their demobilization and disarmament.

1.6 Conclusion

As seen in this discussion specific initiatives and developments in international law have addressed a broad range of issues and concerns of human security. There are concerns that
the old frame of international law which gives primacy to state security could impede the protection of human beings. It is however notable that the evolution of the human rights provisions could well strengthen the security of individuals.

The child soldier crisis is a modern political problem which has received global attention due to the increasing numbers of child soldiers. The dwindling security in areas such as Northern Uganda have created enticing environments in which the practice of child soldiering has thrived, the insecurities of the area have been supportive of the rebel routine of abduction of young children.

The humanitarian debates that seek to establish laws and rules of war and conflict and human rights laws that seek to accord protection to every individual cannot be divorced from the political reality and issues. This is very clear in the debate over what to do when it comes to child soldiers, but endless discussions and meetings in the international community have not been able to negate the fact that child soldiers do exist all over the world and in the thousands in Northern Uganda. The question as to their standing in the lens of justice then becomes a critical one, are they innocent victims of a political circumstance who should be protected and forgiven or are they moral agents who should be held liable for their actions (Rosen, 2007)? The failure of the law to properly articulate reintegration is a weakness in the law that needs to be addressed. Legislation provisions that relate to reintegration are weak and thus one must ask whether the law can be effectively used as a standard in dealing with the existence of child soldiers or is it merely articulations of desires by the international community that cannot be enforced in reality. The discussion in this thesis points to intentions of protection as well as reintegration but in dealing with the child soldier problem more than intention is needed, action must be seen and encouraged in enforcing the provisions of law. The provisions of law must have
the ability to enforce the already articulated instruments. To simply rely on human rights, humanitarian law or international criminal law to give effect to human security is inadequate. Human security has the potential to make significant contribution to the framework of international law. This concept can be used to critically scrutinise the developments in the law and to give priority to the protection of the individual.

The choice of the human security framework comes from a need to know whether the activities that the state, international and local organisations are carrying out in Northern Uganda is helping. There is a need to re-evaluate the programmes in place and ensure that they make sense in changing and improving the lives of the people in Uganda. It is not enough to speak of reintegration; one must also be able to make a case for its usefulness. The core objective of the human security paradigm is to prevent conflicts before they break out, managing the human costs effectively when they do, and building mechanisms to avoid their reoccurrence. It is as such inclusive of short term emergency responses and long term preventative strategies (Tadjbakhsh, 2005). Human security therefore provides an effective means of preventing the degradation of people’s well-being and dignity and diminishing the consequences of insecurities be they man made conflicts or natural disasters. Human security recognises the need for short term initiatives but more than that human security recognises the need for long lasting solutions to problems, the need to invest into programmes that will shape the eventualities of different communities so that they do not end up in a vicious circle of war and peace. This is helpful because reintegration is a long term process and cannot be contained in a limited time frame.

It is for this reason that the Human Security framework must not be given a narrow definition but remain flexible enough to develop our understanding of insecurities. Focussing on one harm will do very little to protect the millions who will die in one year of
non violent preventable security threats. This is clearly the case in Northern Uganda where it is recorded that the leading cause of death is disease and without addressing issues of health, poverty and food security, personal and community security one will not have even made a dent in tackling the problems of formerly abducted children being reintegrated in the region. The communities to which these children are being reintegrated back into must be stable and must at a minimum be able to support these individuals.

As Human Security is a public good and as such touches on issues that concern the capacity of states to act and the legitimacy and effectiveness of interventions sponsored by international institutions and nongovernmental organisations (Tadjbakhsh, 2005). Human security enables us as researchers to critically assess the services being provided to formerly abducted children in the DDR frame and it enables policy makers to match programmes to needs to ensure that the programmes proposed are what is needed by the community. These will involve information from the grassroots of what is needed as opposed to pre-defined programmes in the West that could have little significance in Africa.

Human security in this research will place emphasis on humanitarian values and ideals making an argument for the socio-economic security of people which will not seek to replace the task of the state in protecting its citizenry from external aggression but will place these components of security at par with the political security and sovereignty of states. It will therefore also include safety from chronic threats such as hunger and disease (UNHCR, 1997). Human security holds that the state cannot be secure for long without its citizens having a degree of security in their recourse to food, shelter and warmth; health, education and employment (UNESCO, 2008). Any State in which the people’s basic needs are not satisfied, human and social un-development or underdevelopment is very likely to result (Booth, 1998). Even in the conception of human security the reality is that it cannot
be used to address every threat to every individual and in this case to every formerly abducted child, but it is capable of protecting communities from the most serious harms that threaten their purpose and their course of living. If these harms are adequately addressed by these programmes that deal with formerly abducted children then we will be able to speak of successful reintegration and if not then such reintegration can only be deemed as futile.
CHAPTER TWO

THE POLITICAL CONTEXT OF THE CIVIL CONFLICT IN UGANDA

2.1 Introduction

The central quest of this thesis is to analyse reintegration programmes administered to formerly abducted children and the impact that these programmes have on the larger community. Although this is the focus of this thesis, it is important that analysis made of the reintegration process is done with an understanding of the Ugandan political dynamics. It is on this basis that this chapter gives background information and trends that explain Uganda’s history and the civil conflict that has plagued Northern Uganda for over two decades. These discussions will then inform judgement of whether the peace sought for in Northern Uganda is sustainable. It is imperative that as we analyse the reintegration component of post conflict reconstruction that we engage with the root causes of the war in the region. It logically follows that if the reasons for the war have not been addressed then it is counterproductive to talk of sustainable peace and effective reintegration because the reasons for the war will still exist and can or will eventually lead to another insurgency.

Furley & Roy in discussing the security environment of Africa provides that most African states are located between the endpoints of a peace/war continuum (Furley & Roy, 2006). They further note that peace in the African context does not automatically imply an absence of violence and he refers to this form of peace as ‘negative peace’ which he argues is unsustainable and is the condition of most African states (Furley & Roy, 2006). Northern Uganda has been relatively calm in the recent times with reducing violent attacks
from the Lord’s Resistance Army (LRA) following the agreement for the cessation of hostilities, in 2006, to allow for peace talks in Juba. With this cessation agreement there are those who now argue that the conflict in the North has ended and base this on the fact that populations settled in IDP camps are beginning to go home (International Rescue Committee, 2006). In Lira for instance about 70% of the people have returned to their ancestral villages and began to rebuild their homes (International Rescue Committee, 2006). In the past year attempts to come to a peace agreement have failed with Joseph Kony finally refusing to sign the Peace Agreement on the 14th of December 2008 after the UPDF attacked an LRA base in Garamba. Despite the positive attempts and development geared to establishing normalcy in the North, the failed peace agreement is a reason of concern of many Northerners who live in considerable fear of LRA attacks. Such a situation is characteristic of what would be referred to as negative peace (Furley & Roy, 2006). Galtung defines negative peace as the absence of violence, especially after a ceasefire is enacted (Galtung, 1996). It is peaceful as there is absence of violence but there has been no resolve to the issues that fuelled the conflict in the first place (Galtung, 1996). Of such a situation Keen comments ‘whose peace are we talking about? Peace on what terms? Peace in whose interest? And peace negotiated by which individuals or groups? In one sense, everybody wants peace; it is just that they want their own version of peace’ (Keen, 2001, p. 18). This logically supports the argument that unless the root causes of violence are addressed and the inequalities dealt with then talks about peace are elusive and what everyone seems to brand as peace, will in reality only be negative peace on the basis of which a society such as Northern Uganda can revert back to war.

It is for this purpose that this chapter seeks to provide essential background upon which arguments, assessment and analysis on the process of reintegration can be made. As such, this chapter will provide an overview of the political history of Uganda and a discussion
over the difficulties and challenges of Uganda’s state formation. This chapter will then engage with the current rebel insurgency in the Northern region by the Lord’s Resistance Army (LRA) led by Joseph Kony. This section will offer a detailed discussion of the factors that have been attributed to as causes of the LRA war and consequently the human insecurities that plague Northern Uganda to demonstrate the extreme harshness of life the Northern communities. Importantly, this chapter will engage with Kony’s ideology for this protracted war against the Ugandan government. The LRA war has often been dismissed as the workings of a mad man but as the details of this chapter will unravel, it is a possibility that the war could be following the dictates of a particular political ideology. This chapter will also address the question of whether this war can be won militarily. This analysis will detail the various attempts made by the current government to stop the LRA and why these attempts have been largely ineffective. This part will also discuss the peace negotiations that have been encouraged so as to end the war and the reasons why these have also not been very successful. This chapter will finally discuss why the LRA have remained undefeated in these past decades, is it a question of their military superiority or is it an issue of intent on the part of the ruling government. All these sub-issues will create a context in which the reintegration of formerly abducted children can be understood. More specifically the question of their restoration back into the community cannot be answered devoid of the historical landscape that created the environment in which they were not only abducted but were also forced to serve as child combatants.

2.2 An Overview of Uganda’s Political History

Uganda was a creation of the British Imperialists in the 19th Century and was declared a protectorate in 1894 (Karugire, 1980). Uganda had been one of the more peaceful British territories and this was because it was a protectorate and not a colony and most of the land was still in the hands of the Africans (Dowden, 2008). Very few settlers were allowed to
live in Uganda and this would explain why unlike other African countries that had to fight for their independence, Uganda’s liberty came as a result of peaceful negotiations with the British (1987). The irony of this has however been that Uganda has experienced more bloodshed, social upheaval and economic desperation in comparison to other countries in Sub-Saharan Africa (Dodge, 1987).

Despite Uganda’s route to independence the politics were not different from those in any other post colonial African state. At the end of the 19th Century the British had made the Buganda, a centralized kingdom, the core community of the larger state of Uganda (Dowden, 2008). They then extended the protectorate to the North, West, and East to include other tribes such as the Karamajong, the Acholi, and different tribes of the West Nile. Each of the different Ugandan communities was defined by a different and distinct language and as such the differences and barriers between the Ugandan people was not only cultural but was also linguistic (Karugire, 1980). Mamdani identifies two forms of colonial states, characterised by either direct or indirect rule. Direct rule found its basis on racial political identities, where the white ruling elite were superior to their black African subjects (Mamdani, 2002). This form of rule was however not very popular with the British colonialists, who preferred the indirect rule mode of leadership. The British system of indirect rule designated the local elders and chiefs to carry out their orders but left the implementation of those orders to the traditional local systems. This rule ‘tended to mitigate the settler and native dialectic by fracturing the race consciousness of natives into multiple and separate ethnic consciousness’ (Mamdani, 2002, p. 23). The political identities based on the linguistic disposition therefore formed the ethnic identities by which African states have been defined and divided. In Uganda the British selected the Baganda as the most advanced tribe and therefore used them and their structures to rule the rest of
Uganda (Dowden, 2008). This created problems for the future since most of these tribes were so distinctively different from the Buganda (Dowden, 2008).

The British implemented the ‘divide and rule’ policy that split Uganda into functional regions for maximum effective control (Refugee Law Project, 2004). The British characterised and reinforced images relative to the usefulness and competencies of people in different regions leading to ethnic base stereo-types which continue to define Uganda today. The southerners were regarded as better administrators and leaders while the Northern tribes such as the Acholi were seen to be more militaristic. By politicising indigeneity, the colonial state set into motion the polarisation of different identities in how they related to each other (Mamdani, 2002). This would then define the path of ethnic violence that has defined most African states and in this case the Ugandan state. It is important to note that while the British colonialists exacerbated the prejudices and rivalries on the basis of ethnic identity, they did not initiate these differences, most of these differences existed before colonialism (Refugee Law Project, 2004). The British therefore only adopted a policy of ‘divide and rule ‘to exploit the existing ethnic tensions, but the fact that these tensions existed was vital to ensuring the success of the policy in Uganda (Refugee Law Project, 2004). It is on the basis of this background that leadership, politics and rule has been defined. It is evident that political leadership that had its basis on a foundation of ethnic identity, was not only a contingency resulting out of colonialism but it was also an issue of choice. Whereas the ruling colonialists exacerbated the differences between ethnic groups with their divide and rule policy, the Africans did still have these distinctions between themselves. State consolidation on foundations of ethnic lines was therefore an issue of both contingency and choice.
A critical point to note was that whereas the British had placed the Buganda tribe at the core of Uganda’s political administration, this tribe did not have the demographic might to win a democratic election (Dowden, 2008). The Buganda were also keener on their own kingdom than they were on Ugandan nationalism. In 1962 the British granted the Ugandans independence and attempted to leave behind a Westminster model of democracy which would constitute a President and a Prime Minister (Dowden, 2008). The President was to serve a ceremonial role and the prime minister was to be elected. Sir Edward Mutesa, the king of Buganda therefore became the first president of Uganda, and following an election Milton Obote became his Prime Minister (Mazrui, 1975). Dodge in his book on War, Violence and Children in Uganda, argues that the British Government did intended to lead Uganda through gradual stages to their independence and they did this by developing stable institutions of government that would meet the needs of the local people (Dodge, 1987). Dowden argues that this first election by the Ugandan people for the Prime Minister had however split the country along ethnic and religious lines (Dowden, 2008).

Four years after independence, in 1966, Milton Obote overthrew the Kabaka and disregarding the constitution declared himself the president (Mazrui, 1975). In overthrowing the Kabaka, Obote had used the army, involving the soldiers in politics. Idi Amin, who then served as his army chief had led the attack on the king’s palace (Dowden, 2008). With time Obote became aware of the fact that the army and in particular Amin were a threat, and he tried to get rid of Amin (Dowden, 2008). He was unsuccessful and in 1971 Colonel Idi Amin who had assisted President Obote in overthrowing the Kabaka deposed him of the presidency (Mazrui, 1975). It has been assumed that the British did have a hand in this coup (Dowden, 2008). This was because Obote had adopted a socialist agenda and had threatened to nationalise the British interests in Uganda. Obote had also
been out rightly critical of the British support to the Apartheid regime in South Africa.
With his ascension to power Amin reversed Obote’s socialist policies, securing the British interest. The financial times and the daily telegraph deemed him as the ‘man of the week’ and the ‘staunch friend of Britain’. Many Ugandans and especially the Baganda did welcomed the leadership of Amin and saw him as a liberator. It was a year into his rule that the Idi Amin leadership begun to mire itself with scaled up violence, total dictatorship, massive killings and torture (Mazrui, 1975). Amnesty International in 1977 estimated that 300,000 people may have died under the rule of President Amin (Nations Encyclopedia, 2009). In 1978 Amin got into a disagreement with the then sitting president of Tanzania, Mwalimu Julius Nyerere when in an attempt to retaliate against a rebellion against him his violent actions spilled over to the border town of Tanzania (Mutibwa, 1992). Julius Nyerere then authorized an invasion of Uganda and against Idi Amin by the combined forces of the Tanzanian troops and Ugandan exiles in his country (Mutibwa, 1992). In 1979 Amin was overthrown and went into exile in Saudi Arabia. General elections were held in December 1980 in which Obote’s Uganda People’s Congress [UPC] emerged victorious. However, the results of the elections were contested and this resulted in Museveni guerrilla movement the following year -1981 (Mutibwa, 1992). This action was however sparked fresh rounds of hostilities from various quaters and especially from a guerrilla group led by Yoweri Museveni. Museveni’s NRA had gathered strong support from the local population of the Luwero triangle (this area situated between three lakes: Victoria, Albert and Kyoga) (Mutibwa, 1992). The Uganda National Liberation Army (UNLA) of Obote’s regime frustrated by their failure to stop the NRA retaliated with violence against the civilians, who were mostly the Baganda and the Banayarwanda (Doom & Vlassenroot, 1999). Obote authorised a military ‘operation bonanza’ in 1983 which left about 300,000 people dead at the Luwero triangle (Ofcansky, 1996). In 1985 Obote was deposed of power by Tito Okello who then initiated peace negotiations with Museveni.
Though by all indications the peace negotiations had all gone well, the actions of 1986 proved that Museveni had been less committed to these talks and had only been buying time at the end of which he staged a coup overthrowing Okello and taking power (Doom & Vlassenroot, 1999). Museveni has been in power, ruling Uganda since 1986 when he overthrew Okello in a coup through the NRA.

The Ugandan ethnic groups have throughout history been excessively politicized and militarised (Branch, 2005). During the British colonial period the Buganda who were resident in the South were rewarded generously for their cooperation with the British (Refugee Law Project, 2004). This meant that they had access to more capital, had better infrastructure and social amenities. Communities in the North were however not as fortunate and did not benefit from the same socio-economic benefits as their country men in the south of Uganda. Different regimes of power have therefore tended to favour their own people, and demonized other communities. This trend is not only a product of choice but a sign of a contingent colonised past. It was on the basis of this that the NRA under the leadership of Museveni rallied its support ensuring that there was unswerving resentment of the Northern population by the southerners. This was a classic example of the political manipulation of the NRA ruling elites. After the NRA coup of the capital, Kampala, many of the UNLA (Okello’s) troops begun to flee North in fear of retribution from the Museveni regime (Weekly Focus, 1986). It is important to note that at this time the UNLA soldiers lacked political legitimacy with their own Acholi people because of their cruel actions during the Okello’s reign (Weekly Focus, 1986). The NRA however completely ignorant of how ostracized the UNLA was in these local Northern communities, proceeded on the mindset and assumption that these troops were popular and on the basis of this they attacked the North (Branch, 2005). Following these actions many of the UNLA commanders then fled into the Sudan for refuge (Branch, 2005).
Following this action the NRA had destroyed what they saw as a source of political leadership and this action they interpreted would be fundamental in ensuring that the Acholi were devoid of any political leadership, limiting their participation in the political and military life of the national government (Branch, 2005).

The NRA took charge of the Northern region to ensure that they dealt with instances of rebellion or the emergence of UNLA soldiers, their control was characterised with inhumane acts to the local populations, looting and cattle raiding (Branch, 2005). There was growing resentment of the imposition of the NRA and the Acholi became desperate for a leadership that could end their violence. It was in this period that about three to four thousand UNLA troops returned back to Northern Uganda and launched attacks on the NRA (Behrend, 1999). Though unpopular in the beginning the locals were desperate for liberation from the mistreatment by the NRA that they were tolerant and receptive of the former UNLA soldiers who had now transformed and renamed themselves the Uganda’s People Democratic Army (UPDA) (Behrend, 1999). The UPDA called for the security of the North and the end of the imposed dictatorship (Weekly Topic, 1987). The UPDA worked at ensuring their local support but in later times they did also punish members of the community who were seen to be conspiring with the NRA (Branch, 2005). This situation presented an interesting paradox that left the local population in the middle as proxies who were used and punished for their role as supporters and informants of the different parties to the conflict (Branch, 2005).

After the takeover by the NRA, the Acholi leadership failed in reconstituting the moral order and the traditions of the Acholi people (Behrend, 1999). The community was characterised by social breakdown and general distrust. The UPDA consequently had failed to fight for the people and if anything their actions had resulted in further marginalising the
local population. It was in this environment that Alice Lakwena emerged with claims that she had been instructed to start the Holy Spirit Movement which would wage war against the evil forces that had taken over the land (Behrend, 1999). Alice Lakwena’s Holy Spirit Movement was the outcome of elements of missionary Christian teaching mixed with indigenous cosmology (Behrend, 1999). Alice Lakwena saw it as a duty to fight and so she mobilised, reintegrated and rehabilitated the dissident UNLA forces of Tito Okello that were now resident in the North (Behrend, 1999). The role of Alice Lakwena therefore became to mediate and dialogue between the spirits and her movement (Van Acker, 2004). The Holy Spirit Movement with time grew in numbers and strength and was able to cross the ethnic boundaries in the North but was unable to penetrate the South of Uganda (Van Acker, 2004). The movement consisted of different members from all constituents of the community, from children to the elderly individuals (Van Acker, 2004). The Holy Spirit Movement experienced massive support from a significant portion of the population (Behrend, 1999). This movement was defeated when the Holy Spirit Forces under the unfortunate directive of Alice Lakwena killed some members of a local militia force in the Teso region, fuelling very hostile dynamics between the Holy Spirit Forces and the resident militia force resulting into a conflict that saw to the demise of the Holy Spirit Movement (Van Acker, 2004).

The origin of the LRA must be understood in the context of the emergence and later collapse of the Holy Spirit Movement (Van Acker, 2004). It was in this environment, after the defeat of the Holy Spirit Movement, that Joseph Kony, a former UPDA spiritual mobilizer emerged (Van Acker, 2004). Kony spoke about and introduced completely new and different spirits from those that had guided Alice Lakwena, on the basis of which introduction he claimed his supremacy (Van Acker, 2004). In 1988 the NRA government signed a peace accord with the UPDA, the UPDA commanders however were reluctant in
accepting the terms of this accord and opted to join Kony’s cause serving as some of his senior brigade commanders (Van Acker, 2004). Waves of violence swept through Acholi-land from 1988 until 1991 and the rebel faction used violence to gain support and recruits. Kony undertook mass abductions of children and the population remained unprotected and afraid to report rebel activity to the NRA, a force that had also victimised the local populations (Branch, 2005).

The conflict was prominent in the Acholi inhabited areas of Gulu, Pader, and Kitgum. It is estimated that about 12,000 people have been killed as a result of this conflict, and many more dying as a result of disease and malnutrition (Russia Today, 2009).

Figure 1 - Map of LRA affected areas

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21 Examples of this are Tabuley and Vincent Otti.
In most post colonial African states, the African leader is faced with the unique dilemma on how to rule groups of people that are inherently different. To properly engage with the current crisis of Northern Uganda this understanding of colonial heritage is imperative, because out of contingency the past continues to intrude into the post-independence African relations (Young, 1995). Like most African states the consolidation of the State in Uganda still remains an issue (Herbst, 2000). A fundamental characteristic of any state is its ability to control the territory defined by its borders, to be able to assert its power and gain the loyalty of its citizens. The Ugandan central government has failed to exercise its control over what is now referred to as post colonial Uganda (Herbst, 2000). It is this failure to legitimately control the activities within its borders that has resulted into a history of violence and civil war. The political outcomes in Uganda’s history have been the result of human agency interacting with powerful geographical and historic forces (Herbst, 2000). It is these historical and geographical dynamics that explain the origins, causes and actions of the rebel factions that have characterised Uganda’s history and more specific to this thesis those of the LRA.

2.3 Causes of the LRA Civil War

The LRA war has often been dismissed as a war without cause and as the actions of a lunatic. However from studying the LRA history and origins, it is clear that one cannot be so simplistic as to dismiss this war as a war without intention. It is important to note that the social order inherited by the Museveni government was ailing with numerous issues and it is these issues that have over the years grown into the root causes for the continued mutiny in Uganda (Van Acker, 2004). These causes are clear in the wars and revolts by the UPDA, the creation and massive following of the Holy Spirit Movement and in the initial actions of the LRA which consistently claimed to be fighting for the emancipation of the Acholi people. Various reasons have been cited to be contributing factors to civil war in
Uganda. These factors apply to the LRA war but are not limited to only that war but can also be relevant explanations for the constant upheavals that have marked Uganda.

**The North-South Divide:** In explaining the causes of the LRA war, the social and economic marginalisation of the Northern population has often been named as a fundamental reason (Refugee Law Project, 2004). The gap between the North and South of Uganda emanated from a colonial history in which the British introduced the cash crop production to the south and they made the North a reservoir of cheap labour that would be employed by the south (Doom & Vlassenroot, 1999). The North also became the recruitment pool for the armed forces and civil employment became the domain of the southerners (Doom & Vlassenroot, 1999). Ali Mazrui in discussing the Acholi history states that this ethnic grouping far from being born warriors was also transformed to a military ethnocracy (1975). The British socio-economic structures inherited by independent Uganda further worked to divide the north and south and consequently led to the extreme marginalisation of the north and the positive development of the South (Doom & Vlassenroot, 1999). Young argues that the pathologies of modern African states can be traced to the particularities of their colonial history (Young, 1988). He continues to argue that there is a need to review the complex phenomenon of colonial rule so as to properly understand the crisis’ that have defined African states (Young, 1988).

The Acholi people have consistently claimed that the Government lacks dedication in developing the North (Van Acker, 2004). Some have gone as far as accusing the present government of deliberately under-developing the North by targeting some of the primary production factors such as land, labour and capital (Van Acker, 2004). While extravagant development aid has continued to flow into Uganda, it is significant that this aid has not benefitted the northern communities that have remained marginalised both because of the
war and as a result of the historical grievances that have made the war an excuse for the continued isolation (Neu, 2005).

With the prevailing hostilities in the North, the Government in 1996 issued a decree that saw the local populations moving from their ancestral homes into the so-called ‘protected camps’ so as to ensure their protection from the rebels (Branch, 2005). This action has been disadvantageous to the subsistence of the people because it gave them very little freedom and access to farming land (Van Acker, 2004). The Diaspora Acholi have argued that this policy of protected villages has reduced self-sufficient farmers into destitute aid dependants (Van Acker, 2004). There is also mistrust over the government’s intention with the land. Many of the Acholi fear that with the current Land Act there could be an encroachment by outsiders on land that is owned by them through a communal system (Van Acker, 2004).

**The Militarisation of Politics:** For years tracing back to colonialism the Northern region has served as a reservoir for cheap labour from which the British recruited their soldiers. This structure remained intact even in the post-colonial period. With every regime change there was a tendency to replace the old soldiers with a new group loyal to the government of the day. This therefore meant that there was a huge stock of former UNLA soldiers who had served with the previous regime of Tito Okello left despondent on Museveni’s rise to power. It is such elements that then act as catalysts to the rebellions and provide a fertile ground for rebel recruitment (Van Acker, 2004). This could explain the formation of the Holy Spirit Movement and was also true of the LRA. Most of these soldiers were well trained, equipped and had served under previous regimes. It is their unrest, dissatisfaction and idleness that has fed into most of these rebel groups in the North. The problem of state failure, where leaders fail to govern their core areas is becoming more apparent as the
post-colonial African states continue to develop. In the case of Uganda the vicious cycle of coups is an indicator of the inability of the state to consolidate itself under one rule. The excessive formation of rebel groups in Uganda such as the LRA is indicative of the inability of the state to exercise control in the confines of its borders (Herbst, 2000).

**Leadership Vacuum:** After the 1986 takeover by the Museveni regime and the expulsion of the UNLA soldiers into the Sudan, there was an obvious leadership vacuum in the Acholi community (Van Acker, 2004). The Acholi political, traditional and military leaders had failed over the years to adequately ensure the interests of the local Acholi. It was this vacuum therefore that gave rise to the leadership of youthful individuals such as Alice Lakwena and Joseph Kony (Van Acker, 2004). The two offered attractive holistic solutions to the problems of their people on the basis of the Acholi culture and traditions and in so doing earned the support of the local people (Van Acker, 2004).

**The Regional Factor:** In explaining the causes of the LRA conflict one of the most cited cause has been the proximity of Sudan to Northern Uganda. Sudan has over the years had its own share of conflict and for years had no central government with effective control of the southern area. This therefore meant that there was an easier proliferation of arms through the Sudanese and Uganda border. (Lajour Consultancy, 2003) There has also been proliferation of small arms from neighbouring Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) (Lajour Consultancy, 2003). The open support of the LRA by the Sudanese government, in terms of logistical support and weapons, effectively making them a crucial force in the destabilisation of Uganda and of the SPLA, a force that was openly supported by the Museveni regime, has been a causal factor to the conflict (Van Acker, 2004). This conflict has over time become embedded in regional dynamics and as a consequence has grown to be even more dangerous.
2.3 The Human Security Reality of Northern Uganda

The Acholi region continues to lag behind when it comes to the basic human development indicators, with the poverty line in the North increasing in contrast to other parts of the country (Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development, 2003). Northern Uganda is a haven of grave human insecurities. To be able to effectively understand the causes of the armed struggles in the North and the marginalisation of the region it is imperative that this chapter spell out the various human insecurities that have plagued the Northern Uganda.

Uganda is ranked number 144 out of 177 countries on its human development indicators according to the UNDP’s 2005 Human Development Report. The country’s population was at 28.3 million people in 2008 (Uganda Population Secretariat, 2008), with an estimated life expectancy of 47.2 years, and depends on an external budget to fund at least half of its national budget (UNDP, 2005). About 38.8% of its population lives below the poverty line, and at least 63% of these people live in the Northern region (UNDP, 2005). This would then mean that a lot of the people living in the North are unemployed and poor, unable to sustain themselves. Gulu District for example suffers from low productivity, low levels of business and investment; low sanitation living in the IDP camps; and gender disparities in terms of access to education, resources, and in development activities (Baines, Stover, & Wierda, 2006).

During the war about 1.8 million people were displaced from their original homes and now live in Internally Displaced Peoples (IDP) camps. Displacement is a crucial indicator of human insecurity and is also related to other aspects of human security such as the protection of civilians in armed conflict, war-affected children and the observance of
internal humanitarian law and human rights (Von Tigerstorm, 2007). IDPs are described as the largest at risk population in the world (Cohen & Deng, 1998). Since these communities and individuals have not left their state of origin they are not regarded as refugees. This has therefore meant that in order to assist these populations there was need for organisations and agents of the international community to intervene in the affairs of a sovereign state. Northern Uganda faces harsh realities of abject poverty with more than 80% of the Acholi community displaced (IRIN, 2004). The quality of life in these camps is severe and is characterised by water shortages and grave sanitation problems making the residents of these camps more prone to epidemics.

The health services in the Northern Uganda are poor and in particular in the IDP camps. According to the UN OCHA (2006), 41% of all the deaths in the camps in Northern Uganda were amongst children under the age of five who have died of preventable diseases (World Health Organisation, 2006). Mortality in the conflict area is much higher than the rest of Uganda. The primary causes of death among children and adults were, in order of importance, malaria/fever, HIV/AIDS and violence (Ministry of Health, 2005). The HIV prevalence in this area was considerably higher than the rate in the neighbouring ‘non-conflict’ districts. The IDP camps are characterized by poor sanitation and over congestion exposing the local populations to diseases and infections. In Gulu for instance the Gulu District organisation and the World Food Programme in 2005 estimated that 43% of the health facilities were non functional and those that were functional were inadequately equipped and unable to effectively meet the medical needs of the sick (World Vision, 2006). The 2005 Mortality Survey carried out in Gulu, Kitgum and Pader districts in July 2005 estimated an ‘under 5 mortality rates at 1.54/10,000/day and 3.18/10,000/day respectively, well in excess of the emergency threshold of 1/10,000/day’ (Ministry of Health, 2005). Survey findings also indicated that the leading causes of mortality were
malaria, diarrhea, violence and HIV/AIDS. Malnutrition, HIV/AIDS and limited access to quality health services compound the problem (OCHA, 2006). Children in these environments face the grave realities of illness that are a result of their living environment.

The much needed psychosocial support to a victimised group of children and to the community at large is also rare because of the scarcity of resources. Most of these children have witnessed parents, relatives, friends and their environment destroyed around them (Onyango, 1998). Other children have behavioural disorders and become fearful, extremely restless or aggressive (Geltman & Stover, 1998; Save the Children, 1996). Others feel confused and or hopeless and lethargic (Boyden & Gibbs, 1997). An environment of fear ensues in which the children are in constant apprehension fearing for their existence.

A common practice during intrastate conflict is government soldiers or rebel troops systematically raping girls. In military camps girls are often compelled to provide ongoing sexual favours to soldiers in return for food and or to ensure a degree of physical protection (Butler, 1998; Machel, 2001). As a result of these sexual practices, the transmission of STD’s including the HIV virus has become more widespread throughout Africa (Machel, 1996). This practice has been very common in northern Uganda.

Northern Uganda is also characterized by shortages in food supply. In the face of this humanitarian crisis those placed in IDP camps have been the recipients of food aid for their survival. The lack of enough food and poor diet has led to rampant malnutrition. By 2002, the number of stunted children in the North had risen up to 50% (World Vision, 2006). In a Survey carried out by the International Centre for Transitional Justice and Human Centre of the University of California, respondents were asked to state their most immediate need and concern, for many of these respondents their greatest need was the
need for food, the unavailability of food supply was a concern to most of the people in Northern Uganda (International Center for Transitional Justice, 2007). The state of transport networks are often rendered inaccessible in war and this in turn affects food availability. Food supplies become scarcer and prices inevitably rise.

Though the North has become relatively safe with the decline of rebel activities, without the signed peace agreement and the formal cessation of the conflict the security situation still remains unstable. There are real fears that the LRA rebels will continue to commit human rights abuses and atrocities against the population, abducting children and women, looting, brutally maiming and killing civilians. Humanitarian aid workers cautiously moved around the town centres of the North but are at many times unable to penetrate and help people outside the UPDF protected camps. Most organisations working in the North of Uganda relied on the military for constant protection as they deliver aid to the people of Northern Uganda. Movement restrictions remained in place for displaced populations, thus limiting their movements outside the camps to a few hours a day. In general, IDPs who in many instances lived in fear find themselves bound to earlier government restrictions and only move out of the protected camps between nine in the morning and five o’clock in the evening and within a radius of 2-5km out of camps. Access to farmland, firewood collection, hunting and other livelihood activities carried out in the bush are mostly affected (OCHA, 2006).

The education of the young has also been greatly inhibited by the intrastate conflict (Onyango, 1998). The child’s right to education is greatly undermined and the state is unable to restore many of the institutions that facilitated the same and were destroyed as a result of the war, leaving many unskilled and uneducated and this then becomes a grave security concern. With the warring states pre-eminent focus on defence expenditure
resources are diverted away from education which could be a useful tool in sustaining the desired peace.

Due to the LRA crisis in Northern Uganda there is a general feeling of insecurity among the IDP camp population and this poses a serious human rights issue and will have long term consequences on children who are separated from their families daily. The number of children for example that had to commute to town centres for their protection serves as an indicator of the severity of the conflict (Rose & Sattarzadeh, 2005). In a survey by the International Centre for Transitional Justice and Human Centre, most of the respondents were very concerned about the insecurity in the region and their second most immediate need was achieving sustainable peace in the region (International Center for Transitional Justice, 2007).

There is then the question of amnesty that is granted to all ex-combatants. The ideal situation stipulates that all returnees should be accorded amnesty packs to be able to assist them adapt back to normal life. The practice however is distinctively different with most of them not having access to or receiving any form of amnesty once they have given up arms. This situation then forces these individuals to come up with aggressive ways of ensuring their survival.

There is a concern when rehabilitation and development are being administered in the scenario discussed. Development in an environment that can only absorb relief aid is a critical factor to consider when discussing the internal dynamics that sustain the conflict (Van Acker, 2004). Human security concerns need to be addressed so as to enable an environment in which the economy is recapitalised and to ensure the positive growth of the society (Van Acker, 2004).
2.4 Kony’s Ideology or Lack of It

Often analysis made of the LRA war has been summarised as the handiwork of a religious fanatic, a crazy man (Van Acker, 2004). It is believed that Kony does not operate in his own capacity but as a messenger of the spirits (Lubega, 2002). His vision and actions should not be confused with Christian values and teaching even though he claims to be restoring the Acholi community back to the Ten Commandments order. His belief stems from an Acholi traditional practice which is believed in the times of crisis to cure the disturbed moral order (Van Acker, 2004). One would wonder if then if the LRA is merely a guerrilla outfit or does it present any political logic.

This war has been termed by most as fanatical, and for some like Finnstrom the war has been seen as ‘bizarre’ (Finnstrom, 2008). This view has been supported by many academics and Kony has often been viewed as an insane and violent individual (Branch, 2005). Gersony has categorically argued that the LRA struggle was devoid of political content and that their indiscriminate actions to the local populations are proof of that fact (Gersony, 1997).

Gerard Prunier has argued that this war is simply a proxy war between the Sudan and Uganda (Prunier, 2004). To him the LRA has no clear political mandate and is simply a tool used by others to achieve their objectives, this he argues would be why the LRA has no desire to mobilize local support (Branch, 2005). Though this makes logical sense the fact that the Sudanese have ended their support for the LRA and this has not dwindled their strength casts doubt to whether this is a true assessment of the LRA.
Doom and Vlassenroot have argued that there is a political rationale in the activities of the LRA (1999). They argue that Kony only began attacking his own people when he felt that his own people did not support him (Doom & Vlassenroot, 1999). They argue that in the initial stages of the LRA, the movement did have a clear political message which faded when the war became an end to itself as opposed to being a means to achieving particular articulated ends (Doom & Vlassenroot, 1999). They however argue that even in the madness of Kony’s actions there is a trace of political rationale (Doom & Vlassenroot, 1999). The authors explain that traumatisation of the population serves to paralyze the population and to undermine their confidence in the government’s capacity and will to protect its own people (Doom & Vlassenroot, 1999). They further argue that it is the random nature of these violent acts that is used to realise certain political effects. Though the LRA actions were random in some instances, in most cases the actions were targeted at particular individuals who were seen as collaborators with the Museveni government (Doom & Vlassenroot, 1999). The Refugee Law Project argues that the LRA might have a political agenda and the problem is in effectively articulating it (Refugee Law Project, 2004). They explain that this could be because of Kony’s inability to articulate his political objective or the fact that the LRA which has survived through looting and abductions has not needed to articulate any political goals (Refugee Law Project, 2004).

Finnstrom has argued that the LRA does have a political agenda evident in their manifests, which have been mostly dismissed as the work of the Acholi in the Diaspora who have manipulated the LRA war (2008). In defending his position he argues that these manifests have been read to the camps by the LRA forces who have acted in ownership of the content of these documents (Finnstrom, 2008). The manifests have consistently demanded for an end to the war through negotiations, political integration of the Acholi, free elections and multipartyism (Finnstrom, 2008). This claim can be supported by the fact
that the LRA did encourage the local population to vote for Ssemogerere in 1996 and called for a cease fire during the election period. The LRA does see itself as a force fighting for the people; this has also been evidenced by their demands during the peace negotiations in Juba (Puijenbroek & Plooijer, 2009).

The ICG has argued that though the LRA might have a political agenda this is rendered invalid by the LRAs constant abuse of human rights as far as the local population is concerned (International Crisis Group, 2004). Branch however makes a counterargument that though the LRA continues to use violence to justify its means one cannot disqualify the validity of their political agenda on the basis of their use of violence (2005).

There have been arguments that Kony’s activities amounts to religious terrorism clear from the actions of the LRA in rejecting the rules of the society (Van Acker, 2004). The LRA can be seen as religious terrorists in their use of violence as tool for the attainment of their goals (Van Acker, 2004).

In evaluating the political motivations of the LRA it is possible to conclude that the use of violence by the LRA is not merely the workings of a mad man but it is a mechanism, politically structured to ensure certain objectives are met. Though the political agenda of the LRA may not be obvious because of the continuous threat on local populations, there is a general concern that if the root causes of the war are not dealt with then this agenda could become clearer and even more relevant in future insurgencies (Branch, 2005).

2.5 Can the LRA War Be Won Militarily?

Different efforts have been advanced to ending the operations of the LRA in Northern Uganda. President Museveni has been a strong advocate for military solution as is clearly
evidenced from the different offensives he has launched against the LRA in the North. Most of the early years were marked with attacks between the government forces and the LRA. In the end of 1989 there was considerable calm in the Northern region. Betty Bigombe then a minister in Uganda’s government declared that the war was over (New Vision, 1989). This announcement was premature, because in mid 1990 there was a huge upsurge of violence and the government faced criticism for making a hasty declaration (Branch, 2005). There was as a result of this upsurge vigorous house searches and interrogations in a quest to find the LRA rebels. This was what was referred to as ‘Operation North’ (Branch, 2005). The NRA ended all road transport across the Nile, and cut all communications with the North and imposed a media blackout, seizing all radio stations in the region (New Vision, 1991). Anyone who spoke against the operation was regarded a collaborator and was punished for it. The Government dispelled claims that there were any abuses and politically motivated arrests in the North (New Vision, 1991). In Museveni’s book, he stipulates that, ‘security is each person’s right and everyone is free to live wherever they may wish to live without fear’ (2000). His actions in the North however have been contrary to this claim, leaving the people in the North vulnerable and afraid.

Bigombe then spearheaded the most significant aspect of this operation which was the formation of militia groups known as ‘Arrow Groups’ which would assist the NRA to fight the rebels. Thousands of men were mobilised to protect their families and fight rebels. The rebels seeing the groups as betraying them stepped up their attacks on the civilian population. The NRA abandoned the Acholi community at this time leaving the defence units formed to defend themselves (Branch, 2005). Kony and his troops carried out rampant attacks in which they cut off hands, lips and ears of those they suspected of
working with the Arrow Brigades (Branch, 2005). This operation had to be ended and in the same month of ending this operation the attacks on the population were stopped.

The Government logic for drawing communities from their homes and placing them into protected camps was based on the fact that the villages were seen as easier targets and the Government suspected that they were aiding in the logistical support essential to the survival of the rebels (Branch, 2005). The camps would ensnare the LRA to contend with the UPDF upon which the government articulated would be their demise. The government then began training home guards who would then protect the new camps. These individuals were however under-trained and under-armed and formed easy prey for the LRA. The UPDF did very little to protect the groups of people that had now been placed in camps.

Following this attempt to end the war militarily the Government decided to initiate peace talk with the rebels. The peace talks were however largely unsuccessful with Museveni giving constant ultimatums and issuing threats to the LRA (Branch, 2005). These actions only served to anger Kony who withdrew from the peace talks and stepped up his attacks on the locals. These actions have been interpreted by some as a ploy by Museveni to continue the war in Northern Uganda.

With the subsequent attacks the question of Sudan’s involvement in the LRA war was of primary concern. The LRA was better equipped for war in comparison to their NRA counter-parts. In March 2002, as part of diplomatic agreement between Museveni and his Sudanese neighbours, Sudan did allow the UPDF (formerly known as the NRA) to launch an aggressive attack on the LRA situated in the South of Sudan. The UPDF launched “Operation Iron Fist”, aimed at routing the LRA from its bases in Southern Sudan this was
following an agreement between the Government of Uganda and that of Sudan which allowed the former to send her troops onto the territory of the latter, in order to deal with the LRA insurgents (Frommer, 2002). Whilst the government and the UPDF have claimed success by the fact that Kony no longer has permanent bases in the areas of Southern Sudan near the Uganda border where he can launch attacks onto the territory of Uganda, civil society groups have noted that the operation was the biggest mistake of the government as it has doubled the numbers of the displaced and made the security situation worse (Human Rights Watch, 2003). This is because this operation resulted in extension of the LRA’s operational area from Gulu, Pader and Kitgum districts to the districts of Lira, Apac, Katakwi and Soroti. This increased the numbers of the Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) (Kasaija, 2006).

As recently as the end of 2008 the Government of Uganda did launch a military offensive against the LRA in the DRC. This operation was called ‘Operation Lightning Thunder’ and was supported by the DRC government and the Central African Republic (CAR) (Puijenbroek & Plooijer, 2009). Analysts have argued that this operation in many ways was not well thought out and bore striking resemblance to ‘Operation Iron Fist’. This attack served to make the LRA regroup into smaller formations and to attack the local populations as they abducted children to join their cause (Puijenbroek & Plooijer, 2009). Official estimates are that from this offensive 896 people have died and 711 people kidnapped, of whom 596 are children (OCHA, 2009).

The other effort that has been initiated by the Government of Uganda has been to evoke the involvement of the International Criminal Court (All Africa, 2004) which has issued the warrants of arrest for the top leadership of the LRA. This involvement of the ICC by the President is seen to have been another move that could have adverse ramifications on
the populations in Northern Uganda. There are those who however argue that this action has weighed in on Kony to start negotiating and as such it was a good move on the part of the Government.

The other efforts have been largely diplomatic with a former minister Betty Bigombe trying to mediate the conflict and to bring Joseph Kony into an honest dialogue with the government (International Crisis Group, 2004). Though the Government still maintains that there is room for dialogue, with the ICC arrests issued it seems the LRA leadership is facing international criminal charges which the Government may not be able to override. There are those who have argued that peaceful diplomatic resolves might be the way out for Northern Uganda and this should be pursued by drafting a peace proposal, strengthening DDR and promoting reconciliation in the North (International Crisis Group, 2004). There have also been various regional, international mediation efforts by the two opposing parties to this to the conflict at the Naivasha Talks, which was unsuccessful in resolving the conflict. In 2006 peace talks were initiated in Juba under the auspices of the government of South Sudan. These negotiations have successfully managed to get the parties to agree to the terms of the peace agreement but Kony has failed to honour his commitment to the peace process. Kony has repeatedly refused to avail himself to sign the peace accord that would end the LRA war (Puijenbroek & Plooijer, 2009).

The other initiative of the Government was to isolate the LRA leadership by issuing amnesty to the perpetrators of the violent crimes. The Amnesty Bill was introduced in parliament by the Government (Afako, 2002). In introducing the Bill, the government was revisiting an old political formula of offering pardons to insurgents as a means of ending intractable conflict (Afako, 2002). The Amnesty Bill was finally passed into an Act in 2000, which offers pardon to all Ugandans engaged or engaging in acts of rebellion against the
government of Uganda since 26th January 1986 (Refugee Law Project, 2005). The act stipulates that it has to be renewed every six months by Parliament. Since it was passed, it has been extended periodically. The Amnesty Act extends amnesty to all Ugandans, irrespective of age, who have been involved in insurgency through actually participating in combat, collaborating with insurgents, committing other crimes to support insurgency, or in any other way assisting others involved in the insurgency. There are those who argue that amnesty should continue to be offered to all, including the LRA leadership.

2.6 Why Does The LRA Remain Undefeated?

The LRA is a well trained armed group with a strong command structure and well equipped with weapons. Nobody knows how many people are involved in the LRA, but most defence specialist estimate the number to be about 600 to 1000 people, some estimate about 2,000 to 4,000 people belong to the LRA (Puijenbroek & Plooijer, 2009).

A major reason fronted for their success has been the Sudan factor. It has been argued that the constant replenishing of the LRA by the Sudanese government did strengthen their resilience logistically. There have been allegations that if it were not for the Sudanese involvement and their support for the LRA activities then the UPDF would have defeated the LRA (Branch, 2005). It is doubtful that it was only the Sudanese support that strengthened the LRA. Years now after the Sudan withdrew their support and allowed the Ugandan forces to destroy the LRA operational bases in South Sudan; the UPDF has still not been able to capture Kony. Recently the LRA has been involved in the abduction of children and civilian persons in the DRC, and this then renders the LRA a regional militia and no longer just a Ugandan/ Acholi force, transforming what was a Ugandan problem into a regional concern (Puijenbroek & Plooijer, 2009, p. 22).
The inherent weakness of the Government forces is another reason why the LRA has been resilient. The Ugandan People’s Defence Forces (UPDF) is on a whole unprepared, lazy, corrupt and had very little motivation to do their jobs, with high incidences of heavy dissertation at a time (Christian Science Monitor, 2002). It is the UPDF’s lack of capacity and training, poor morale, excessive engagement in the Congo and grand scale corruption that greatly contributed to the stamina of the LRA (International Crisis Group, 2004).

The war has become a lucrative source of income and wealth for certain key individuals. High-ranking military individuals, government officials and high ranking LRA rebels have benefited as a result of the war (Otunnu, 2002). It is doubtful whether the government or the LRA will be committed to seeing an end to the war. Museveni has been quick to blame the rebels saying that the war was a strategy to ensure their own personal enrichment (State of the Nation Address, 2003). Some of the military soldiers have benefited through theft from the Acholi people. Another good example of the Government’s profiting was the army pay rolls indicating payment to about 10,000 ‘ghost’ soldiers (International Crisis Group, 2004), and the trafficking of army fuel to civilians (Van Acker, 2004). In view of these material considerations surrounding the prolongation of the war, Van Acker argue that the donor community and the donor funds also present a questionable dynamic to those working in this conflict and therefore raising a question as to their commitment. These gains could in many ways inhibit the efforts to end the conflict.

There are those who have argued that the government failure was one of intention with the Museveni government being unwilling to end the war since the war served his interests. In addition to the economic reasons that would explain the war the Government has had political reasons in allowing the conflict to continue: politically many of the locals have
seen it as a revenge on the Acholi for the violence and the killings they carried out at the Luwero Triangle during the NRA war (Branch, 2005). Also politically, there have been arguments that the government has used the war to prevent political mobilisation that could see the end of the Museveni era (Branch, 2005). Many individuals believe that the war has been allowed to continue as a slow genocide to eliminate them as a people (Branch, 2005). The war has been used as an excuse to silence any political opposition to Museveni, with any vocal Acholi leader being branded the friend of the rebels (Branch, 2005). A report by HURIPEC argues that it is the Museveni government that continues to fuel the war against the northerners (HURIPEC, 2003).

The United States Government has also had a stake in this war, with Museveni receiving military aid and diplomatic support for his war on terror against the LRA and in exchange he has served as a conduit to the SPLA which has been at the forefront in waging its own war on the Khartoum government (Finnstrom, 2008). Museveni has continued to spend huge amounts of his budget on his military budget which most donors have continued to advocate he reduce. He has justified this expenditure through the LRA war though most of the military aid has been diverted to the invasion and militarisation of Uganda in the eastern part of the DRC. The donation of funds from the American government to the Ugandan government does send a message that the US sanctions military attacks as a solution to the LRA conflict and is indicative of their failure to hold Museveni accountable for his actions (Neu, 2005). President Museveni has become popular in the international finance community due to the successful implementation of Structural Adjustment Programmes in Uganda and as a consequence to this many of his controversies have been ignored by the international community (Allen, 2005).
There have been claims that the LRA has some sort of support from the Acholi population both locally and abroad. There have been claims that in areas such as Kitgum and Pader the locals have gone as far as feeding the LRA soldiers (Ekomoloit, 2002). These claims however been largely unproven and it has been doubtful that if the LRA were acting as agents of the local community they would in turn inflict inhuman suffering on the very people they are acting for. The local community finds itself at a crossroad, a situation in which it completely distrusts the UPDF and on the other hand is completely opposed to the war.

2.7 Conclusion

The regional and ethnic divisions that predate colonialism have been accentuated by post-independence regimes. Each successive government in Uganda has failed to identify and prioritise the issue of nation-building (Refugee Law Project, 2004). The political interests of the ruling few have continued to charter the trend of Ugandan politics. There has been large intolerance of different views and this has perhaps been the reason for the violent history of Uganda, with each successive government solidifying its rule on the basis of ethnic identity. The different leaders in Uganda have continued to surround themselves with relatives, friends and people from their own ethno-religious group. Perhaps what is more worrying of this situation is the fact that southern Ugandans do not generally relate to the struggle and the war in the North. There is a sense in which this war has not been viewed as a national issue of concern (Refugee Law Project, 2004).

In view of their history the Acholi people find themselves caught up in a predicament. This is a case in which the LRA cannot be regarded as an agent of the Acholi people. This is clear from the merciless killings and atrocities waged against the local population by the
LRA (Branch, 2005). If the LRA was an agent of its own people one would expect that they would ensure their lives and not doom them to destruction. The people are a potential constituency that the LRA has continued to disregard in the war that they have waged against the ruling government (Branch, 2005). In the same breath the Ugandan government cannot also be considered as an agent of the Acholi, this is because the government has not done much to protect and provide for the Northerners thus a failure of the social contract. The Acholi people therefore find themselves caught between the two parties and are continuously victimised by this war. Both the LRA and the government continue to see the locals as a threat instead of a possible support base (Branch, 2005). It therefore follows that if the Acholi were mobilised then the war could probably come to an end. On the other hand if the LRA mobilised the Acholi the war would undergo a significant transformation making the LRA a national threat that would threaten even Museveni’s support base (Branch, 2005).

The continual failure of the government to protect the camps was clear indication to the Acholi people that the government was not interested in ending the war in the North. The failure to protect the Acholi people has been interpreted by some to be a political strategy aimed at preventing organisation by the Acholi to demand for the accountability of the UPDF and the end of the war (Finnstrom, 2008). Counter arguments to this have been that the UPDF is generally incompetent and corrupt thus explaining their inability to match the LRA. Uganda’s play at regional politics, especially its involvement in the Congo and interests of the international community has created a situation in which the war is never ending. The military solution might not be the solution to the LRA problem and the peace talks must be encouraged (Neu, 2005). The dilemma created with the issuance of the ICC warrants creates a further problem and there are arguments that this could explain Kony’s hesitation to sign the peace deal, therefore delaying the peace for the Acholi people.
The Ugandan leadership has failed to consolidate, and legitimise its control over the Northern populations. The Museveni government has continued to ape the colonial system of governance and has mobilised its support on a divide and rule basis (Van Acker, 2004). This logic has been used to explain the success of the south and the extreme poverty in the North. It is not without foundation therefore that many Acholi feel disadvantaged by the current administration because of their major involvement in the previous government of Milton Obote (Van Acker, 2004).

There has been great distrust involving the government in the North. The artificial distinction maintained by the government forces between the rebels killed on the battle field and the children rescued from the LRA is of concern. In an interview with Father Frasier, he indicated that in many instances the UPDF had erroneously reported killing aggressive rebels when in essence it was a group of abducted children. A UN Mission noted with great concern that in the UPDF statements on the LRA the constant claim of rebel deaths was as a matter of fact the death of very young children (OCHA Regional Support Office for Central and East Africa, 2003). Further distrust is created when the Government offers all returning rebels’ amnesty but later on proceeds to the ICC for indictments against the top leadership of the LRA. This then leads us to question the Government’s commitment to peace.

It has been tragic that in Ugandan politics, violence has become the viable cause of action, and the country is caught up in a vicious cycle of attack, counterattack, suffering and revenge (Van Acker, 2004). Because of the LRA’s history of extreme violence against the

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Acholi, they have refused to join the army in its current form (Branch, 2005), despite the LRA articulating the cause of the Acholi people. There are speculations that if the LRA were to restructure itself, changing its image and if the government continues to ignore the needs of the local populace then the generations of youth in the camps may join the rebels turning the war into a genuine threat (Branch, 2005). This is especially critical in this thesis, because if reintegration is not done properly then it is these returnees who will find a cause to fight. Efficacy in reintegration can therefore not be treated as an alternative but must be embraced as a necessity. Children in northern Uganda have suffered terribly over the past two decades of war and can be seen as the main victims of the war with the LRA abducting at least 20,000 children and youth. While it is true that most children are forcibly recruited, others join the armed groups because of poverty, redundancy and frustration (World Vision, 2006). The harsh realities of what they are reintegrated to has not been a focal point in many discussions on reintegration, yet it is imperative that when we speak of reintegration we fit it in to the context and the realities in which many of these children have been forced to live. An environment of pure want and fear will only breed more insurrections and discontent.

Successive governments in Uganda have failed to address the root problems or in many cases have adopted structures that were riddled with inconsistencies and this has inadvertently meant that most contentious issues have often degenerated into violence (Refugee Law Project, 2004). The Acholi people in turn have stopped expecting to get help from the political systems and there is a growing feeling of marginalisation (Van Acker, 2004). It is impossible to demand that the Acholi people blindly trust a government that has turned its back on them for over two decades (Neu, 2005). It is these extreme conditions and perpetual and intentional oversights on the part of the Government when it comes to their welfare that would explain the emergence of personalities such as Alice
Lakwena and Joseph Kony. This then makes it clear that the defeat, capture or death of Kony is not equivalent to an end of war rather it is merely an opportunity for the creation of another rebel group. The root causes of the conflict and the instruments of marginalisation must be addressed if the North is to know peace and live free from want and fear.
3.0 Introduction

Recent years have seen many countries involved in intra-state conflict, this has been the case especially in Africa. Many of these conflicts have come to an end as a result of negotiated peace deals monitored by the international community. It is at the end of these conflicts or in some cases the anticipated end of conflict in different regions of the world, the international community and the local national community usually engages a number of interventions and mechanisms that would assist in stabilizing and supporting the development of peace and the transition from armed conflict to stable peaceful environments. One of the fundamental interventions that has been formulated to this end is the Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (DDR) programme. DDR resides in the nexus of development and security agendas. It is critical to development and in preventing future wars and is therefore considered as a core component of any peace agreements (Pouligny, 2004). Ozerdem argues that there is an interrelationship between successful DDR and sustainable peace-building process (2002). The Brahimi report referred to DDR as key to post-war stability and to reducing the likelihood of recurring conflict (United Nations, 2000). DDR is seen as having the potential to create significant opportunities for sustainable peace and human development (Kingma, 2002). DDR is therefore a tool for achieving human security and it is the two faced nature of this process to embrace both development and security that ensures that the people are free from want and fear.
Over the last few years the DDR concept has developed to reflect long-term peace building and development initiatives and short term goals of cessation from violence. In embracing the human security agenda DDR has evolved from just concentrating on the collection of weapons and processing of combatants to improving community security through social and economic investment (Molloy, 2008). The concept of human security focuses on the smallest unit of the community, the individual, the family and then the community as a whole (Molloy, 2008). This type of DDR has therefore moved beyond a process to a concept which is holistic in its social engineering and with strong linkages to all aspects of national recovery and the strengthening of human security (Molloy, 2008). Human security is of prime importance since it ensures that combatants no longer feel a need to fight and are willing to give peace a chance. Reintegration programmes need to ensure that the security needs of ex-combatants are met as failure to ensure whole security could see these individuals reverting back to war (Koth, 2005). Disarmament and weapons control measures have limited value unless those who are being disarmed are reasonably satisfied with the security and economic incentives that are offered in return for their involvement (Berdal, 1996). The DDR process is not a militaristic one rather it is a reliable predictor of the success and failure of the post-conflict peace-building activities and a contributor to sustainable peace (Gomes Porto & Parsons, 2003). A human security approach to DDR is therefore appropriate in situations of transition from conflict to peace where the protection needs are still great and deprivations of human needs serious, the fabric of society destroyed and weak state institutions incapable of meting needs effectively (Japan International Cooperation Agency, 2006).

Ozerdem provides that DDR is regarded as a ‘peace building component through which the post–conflict socio-economic needs of the combatants are addressed in order to reduce the likelihood of reversion back into war’ (2009, p. 2). He argues that peace building in this
case should therefore be seen more as a process and not a goal if one hopes to achieve positive and sustainable peace (Ozerdem, 2009). DDR activities have played a significant role in peace-keeping but there has been no agreed doctrine or fully developed set of parameters as to how DDR can be carried out effectively (Pouligny, 2004). This then would explain the tendency to put many inappropriate objectives and expectations under the DDR mandate (Pouligny, 2004). Due the fact that DDR processes are limited in nature it is important to limit the expectations of their outcomes (Ball & Van de Goor, 2006). The DDR process cannot substitute for the inadequate will on the part of the parties to engage in the political processes, or for the peace enforcement activities or on its standing alone prevent conflict from recurring (Ball & Van de Goor, 2006). Though DDR can contribute to these activities it cannot in and of itself be considered in place of these.

DDR refers to that process of demilitarizing official and unofficial armed groups by controlling and reducing the possession and use of arms, disbanding non state armed groups and reducing the size of state security services and assisting former combatants to reintegrate into civilian life (Ball & Van de Goor, 2006). The UNDP explains the DDR of ex-combatants as a process with political, military, security, humanitarian and socio-economic dimensions that aims to address the post-conflict security challenges that arise from ex-combatants being left without livelihoods or support networks other than their former comrades in the critical transition period from conflict to peace and development (UNDP, 2005). It is this process that seeks to support the ex-combatants’ economic and social reintegration so that they can become stakeholders of the peace (UNDP, 2005). Knight and Ozerdem define DDR as a part of the overall peace building process (2004). Others like Berdal argue that DDR is aimed at reducing military expenditure that characterises the war period and allowing for the scarce resources to be reallocated to social and development projects while re-establishing a legitimate monopoly over the use of force.
by the Government (1996). He further argues that on emerging from a war soldiers and arms are a potential source of domestic and regional instability and DDR addresses this concern (Berdal, 1996). Kingma notes however that DDR does not lead to a net increase in resources available for direct development expenditures in the short term, given the importance of the costs of resettlement and reintegration of ex-combatants (Kingma, 2002). The United Nations has stipulated that the DDR process has repeatedly proved to be vital to stability in a post conflict situation; reducing the likelihood of violence, either because of a relapse into war or outbreaks of lawlessness and to facilitate a society’s transition from conflict to normalcy and development (United Nations, 2000). While there are many proponents who advocate for DDR in post-conflict reconstruction, others have argued that there is very little evidence that the participation in DDR increases the likelihood of successful reintegration (Humphreys & Weinstein, 2005). Humphreys and Weinstein go on to argue that non-participants in DDR do just well in the post war period in comparison to the active participants of DDR (2005). Spear in discussing disarmament and demobilisation argues that the success of the DDR process is heavily dependent on the feasibility and aims of the peace agreements, the implementation environment, the capability and resources of the implementers, the attitudes of the warring parties, and the effective verification of treaty implementation (Spear, 2002). Gomes Porto and Parsons provide that the DDR processes must be understood in relation to their environments because this will to a large extent influence what is possible and what is not and will dictate the developments that would be useful to a particular respondent group (Gomes Porto & Parsons, 2003)

The central quest of this thesis is to analyse the reintegration process and programmes for formerly abducted children in Northern Uganda. Current literature focuses more on the functional and normative aspects of DDR but it is necessary to engage with the impacts
that the application of DDR present in sustaining peace (Ozerdem, 2009). The scale of operations and the level of financial and political investment made in DDR and the high likelihood that the governments and the international community will continue to face such issues demands for more systematic treatment and consideration and gives basis to this central quest (Berdal, 1996). Despite the growing support for DDR the process has been constantly challenged for the lack of insight and empirical standing of whether it works or not (Muggah, 2006). Most evaluations of DDR have been focussed on the outputs and achievements, for example, the number of weapons collected, the number of ex-combatants processed and the funds disbursed, the so called process indicators (Specker, 2008). What however has been lacking are the performance indicators which are difficult to measure (Specker, 2008). The analysis of the reintegration process is therefore a question into the performance of reintegration as opposed to the process of it. This is therefore means that DDR cannot be simply treated as a technical tool because it is as much about social engineering as it is about politics (Pouligny, 2004). Following the analysis of the reintegration programmes being administered in Northern Uganda this chapter aims to do two things to discuss and provide the benchmarks by which we will consider the standards of reintegration.

This section will provide a basis for the subsequent chapters which will look at the practical application and implementation of reintegration and how the implementers, recipients and the larger community of Northern Uganda view and accept these programmes. The other objective of the chapter will be to provide a detailed discussion of the literature, statute and legal provisions for DDR which will give a theoretical basis for understanding the activities practically carried out in my case study of Uganda and the policies and programmes that have been advanced in support of the practice of DDR. Though my central question is directed to one component of DDR which is reintegration, it is important to provide the
context in which reintegration takes place. Reintegration does not operate devoid of Disarmament and Demobilisation and it is important that my analysis of reintegration lies on the knowledge of the DDR process in Uganda. It is also important to establish that the DDR stages, in practice, may overlap one with another or may not follow this particular sequence and in many cases one stage does not automatically follow the other and at times these processes may be established concurrently. This chapter therefore provides context to the process which this research wishes to question, to be able to effectively analyse reintegration it is imperative that this work discuss the context of DDR in general to understand the core objectives of the process and specifically to understand the process in the context of my case study. It is important to note here that in many armed conflicts no single party emerges a victor and in many cases former enemy factions negotiate peace settlements to end civil war. DDR initiatives in many cases are as a result of these negotiations and this is why the planning and operationalising of such initiatives must inspire confidence and trust to the parties involved (Weiland & Braham, 1994).

This chapter will therefore discuss in detail the three components of DDR, its central objectives, its interplay with other components of development that are administered in the conflict or post-conflict region and how these enhance the freedom from fear and want. This chapter will also discuss some of the technical challenges of the DDR process. This thesis will question the modalities of implementing reintegration in the context of a weak state such as in Northern Uganda. This chapter will then conclude by providing a useful and analytical basis which will provide a basis for the arguments in the subsequent practical chapters that analyse reintegration in Uganda.

DDR programmes have received significant attention from academics and policy makers in the recent past and this could be because of the rising numbers of programmes all over the
world or the involvement of the international community in supporting these activities (Gomes Porto, Alden, & Parsons, 2007). This field has been defined and codified through the UN Integrated DDR Standards (IDDRS) published in August 2006 by the UNDPKO in an attempt to create a substantive basis on which member states could engage with and supported DDR programmes (United Nations, 2006). DDR has also been provided for by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)-DAC’s implementation framework for Security System Reform (SSR) (OECD-DAC, 2007).

Another initiative that was developed to deepen the international community’s understanding of the design and implementation of the DDR programmes was the Stockholm Initiative on DDR (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Sweden, 2006). This brought together representatives from Governments which have both experienced the DDR process and have funded these processes, international organizations, academic institutions and civilian, military and police experts to discuss DDR (Gomes Porto, Alden, & Parsons, 2007). In this initiative there was also creation of specialized working groups that held in-depth consultations with parallel processes, such as the United Nations' internal "Integrated DDR Standards", the African Union's policy work on small arms and light weapons and the World Bank's regional program for Central Africa; Multi-Country Demobilization and Reintegration Program (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Sweden, 2006).

The Report of the High Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change considered demobilizing combatants the single most important factor determining the success of peace operations (United Nations, 2004). Without this civil wars cannot be brought to an end and other critical goals such as democratization, justice and development have little chance of success (UNDP, 2005).
3.1 The DDR Process

Traditionally there are two types of DDR programmes. The first type are the programmes that focus on demilitarisation of combatants and this involves reducing the numbers of military personnel following a decisive victory, and attempting to reduce the military expenditure in order to take advantage of the peace dividend. The second type of DDR has to do with those programmes that take place in war-to-peace transitions, here there is no clear victor between the warring parties and these are undertaken as a part of the peace settlement (Colleta, Kostner, & Wiederhofer, 1996). This process would then involve incumbent governments, non-state armed groups and third parties acting as mediators (Gomes Porto, Alden, & Parsons, 2007). This thesis rests on the second type of DDR, looking at Uganda as a country that has not yet fully emerged from conflict but one that is trying to find a peaceful way to settle the war in the North. Knight is careful to note that in this type of DDR the success of the programmes is largely dependent on the political will of the belligerent parties (Knight, 2001). In considering DDR as a tool of peace building its challenges can be perceived and responded to from what Muggah refers to as minimalist and maximalist perspectives (Muggah, 2004). The minimalist view is based on the security risks that the combatants represent (Collier, 1994), while the maximalist perspective bases its response on development challenges (Berdal, 1996). Though the DDR processes are run together it is important to recognise the individual contribution of each component.

Disarmament

The United Nations Department of Peace keeping Operations (UNDPKO) defines disarmament as the collection, control and disposal of small arms and light weapons and the development of responsible arms management programmes in a post conflict context (United Nations, Department of Peacekeeping Operations, 1999; Pouligny, 2004). Disarmament efforts that aim to remove the means by which war is fought, also leave
factions and combatants vulnerable, without weapons that they would need to protect themselves in the event that the other side does not honour its agreement (Humphreys & Weinstein, 2005). Pouligny argues that disarmament should go beyond giving up their weapons and should include changing attitudes towards weapons (Pouligny, 2004). Disarmament does not ensure a total collection and disposal of arms, which is often the unrealistic expectation. Though it is a first step to ensuring a safer and more secure environment the real value of disarmament is its symbolic value (Ozerdem, 2002). Although there is an abundance of arms in post-conflict environments disarmament on its own is insufficient to eradicate or permanently remove the means of violence in the short to medium term (Ozerdem, 2002). To ensure successful disarmament this action must be based on transparency of the central authority throughout the process, the sustainability of reintegration for the ex-combatants, safety that the weapons will not be used adversely against the community and legitimacy of the state in question through the support of the international community (Ozerdem, 2009).

Demobilisation

Demobilization is then defined as the planned process by which the armed force of the government and/or opposition of factional forces either downsize or completely disband their troops (United Nations, Department of Peacekeeping Operations, 1999; Berdal, 1996). Demobilisation which is often regarded to be the second stage of the DDR process serves to register, count and monitor the combatants and to prepare them for their discharge with identification documents (Ozerdem, 2009, p. 18). In the case of Northern Uganda this action would refer to completely disbanding the LRA, which is not considered a legitimate force and which has been often branded as a terrorist or insurgent group. Demobilisation on the other hand is a process which strips the combatants of the prestige,
comradeship and economic opportunities that may have been channelled through their participation in the fighting (Humphreys & Weinstein, 2005). This loss of status and the vulnerability resulting from DDR could easily complicate what may seem to be a straightforward process. Decisions to demobilise are always based on specific military, political and socio-economic circumstances like multilateral, bilateral and national peace accords or disarmament agreements (BICC, 1996). It is critical to bear in mind that demobilisation does not automatically take care of the development and security challenges, Kingma points out that it is not a magic bullet and that in reality politics always comes first (2001). He continues to argue that it is only on the basis of a real political solution of the conflict will demobilisation, resettlement and reintegration support be effective (Kingma, 2001).

**Reinsertion**

Reinsertion is the immediate post-demobilisation package that is offered to ex-combatants as interim assistance before the longer term process of reintegration (Isima, 2004). Reinsertion assistance is intended to improve the process and this often includes the post-discharge orientation, food assistance, health, education support and cash allowance (Knight & Ozerdem, 2004). This reinsertion assistance is considered to be a short term material and financial assistance that seeks to meet the immediate needs of the combatant for about one year enabling the ex-child soldiers successfully reintegrate back into civilian life (Colletta, 2001). Immediately following the return of ex-child combatants’ assistance can be given either as a cash subsidy or via material outputs and this provides some form of safety net by which the ex-child combatants can successfully be reintegrated back into their communities (Colletta, Kostner, & Wiederhofer, 1996; Specker, 2008). Although mere cash handouts are not sufficient on their own but they do play a significant role in defusing potential unrest amongst the ex-combatants and encouraging a more rapid demobilisation (Berdal, 1996).
Often financial incentives have been criticised as leading to misconceptions that combatants were being paid for their guns (Centre for International Cooperation and Security, 2006). Some have argued that cash packages have not been effective or sustainable and have exaggerated social tensions between ex-combatants and civilians (Specker, 2008) portraying the image that combatants are being rewarded for their role in the conflict. Targeting for cash payments is difficult since cash is of inherent value to everyone and does not allow for self selection (Peppiat, Mitchell, & Holzmann, 2000). Others have argued that cash is only suitable in settings where banking systems are functional and markets are strong thus excluding a lot of post-conflict environments (Willibald, 2006). Advocates of cash reinsertions argue that these are very effective in enabling the returnees to buy that which they needed and the cash could also have a positive impact on the wider community of settlement and that it can be used for investment to stimulate the local economy (MDRP, 2007; Peppiat, Mitchell, & Holzmann, 2000). In some cases it is difficult to provide in-kind assistance than cash and there have been instances where in-kind support has led to corruption (Specker, 2008). The ease of using cash in reinsertion is perhaps its greatest advantage over in-kind support (Isima, 2004).

With financial or material support given to ex-combatants it is imperative to strike a balance between dealing with their specific needs and not creating discontent among the members of their communities (Kingma, 2002). Experts have argued that though special reinsertion assistance for ex-combatants is required during the demobilisation and resettlement phase, reintegration support should be aimed as much as possible at the entire community as a part of their general rehabilitation (Kingma, 2002). With cash reinsertion packages the mobilisation of funds, establishing the criteria for differentiation and the
amount to be paid, financial management education and dealing with corruption are the inherent challenges (Knight & Ozerdem, 2004).

Reintegration

The final stage of DDR is Reintegration, which the UNDPKO sees as assistance measures provide to combatants that would increase the potential for them and their families’ at economic and social reintegration into civil society (1999). Reintegration therefore can be economic, political and social in nature. Economic reintegration has to do with enabling former combatants build livelihoods by having access to means of production and employment (Nubler, 1997). Political reintegration refers to the process through which combatants become a part of the decision making process (Ozerdem, 2009). Ex-combatants usually become involved with a military group because they identify with the politics of that group and oppose the politics of the government (Gomes Porto, Alden, & Parsons, 2007). Social reintegration refers to the creation of an environment in which the ex-combatants are accepted back into their families and communities (Kingma, 2000). Reintegration will therefore include medium to long-term programmes, including cash compensation, training or income generation meant to increase the potential for economic and social reintegration of ex-combatants and their families (Berdal, 1996). This provides for demobilised individuals the capacity to establish themselves in a civilian environment and they are accorded an opportunity in social, economic and political life. Reintegration must be left open-ended in the sense that it can be merged with the socio-economic development of the country as a whole (Coelho & Vines, 1995). Reintegration activities need to be much more comprehensive, complex and integrated into the overall post-war recovery process (ILO, 1995). Successful reintegration depends to a large extent on the extent to which short term concerns about security and political stability are not only addressed but also effectively reconciled with long term strategies for economic
reconstruction and development (Berdal, 1996). Reintegration is therefore characterised as a longer-term and continuous social and economic process of development (United Nations General Assembly, 2006). Despite the fact that reintegration is usually less visible than demobilisation, it does present both a challenge and opportunity to the overall peace process (Kingma, 1996). The reintegration of former combatants however does represent a complicated reality since often the illiterate soldiers are often thrust back into the communities in which they inflicted inhumane suffering. The combatants are often without skills and isolated from social networks, forcing them to face an uphill struggle in re-establishing a non-militaristic way of life (Humphreys & Weinstein, 2005). Colleta, Kostner and Wieerhofer argue that successful long-term reintegration can make a major contribution to national conflict resolution and failure to achieve it can lead to considerable insecurity at the societal and individual levels (1996). Successful reintegration is dependent on the ex-combatants, the involvement of the local community and the opportunities for employment and income generation (ILO, 1995). This act of transforming combatants to civilians or citizens is the central focus of this thesis.

The sequencing of the DDR process need not be linear and it is possible for reintegration to begin before disarmament and demobilisation though often this is not the case due to security constraints (Specker, 2008). Demobilisation and resettlement might be easy to implement but reintegration is a slow social, economic and psychological process depending on a large extent on the ex-combatant, their families, their communities and the international community at large (Kingma, 1999).

In war a weapon is considered to be a means of livelihood, and the carrier of the weapon uses it to not only protect himself rather to also provide for himself. In many regards the weapon is seen as a tool that alleviates fear and want for an individual in war. The
relinquishing of this weapon to a state or governing body then signifies a trust and understanding that the state will then protect and provide for the needs of the ex-combatants. It is on this basis that Ozerdem and Knight make their argument that DDR is a social contract for a state that is emerging from war (Knight & Ozerdem, 2004). Disarmament therefore implies that there is a commitment on the part of the state and faith from the ex-combatant that there will be an environment in which the economic and security value of the weapon is gradually eliminated (Willibald, 2006).

3.2 Core Objectives of DDR

Having discussed what DDR is and what it stands for in a post-conflict or in-conflict society it is imperative that the objectives of these programmes be discussed to give the basis for which we shall make reference to when grappling with the analysis of the reintegration process. The ultimate objective of DDR should be to improve the welfare of people in productive civilian life (Nubler, 1997). The objectives of these programmes as alluded to before will provide the necessary benchmarks by which we can analyse the success and the failures of reintegration practice in Northern Uganda. The aim of the DDR process is to contribute to security and stability in post-conflict situations so that recovery and development can begin (Knight, 2008). The DDR process aims to deal with the post-conflict security problem that results from ex-combatants being left without livelihoods or support networks during the transition period (United Nations, 2006). The long term objectives of reintegration have to do with enhancing economic and human development (Kingma & Sayers, 1995). DDR has four interrelated aims that have to do with the political environment, the security of the local DDR environment, the economic enablement of the combatants and the fiscal objectives of revamping and growing the local economy (Ejigu & Gedamu, 1996).
The objectives of the DDR process have been articulated in the UNDP Practice Note as firstly, to contribute to security and stability by facilitating reintegration and providing the enabling environment for rehabilitation and recovery to begin. Here DDR programmes will provide the environment for rehabilitation, this can be through reinsertion packages, or by transporting the returnees back to their communities and facilitating their restoration back into those communities. To effect this objective in a post conflict scenario then it is imperative that the implementing agencies must know more about how the combatants experienced the war in order to better design and target their programmes (Humphreys & Weinstein, 2005).

Secondly the DDR programmes aim to restore trust through confidence-building among the conflicting factions and general populations. In this case study this would involve reconciling the returned ex-soldiers of the LRA to the Acholi population that has been victimised by their vicious acts and this could involve supporting and promoting cultural practices of restorative justice to ensure that the society accepts these individuals back into the community (UNDP, 2005). War torn countries are easily characterised by fragmented societies with the combatants growing apart from the local civilian society (Nubler, 1997). The integration of both groups therefore constitutes an important dimension of the DDR process (Klingebiel, 1995).

The third objective is an economic objective which aims at ensuring the successful reintegration back into the community so as to prevent ex-combatants from reverting back to violence as a means of solving a personal crisis or a cause (UNDP, 2005). DDR programmes are one of the key inducements used by international actors to manage spoilers in post-conflict scenarios. The process offers opportunities in which the leaders can deliver concrete benefits to combatants at the conclusion of the fighting, some of
which can be designed to address underlying grievances that have given rise to the conflict (Humphreys & Weinstein, 2005). DDR ensures that combatants return to a productive life with increased social and economic stability through the acquisition of skills and as a result minimal unemployment (Ejigu & Gedamu, 1996).

The other object of DDR has to do with promoting national reconciliation, this is more relevant to cases and instances in which two groups have disagreed, or in cases in which a particular faction of the nation has been marginalised, to look to rectify those situations and to restore national cohesion (UNDP, 2005). To this end DDR programmes therefore become part of larger efforts to reform governance structures in post conflict environments and to bring warring factions to the table to make a commitment to the permanent settlement of the conflict (Humphreys & Weinstein, 2005).

Lastly DDR programmes aim to free up human and financial resources and social capital for reconstruction and development, this involves bringing in support from the international community to ensure that societies are restored back to a peaceful state (UNDP, 2005).

These objectives are crucial to our understanding of DDR because they provide us with the direction and expected outcomes of the process. It is on the basis of these objectives that this chapter engages with the analysis of reintegration programmes. Looking at the objectives it is clear that the DDR process cannot function on its own and that there has to be interrelationships between different elements of post conflict reconstruction so as to ensure coherent and comprehensive interventions of DDR. Successful and sustainable DDR requires a long term, developmental and multi-dimensional approach. This however raises its own complications with those who do not think that military issues should be
included in the process of development. Some have argued that even these kinds of issues do require appropriate responses from development practitioners thus arguing that security problems needed to be integrated into development (Gomes Porto, Alden, & Parsons, 2007). Another evidence of integration of DDR with other disciplines and elements of post-conflict reconstruction can be seen in the different organisations that are involved in implementing the programmes in many of these countries.

Perhaps more crucial to this thesis is the argument for human security. For reintegration to be successful then individuals reintegrated must be free from fear or want. In the objectives discussed above it is clear that DDR has within itself a mandate to ensure that those who have gone through the process are free from fear and want so as to avoid or deter relapses back into a state of war for societies that have just emerged from civil conflict. It follows that the conceptualisation of DDR programmes falls into the question of human security, making an argument that if DDR ignores the elements of human security in its formulation then there will be gaps in the relevance of the programmes to recipient groups. In instances of transitions from conflict to peace in different communities needs are great and deprivations of basic human needs are serious, the fabric of society and social safety networks are frayed or destroyed, and weak state institutions are incapable of meting needs effectively (Japan International Cooperation Agency, 2006). It is in addressing the needs experienced in these environments, by addressing the freedoms and fears that we can be able to formulate effective DDR programmes. It is also true that well administered DDR programmes do go a long way in contributing to human security (Centre for International Cooperation and Security, 2006). The components of human security do make useful contribution to strengthening the provisions and activities of DDR projects and adherence to the human security framework can ensure more relevant, context
and problem specific DDR, thus ensuring the national reconciliation, development and security of post conflict societies.

3.3 Limitations of the DDR Process

While the DDR process has evolved over time and many lessons have been learnt over the years and improvements have been made to the programming and the conceptualisation of the process, it is still fact that the process still faces numerous challenges. These challenges are pivotal to understanding the reintegration process and will enable this research to understand why programmes are administered the way they are. Even where ex-child combatants are accommodated or induced into formal DDR programmes it is often forgotten that there are both quantitative and qualitative dimensions that must be taken into consideration (Malan, 2000). There is always the tangible side of reintegration that has to do with numbers which many people tend to dwell on and this aspect receives more consideration but the qualitative side of reintegration is perhaps even more so vital in reversing the years of indoctrination and the learnt militaristic values and violence and as such is central to any consideration of successful DDR (Malan, 2000). These two aspects of DDR do have a cost implication and the needs of demobilising child soldiers will always exceed the resources that are available to address those needs and it is these challenges of trying to reintegrate child soldiers in a proper manner that this section will address.

Most conflicts in recent years have taken place in weak states or what some would even refer to as failed states or very low-income countries (Berdal, 1996). Berdal provides that in most of these states the public-sector institutions are severely weakened by the war and most of these states have accumulated large debts further weakening their ability to assist the demobilised soldiers (1996, p. 46). There are numerous political, economic and social security challenges in many of the countries that have undergone civil conflict, with most
of these states being situated in Sub-Saharan Africa. It therefore follows that DDR programmes do have to reflect the realities of economic life and conflict affected countries which have very limited employment opportunities, education or training opportunities (Ball & Van de Goor, 2006). DDR processes are very complex in post conflict environments as a result of the simultaneous processes of democratisation, economic stabilization, infrastructure rehabilitation and repatriation of refugees or placement of the internally displaced individuals (Gomes Porto & Parsons, 2003). In many of the places in which DDR is being administered the political, social and economic structures are very devastated, these states are characterised by state weakness, poverty and underdevelopment thus limiting the perceived objects of DDR programmes (Gomes Porto, Alden, & Parsons, 2007). It therefore follows that we must question that which we are returning ex-child soldiers back into, if the conditions are so adverse the challenge is in how these children can be expected to survive upon being ‘reintegrated’ back into communities. Reintegration is faced with major structural constraints due to the context of wide-spread socio-economic deprivation and an almost total collapse of the economy (Douma & Klem, 2008). If reintegration takes place in state weakness, decay and failure, structural conditions become paramount in the success and failure of the process (Gomes Porto, Alden, & Parsons, 2007). Another argument made on this challenge is that weak states are incapable of financing the DDR process and as a result we find that there is heavy dependence on the international community to finance these efforts, leading them to play a central role in the DDR process. The dominance of international actors in planning and implementation of DDR presents its own unique challenges.

Another fundamental challenge of DDR programmes has to do with the fact that they are not context specific. This is as a direct result of the previous limitation to funding of the DDR process. Since external actors are largely responsible for the process we find that they
formulate the programmes with very little understanding of the post conflict environment in question. DDR programmes do need to reflect the considerable political complexities and uncertainties in post conflict environments. DDR programmes need to take account the institutional and human capacity weaknesses that are typically found in most of these conflict-affected countries (Ball & Van de Goor, 2006). The international community though well intentioned, is incapable of drafting fully relevant programmes without ground or local support and this has been a major hurdle for most DDR programmes. Programmes must be able to evaluate the local capacity to generate and manage the DDR programmes upon which they can make judgements on how to best support them (Ball & Van de Goor, 2006).

The process of DDR is in and of itself a political endeavour and the Stockholm Initiative makes the point that DDR is part of a political process but it has long been divorced from the political considerations and neglected as a tool of peace process (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Sweden, 2006). DDR is essentially a politically driven process and its success is heavily dependent on the political will of the parties to enter into the process in a sincere manner (United Nations, 2006). This political will has to be maintained throughout the entire duration of administering the DDR programmes and it is this good will that will contribute to the wider peace process and transition from conflict to peace (Knight, 2008). Knight and Ozerdem argue that the outcome of DDR is largely dependent on the political context in which it is carried out because armed factions do in a way still retain some form of territorial control and do have the ability to engage in war if the peace agreement falls through (Knight & Ozerdem, 2004). It is therefore vital that there is strong political will and leadership (Colleta, Kostner, & Wiederhofer, 1996). Lack of commitment by any of the parties involved will undermine the expected success of any DDR initiative or process (Kingma, 1996). DDR cannot develop the political process but it must follow it because
demobilisation requires a clear and credible central authority (Kingma, 1996). DDR is fundamentally political in nature and should be seen as part of a broader integrated approach to reconstruction processes including security, governance, politics and developmental aspects (Specker, 2008). DDR needs to be embedded in a much larger process of national reconciliation conducted in a safe and supportive environment in which individuals interact and cooperate (Kingma, 1996).

DDR has taken up as one of its objective the duty to reunite ex-child soldiers with their families and their communities. It has however been the case that in many instances efforts to trace families have been somewhat difficult. In many cases some families have perished in the conflict and in other cases they are incapable of providing for and sheltering these returned children (Malan, 2000). In some instances where children have been forced to commit heinous crimes as part of their initiation into some of these armed factions we find that they, the ex-child combatants, are fearful of going back to the very communities which they victimised (Brett & McCallin, 1998). In these cases alternative care has to be organised and these in many of these post conflict states is a challenge.

The other limitation has to do with the design of DDR. In which in most programmes the assumption has been that ex-combatants would surrender weapons as a criteria for eligibility into the DDR programmes but this practice and assumption tends to exclude many children who served in different factions as porters, cooks, spies and other roles that are not necessarily militaristic. DDR programmes are limited in their support to special groups. There is a mistaken tendency to regard all former combatants as a homogeneous group (Ozerdem, 2009). DDR programmes often fail to consider the different special groups involved in reintegration (Malan, 2000).
Most programmes have taken too little consideration of the special needs presented by female combatants, the complexities of reintegrating children and the complicated support needed for those who return disabled. The unique experiences of this group socially, emotionally warrants that more attention be given in designing their DDR packages. Since most individuals do not perceive these groups as crucial, more attention is given to those who were engaged in active combat, and the DDR of these special groups is overlooked.

There is obviously a great need to change the perception of those implementing DDR (Kingma, 2002). Many of the children who were recruited to fight often return as adults and their experiences have a profound impact on their emotional and social growth requiring that they get extra care and assistance (Kingma, 2001). Child combatants are often forced to join illegal groups and they could easily become victims again if the reintegration programmes fail to assist them (Koth, 2005). The problems that female ex-combatants face may affect the social fabric (Kingma, 2002). Most women are often involved in the war as combatants, wives, sex-slaves and it is important that they be recognised as deserving of DDR. While it is possible for the female and child ex-combatants to be demobilised without specific programs, their special needs demand for more carefully consideration (Kingma & Sayers, 1995; Save the Children Report, 2007).

The health care needed by disabled or ill combatants is an issue that many DDR programmes seem to leave out yet it is a real need of a large proportion of those demobilised (Kingma, 2001). ILO research on disabled former combatants shows that often they are excluded from training, resettlement or employment schemes that other combatants go through (ILO, 1995). There is need to integrate them into normal life as much as possible (Kingma & Sayers, 1995).
DDR programmes have failed to recognise the unique trauma experienced by these groups of ex-combatants and as a result many of them have resulted to drug addictions and alcoholism. This is common with many of the former child combatants. These may in the long term lead to cycles of violent conflict that could undermine the peace process (Kingma, 2002). Though the different DDR programmes have tried to engage in psychosocial counselling there is little evidence of what kind of impact this has had (Kingma & Sayers, 1995). A critique to this has however been the failure to take into consideration the cultural contributions to psychosocial support rather the practice seems to have been that of transplanting western concepts of post-traumatic stress disorder to DDR. The complexity of getting a better sense of who the ex-combatants really are and what their actual situation is means that more time is actually needed to plan DDR activities (Pouligny, 2004). The planning for DDR needs to start early despite the political uncertainties that may exist in the post war country in question because this will inspire confidence in the parties involved in the peace agreement and in the future of their country (Kingma, 2001).

A significant difficulty is how to mobilise individuals who were abducted as children and grew up within armed factions and only returned after they had grown up into adults. Most of these individuals will require special programmes (Malan, 2000), which will seek to socialise them differently since the only life they know is that of violence, this is however a challenge where programmes face limited funding and are unable to provide this specialised DDR for unique groups. There is significant difficulty in DDR programmes having the flexibility to tailor the benefits of DDR to the different categories of combatants (Ball & Van de Goor, 2006). Failure to reintegrate ex-combatants socially and economically has immediate and long term consequences. In the short term the disaffected ex-combatants may threaten the peace process by continuing to fight in country and across borders and in
the long term the combatants can develop into a social underclass that could potentially hinder the country’s economic and social development (Specker, 2008).

Another critical challenge of the DDR programmes has to do with finding the appropriate balance between monetary and in-kind support, particularly for reinsertion packages. Reinsertion benefits have in many cases been provided to individuals upon their demobilisation. However since this process is carried out in very weak and fragile environments this act has often led to some resentment from the civilian population who in many cases are worse off or in the same state as the ex-child combatants who are being granted the reinsertion packages (Ball & Van de Goor, 2006). Experts have justified the targeting of ex-combatants with specific programmes and help by arguing that it is important for these individuals to see their role in a post war order to discourage negative self-mobilisation (Last, 1999). David Last argues that former combatants do make up a vulnerable group unable to deal with the post war economy and they are returning back to their communities empty handed (Last, 1999). He argues that such targeted programmes should be viewed as investments in the productive potential of former combatants rather than a bribe to keep them out of trouble (Last, 1999). Keeping former combatants occupied and providing for their reintegration is important but the manner in which this is done is also important (Ozerdem, 2002).

The security objectives of ensuring that the combatants do not revert to war must be balanced with the economic realities of the communities they are being taken back into to ensure sustainable peace. Ozerdem argues that such balance can be maintained by targeting them as individuals within the wider community (Ozerdem, 2002). Kingma argues that reintegration support should benefit the entire community because this support is more effective if it falls in line with the broad reconciliation and peace building processes and an
enabling environment where individuals are encouraged to take initiatives (2001). The
group therefore benefiting from reintegration support is much larger than the targeted
group of ex-combatants (GTZ, 1997).

An enormous challenge of reintegration has to do with the political will of the states
involved. The agendas of political leaders generally carry plenty of weight and this may
play in favour of the short-term imperatives and programmes that are unsustainable
(Pouligny, 2004). Even with great support and financing the success of reintegration
programming is dependent on the political commitment of the state in question. External
actors cannot replace the political commitment or the political trust needed between the
warring parties (Berdal, 1996). To ensure the success of any DDR initiative the political
will to see these initiatives succeed must be seen. Success in disarming and demobilising
soldiers after armed conflict depends on the extent to which warring parties and individual
combatants believe that their physical and economic security will not be adversely affected
by relinquishing their arms and abandoning the war (Berdal, 1996). This therefore supports
the fact that there must be a trust between the warring parties that the other will ensure
that they have fulfilled their promises.

Finally most DDR programmes face the limitations of being constrained to a particular
time frame. Reintegration is the process by which ex-combatants acquire civilian status and
gain access to civilian forms of work and income, this process is primarily social and
economic in nature and as such should be put in the context of an open time frame
(Douglas, Gleichmann, Odenwald, Steenken, & Wilkinson, 2004). It is the long term
nature of this process and the different complexities involved that must not be
underestimated if reintegration is to be successful (Gomes Porto, Alden, & Parsons, 2007).
DDR should be linked to the long-term recovery and development programmes in order to
provide sustainable reintegration for ex-combatants and their dependants as well as other community members (Ball & Van de Goor, 2006). This has been a difficulty in many places where the DDR process has been treated separately and not been enshrined in the primary budget of the State. Trying to fit DDR into a specific time frame tends then to underestimate its value or to set unrealistic expectations of the process thus threatening its very success. DDR programmes would be better off placed as part of a long term development strategy though this is hardly ever done in practice (Gomes Porto, Alden, & Parsons, 2007). No sustainability can be ensured if donor engagements remain short-term (Specker, 2008). To this end Pouligny argues that to guarantee a minimum of continuity in DDR then financing of reintegration programmes should be part of the UN regular budget and should not depend on voluntary contributions. She further states that such budget should be quickly included into war-torn societies national budgets in order to ensure that local states are responsible for these aspects (2004). Specker supports this view by advocating that for reintegration to be effective then recovery programmes should be linked with respective line ministries (Specker, 2008). There is need for national ownership of the DDR processes if one is to ensure the efficiency of the programme. In practice however the DDR process is primarily externally driven (Specker, 2008). McMullin argues that for the UN and its partners a preference for reintegration in the short term rather than investing in long-term solutions also calls into question their credibility as peace builders (2004). The UN tendency to withdraw after post conflict elections signals a frail commitment to the long-term security of states that lack the means to consolidate the rule of law on their own (McMullin, 2004).
3.4 Questioning the Notion of Reintegration in Northern Uganda

All DDR-type initiatives undertaken in Uganda since 2000 occur within the framework of the Amnesty Act. In trying to attain peaceful resolution to the LRA conflict in the North of the country, the Parliament of Uganda enacted a comprehensive Amnesty Act in 2000. This Act provides that, ‘any Ugandan wishing to abandon rebellion after participating in combat, collaboration with perpetrators of violence, committing crimes that furthered the war or assisting or aiding the conduct of war will be granted amnesty, without risk of criminal prosecution or punishment in a national court for offenses related to the insurgency’. 23 This Act provides that the Reporter will be granted amnesty if he/she reports to the nearest government unit, denounces their involvement in war, surrenders any weapons in their possessions, and is issued with a certificate of Amnesty. This return is followed by a process of DDR which is facilitated and funded by both the government and the international community. The reintegration process has however faced fundamental challenges which this section seeks to contend with.

Due to the continuing security concerns in the North of Uganda many people still live in Internally Displaced People’s Camps. The conditions for DDR are therefore not normal since the children reintegrated are not taken back into communities but rather they are placed in the IDP camps. The main objective of reintegration is to restore ex-child combatants to the lives they had before they joined the LRA. This however has not been possible leading one to question whether the real objective of reintegration has been attained. There can be no reintegration without return, any reintegration process that fails to consider the return of the community and returning ex-combatants back to their villages cannot be said to be successful. The word reintegration in this case is a misnomer since in many cases the ex-combatants do not returning to their area of origin (Kingma, 2002). The

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23Section 3 and 4 of the Amnesty Act of 2000.
experiences of war and violence automatically change the lives of all involved and it is impossible to assume that a society or an ex-combatant can slip into their pre-war social role making it difficult for one to talk of reintegration.

Often the term reintegration has been confused with reinsertion. It has often been presumed that merely placing an individual back into their community constitutes reintegration. Different programmes on the ground have marked their success by their successful reunification of the ex-combatants with their family. This action however while it may be a component of reintegration, is in itself not reintegration. Reintegration has to do with securing the life of an individual to ensure he is free from fear and free from want. This action on its own does not ensure such freedoms and more needs to be done past the reunification to ensure effective reintegration. While the term reintegration has commonly been used to cover all activities after demobilisation in practice reintegration has been limited to providing reinsertion and resettlement assistance only (Specker, 2008). This has been because of lack of funding, lack of good preparation and a deliberate action by DDR practitioners to limit their targeted assistance to ex-combatants only.

After mass atrocities and constant attacks on the Northern communities by the LRA, the government issued an order for these communities to vacate their ancestral homes. This action meant that many of the people moved to the camps and others to other parts of Uganda. Reintegration proposes restoring all these different groups of people back into the same community. While this may sound like the ideal action in instances of post conflict reconstruction the social implications of this action cannot be understated. Having been in different environments, some in the city, and others in IDP camps, others abroad, it becomes difficult to synch all these different socialisations to create one community. With time it is important to note that the individuals who make up the communities have
formed new identities and been socialised differently. Reintegration one to another then becomes difficult in a community where different members have different value systems. The failure of the reintegration process to articulate the great difficulty that communities will have upon their return back to their ancestral communities could render the process ineffective. In an interview with a local resident in the North he argued that, ‘Some have learnt how to earn a living by the gun, others will have more resources, and others will be very poor, it is difficult to reconcile the very different people who return upon reintegration. Their experiences will have shaped them differently’.  

Reintegration aims to provide returnees with an alternative civilian lifestyle that promotes peace. Ideally reintegration should aim at providing ways to help the combatants become economically independent and psychologically healthy. The reality however is starkly different from what one would imagine. The lack of job opportunities and rehabilitation facilities for most of the demobilized soldiers especially the young ones have driven them into committing crimes to ensure survival. When it comes to reintegration it is imperative to recognise that most nations devastated by war simply do not have the resources to provide for proper reintegration (Dodge & Raundalen, 1991). The primary needs of ex-child soldiers in the reintegration process are food, shelter and clothing (Barnitz, 1997). To be able to design relevant and appropriate reintegration programs one must understand the socio-economic conditions faced by the child before, during and after recruitment (McCalin, 1995). Reintegration needs to be integrated within the employment, general economic policies and security strategies if the initiative in any way stands any opportunity of success. Unless this is done the local state capacity to actually govern the country remains doubtful resulting into national and regional insecurity (Pouligny, 2004). Economic reintegration contributes to financial independence and self-reliance which is

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vital to any DDR process however in reality many ex-combatants find themselves having to deal with unemployment (Nubler, 1997).

The conditions in the North of Uganda are harsh and it is difficult to implement ideal DDR. With most members living in the IDP camps and with very limited resources it is a constant challenge for those who have returned to survive. One would argue that if reintegration implies taking a returning child to an impossible and harsh reality forcing one to ask, ‘What in reality are these ex-child combatants being reintegrated back into?’ Though most of the children were forcibly conscripted into the LRA the harsh realities of reintegrated life could in many instances create nostalgia over the lives they had had in the bush. ‘For many of the girls, they were wives to commanders and though their lives may not have been what some may consider luxurious in comparison to the lives they now live they lived a very privileged life while in the LRA’. Depending on the rank an individual held in the LRA for some of them life in the bush had more to offer when compared to their lives in the IDP camps. It therefore begs the question if the environment of return is so harsh and adverse isn’t there a high likelihood that reintegration could fail and many would revert back to a life within the rebel ranks? With Kony still free and in the likelihood that no peace agreement will be reached it is a possibility that an environment of war could revert. Any reintegration that fails to encompass this kind of security threat is inherently weak. The ex-combatants do also present a security dilemma and any reintegration design supported by the international community and the state that does not take this into consideration then is ineffective (McMullin, 2004). This dilemma is worse in the northern Uganda crisis where the leaders have not been brought to justice and are unwilling to sign peace agreements.

Reintegration implies that there is a recipient community to receive the returnees upon their return. Community involvement is critical to the success of reintegration and any programme that operates devoid of the opinion of local community is not sustainable. Many programmes have tended to have a top-down approach ignoring the input of the local community. Local involvement deals with issues of impunity and allows communities to feel involved in accepting the returning combatants on their own terms and in accordance to the dictates of their culture (Pouligny, 2004). Such local ownership of the process of reintegration is a vital component of any meaningful reintegration and consequently proper peace building. The community and its traditional decision-making mechanisms should be encouraged in addressing the needs of the former combatants within the framework of their communities (Ozerdem, 2002). Strengthening of the local capacity is vital for reintegration (Kingma & Sayers, 1995). Local ownership of the DDR process and the fostering of local norms and values are essential elements of a sustainable peace building process (Pugh, 2000).

It is often the case that when discussing reintegration often more consideration is given to those who are returning from the ‘bush’. In northern Uganda the Acholi community has been made dysfunctional as a result of this war. Over 2 million of these people have lived in IDP camps to ensure their security. In an environment such as this it is an error to ignore the local communities in the reintegration debate. Upon returning back to the community the ex-combatants are placed back into the family structures and the communities in which they originally came from. To take into consideration of only one group, in this case the returnees and ignore the communities that have to take responsibility for them would be an action undermining the success of reintegration. Reintegration must pursue a holistic approach if it to be relevant.
With reintegration there is no one size fits all. Every war is different and the impact it has had on the different people is different. Even in the contexts of a single war, the experiences are different from one community to another. The process must therefore be area specific and the needs must be considered on that basis. It is not possible with this process to have one uniform application and programming that will be applicable to every area and every respondent. An understanding and constant analysis of the local environment which is the recipient of DDR is vital. The failure to analyse will result to a technically oriented DDR fixated on procedures and techniques as opposed to substance, a neglect of the local anthropology and history that could better inform interventions, and a lack of perspective on how DDR fits into post-conflict reconstruction (Pouligny, 2004). What works in an urban centre in Uganda for example will differ greatly with what may work in a rural setting. A good example is that of rural setting in Uganda where issues of land tenure and access will be inevitable while this may not be the case in an urban setting (Colleta, Kostner, & Wiederhofer, 1996). Land rights in such an environment could cause a resurgence of community tensions which must be anticipated in any reintegration design.

Closely linked to this critique of reintegration is the fact that as a result of the different expectations of the reintegration phase it is often not always clear when the reintegration process starts and ends. There is lack of clear parameters to define the formal completion of the reintegration of ex-combatants. Some regard the end of the vocational training to be synonymous to the end of reintegration whilst to others it is the acquisition of a means of survival. It is this inability to articulate parameters of reintegration that leads to unrealistic expectations of the DDR process. The dilemma over the completion of reintegration has differing views with members of the international community viewing reintegration on the short term, and making their judgements on the basis of whether there is existing violence or not.
To ensure a balanced reintegration of formerly abducted children it is critical that the training undertaken for returning combatants be matched with the local market opportunities. In deciding on the overall components of the reintegration process it is vital that the social, economic and institutional characteristics of the country be considered more closely (Ozerdem, 2002). It is common practice in post conflict environments for there to be massive training in a particular vocation leading to massive unemployment on the completion of training. For reintegration to be considered successful research needs to be done on what the local economy needs so as to inform the implementers of DDR on the vocations to train in. Failure to understand the socio-economic conditions, the local labour markets and lack of innovative ideas on how to kick start employment for ex-combatants can drastically undermine the reintegration process. Employment of former combatants requires analysis and understanding of the functioning of the labour market (ILO, 1997). The failure to include the private sector in formulating reintegration programmes has seriously undermined the reintegration process (Ozerdem, 2009). A better understanding of the local environment in terms of jobs and business opportunities can only be informed through involving all members of the public and private sectors. The training undertaken must be based on an analysis of what the demand is in a particular social setting (Nubler, 1997). Training will not only address the economic needs of ex-combatants but it will also contribute to developing a sense of identity that is not linked to previous roles in the military (Nubler, 1997).

In order to help ex-combatants reintegrate it is crucial that one establishes what the demobilised population thinks of the process of demobilisation. The success of any one reintegration effort is tied to how those being reintegrated view the reintegration process and whether they regard it as meaningful or not (Berdal, 1996). Their opinions cannot be
down played or replaced with other ‘good ideas’, their interpretation of life and what they would view as success is crucial and differs from one community to another and the same must be considered to ensure successful reintegration. A bottom-up approach will perhaps be the most important imperative to ensuring that there is sustainability (Ozerdem, 2002).

A factor that could hinder peace agreements is the way in which combatants view their absorption into the community at the end of a conflict (Assefa, 1992).

3.5 Conclusion

This chapter has discussed how the process of DDR is administered in post conflict situations. The objectives of the process of DDR as laid out by the United Nations serve to provide a framework in which the analysis of the process of reintegration can be made in the subsequent chapters of this thesis. This chapter has fundamentally provided a context to reintegration, which is the central focus of this work. It has also been established through the discussions made in this chapter that it is not possible to discuss reintegration in alienation from the DDR process because in practice it is not always possible to implement these components in isolation to each other. This chapter has also engaged with the limitations of the DDR process across the board and emphasised on the need for DDR to be context specific.

This chapter has built a basis for the main arguments of this thesis on the analysis of the reintegration process of formerly abducted children. Discussion on the DDR literature provides a valuable backbone to understanding the practice of DDR as far as children are concerned. The literature also points out to the failure on the part of the DDR programming to articulate for specific reintegration when it comes to children who ought to be considered a special group for the purposes of reintegration. This chapter has shown that DDR cannot be considered in a vacuum and for it to be able to ensure freedom from
want and fear it must be linked to the social, cultural, economic and political surroundings. It follows that that human security concerns need to be considered when dealing and formulating DDR programmes. This chapter has also made a case for the importance of local input in formulating DDR so as to ensure that the process is context specific. This has provided a basis for the discussion that will be made later on of the views of the local population on the practice of reintegration of ex-child soldiers. It is clear that DDR does not automatically translate to sustained peace and human development but if administered well it could have a positive impact on the peace building process. The links between the different components of DDR and the subsequent links to the peace building process and development are crucial to ensuring the transformation of a combatant to a civilian rendering the reintegration process effective.

This chapter has also raised pertinent questions to the understanding of the reintegration process. Questioning the accepted notions of reintegration and raising the complex dynamics involved in reintegrating in Northern Uganda would hopefully better enable a judgement as to whether the process on the whole has been well administered or not. Reintegration processes are complex and more especially in post conflict environments. Each individual case presents its own dynamics which are rooted in particular post conflict environments.

DDR processes are complex and more especially in post conflict environments. Each individual case presents its own specific challenges rooted in particular environments (Gomes Porto, Alden, & Parsons, 2007). DDR must be understood and approached as a process and not a programme, while DDR consists of different programmes it is necessary to note that these programmes exist within a long term dynamic process. For DDR programmes to have a lasting impact Berdal argues that they must be a part of the wider,
long term attempt to create a necessary political and psychological environment. This must be complemented by the necessary mechanisms and institutions to address unresolved tensions and issues without resulting to violence (1996). DDR needs to be designed and managed more efficiently if we are to ensure the emergence of a peaceful society. This will involve treating the DDR process as a whole, linking one component of the process to the other ensuring flexibility and improvisation to ensure that the programmes are matched to their environments (Berdal, 1996). It is clear that intra-state wars do take place in weak states with fragile institutions to which Berdal argues that external funding should concentrate on strengthening local structures and capacities (Berdal, 1996). Such action will ensure sustainability to the efforts made in the process of reconstruction. The development needs of the country in question will also be stimulated by the international support accorded further reducing the long term costs, donor-dependency and encouraging that country’s productivity (Berdal, 1996). The DDR process must therefore be considered realistically to ensure that they are effective and subsequently are helpful in transforming children who have been both victims and perpetrators of wars into useful civilians in the society (Ball & Van de Goor, 2006).

Successful DDR must include a state of peace and a restoration of human rights and dignity. The success of any such initiative must ensure that human insecurities prevalent in a region are addressed. This is because addressing issues of fear and want will in many cases be addressing the root causes for why a society would go to war. Long term adverse implications are likely if ex-combatants fail to reintegrate. DDR needs to be linked to the overall economic and development policy framework. The process should take into consideration the specific psychological, social, economic, structural impacts of war on both the combatants. The special groups, the female combatants, the children, the ill and handicapped must be taken into consideration when formulating policy. Such policy must
operate in the environment of the community and the reintegration support must be to the whole community ensuring that the DDR process does not serve to provide more inequalities but to present a process in which reconciliation and healing is possible.
CHAPTER FOUR

AMNESTY AND RESTORATION: THE PRACTICE OF
REINTEGRATION IN NORTHERN UGANDA

4.1 Introduction

The main purpose of the reintegration process is to provide an alternative civilian lifestyle to returning combatants and to ensure that their lives are reasonably free from fear and want. Reintegration therefore is or must be social, economic and political. The previous chapter has laid out the articulation and the processes of DDR. This chapter will consequently discuss the reintegration process in Northern Uganda. Of significance in this chapter are the discussions on the theoretical underpinnings of the process. This chapter discusses the Amnesty process and the reasons why the Government of Uganda has felt compelled to grant amnesty to returning combatants. The chapter places the amnesty debate in the larger concept of restorative justice arguing that in dealing with the LRA conflict the government has opted for restorative justice in theory over retributive justice. This chapter will engage with the activities and limitations of different actors that play a role in assisting formerly abducted children adopt back into civilian life. These actors will include: the Government, the International Organisations; the Community Based Organisations (CBOs) and the Acholi cultural authority-the Kel Kar Kwaro.

The aim of this chapter in this thesis is three fold, to engage with the concept of amnesty in a wider framework of restorative justice; and to analytical analyze the activities of the different programmes so as to evaluate their efficacy on the basis of achieving restoration and on the basis of their objectives. It is important to state that the different actors that are
subject to study in this chapter play different but vital roles in reintegration. The aim of this exercise is to explore which practices stand out as useful for reintegration. A vital contribution of this chapter will be how different organizations can work in post-conflict environments to ensure that there is reconciliation between individuals and communities. It is the achievement of this reconciliation that will inform our debate on whether the reintegration process is useful and a possible tool of post conflict reconstruction. This will then form a basis on which we can make an analysis and judgement about the reintegration process and whether this process has effectively eradicated fear and want amongst those who have been reintegrated back into the community.

4.2 Argument for Amnesty

With the end of different civil conflicts around the world, many societies and warring parties have emerged from their violent past by drawing on amnesties as a channel by which they can promote reconciliation and peace. On different fronts amnesties have been criticised as highly ineffective because they promote a cycle of impunity with gross atrocities going unpunished, unacknowledged and without redress (Bloomfield, Barnes, & Huyse, 2003). There have been numerous debates as to whether amnesties hinder or facilitate reconciliation.

The Black’s Law Dictionary defines amnesty as the act of abolishing and forgetting the past offenses (Huyse, 1995). Amnesty comes in a variety of forms: it can be blanket or limited, extended to all crimes committed within a particular period, or restricted to less serious crimes or to less responsible actors or both; they may cover all individuals within the classes named, or require individual applications; they may affect only criminal or also civil liability (Greenawalt, 2000). The Optional Protocol II of the Geneva Conventions which relates to non-international armed conflict provides for amnesty by providing that, ‘At the
end of hostilities, the authorities in power shall endeavour to grant the broadest possible amnesty to persons who have participated in the armed conflict, or those deprived of their liberty for reasons related to the armed conflict, whether they are interned or detained’.

This protocol in providing for amnesty however stipulates that amnesty will and should not be granted for war crimes and crimes against humanity, which are always punishable as stipulated in the Convention of the Non-Applicability of Statutory Limitations to War Crimes and Crimes against Humanity. In practice however, this has not been the case and broad and blanket amnesties have been granted even for these crimes.

As pointed out in the previous chapter the DDR initiatives in Uganda are provided for by the Amnesty Act of 2000. The Amnesty Act presents a radical response to the ongoing conflicts in the country and balances the need for resolving the conflict with the longer term demand for justice (Refugee Law Project, 2005). This Act lays emphasis on restorative forms of justice as opposed to retributive forms of justice to end the violence and create conditions for sustainable peace, by granting amnesty to any of the returnees regardless of the crimes that they have committed (Refugee Law Project, 2005).

This law has raised serious and complex issues on how justice will be served by granting amnesty to those who have violated the communities now displaced in the North, but the context in which amnesty was viewed as a solution is critical to this argument. Northern Uganda has been victim to continuing cycles of armed conflict and it is on this basis and the desire to bring the war in the North to an end that the Amnesty Act was drafted and passed as law (Refugee Law Project, 2005). It is now practice that all formerly abducted children who return from the bush are granted amnesty upon which they are taken through the process of DDR. The Amnesty Act’s primary objective is to persuade and convince reporters to take advantage of amnesty and to encourage communities to reconcile with
those who have committed great atrocities against them. The significant question one has to ask is why the government of Uganda has chosen to grant amnesty to the rebels who have antagonised the Northern populations. There have been various arguments advanced to explain amnesty: firstly, Uganda has been characterised by violent and bloody coups and us such the ruling government has also been responsible for their share of the bloodshed that marks the Ugandan history (Refugee Law Project, 2005). The government in dealing with the Northern conflict is an actor who lacks clean hands, and has no moral authority to demand for pure retributive justice. The Government as a result has therefore engaged broader concepts of amnesty in an effort to restore calm in Northern Uganda; secondly, the Government seeks to pursue peace at all costs for the Northern populations. Their commitment to protecting the local communities up North has been severely criticised with many arguing that the Government had no will or interest in protecting the Acholi community (Branch, 2005). This desire to now work to protect these communities can be interpreted as the yielding to international pressure with the recognition of the Northern Ugandan situation was one of the world’s worst humanitarian crisis (Agence France-Presse, 2003); thirdly, the Government has on different occasions tried to defeat the LRA through military techniques and attacks as has been discussed in Chapter Two. Due to different variables discussed previously the government has been unable to secure victory over the LRA (Van Acker, 2004). The strategy therefore of giving amnesty to the rebels has served as the Governments effort to weaken the LRA and to isolate the top leadership of the movement; finally another reason for granting amnesty has been the fact that most of these rebels are as a matter of fact victims themselves. It has been argued in an earlier chapter of this work that most of the rebels are abducted children, this begs the question of whether these children should be regarded as victims or offenders. International law has been clear in the midst of all the conflicting provisions that a child cannot be held liable for crimes

26 This objective is clearly articulated in Section 5.1.1 of the Amnesty Commission Handbook.
that they committed in the course of their childhood and as a result of undue pressure (Happold, 2005). In different post-conflict environments it is impossible to draw a clear distinction between victims and perpetrators (Bloomfield, Barnes, & Huyse, 2003).

Amnesties for gross violations of human rights have often been very controversial. The minimalists have argued for the provision of blanket amnesties as the best alternative to promoting reconciliation. This position has been very popular with politicians, governments and in some respect religious leaders. They argue that prosecutions of offenders could intensify the violence. To them justice is in consolidating peace in a country so as to enhance human rights (Orentlicher, 1991). They argue that this action helps the society to move on beyond past the wrongs and crimes committed. This group lays emphasis on the political reconciliation of a state over the desire of justice for an individual.

Those of a maximalist view of amnesty however argue that anything less than prosecutions for war crimes and crimes against humanity would be highly unacceptable and that justice must be sought at all costs. Organisations such as the Human Rights Watch and human rights activists fall into this category. They argue that amnesties do not promote reconciliation rather they undervalue the very ideals that future societies should be built on (O’Donnell & Schmitter, 1986). They argue that amnesties in the longer run are more dangerous because they encourage instances of private revenge and also create a cycle of violence in which victims who see perpetrators go free result in taking action to right a past wrongs (Parker, 1996). Amnesties are seen to be a hindrance to reconciliation because there is no individual accountability for the heinous actions perpetrated by a few people (Huyse, 1995). The granting of amnesty cannot be seen as a solution to dealing with the different inter-personal differences that might have arisen as a result of the war (Hamber &
et al, 2002). Granting of amnesty is merely a top-down approach in which the victims might feel unacknowledged and their plight unappreciated (Kritz, 1995). The maximalists favour the retributive forms of justice.

In post conflict settings many conflict resolution scholars usually find themselves in the continuum between the minimalists and the maximalists approaches to justice. This school of thought is the pragmatic school which stipulates that there is no relationship between the granting of amnesties and reconciliation. The pragmatists argue that post conflict societies face political realities at the end of the war that would favour amnesties over retribution (Sarkin, 2001). At the end of a war, concessions have to be made between the ruling government and the rebel faction in recognition of the fact that the rebel faction might still have the power to create instabilities (Sarkin, 2001). Many post conflict states face the uphill task of rebuilding the country’s infrastructure and due to the material and logistical cost of criminal trials and hearings these states are unable to engage in all these efforts simultaneously thus making a case for restoration as opposed to retributive processes (Huyse, 1995). There is also a lack of a rigorous penal system that could see only some selected individuals punished and this can render the process arbitrary and have an impact on the process of reconciliation.

The pragmatist make a critical point that the context of the post conflict state must be considered when considering the question of amnesty, in some cases prosecutions may be best and in others amnesties are best placed. In the recent debates over the ICC arrest warrants for the LRA top leadership there have been arguments that justice in the west is considered in retributive terms, while in the African culture, justice is aimed at healing and reconciliation. This justice has the objective of reintegrating the offender on one hand and healing the victim on the other (Tutu, 1999). The pragmatists argue that it is in involving
the community in the process of justice that then one can hope for reconciliation. A system that is perpetrator driven is poorly equipped to deal with the needs of the victims and to address their trauma (Johnstone, 2002). It is the obvious limitations of the minimalist and the maximalist view of justice that informed the pragmatic view, which proposes a mid-point between blanket amnesties and complete prosecutions, where the victims would be acknowledged and the themes of peace, justice and reconciliation be promoted simultaneously, thus their proposal for the adoption of restorative justice. This is the philosophy that informs the Government of Uganda’s actions in granting amnesty to the LRA rebels.

4.3 Amnesty in Restorative Justice

Restorative justice can be defined as a process in which parties within a particular offence collectively resolve how they will deal with the aftermath of it and the implication of the offence (McCold, 1998). Pragmatists have continued to argue that restorative justice encourages reconciliation at different levels and increases the involvement of the victim in the process and demands that the offenders are held accountable to the victim or the victimized community (Umbreit, 2001). Restorative Justice recognises that the community is responsible for the social conditions that contribute to the offender’s behaviour (Umbreit, 2001).

Restorative justice creates an environment in which the perpetrator can confess the truth without fearing that they will be sentenced for it. It is in these forums that the victims are able to learn about what happened to their loved ones in the duration of the war thus providing closure. The victims also are able to tell their stories in a non-threatening environment. Restorative justice emphasizes the humanity of both parties and seeks to re-establish the connections between them (Zher, 1999). In different post conflict societies
the use of truth commissions and traditional methods of justice have been the tools to restorative justice.

Although this could be reflections of the local power structures (Pankhurst, 1999), and may be extremely limited it is a fact that these traditional methods provide a great contribution to the search of truth, justice and reconciliation in divided societies in a way that is culturally-sensitive (Huyse, 1995). These traditional methods can help deal with future conflicts and promote a Human Rights culture through education of their own community and future generations (Huyse, 1995).

Despite the importance of restorative methods of justice it is important to note that the pragmatists argue that reconciliation would be hindered if reparations whether material/and or symbolic are not made (Bloomfield, 2006). These reparations are seen to promote political and community reconciliation as they are an acknowledgement of the wrong done and the desire to correct it (Mani, 2002). Reparations also play a fundamental role in addressing the trauma the victims have suffered, and though insufficient in completely ensuring restitution for the victims they do show a deliberate effort to rectify the harm caused (Bloomfield, 2006).

The key values of restorative justice revolve around the goal of ‘restoration’ (Kinyanjui, 2008). The concept of restorative justice is not without its own incoherencies and raises questions on various fronts such as: who is being restored; who actually should be restored; what should be restored; how do we gauge restoration; and why is restoration important (Kinyanjui, 2008). A consensus on the exact definition of restorative justice has still not as of yet been reached (Kinyanjui, 2008). There is however a consensus on the fact that the victim must be restored (Johnstone, 2002). Johnstone and Van Ness outline the key
ingredients that synthesise the debates within restorative justice (2007). The six definitive ingredients are that: Restorative Justice will be an informal process which involves the victim, offenders and others, in discussion of the offence, the redress and how to avert from further wrongdoing or conflict; it aims at empowering ordinary people who have been victims; that the effort will be shifted to making amends for the offence to the victim and geared less towards stigmatizing and punishing the wrongdoer and encouraging their reintegration into the community after reparation; that justice will be administered in respect and violence or coercion avoided or minimized; that the focus will be devoted to the injury done to the victims and to the needs that result from that, and to tangible ways in which those needs can be addressed; emphasis will be made on strengthening or repairing relationships between people and using relationships to resolve difficult situations (Johnstone & Van Ness, 2007). These ingredients then serve as a yardstick for what would be considered as restorative justice (Johnstone & Van Ness, 2007).

It logically follows that the different actors operating for the reintegration of formerly abducted children are agents of restorative justice. This chapter will therefore engage with the conduct and practice of the different actors carrying out reintegration activities in Northern Uganda. An analysis of the reintegration process will be made by measuring the activities of different actors. This will be done firstly, in terms of the core ingredients of restorative justice and whether the different programmes have achieved proper practice of restorative justice and secondly on the basis of whether the organisations are doing that which they set out to do or claim they are doing.
4.4 The Government’s Role in Reintegration

When discussing the reintegration of formerly abducted children by the government there are two crucial players: the Uganda Peoples Defence Forces (UPDF); and the Amnesty Commission. In recent years in Northern Uganda children who had been abducted and forced to serve in the Lord’s Resistance Army (LRA) have escaped, surrendered or been captured by the UPDF as can be seen in the figure below.

![Figure 2 - Illustration of how formerly abducted children return to their communities](image)

Uganda is not as of yet a post conflict state, and though the violence has subsided in latter months this situation is still volatile and can change. Many of the local communities still live in IDP Camps to ensure their safety from irregular and random LRA attacks (Waterkeyn, Okot, & Kwame, 2005). The conditions for DDR are therefore not normal since the children reintegrated are not taken back into communities but rather they are placed in the IDP camps.
The Amnesty Act in providing for reintegration establishes a Demobilization and Resettlement Team (DRT) which functions to decommission arms, demobilize, resettle and reintegrate reporters. The Amnesty Commission, the primary implementer of the Act, carries out sensitization activities with an aim of creating a conducive environment for formerly abducted children to return and relate to their communities. The Commission is also responsible for identifying and screening reporters and this includes formerly abducted children, collecting personal information from them that would enable their reintegration. The Commission carries keeps records of the returnees. This activity has been greatly supported by the International Organisation for Migration and the recorded number of returnees is over 20,000 individuals. There have however been anomalies when it comes to the numbers recorded by the Amnesty Commission, this is because out of the recorded number the Commission only records 1,700 individuals as returnees from the LRA yet evidence provides information to the contrary. The LRA has been the largest rebel force for over 20 years and the numbers of returnees has been large, it seems that the records kept by the Amnesty Commission cannot be considered reliable or accurate. The commission issues the amnesty certificates, provides for psychosocial and counselling support to reporters, carries out medical or health examination of the returnees, distributes the in-kind assistance packages and cash reinsertion funds. The reinsertion packages normally include, material items such as a blanket, mattress, a cup, a plate and any such

27 Section 11 and 12 of the Amnesty Act of 2000.

28 Interview with Amnesty Commission Representative on the 12th of September 2008.


31 Ibid

items. This package in its totality is less than $200 per returnee, and this is hardly adequate to effectively set up any individual in society. It is however important to note that not all returned children have received the resettlement packages, about 32% of the children interviewed said they did not receive the resettlement packages while 68% had received them.

![Graph showing the number of formerly abducted children respondents who received reinsertion packages.](image)

Figure 3 - Indication of how many formerly abducted children respondents had received reinsertion packages

Of those who receive these packages, many of them end up selling these items to cater for their own survival. This being because faced with the challenge to survive with no way of making a living selling these items to the local populations enables them to be able to survive for awhile.

The official UN DDR website provides that social reintegration has been achieved mainly by promoting reconciliation of returnees with the family and the community (United Nations, 2006). This work has been carried out through traditional reconciliation

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33 Ibid


mechanisms, religious meetings and community-welcoming gatherings. Economic reintegration has been achieved primarily through counselling and referral to vocational training and income generation opportunities offered by specialized institutions throughout the country (United Nations, 2006).

The UPDF plays a fundamental role in debriefing the returning children and offers some psychological support through radio programmes, drop leaflets with amnesty information in LRA territory to inform the children and other reporters of the desire of the UPDF to rescue them. The UPDF usually then organizes for transport to the nearest Child Protection Unit and the returnees would be offered food and medical services through their personnel and hospitals. Most returning children are kept within the UPDF for a maximum of 48 hours. The ages for many of the formerly abducted children varies, with some being as young as 8 years old. Once care has been administered formerly abducted children are then transferred to Child Protection Units (CPU). These CPU centres are vital for those who have special needs or vital information due to their involvement with the LRA (Allen & Schomerus, 2006). The CPU centres are run by officers, medical personnel, and intelligence detail with specialized training in dealing with children. In interviews with the UPDF official, the information given was that the CPU staff did engage in follow up and in ensuring that the returnees were getting along well in their training and employment. In this research however none of the respondents indicated any action of follow up by the UPDF, with most returnees adamant that the UPDF did not go further to seeing to their

37 Ibid
38 Ibid
39 Ibid
welfare after the debriefing. The activities of the UPDF in the process of DDR are funded through the Ministry of Defence budget.\footnote{Ibid}

According to Allen and Schomerus, they observe that the UPDF is determined to have this system run almost seamlessly, with nobody going straight to a reception centre, since the Act is very clear in its provision that amnesty can only be granted to those who have reported to official local authorities and been debriefed\footnote{Kakurungu. (2008, September 29). Captain. (G. Maina, Interviewer)} (2006). There are however some individuals who go straight to reception centres or straight into their communities without necessarily reporting to the UPDF (Allen & Schomerus, 2006). Some returnees are scared of the UPDF and they rather risk not getting an amnesty certificate than dealing with them. Others have responsibilities at home that cannot wait to go through the process, but a large number are ignorant of the process and of the consequences of not obtaining an amnesty certificate (Allen & Schomerus, 2006). The number of those who circumvent the UPDF however is not that high (Allen & Schomerus, 2006).

The UPDF upon the conclusion of its activities then transfers children to the reception centres where they receive further help before placement back into their communities. The UPDF does offer the option for those children who have already attained the age of majority to join the UPDF forces in the North. Many individuals have taken up this offer and joined the forces to help defeat Kony and the LRA (Allen & Schomerus, 2006). A good example of this is the 105\textsuperscript{th} battalion which was formed by the LRA returnees. This unit was instrumental in recovering hidden arms and showing secret locations.\footnote{Kakurungu. (2008, September 29). Captain. (G. Maina, Interviewer)} This battalion however has since been disbanded and the members redistributed to other UPDF factions (Kakurungu, 2008).
4.4.1 Critique of the Government’s Role in Reintegration

The process of DDR in Northern Uganda has received immense support but has been plagued by various difficulties. There has been wide debate and acceptance of the fact that restorative justice is seemingly the best option for the North. The Amnesty Commission despite its activities has come under legitimate challenge and criticisms as to its engagement with its objectives. Some have been adamant that the Commission can do more to ensure that the process of reintegration is better understood and administered. It is fact that the Amnesty Act which has been the foundation of DDR in Uganda has had its own series of hiccups and has failed to address particular potential gaps that would render the process of DDR ineffective.

The Amnesty Commission is faced with an impossible situation of implementing its mandate in the context of an on-going war. As pointed out earlier the peace in Northern Uganda is still fragile and there has been no formal agreement between the government and the Lord’s Resistance Army to end this war. Kony has been reluctant to sign any peace agreement, even though there was great anticipation that this would have been done by now.42 The spirit of the Act has been embraced by those living in the North who view it to be a useful and necessary tool to achieving this peace and restoring normalcy in the North (Refugee Law Project, 2005). Most individuals in the North seem to favour amnesty over some of the military actions that have been previously undertaken by the government which have always failed to restore peace and calm in the region and which they viewed as actions against their abducted children who were in the LRA factions (Refugee Law

This Act faces the impossible task of being implemented in a volatile environment.

The second criticism which was alluded to earlier is on the genuineness of the Government and their commitment to ensuring that there is peace in the North. The communities have continued to feel isolated from the goodwill of the actions of the ruling government. This view is further supported by the Government’s policy to place the people in the North in IDP camps, the failure of the current government to protect the people in the North from violent danger and also the government actions that have resulted in depriving them of their livelihoods (Refugee Law Project, 2005). The provisions of the Act must be matched to the government will to implement provisions of the Act to ensure success. Many of the residents in the North however do not feel that this is indeed the case. The involvement of the ICC in the North of Uganda by issuing the arrests warrants has been a major challenge in how DDR is perceived with most people very cautious and suspicious of the process. The ICC has made an argument on the need for justice, and their mandate to punish those responsible and the obligation to ensure that there was no impunity. The ICC has however been largely viewed to be providing a convenient escape route for the government to avoid dealing with the root causes of the problem in Northern Uganda. The Refugee Law project argues that the peace process is a better mechanism for addressing some of the deep rooted causes of the conflict and the intervention of the ICC could be jeopardizing the one chance the people in the North have to achieving peace (2005). The desire for the community to use customary understanding to ensure reintegration is an element of restorative justice which the government in calling in the ICC seemed to undermine. The Uganda Law Society (ULS) with the support of some legislators has proposed that under the ICC bill of 2006 currently before Parliament that children should be charged for crimes committed. The ULS and the MPs have then agreed that for the
purposes of this provision in the Bill the age of criminal responsibility should be reduced to the age of 15 (Naturinda, 2008). It is such actions that have made people in the North very paranoid in their dealings with government and that have threatened the entire peace process.

The Amnesty Act fails to differentiate the different groups of reporters, and only provides for all of them. The reality is that many of those returning from the bush would fit into different groups; there are adults, females, those with disabilities, and children. The Act fails in creating a distinction on the process of reintegrating these different groups back into the community. The Act subsequently fails in protecting formerly abducted children from people who in the past could have been their commanders. The Act lacks these essential details which are pivotal to the workings of Act to ensure the achievement of its central objective. Restorative justice does not treat like cases alike, because every victim is unique and must be given unique audience if justice is to be seen to be done (Huyse, 1995). Actions of generalizing returnees regardless of their offences together renders the victims experience as common.

This of lack of clear detail in the provisions of the Act does have dire consequences. The failure for example to group returnees does have an impact on how the children are accepted back, and the repercussions are worse for children who are girls (Fox, 2004). On returning back to their communities these girls are often rejected by their families and face enormous stigma. In most traditions land passes or is inherited by the male child and this makes marriage a vital tool to owning wealth for most girls in these communities. Most of these girls however because of the abductions, rape, forced marriages and in many

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43 Ibid

cases the unplanned for children never get the opportunity to get married and as such do end up as very poor members of communities. Failure by the Act to provide for this situation and the special needs of different returnees is a major criticism to the Act.

The act also fails to expressly provide for follow up of the reintegrated children. The process of reintegration can only be successful if there is clear monitoring and initiatives for improvement. The Act provides for the monitoring of the process but fails to provide instruction as to how the Amnesty Commission can do this. The failure to follow up the recipients of the process to ensure success is a critical gap in the activities of the commission and of the Act. Since restorative justice involves high public participation this acts as the necessary check needed to ensure that the returnees are adopting back into the community (Huyse, 1995).

The issue of compensation is one that has caused growing resentment of the formerly abducted children (Refugee Law Project, 2005). However this is to be expected with many of these communities being so impoverished and living in harsh conditions. The financial packages have blurred the very exercise and objective of DDR. The government itself has fuelled this through its Peace, Recovery and Development Plan by acknowledging the need in the community and of the ex-combatants and there after giving resettlement packages to the ex-combatants to facilitate their reunification with their families. This has created rifts between communities and ex-combatants, and even between the ex-combatants themselves with some having received the reinsertion packages and others not receiving anything. The whole practice of DDR seems to then be pegged on the financial reward and for DDR to be successful this cannot be the focus and this needs to shift and attention needs to be paid to the root causes of the war and why there is conflict in the first place (Refugee Law Project, 2005). Deng in discussing reintegration argues that reintegration programmes
should not target former child soldiers as an individual group, but instead should be oriented toward the community (Deng, 2001). There is a need for a shift from the individual to the community to ensure the success of reintegration programmes (Douglas, Gleichmann, Odenwald, Steenken, & Wilkinson, 2004). These authors emphasize that the community should be prioritized over and above the individuals. Reintegration involves more people than simply the ex-combatant (Gomes Porto, Alden, & Imogen, 2007). It is not just the successful integration of the ex-combatant that will ensure sustainable peace and demilitarization but also it is the development of the civilian society that the ex-combatant belongs to (Douglas, Gleichmann, Odenwald, Steenken, & Wilkinson, 2004). As such the involvement of communities in the planning and design of DDR programmes should be encouraged and communities supported so as to be able receive ex-combatants (Gomes Porto, Alden, & Imogen, 2007). The emphasis on reparation by restorative justice could serve as a balance in how the community accepts the returnees. This action would serve as a counter balancing measure to cancel the notion that returnees are being rewarded for their crimes upon return.

With regard to the UPDF as the security force in Uganda and as an actor in reintegration, the biggest challenge lies in the impossible task of enforcing and ensuring absolute security in the North. Disarmament is still a challenge in North Uganda. In a situation where weapons are not taken out of circulation a society would be considered to be under great risk from war. According to the Small Arms Survey, Uganda is still awash with small arms and these cached weapons are likely to be used for future conflicts (Small Arms Survey, 2006). If this particular D is not taken care of then the whole process of DDR is largely unsuccessful and the likelihood of reverting back into war is still highly probable. The presence of guns can also render the whole reintegration process impossible with children who only know violence as a source of revenue threatening communities to ensure that
they survive or punishing those they feel are not accepting of them. For DDR to be successful the parties to the conflict must believe in the success of the peace process and this will force them to relinquish their weapons (Saferworld, 1996). It is also important that this is matched with arms control, and import of new weaponry should be avoided at all cost, this could demand for imposition of arms embargo by foreign trading governments and monitoring of borders for arms smuggling (Cox, 1998).

Another challenge to the DDR process in Uganda is that the UPDF has in practice been absorbing some of the ex-combatants into the regular service of the army. Most former LRA combatants find that this is the only choice they have at surviving and join the UPDF for self preservation. The process of taking on ex-combatants into a government army is one that has been outlawed by international law in the third Geneva Convention, and any such action only compromises the legal integrity and honesty of the government and fuels mistrust among the people (Refugee Law Project, 2005). Subsequently the government has been weak in looking at the challenge of demobilizing the local militia and what economic alternatives would exist for these soldiers should the war come to a final end and peace is restored in the North. The Survey of War Affected Youth observed that it was highly unlikely that the abductees would return to the bush and that many of the young people felt no allegiance to Kony or his cause but it is also fact that if peace could not be achieved or maintained that many children would revert back to violence either through the LRA or the UPDF (Blattman & Annan, 2006). Demobilization does need to be carried out successfully to avoid this situation, without which civil wars cannot be brought to an end.

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45 This is implied in the 3rd Geneva Convention on the issue of treatment of Prisoners of war and hors de combats.
and other critical goals of democratization; justice and development will have very little chance for success.46

Another criticism levelled against the UPDF has been that of gross human right violations. There have been claims of widespread sexual and physical abuses perpetrated by both the government soldiers and rebels on the Northern Ugandan population and there has been general impunity when dealing with soldiers who were violators of human rights (Butagira, 2008). Though the Public Relations Officer is adamant of the good conduct of the UPDF forces the locals have had misgivings and in some cases lodged complaints about the conduct of the soldiers in the region.

4.5 Reception Centres in Reintegration

The reception centres form a critical level in the analysis of the reintegration process in Northern Uganda. These reception centres were set up to provide safe spaces for children returning from the LRA. These centres are supposed to provide basic care and counselling to enable the ex-child soldiers return back into their communities (Allen & Schomerus, 2006). Most of these organizations were set up to help children quickly adapt back to society (Allen & Schomerus, 2006). These centres have acted as a middle ground to returnees, providing them a space in which they can readjust to returning and by sheltering them from immediate exposure to communities that may not be so receptive of their return.

In this research the reception centres studied and discussed in detail are Gulu Support the Children Organization (GUSCO), the World Vision (WV), and Concerned Parents.

Association (CPA). These three organizations were vital sources of information appertaining to the activities of reception centres in reintegration. World Vision represents a Christian ideology and an international organization outlook. GUSCO and CPA provided a secular approach to reintegration and an indigenous organizational practice in reintegration. This section therefore will aim to critically analyze the activities of the reception centres towards reintegration, making arguments for their efficacy in achieving their stated objectives.

The return through a reception centre or the failure to by an ex-child combatant could have repercussions as far as the amnesty provisions were concerned. About 32% of the respondents interviewed did not attend any of the reception centres and went home directly. From the interviews it was clear that the respondents who had not attended the reception centres did not get any of the reinsertion benefits, the graph below clearly shows this by drawing a relationship between attendance in a reception centre and the access to amnesty packs. To be able to obtain the reinsertion packages it was mandatory that one had to have the amnesty certificate granted by the UPDF.

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47 Centers are funded by DANIDA, USAID, Terres des Hommes, Save the Children Uganda and the Government of Uganda.
4.5.1 Critique of the Reception Centre Activities in Reintegration

Restorative Justice emphasises on the importance of the community to be involved in the process of administering justice. In the case of the reception centres, this would mean that there is need for the whole community to be involved in the activities and decisions of the reception centres. This is based on the fact that the community must be treated as a primary stake holder in the decisions that involve the returnees. All these organisations did claim to involve the local communities in the crafting of the programmes that were implemented. World Vision involved the locals in reviewing its activities as opposed to designing and in the protection of formerly abducted children once they are returned back into their local communities. The organisations also provided that they engaged with the opinions of the formerly abducted children.

In carrying out the research however we asked the locals of their participation and only half of the respondents interviewed from the local community said that they were involved in the process. It was however interesting to note that of the half almost all of them gave their own personal encounters with the formerly abducted children. Most of them said they
had helped to feed a returnee, clothed a returnee, or shown kind gestures to these returning children. It was only those respondents in positions of authority such as the chiefs who seemed involved in the programming of reintegration. Most of the others who had said they were involved were not involved in the decision making level of how reintegration was to be done. It is also important to further note that whilst the local leaders seemed involved, their work seemed limited to the cultural practices of accepting the children back into the community and not in designing the programming for reintegration. There is a clear gap between the organization’s claim to involve the local people and the actual practice of doing so. When the children were asked about the reintegration programming and what they thought about it or how it could be improved most of the children did not give an answer. Most of the formerly abducted children did not think it was their place to suggest what should happen and mostly dismissed the question as the responsibility of the government or the reception centres. The fact that the returnees did not seem to engage with the programming was a clear sign that they did not feel that their views counted for anything.

The involvement of the recipient actors cannot be downplayed and if solutions are to be sustainable they must stem from these communities. Restorative justice lays emphasis in the fact that communities must be involved if the process is to be effective and useful. There have been claims that the local communities have in some instances rejected the returning children. A criticism levelled to this challenge was that if the communities had been involved throughout the process instead of merely being used as a dumping ground then maybe there would be more acceptance.48 This suggestion is indicative of the fact that the members of the community wanted to be involved in how the process was carried out and not merely commanded and expected to accept the children back. Durable

reconciliation must be home-grown. Forgiveness can only emanate from those who suffered to those who caused the injustice (Bloomfield, Barnes, & Huyse, 2003).

At present most of the reception centres are empty with very few children now returning from the bush. Most of these organizations have therefore diverted their focus from reception to rigorous follow-up and monitoring of children who had come through their reception centres. This exercise they hope will enable them to know how those who have already been reintegrated are adopting back into their communities. In a review recently done for Save the Children Uganda the reviewer was cautious of the alternative programming that was being done but questioned the capacity of these organizations to carry out these tasks (Hassan, 2008). It is important to note that while interviewing the formerly abducted children on the process of reintegration this research asked them about follow up and whether the reception centres they had been to or the UPDF which claimed to carry follow-up activities had sought after them after they left their facilities and were implanted into the community. Most of the children reported that they had never met any member of the centres once they had been released back into their communities (See Figure below).

![Figure 5 - Indication from respondents of reception centre follow up activities](image-url)
Follow up of the returnees once they have been placed in the communities is a hurdle for these organizations. This shows that whilst the centres had claimed that this was an activity they were largely engaged in, many of the returnees had not been recipient to this service by the centres, thus a gap between the rhetoric and reality. Many organisations claimed that there was an overwhelming demand for the resettlement and reintegration of formerly abducted children. A criticism levelled against this challenge is that it is possible to get members of the community involved in carrying out the activities of the centre. A legitimate group of individuals that could be called on would be the elders and chiefs in the Ker Kal Kwaro who would volunteer of their time for small budgetary allowances to help the organizations. It was however clear that most of these organizations had a closed policy and preferred to internally conduct their activities without help from outside making it very costly to run their programming.

In light of the fact that the experiences of the abducted children were very traumatising, psychosocial support is perhaps the most fundamental component of every reception centre. In a research carried out for the USAID and UNICEF on reception centres in Northern Uganda, most of the respondents said that out of all the activities in the centre their best memory was ‘counselling’ (Allen & Schomerus, 2006). The World Vision reception centre’s psycho-social component involves taking children through recreational activities such as drawing, and consequently engaging children in drawing some of their bush memories and experiences. The organization also does take the children to the UPDF barracks to demystify their fear and to help them overcome the indoctrination of Joseph Kony (Allen & Schomerus, 2006). The ex-child soldiers do also go through counselling in which children are given an opportunity to talk to trained counsellors about
their time in captivity. A vital component of the psycho-social component of the World Vision programme is prayer, which is the foundation of all their practices. Children who have gone through this centre report feeling forgiven and protected. GUSCO and CPA on the other hand support indigenous community reconciliation as a psycho-social effort to enable the community get past the adverse activities of the formerly abducted children. This activity also enables the returnees to feel forgiven and accepted back into the community and for the community to go through an initiation of reconciliation with the aggressors who had destroyed property, taken lives and changed the way of life in Northern Uganda. This is indicative of the leaning of local organisations on community driven reconciliation and justice. The actions of community forgiveness and acceptance are powerful tools of restorative justice. World Vision seems to take on a western centric approach to counselling and a religious view of forgiveness of the combatants.

When this research engaged the formerly abducted children on counselling, many of them said that it had helped them to deal with the traumatic events of living in the bush. It is however important to note that a great portion of returnees still did experience the effects of their time in combat. Many of them still deal with the memories of what they did, how they killed members of their family and what was done to them. Most of the girls recount being forced into marriages with the soldiers and being forced to have sexual intercourse. In a focus group most of the girls recounted returning home to find their parents dead and their siblings scarred. The reoccurrence of these memories is an essential factor that must be considered when discussing psychosocial support. This research was interested in


50 Ibid

finding out whether this useful service was accessible for those individuals who had been reinserted back into the community. The different organisations interviewed claimed that this was a major activity of the reception centres. When asked about this most of the children explained that they did get counselling, but this was done by their relatives and not reception centres. It is clear that this aspect of reintegration though most hailed has still not been achieved and that more needs to be done to fully achieve this objective. It is evident that there is a disconnect between the claim of successful psycho-social support and the actual reality thus rendering this component of the reception centre activities partially ineffective. The GUSCO official in discussing the psychological welfare of returnees states that about 30% of the formerly abducted children have post traumatic stress disorder and recovery is only 70%, meaning that about 30% of the children do not get to adequately recover.\footnote{Otieno, O. (2008, October 2). GUSCO Official. (G. Maina, Interviewer)} A suggestion made in one of the interviews was that the assistance given to the formerly abducted children had to be sustainable and that there was a need to teach members of our community how to help themselves.\footnote{Owuor, A. (2008, September 3). Journalist. (G. Maina, Interviewer)} This suggestion if panned out would mean that it would make more logical sense to train members of the community the chiefs, the elders, the older women how to counsel and deal with psycho-social problems. This would ensure that even when the children are placed back into the community they would be able to access counsel thus providing a better chance for the whole society.

Another vital activity of the centres is the advocacy of the rights and plight of the formerly abducted children. CPA’s carries out this activity through documentation, production of leaflets and use of other communication. This activity is aimed at getting the community to empathize with what the formerly abducted children have gone through and to create

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receptivity within the community for their return (Allen & Schomerus, 2006). Within their advocacy mandate the organization also runs radio programs which advocate and speak against discrimination and stigmatization of the formerly abducted children in community. GUSCO is also very involved in advocacy for the rights of these children; they do this by advocating for policies that oppose stigmatization, and the production of Information, Education and Communication (IEC) material that gives information on the plight of these children. GUSCO also works closely with the community to ensure tolerance and acceptance of these children once they are returned back to the communities. World Vision like the other two centres is very committed to advocacy through radio programmes where they sensitize the local communities on the plight of the returned formerly abducted children, carrying out community meetings in which they speak to members of the public in schools and in camps about the rights and the misfortune of the formerly abducted children creating a sense of reception for the returning children.

In interviewing formerly abducted children many of them said that on returning back to their communities they were received positively. Some of the respondents recounted the warm reception upon their return back into the community. Some of the reception was mixed, meaning that while some of the relatives were accepting there are others within the society that did not accept them.


55 A good example is the publication of the Child Trumpet Magazine produced by GUSCO.


Organizations like GUSCO continue to support the traditional cleansing ceremony facilitated by the Ker Kal Kwaro so as to ensure social cohesion in the community between the locals and the formerly abducted children as well as other returnees. It was however interesting that even whilst most formerly abducted children claimed that their reception back into the community was warm and positive, many of them complained that they were often labelled by members of the public. It is clear that though the community was well prepared by the different organizations to deal with the return of the formerly abducted children this did not rid the stereotypes in within the society. Most of the respondents recounted that in instances of petty misdemeanour and crimes they were always suspected first. It was evident that the members in community could not get past their previous conduct and in a way had still not fully resolved the issues of the past. This shows that while advocacy was a crucial tool in the community accepting the formerly abducted children back more needed to be done to ensure that members of the community had come to a place of dealing with their actions and forgiving them. This would ensure that the reception process was whole and that in the future the respondents did not face stigmatization and discrimination by members of the local communities they were reintegrating back into. The advocacy and public education carried out by these organizations through materials and radio is fundamental to children being accepted back. Constant educating and community counselling is necessary if protecting the children from stigma and discrimination is to be achieved. Success cannot be only measured in the way communities receive formerly abducted children but also in how they live with them and accept them in future years.

\footnote{The Acholi Paramount Chief and his ruling chiefs and elders; also refer to next chapter for discussion of the traditional cleansing ceremonies referred to here.}
The centres also involve the formerly abducted children in social activities and livelihood skills. CPA which has a bias to dealing with child mothers carries out livelihood strengthening skill activities to enable their respondents to tend to their homes and care for their children.\(^\text{59}\) GUSCO engage in many social activities with the children while they are staying in the centre, these include feeding of the formerly abducted children while they are at the centre, the medical examination and treatment of children and the playing and recreational activities which the children are mostly involved in whilst at the centre.\(^\text{60}\) World Vision involves the formerly abducted children in playing football, netball, other games, and traditional dancing.\(^\text{61}\) The Centre is involved in medical treatment of the returnees and also trains child mothers on health related issues and family planning.\(^\text{62}\) Most of the children interviewed about their activities whilst at the reception centres said they played games, did dramas and cultural dances. These activities seemed to be popular at all of the reception centres.

Whilst the other issues such as social acceptance and fighting the memories of captivity were important the need to survive was greater and the means to do so needed to be given greater attention. It is very apparent that the centres have a greater bias to psychosocial and social detail but fail to meet the core objective of reintegration. To be able to adequately speak of proper reintegration one must be free from want and fear and the efforts to achieve both these components needs to be central to the programming of reintegration.


\(^{62}\) Ibid
The Centres did to an extent provide economic empowerment to the formerly abducted children. The various representatives of the different reception centres said that they did teach skills to the returnees. GUSCO and World Vision for example trained the returning children skills in bicycle repair, carpentry, bakery, tailoring, and brick laying. They also did teach basic business management and provided start-up capital for small businesses for the formerly abducted children. World Vision did support formal education for some of the children who had gone through that particular reception centre. CPA did give some ox-plows and grinding mills to some of the child mother groups.

In wanting to find out about the quality of life of the respondents in relation to whether they had acquired a skill at the centre or not we asked the respondents what they did with their lives. It was evident as illustrated below that those who had acquired skills were better off in making a living. This is true of all trades except farming where those who had acquired no skill in anything seemed to do even better than those skilled at the reception

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centres. A reason for this could perhaps be that there was no farming skill transference class in any of the centres.

![Graph showing acquired skills](image)

**Figure 7 - Analysis of whether the skills obtained at reception centres helped formerly abducted children in their community life**

It seemed clear from observation and through interviews that whilst in some cases skills had been taught, these proved inadequate when individuals did not have the start-up capital to make a living off these skills. Though the reception centres spent a small percentage of their resources on economic empowerment objectives, more needed to be done to economically empower the formerly abducted children.

While most of the challenges are legitimate concerns and would account for a percentage of the gaps that exist between what the organizations say they do and what they actually do, it seems that restructuring of the programmes will go a long way in addressing the challenges. If the process of amnesty is to be rewarding and the decision to restore communities and societies is to be realised then the local community must be at the centre of all these activities. Involving the locals is in no way the magical answer that eliminates all the problems but it could be an answer to some of the concerns. The disconnect that
exists between the objectives, the rhetoric of what the organizations do and the practice on the ground has to a great degree rendered the practice of the reception centres ineffective.

4.6 Other Actors In The Reintegration Process

A practical gap in the practice of reintegration has been to do with the confusion of the term with the concept of reinsertion. It has often been presumed that merely placing an individual back into their community constitutes reintegration. Different programmes have marked the efficacy of their programming on the basis of the successful reunification of the ex-combatants with their family. As has been discussed in the previous chapter this action, is not in and of itself reintegration (Alden, 2002). Reintegration has to do with securing the life of an individual to ensure he is free from fear and free from want. There is a tendency to assume that the activities of the UPDF and the reception centres constitute reintegration, this therefore has meant that there has been more discussion and debate over the activities of the UPDF and the reception centres but very little attention has been devoted to what this thesis refers to as the ‘other’ actors of reintegration. There has been consequently very little research done on the activities of these formerly abducted children once they have been reinserted back into their communities. This stage is a significant component of the reintegration process as it is in this phase the formerly abducted children have to return and adopt civilian roles in the community. Failure to properly articulate this stage and to plan for the complexities around it could as a matter of fact lead to unsuccessful peace-building.

Research carried out in Gulu found that once placed back into the communities a large majority of returnees engage in small businesses. Many of the boda-boda riders65 in Gulu,
for example are former child soldiers. Some of the children also get employed in farms, households or businesses.

![Bar chart showing current occupations of formerly abducted respondents](image)

**Figure 8 - Current Occupations of Formerly Abducted Respondents**

It is significant that also a large number of returning children are involved in attaining education and training. From this representation of our respondents in this research it is clear that about 37% - 40% of the formerly abducted children did go on to join a school or an institution for some form of training. It is for this reason that the organizations and institutions that provide these services are also a critical part of the reintegration process. Their contribution to process does form a critical basis over what would be deemed as successful reintegration. Examples of such organizations in Uganda include organizations such as; Child Voice International (CVI);\(^{66}\) St. Monica’s;\(^ {67}\) and the School of War Affected Children (SOWAC).\(^ {68}\)

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\(^{66}\) CVI is a Christian international organization that seeks to restore the voices of children silenced by war

\(^{67}\) St. Monica’s is a centre that was founded in 1975 by the Italian Missionaries Sisters. The school was created to promote disadvantaged girls and young women in pursuit of social justice. In recent years the school is run by indigenous Sisters of the Sacred Heart of Jesus and has worked to provide skills to formally abducted girls who in most cases are also child mothers.

\(^{68}\) SOWAC is a boarding school facility built and funded by the Government of Uganda and the Belgium Government.
To be able to consider the reintegration programme a success, the process must be judged on the extent to which it has reasonably freed formerly abducted children from want and fear enabling them to survive and to feel safe. To ensure that this is achieved various challenges have to be addressed.

The involvement of the local community is vital to achieve any sort of sustainable reintegration. With the government’s decision to adopt practices of restorative justice and grant amnesty to the formerly abducted children there is an underlying demand that the local community is receptive to their return. Any successful reintegration attempt must include the community. This community involvement deals with issues that the maximalists refer to as impunity, by ensuring that justice is accorded to the victims of the crimes and the offender is punished and forced to make reparations in accordance to the dictates of their culture. A good illustration of local involvement is in how the St. Monica institution involves the locals in drafting and determining programmes. This is done through forums where the director holds public meetings with members of the community and discussions are held and local initiatives in the different reintegration programmes are encouraged. CVI, an international NGO, also involves the girls they care for in defining the programmes on the basis of what they define or perceive success to be.

The ideal of any reintegration programme is to give formerly abducted children an alternative civilian lifestyle. It is imperative that in carrying out reintegration activities that post conflict nations engage with the economic realities that the returnees have to contend with to ensure survival. This is why the programming for the reintegration process by the different actors is vital. From observation it was clear that programmes crafted by the
indigenous persons took into consideration details that were relevant to the local community. In SOWAC the programmes were crafted by government officials in the Ministry of Education. In CVI while the larger workforce was indigenous and they consulted with the locals their programmes were drafted by international expatriates based in Gulu. The programmes run in St. Monica’s for instance were relevant to the local people and the structure of the institution was greatly informed by the fact that the sisters who run the centre were members of that same community. Many of the staff members and instructors in this centre had experienced firsthand the devastation of the war; they had also lost their relatives, friends, homes and now were committed to restoring their communities. Their personal experiences and knowledge of the economic hardships of the area gave them an advantage in drafting programming that was useful and relevant to the local community and the returning children.

One cannot over emphasise how important it is for the returning children to feel part of the reintegration process. Their opinions must be given consideration and their involvement held in high regard. The way in which combatants view their reintegration back into the community is critical to ensuring the end to conflicts (Assefa, 1992). A good example of this is CVI develops individualized reintegration plans for the different girls and this is done by talking to the girls and finding out what a successful life would be to them. This differs with every girl to some success is psychological stability, to another it could be the ownership of two huts and to another is acquire vocational skills.69

In discussing reintegration efforts by these other actors it is vital to note that it is not enough to train these children and give them skills; it is important that institutions and

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organizations think of an after plan and move swiftly to implement such a plan to ensure that these children have opportunities within the community. St. Monica’s for example has put in place a working system in which they approach future employers and also the existence of a business tailoring unit in which most of the girls get employment. An organisation such as CVI however seemed more concerned with giving skill and helping the girls recover but there was no indication of an after institution plan and this was made clear even to the girls. The ability of a programme to provide opportunity upon its completion for a number of the children is a necessity to ensuring successful reintegration.

There has been a lot of criticism to the isolation of formerly abducted children with many arguing that there was a need to mix the formerly abducted children with the rest in the community.\textsuperscript{70} This is because it creates a ‘them’ and ‘us’ mentality. The purpose of reintegration is to reconcile the children back into the community and it therefore defeats the purpose if the formerly reintegrated children are put up on their own in the seclusion of community. This action perpetuates stigmatization and further discrimination thus enhancing fear amongst the returning children. SOWAC for example is a school that is built for formerly abducted children and admission is based on the production of an amnesty certificate. The St. Monica’s and CVI programmes have attempted to mix the children with those who were not formerly abducted and though they understand the harsh experiences that some of the children have gone through they have attempted to provide structures in which all these children abducted or not can experience childhood. Though the idea in SOWAC is noble the effectiveness of restoring these children back into community after alienating them by educating them separately might be difficult.

\textsuperscript{70} Mao, N. (2008, August 20). Former Member of Parliament for Gulu. (G. Maina, Interviewer)
A further challenge has to do with the fact that in a community that is so impoverished and where there is a struggle for children to attend school, preferential treatment of the children who had been aggressors in the past over those who had not been in the bush further complicates the dynamics of reintegration. In Gulu for example many formerly abducted children use their amnesty certificates to obtain scholarships and grants for businesses. In many instances these services are not available for children who were not abducted and this creates a tension between individuals who were abducted and those who were not.

Another challenge when it comes to the reintegration of children was the complication that arose from mixing the boys and girls in the different institutions. SOWAC for example has attempted to administer its programming to both genders. During the war many of the girls were mostly wives and many of them had been raped by their male counterparts.\textsuperscript{71} This therefore implies that the girls always undertook docile roles in comparison to their male counter-parts. It is doubtful that an action of putting them in the same environment as the boys will help them reintegrate into normalcy. This action can as a matter of fact be construed to be a recreation of the bush structure in a formalized setting. A recent article in the local daily argued that research amongst these girls has shown that the ex-LRA rebels do still harass the girls who they consider to be their wives (Namubiru, 2008). An environment where the girls and boys are mixed enhances fear for some of the returnees and gives back negative power to others. The high drop-out rate is indicative of the defective system structure in SOWAC.

\textsuperscript{71} Sister Rosemary. (2008, September 1). St Monica’s Director. (G. Maina, Interviewer)
Since a significant number of the female returnees return to their communities with children it is necessary that reintegration programming take into account this circumstance. Many times most of the girls who return from the bush are unable to go to school or to join any vocation teaching centre because they bear the responsibility of taking care of their children. This is a dynamic that must be taken into consideration if reintegration is to be considered effective. St. Monica’s has a running day-care facility in which the girls who are enrolled in their can leave their children when they attend school and their children also benefit from basic education. CVI also takes in the children of these children into account when planning for their programming. It is self-evident that girls in these programmes feel more socially accepted and this in turn enhances their participation and return back into the community.

Successful reintegration is the cornerstone of any lasting peace. Post-conflict reconstruction efforts must endeavour to ensure that reintegration activities are successful. The activities of these organisations must therefore be relevant in addressing need and must involve the local community and the returning demobilised population. The activities of these organisations are vital to the whole reintegration debate and their efforts must be strengthened. On the basis of an argument made in the previous chapter about the long term nature of reintegration, it follows that since these institutions exist to serve the returnees for longer periods of time then their activities must be central to the reintegration debate if there is hope for sustainable restoration of communities.

4.7 The Ker Kal Kwaro - Cultural Actor

The Ker Kal Kwaro is the cultural unit in the Acholi community mandated with the task of reintegration. As an actor in reintegration the Ker Kal Kwaro plays a significant role in ushering in the formerly abducted children and acting as the leader in accepting these
children back into the community. The Kel Kwaro enjoys the legitimacy of the local people and is composed of the Paramount Chief, the 52 chiefs who each lead a clan from the 4 districts of the Acholi and a secretariat with project officers, account assistants and office staff. The objective of this institution of leadership is to be at the apex of Acholi cultural values, and to provide leadership in Acholi culture and foster reconciliation and unity. Since the institution is composed of community and clan leaders, their initiatives are community driven. The institution teaches formerly abducted children life skills and culture and these are vital to enabling the children re-adapt back into the community way of life. The Ker Kal Kwaro receives returnees into its supervision through referrals and coordination with key stakeholders. Once the abductees have gone through the reception centres many of them are referred to the Ker Kal Kwaro for guidance and also for the celebration rituals of accepting them back into the community. Those who have not gone through reception centres are also referred by their clan leaders or elders.

The tasks of the Ker Kal Kwaro include peace building in the Acholi region. This is done by receiving the formerly abducted children back into the community. This involves counselling members of the community and victims of atrocities that it is important they forgive and accept these children back. Often a case is made for the innocence of the abductees and the blame placed on Kony for their actions. This role is a significant component to the success of the reintegration process. The acceptance of the abductees regardless of the reluctance of the community members is a foundation for any form of

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73 His Highness Rwot David Onen Achana

74 Districts of the Acholi are Gulu, Kitgum, Pacte, and Amuru.


76 Ibid

77 Ibid
reintegration. The practice of rituals during the acceptance ceremony is also a vital component of reintegration; the victims in this system feel addressed when these returnees apologize and in some cases narrate their actions. This action is said to bring closure to those who suffered the violence of the war. The Ker Kal Kwaro also does counselling where in communities the formerly abducted children are usually advised to approach their elders and chiefs for assistance. The institution also does some social services within the community by creating awareness on HIV/AIDS and the importance of testing and also enhancing the role of women in community affairs. Both these social activities have a bearing on the quality of life that the abductees live. A significant number of formerly abducted children suffer from HIV and information as to what to do about it is vital, also not all returnees have been tested therefore the encouragement to get tested is a vital service of the Ker Kal Kwaro (Coalition to stop the use of Child Soldiers, 2008). The institution has received support from various donors such as the IOM that supported their recent cleansing ceremony.

Some of the other cultural practices that accompany the reconciliation process are that those who had committed atrocities such as raping and killing would stick their bare feet on a freshly cracked egg. In the Acholi custom the egg symbolized innocent life, and according to local custom by stepping over the ‘opobo’ tree and into the egg then the returnees were restoring themselves to what they used to be before they committed the vicious atrocities (Harlacher & et al, 2006). There was also a session where the returnees

78 Ibid
79 Ibid
80 This ritual is traditionally referred to as ‘Nyono tonggweono’. In Acholi tradition when someone has been away from home and then returned a cleansing ritual had to be performed at the entrance of the clan settlement. The belief is that people who have been aware could have contracted spirits that could bring misfortune to the community (Harlacher & et al, 2006).
were required to verbally ask for forgiveness for the wrongs committed and the elders would then forgive them on behalf of the community. After being welcomed back into the fold, the offender would sit down together with tribal leaders and make amends for his transgressions (Harlacher & et al, 2006). After confessing to his misdeeds, the wayward tribesman is required to pay the victim's kin compensation in the form of cows, goats and sheep (Harlacher & et al, 2006). These rituals and ceremonies have been seen to free individuals and groups from holding any grudges between themselves.

The greatest challenge that the institution faces is limited funding. Since they have access to the local community there is a sense that they can do more to aid the process but they are limited by what they can do. From observation it was clear that they could be involved in the activities of the reception centres to provide the follow up detail that was lacking and complement their activities making their efforts to help formerly abducted children more effective. The organization also faces the daunting task of convincing their communities not to stigmatize the returning children; this has proved to be even more difficult for the returning young mothers who have been shunned by the community. It was clear that though the Ker Kal Kwaro was a legitimate leading authority, they did not have the power to force the locals to accept the formerly abducted children back into the community. This meant that they could not fully protect the returning children from instances of stigmatization and discrimination.

Compensation is usually done in form of money and the money received by the victim’s clan is used to pay bride price for a son of the clan to get married to a woman. The woman would be expected to give birth to a child who would be named after the person killed and this is seen as a continuation of his life (Harlacher & et al, 2006).
The Ker Kal Kwaro is a significant player in the process of reintegration because it is the one institution that provides a link between the returnees and the communities. The activities of this cultural unit are vital for any reintegration to be considered successful. Greater emphasis however needs to be made to involve the unit in the activities of the reception centres. Their services should be more than the welcome reception of the returnees and their counsel should be integrated in drafting relevant reception programmes for the formerly abducted children.

It is also important to note that with the Government granting amnesty to the returning rebels there is a danger of a perception of impunity. The victims of heinous crimes could easily feel that justice was not done and that offenders were left to go free. The role of the Ker Kal Kwaro then becomes invaluable because it acts as an organ for justice. The traditions and practices like *Mato-put*, play a significant role in ensuring that the offenders atone for their wrongdoing and that the victims are honoured and their experiences valued and respected. Since Restorative justice has the victim as the central concern in any offence the Ker Kal Kwaro play a fundamental role in ensuring that the victim feels redressed and that the community is reconciled.

### 4.8 Conclusion

In granting pardons and amnesties for crimes committed by the LRA cohort, the Government has shifted its philosophical standpoint in dealing with former rebels. As noted in previous chapters the Government has over time been committed to military offensives as a way of dealing with combatants. These strategies have consistently failed to work and only served to strengthen the rebellious activities of the LRA and its outrage on the civilian populations. In discussing the reasons for this shift to granting amnesties this thesis has identified a variety of reasons. Of interest is the international pressure on the
Government of Uganda to adapt this element of restoration. This is indicative of the pragmatism that exists in the international debate on the reconstruction of post conflict states and the influence of the liberal peace dividend that works to attain peace at all cost. The question that arises then as a result of this is whether justice should be sacrificed for the sake of peace. It has been argued in this chapter that the workings of restorative justice serve to ensure justice, though not retributive it is the most relevant form of justice to restoring communities. Issues of justice and peace are better articulated in the subsequent chapter where this work engages with the desire for peace and how the same can be achieved together with justice.

From the discussions it is evident that the practice of reintegration differs significantly from what it was desired to be. The organizations in place have set objectives which they must achieve to ensure an effective process of restoration, this has however not been the case in practice. There are gaps between practice and the theoretical objectives. These gaps have consequently undermined the overall goodwill of the programmes and their objective to effectively re-establish formerly abducted children.

The successful administration of different programmes of reintegration is at the heart of lasting peace. The government, local organisations and the international community must work to ascertain that those who have returned are equipped with a reasonable opportunity to have a life that is free from want and fear. To ensure successful reintegration the process must address the relevant needs. These organizations must craft relevant programmes that can address society’s needs and to ensure the relevance of the trade and skills they teach formerly abducted children. Programmes must aim to provide economic independence to these children within the reality of their community. The wholeness of the programming must ensure economic survival, social freedom and political participation which are
imperative components to ensuring that these programmes are not only effective but useful.

The nature and the causes of the conflict must be addressed. Suffice to say that the conditions in the North of Uganda are harsh and it is difficult to implement ideal reintegration programmes. Many members of the communities live in the IDP camps and with very limited resources it is a constant challenge for those who have returned to survive. This begs the question asked repeatedly through the discourse of this thesis, if reintegration implies taking a returning child to an impossible and harsh reality then what in reality are these abductees being reintegrated back into? Though most of the children were forcibly conscripted into the LRA the harsh realities of reintegrated life could in many instances frustrate them and forcing them into crime. Reintegration programming must therefore aim to ensure that these returning children are established within the confines of what the local community defines as normal life. This therefore implies that programming must be realistic, accurate and most of all relevant. The success of reintegration in Northern Uganda does have huge implications for the required peace in the region. The desire for lasting peace can only be met if there is proper reintegration which grapples with human insecurities and if the root causes of the conflict are addressed.
CHAPTER FIVE

CAN LOCAL COMMUNITIES BE RESTORED: THE RESULTING IMPACTS OF REINTEGRATION PRACTICE

5.0 INTRODUCTION

In the post-conflict environment of Northern Uganda it is a fact that peace without justice is only symbolic peace (Gunson, 1996). It is often the case that in post-conflict environments there is always a deliberate effort to blot out the memories of the violent past and for the domestic and international communities to embrace the principles of amnesty. It is imperative to note however that that a cessation of violence is not invariably equivalent to the achievement of peace (Francis, 2000). While notions of amnesty may logically make sense in the context of post conflict states the local populations will be hard pressed to invest their trust in governments if they feel that the injustices they suffered have not been redressed (Mani, 2005). Both justice and reconciliation are fundamental and significant to ensuring successful post conflict reconstruction of societies (Lambourne, 2004). This is especially true of the Acholi community in the North of Uganda that as discussed in previous chapters has been marginalised by the government and been constantly attacked by rebels that have claimed to be fighting for their cause. In this society there is an urgent need to marry issues of justice and peace together to find a logical and reasonable solution that sets these communities free from fear and want. Mani however raises concern with the manner in which justice after conflict is administered (2005). She argues that transitional justice is often preoccupied with the injustices that are consequential to conflicts but often neglects the injustices that are linked to the causes of the conflict (Mani, 2005). There is a tendency to focus more on human rights aggressions
and the visible causes of the conflicts and completely disregard the inherent causes of the conflict. There is a need in post conflict settings to address justice holistically and in an integrated manner so as to encompass all the injustices that have been suffered by the war affected populations (Mani, 2005). In northern Uganda it will therefore be more beneficial to not only focus on the adverse activities of the LRA but to also devote attention to the role of the government in the conflict.

In post conflict settings it is often difficult to address issues of justice and in many cases there is a dilemma on whether to fully pursue justice at the expense of any form of peace (Mani, 2005). In most instances the demands for justice can often contradict the conditions that are necessary to maintain a cessation of hostilities (Mani, 2005). Justice and reconciliation have therefore always been seen as competing objectives in the peace building process and to ensure an end to conflict the solution has always been to negotiate (Lambourne, 2004). It is instances such as these that see the LRA rebels receiving amnesty from the government in Uganda. This process however can perpetuate a culture of impunity on one hand (Lambourne, 2004), and on the other hand, ignoring justice claims may easily cause disgruntlement amongst the aggrieved groups and undermine any hope at achieving sustainable positive peace (Mani, 2005). Peace agreements that grant amnesties to individuals who are deemed to be criminals can at times be detrimental to the post-war stability and reconciliation (Francis, 2000). Post conflict reconstruction must therefore identify and create structures that will strengthen positive peace and ensure that societies do not relapse back into conflict (United Nations, 1992). Kritz observes that there seems to be a paradigm shift by different stakeholders recognising that there is a need to acknowledge past human right violations and to establish accountability mechanisms that would ensure justice and reconciliation (Kritz, 1995).
While there is great discussion on the need for justice and reconciliation in post conflict reconstruction and peace building, there is very little said of how these concepts would relate to each other or what these concepts would mean in practice (Pankhurst, 1999). There is also modest discussion over the mechanisms and the desired objectives of reconciliation and justice in the post conflict states, except the assumption that the same would contribute to peaceful states (Lambourne, 2004). There have been contentions that justice is an essential component of reconciliation (International Peace Academy, 1996). In discussing the Northern Uganda crisis it is important to note that discussions of reconciliation cannot be made devoid of an engagement with justice. It is only in addressing the injustices that these communities have suffered from the actions of both the government and the rebels that one can even begin a discussion on reconciliation. Justice therefore cannot be confined to only legal justice but must be applied to other forms of justice (Lambourne, 2004). Lederach discusses the importance of socio-economic justice as a critical element to guaranteeing peace (1999). He argues that in peace building efforts there has been a failure in developing a peace-building framework that produces social and economic justice (Lederach, 1999). He advocates that peace-building must invest deeper in not only resolving conflicts but also in issues of restorative justice and in social-economic justice (Lederach, 1999). Justice therefore assumes meaning not only in the legalistic debate but also as a social, psychological and economic concept.

It is on this basis therefore that this chapter in contributing to the discussions in the previous chapters on the nature and practice of reintegration will engage with the resulting impacts and realities of the reintegration process. Reintegration which serves as a tool that ensures the restoration of post-conflict societies does introduce interesting dilemmas that must be discussed if the practice is to be made more effective. It is not sufficient therefore to discuss only the implementation of the process of reintegration without engaging with
the larger discussion of the resulting impacts this process has on the returning children and
the local communities in Northern Uganda. This chapter will firstly discuss the legalistic
issues of justice and peace. In Northern Uganda most of these formerly abducted children
have been responsible for killing and violently injuring members of the societies that they
are being reintegrated back into. To be able to effectively analyse the process of
reintegration, the issues of justice and how victims are addressed and violators punished is
central to assessing how returnees are accepted back into communities. This chapter will
subsequently engage with the economic burden of reintegration and the overlooked
implied responsibility of the local set-ups to provide and to cater for the economic needs of
the returnees. The chapter therefore discusses the pertinent issues of the cost of
reintegration and the obligation of the different parties to pay for this process. This
chapter will analyze the social and psycho-social implications of reintegration which will
involve a study of the social activities which the children are involved in to assess how they
are adjusting back to normalcy. This will include a study of their relationships in the
community to be able to understand to what extent the community has embraced these
returning children and to also be able to analyze whether communities have gone past the
aggressions of these formerly abducted children. Lederach in discussing peace building
does argue that relationships are central to any successful reintegration process and that
peace-building must be built on a foundation of relationships (Lederach, 1999). It will also
be pertinent to see the extent to which counselling has helped in the psychosocial
adjustments of children back into the community. The chapter will also make an analysis of
the gender implications of reintegration. This is especially important because girls make up
about 30% of the returning children but they rarely go through the formal process of
reintegration (United Nations, 2006). Most of them return having had children and as such
form an entirely different and unique group. How the community accepts this special
group of children and the reverse impact this has on the community is an important aspect when analysing the process of reintegration.

To inform this thesis on the impact of reintegration on the local community an empirical investigation was carried out with different members of the local community. When the respondents were asked about their experience and thoughts of the reintegration process most of them were positive of the reintegration process but expressed some reluctance to the idea of wholly accepting the returnees back into the community. Many of the respondents argued that the formerly abducted children were also victims of this brutal war and had been forced through abductions and excessive indoctrination to carry out violent acts. They saw the reconciliation of families that had been estranged by war as a positive return of the reintegration process. It was clear that the older individuals interviewed felt hopeful that the next generation could be restored through the reintegration process. There was however concerns with what would constitute effective reconciliation and whether actions aimed at blotting out of the violent past would ensure peace. Some of the respondents raised concerns over the preferential treatment of some returnees over members of the community. As has been discussed previously most of these Northern communities have suffered the brunt of the war and have consequently been impoverished and marginalised. The granting of amnesty packs to the returnees has been interpreted often as a process that seeks to reward the returnees for their aggressions and there was a justifiable argument that the reinsertion packages needed to be more inclusive of the families and members of the local community. Others were more concerned about the short durations of the reintegration programming arguing that reintegration has to be an extended project that was inclusive of community participation. Many were worried that the lack of skill training opportunities, schooling and jobs for the formerly abducted children would eventually push many of them to a life of violence.
Those in positions of power argued that the inadequacy of the process and the meagre resources and budgets under which the process was being implemented was a source of concern. There were members of the community who felt that the process of reintegration needed to have its foundation on the return of the local populations back into their ancestral homes. There were questions raised as to the sloppy manner in which the process was being carried out and the lack of coordination and methodological interaction by the different stakeholders which only made the process questionable, with every organization having its own different agenda. The social habits and violent actions of the returnees did also make it difficult for some of the members to appreciate their return. In analyzing the experiences of the members of the local community with the process of reintegration, majority of the respondents felt that the process had been administered poorly and that more could be done to ensure that the process is better administered. The figure below is representative of how the local population recipient of reintegration graded the process.

![Figure 9 - Grading of the Reintegration Process by the Respondent Local Community Members](image)
5.1 The Justice and Peace Dilemma in Northern Uganda

The Government of Uganda in dealing with the LRA crisis has decided to grant amnesties to any of the rebels that would surrender from the rebel camp. Some have argued that this is indicative of the Government’s commitment to bring peace to Northern Uganda. This claim has been further supported by the fact that the government has been ‘committed’ to signing a peace deal with Kony, but the rebel leader has been reluctant to surrender and sign the peace accord. There are however those who argue that the government has only decided to grant amnesty due to increasing international pressure that they end the war. There have also been claims that amnesties are part of a government initiative to isolate Kony so as to defeat him. This argument has been supported by the continuing military offensives by the government, with the most recent one being in DRC as discussed in an earlier chapter of this work. The Government’s request for ICC intervention against Joseph Kony and his top leadership has also been cited as being indicative of the Government lack of good will to end the Northern Uganda conflict. This situation therefore puts two different systems of justice at war in the Northern Uganda Scenario. One system is based on Western notions of justice, the other rooted deep in the African tradition of forgiveness. The Ugandan Government faces a challenging dilemma and must try to reconcile the competing demands of different stakeholders on how to address the situation in Northern Uganda. There are demands that complete impunity is necessary to ensure that lasting peace is achieved in the region, and there are also extreme views that without justice then one can never speak of any lasting peace. Whilst the ICC’s quest for justice is understandable one has to question whether it is right to ignore the advocacy for amnesty, a method which many Ugandans believe will be key to promoting the necessary peace and reconciliation. To the contrary there have been arguments that prosecutions for serious crimes must be carried out as a necessary part to achieving durable peace as this
would send a strong message that no one was above the law, and reestablish respect for the rule of law (Rawlence & Baldwin, 2008).

While the position of the ICC is legalistically right, surveys show that civilians want the war to end before deciding what they need to do for justice (Refugee Law Project, 2005). Civilians are more preoccupied with their struggle to survive than they are with the format of justice. In a recent survey carried out by the International Center for Transitional Justice (ICTJ), respondents were asked what the immediate need of Northern Ugandans was and it was interesting that the respondents did not rank justice as the major concern, they were more concerned with the lack of food and the need for peace (2007). This does not mean that they did not desire justice; it only meant that the need for food and peace was far more pressing than that of justice (International Center for Transitional Justice, 2007). It is important to state that though justice is not the primary concern to the locals the importance of it to other stakeholders makes it a necessary point of discussion in analysing how reintegration impacts on the local community. The process of reintegration has brought with it the presence, assistance and legitimacy of the international community. While making an argument on human security over the obligation of the international community to intervene and assist in post conflict situations the consequent dilemma then becomes that of drawing boundaries. If the Acholi community has been recepient of international help then international bodies such as the ICC see themselves as rightly placed to demand for justice and in this case the right to prosecute some members of the LRA. The reintegration assistance accorded to the locals cannot be therefore seen in the absence of the opinion of the international community. The problem with this however is that the desire and need of the local people for peace and security can easily be ignored in the pursuit of justice.

82 Only 3.2% of the respondents according to this study ranked justice as a top priority.
Of particular interest in this thesis is the question of whether children are liable for their actions, if they are, should they be punished. This discussion contributes to the debate of who would be considered a child in these communities. It is fact that if some Acholi victims were asked about the children they would say they should be punished and that they did have the legal capacity to understand their actions and that having been initiated through African customs and traditions they were adults of sound mind. The ICC however maintains that they would not prosecute any individual under the age of 18 who according to the UNCRC is a child. This is unfortunately complicated by the fact that the war Northern Uganda has been going on for over twenty years and some of those who joined the LRA as children are now adults, the question then becomes how the ICC would deal with such a situation. While the ICC intentions are honorable it is the Ugandans who will have to decide what works best for them to achieve justice and restore the society and reconcile the aggressors back into communities. The recent debate over holding the children liable for the acts they committed while under the LRA continues to put the communities at risk (Allen, 2006). This debate creates a growing mistrust between the communities and returnees and this is even further propagated when in discussions over the ICC bill suggestions have been made to hold the children accountable for their past acts (Naturinda, 2008). Such discussions over alterations to the Government’s initial position to give full amnesty to children returning from the bush further endangers those who have to live with them in the IDP camps in the North.

The Acholi Religious Leaders Peace Initiative (ARLPI) which was formally inaugurated in 1998 to pursue peace in Northern Uganda has strongly argued that mutiny cannot be won by the gun (Kasaija, 2006). This initiative therefore called on the LRA and the government to engage in dialogue: the government to grant amnesty to the rebels and the rebels to reconcile with their community through the Acholi traditional practice of Mato oput. This is
a clan or family centered ceremony of reconciliation that incorporates the acknowledgement of wrongdoing, the offering of compensation by the offender and then culminates in the sharing of the symbolic ‘oput’ drink (Kasaija, 2006). The ARLPI has been instrumental in bringing the government to the table with the LRA representatives. The ARLPI has also brought to an end some violent attacks in the North; they have also been very committed to explaining the provisions of the Amnesty Act to factions of the LRA soldiers. They have called and advocated for amnesty which they say is rooted in the cultural practice of their own people and is compatible with the traditional dispute resolution system. This position of restorative justice has had an impact on the already victimized families. Demands that they reconcile no matter how logical has presented psychological dilemmas for victims who wished for nothing less than retributive justice. The realization that the formerly abducted children were also victims is one that is hard to come to terms with for many of the people in the North. The granting of amnesty and the disregard of any retribution to the offenders for some of the crimes or the inability by victims to seek for justice is another adverse impact of the reintegration process.

John Stuart Mill in his utility of law concept argues that, ‘in the conduct of human beings towards one another, it is necessary that general rules should for the most part be observed in order that people may know what they have to expect’ (Mill, 1869) thus calling for justice for victims of crimes. The Acholi tradition of reconciliation advocate for

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83 “Mato oput” literally means “drinking oput”, and oput is a tree common in Acholi. This ritual marks the peak of a process of conflict resolution and is applicable in a situation where there has been a killing in the community. It is therefore an action aimed at re-establishing relationships between two clans as a response to either a premeditated or accidental killing (Caritas Gulu Archdiocese, 2006, 79).


85 Ibid
compensation to be paid to the victim in cash or in kind and this system is seen to bring true healing in a way that the formal justice system cannot (Afako, 2002). This system of justice does not devote all of its attention to the guilt of the person rather it addresses the social cohesion of the community and aims to bring people closer together (Afako, 2002). The Acholi communities in the North have used this conception of justice to accept formerly abducted children back into the community. The formerly abducted children upon their return are taken through the healing and reconciliation process as a preamble to being accepted back into the community. When discussing the traditional ceremonies used to integrate the returning rebels and children back into the community many of the respondents said that these traditions were vital in assisting the community and returnees reconcile. In this research most of the respondents were of the opinion that not much was done to address the victims, and even though the traditional system seemed to address their plight more needed to be done. In discussing the various faces of victims in Northern Uganda, Hon Mao noted that there was a critical conflict for all the stakeholders involved when the offender, the person responsible for the crime was also the victim of the crime. In Northern Uganda the greatest dilemma of justice is that the perpetrators who were mostly children were the victims of violent abductions and atrocities. The question then becomes who would compensate them for what they had gone through. Was it just to demand that they pay reparations to victims for the crimes they had committed if they were also victims?

Paramount Chief David Onen Acana in support for amnesty has clearly said, “We have to understand our culture and know what kind of people we are. Are we the kind that is

86 Ibid
87 Ibid
willing to accept other people's mistakes without pointing fingers? Are we the kind of people who can confess truthfully and forgive wholeheartedly (Liu Institute for Global Issues, 2005)?” The Acholi traditions then have formed the basis of the argument for reconciliation and amnesty within that community (Afako, 2002). The high regard for forgiveness and reconciliation emanates from their belief in the world of the "living-dead" and divine spirits. Their belief in this world plays a significant role in shaping how they see justice (Tom, 2006). They believe that their ancestors guide their moral order and when a wrong is done they bring great misfortune until an action is taken by the elders and the one who has committed the wrong (Tom, 2006). The rituals do play a significant role in social healing and reconciliation. Most of the formerly abducted persons who had gone through the rituals felt a positive change after the rituals (Baines, 2005; Annan, Blattman, & Horton, 2006). These traditional practices have been very instrumental in reconciling the formerly abducted children back to their communities.

To the Acholi justice is not punishment rather it is the restoration of social relations (Annan, Blattman, & Horton, 2006). This culture encourages people to take responsibility for their wrong actions and to ask for forgiveness whereupon the society will forgive the individual and will not seek for revenge but will accept them back into society. This is clearly demonstrated in the survey carried out by the ICTJ which showed that when asked about whether they wished for peace with amnesty or peace with trials and punishments many of the Acholi people indicated that they preferred peace with amnesty (International Center for Transitional Justice, 2007). This was different from members of other communities who wished for trials and punishment for those who had committed atrocities. According to this study it was clear that though amnesty was supported, its structure was seen to need more improvement. More respondents said that they were willing to accept lower ranking LRA officials back into the community and still a high
percentage of respondents of this study said they would be willing to accept high ranking LRA officers (International Center for Transitional Justice, 2007). The responses in this survey indicated that though the respondents preferred amnesty they were also open to trials, truth telling, reparations, reintegration and community building (International Center for Transitional Justice, 2007).

It is important to note that these traditional justice systems also carry with them internal flaws. Though many of the formerly abducted children are accepted back into the community most of them face resentment and stigmatization by those they victimized within their communities. There have been difficulties for some members of communities to accept some of these children back into the society, and to them justice seems to not have been served if these individuals are not punished. One then has to raise the question can peace be achieved if justice is not served. Is the Acholi traditional approach to justice on its own adequate in dealing with cases that involve gross human rights violations, to countless numbers of victims? While it is important to restore and reconcile it is imperative that justice be seen to be done on behalf of the victims so as to have a better chance at a normal society in the future.\footnote{Okena, J. (2008, September 7). Local Advocate. (G. Maina, Interviewer)} It is however true that the ICC’s actions have been less than helpful in trying to restore relationships in the North. The ICC is an external body trying to implement its own understanding of justice to the benefit of the common man. A local researcher however questions the notion of the ‘common man’s justice’. To the common man who has been the victim of the atrocities, justice to that man is bread on his table, security in his courtyard and harmony in his community and it is important to ensure that this man is granted justice. The traditional Acholi system plays a significant role in reintegrating returnees and giving them a chance for life in the community and
though there is some form of resentment this system works better than that of the ICC in restoring the fabric of society.\textsuperscript{90} Amnesty is the only way rebels will lay down their arms and leave the LRA, and the absence of this will only encourage perpetrators to perpetuate the violence. Traditional justice however does need to be accompanied by fair and credible investigations and prosecutions.

There have been many complaints about the involvement of the ICC and the need for a more indigenous approach to justice. The provisions of the ICC however do provide that if there is to be any national alternative to the ICC, this would need to involve credible, impartial and independent investigation and prosecution (Allen, 2006). The UN principles specify that a right to justice means prompt, thorough, independent and impartial investigations and appropriate measures in respect of the perpetrators, particularly in the area of criminal justice, by ensuring that those responsible for serious crimes under international law are prosecuted, tried and duly punished (Allen, 2006). Article 17 of the Rome Statute provides that any national alternative must involve a state genuinely being able and willing to conduct investigation and prosecution. The prosecution must be conducted independently and impartially. The Rome statute also provides that the investigation and prosecution also must not be undertaken to shield the person from criminal responsibility, nor be conducted in a way that is inconsistent with intent to bring a person to justice.

It therefore follows that the suggestions that traditional justice be applied in the situation of Northern Uganda, is a complete contradiction of the Rome Statute unless traditional justice is accompanied by fair and credible investigations and prosecutions. A process which uses traditional justice measures and the possibility of prosecution only in the event the traditional justice measures are not fully complied with would also be insufficient if it did

\textsuperscript{90}Rwot Collins. (2008, October 13). Local Chief. (G. Maina, Interviewer)
away with criminal prosecution for the most serious crimes. On the same basis, a process which uses a truth and reconciliation commission and the possibility of prosecution only if the commission’s terms are not complied with could also be considered highly inadequate. There are serious dynamics when it comes to the pursuit of justice and peace in the North. It is vital that all stakeholders engage to craft a unique process in which peace can be obtained and justice administered. Pursuing justice in the midst of a conflict can have grave repercussions on the civilians, and this was an error made by the ICC in their timing of issuing the arrest warrants. Many have argued that it is the actions of the ICC that have negated the signing of the peace agreement in the North. The problem with this action is further compounded by the ICC’s lack of enforcement capabilities to arrest these individuals. The ICC does need to involve local structures so as to ensure that its actions do not undermine local peace initiatives and efforts. It is important that the ICC apply law to the existing reality and contextualize the law to fit the current situation in Northern Uganda.

The process of reintegration is a necessary component to peace and any effective reintegration must be based on positive reconciliation. Peace building and reconciliation must be founded on relationships and people (Lederach, 1999). The dynamics and the desire for justice by different stakeholders while warranted must be preceded by the achievement of peace in the North. The suffering and the constant fear of attacks from the LRA are the primary concern of the people. The freedom from want and fear reigns supreme over the achievement of justice. The ICC and the Human rights watch and other such stakeholders make a good point that impunity can breed future violence and must be shunned at all costs. The dilemma however is that to the local community that has suffered for over two decades and still continues to suffer the justice proposed by these western actors is not viewed as justice. It is essential to note that the western notion of justice does
not address the victim, therefore there is little to gain if the Acholi people embraced this view of justice. The arguments and actions to obtain justice have had huge repercussions on the local communities that continue to live in displaced peoples camps. The signing of the peace agreement by the rebels seems to be hindered by the ICC indictments of the LRA leaders (Butagira, 2008; Mazige, 2008). It is clear that to the locals the main argument should be that of priority and the need for peace carries higher priority in comparison to retributive justice. Mani in talking of justice and peace talks of reparative justice that is based on both legal and psychological conceptions of reparation. This justice she says is empathetic to the suffering of the victim and is flexible in how it responds to the offenders. What is required to bridge the gap between peace and justices is a social compact between the different stakeholders of peace (Mani, 2005). Mani however stresses the importance of the local population arguing that it is this population that has to live with the aftermath of the decisions that are made by the different stakeholders (Mani, 2005). The justice debate though essential to sustainable post conflict reconstruction must not ignore the fundamental issues of socio-economic justice which have impacted the Northern communities in the process of reintegration. The reintegration process does not only have legal implications and dilemmas but does also present social, psychological and economic implications on those involved.

5.2 Economic Implications of Reintegration on the Local Community
The war has had adverse economic effects on the local populations in the North. Unlike the rest of the country which has continued to experience decreased poverty from 1992 the North has had an increase in poverty levels. In 1999-2004 Uganda’s economy grew by between 2-3% per capita per year, but the benefits didn’t go to the North, which was also the time when civil conflict worsened (Younger, 2007). The reality in the North now is that most of the members of the Acholi community live in IDP camps. It is irrelevant
whether one was of means before the conflict or not, everyone whether previously poor or rich is now living at the same impoverished levels. These harsh economic realities are the conditions in which the formerly abducted children are reintegrated back into and expected to survive in. The existing resources are far from enough to support the family groupings that the abductees are reintegrated back into. This situation and the economic absurdity are made worse by returning children who present another mouth to feed. Despite the relative calm and ‘peaceful’ environment the North is enjoying at the moment an estimated 59% of the people still remain in the IDP camps and 32% have resettled in transit sites between the camps and their home villages (Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, 2008). This is indicative of the fact that the people living in the North are in constant fear of attacks from the LRA which fears could have only be alleviated with the signing of the peace agreement between the Government and Kony. Communities believe that increased stability in the region would lead to heightened economic activity stimulating local businesses and raising incomes and bringing the people back to a life of self sufficiency (Bidwell, 2008). In a 2008 a study done documenting the realities for women and girls in northern Uganda, pointed out that more than half of male and female youth interviewed worked fewer than eight days per month, and 21 percent of male and 14 percent of female youth work zero days per month (Annan, Blattman, Carlson, & Mazurana, 2008).

In the course of this research both the returnees and the locals were asked about what was the biggest challenge they faced with reintegration. As evidenced in the figure below both the returnees and the local Acholi people voiced their economic concerns as the biggest challenge. The inability: to pay to gain skills; to buy food; to provide for siblings, children and elderly family members were common concerns for many of the abductees interviewed.

in this research. Majority of the local community members stated that the economic challenges were the greatest set-back of the reintegration process. It was frequently mentioned that it would have been easier for the communities to accept the returnees if they were not constantly reminded of their actions by the poor surroundings they lived in.\textsuperscript{92} 

![Figure 10 - Challenges experienced by formerly abducted children](image)

When one speaks of the economic element of reintegration of ex-child combatants the first thing that comes to mind is the resettlement kits given to them upon their return back into the community. These tools, seeds, other materials and cash are aimed at assisting the returnees adapt back to a normal life. When asked about these packages and their sufficiency many of the members of the community were of the opinion that these were insufficient and that the Government could do more. A significant number of formerly abducted children questioned for the purposes of this study said that they had not yet received their reinsertion packages upon their return. It is important to note also that even though there was a wide consensus that the packages were insufficient, these same packages did create a rift between the returnees and the local people.\textsuperscript{93} Due to the harsh economic realities even this very insufficient assistance created a situation in which the local people thought that the returnees were favoured and were being rewarded for having

\textsuperscript{92}Ibid

been members of the LRA. The Government of Uganda in turn has tried offering resettlement kits to the IDPs for their return to the villages, but the procedure for administering this assistance has been poorly coordinated and the materials given have been nothing short of poor quality (Human Rights Focus, 2007). There has been widespread misunderstanding over who would be entitled to this assistance. The knowledge and the legal entitlements of reinsertion benefits of the returnees and the uncertainties that plague the assistance given to the local people has been an adverse reality of reintegration. The lack of proper execution of initiatives aimed to reach out to the victim community; both the abducted and non-abducted in the context of a highly impoverished society only creates an economic gap between the returnees and the members of the communities they are being returned to.

In discussing the economic implications of reintegration one cannot downplay the importance of skills and training. The communities and the returnees have both been victims of a war that has impoverished and denied them the opportunities to gain skill and to improve their lives. The labour markets in the North have been described in a SWAY report as an occupational ladder increasing in skill and capital requirements (Annan, Blattman, & Horton, 2006). Due to the grave insecurities and life characterized by living in IDP camps access to capital is difficult making it impossible for the members of the local community there to access skills that would be of great importance. It is only by attaining these skills that any one individual would be able to climb the ladder and over time accumulate some capital (Annan, Blattman, & Horton, 2006). In this research it was clear that over half of the interviewed formerly abducted children had acquired no skill in the process of reintegration. The reason they were unable to gain skills was because they lacked income or they were burdened with other responsibilities. This therefore meant that most of them ended up engaging in trades that did not require skills training such as manual
labour or farming. The downside to this is that because of the violent crisis and high poverty levels in the North many of the local people will have over the period of the war also engaged in these jobs. The reintegration of the formerly abducted children back into the community has therefore created instances of high competition for many of these low skilled jobs. This has been a significant impact of the reintegration process on the local populations that are now condemned to fierce competition for menial jobs, to support their survival.

It is important to note that from observation of the different reintegration initiatives studied for the purposes of this research that most of their programming was similar. In many of the Centres that catered for girls the focus was on tailoring or cooking. What was even more interesting was that even new initiatives, that were coming up in the region were aimed at the same activities. This would therefore imply that the region eventually had more supply of a particular skill than the demand to match it. This presented a dilemma in which it has become clear that training did not equal economic survival. Therefore the scaling up of skills training was not necessarily the answer to the economic challenges in the North and the situation is such that the demand of goods and services is far less the enormous supply of particular goods and skills (Annan, Blattman, & Horton, 2006). While skills programming targeted the formerly abducted children, little consideration was given for those individuals that were already involved in this trades as a way of life. Reintegration efforts therefore presented a flooding of the small market in the north with many individuals who could carry out a similar trade. This minimized the opportunities that previously existed for the local people who were not returnees to get work. Increasing the supply of a particular good or trade presented fierce economic competition in an environment that could not accommodate it, thus disadvantaging the local populations further.
Though education and training were not associated with higher probability of employment it was associated with higher earnings (Annan, Blattman, & Horton, 2006). From the focus groups held in the course of this research at a local training centre it was clear that returning children had access to scholarships and could use their Amnesty Certificate to obtain assistance. Different organizations offered to give opportunities for training to formerly abducted children but there were limited offers for those who had not been abducted. These actions in an environment of extreme poverty and need in Northern Uganda further marginalized those members of the community who had not joined the rebel forces clearly favouring and seeming to reward the returnees. While these reintegration initiatives are well intentioned the failure to consider the local community means that the process only served to increase their want and need and create disgruntlement between them and the formerly abducted children.

For many of the formerly abducted children joining the army seems like a logical viable step upon reintegration and many young rebels do take this option (BBC News, 2004). Many of these ex-child combatants only know how to fight and joining the UPDF gives them an opportunity to do that and survive. Many of the returnees join the military service as both a protective strategy and an economic strategy (Annan, Blattman, & Horton, 2006). In an interview held with a ex-child soldier he was quick to explain that ‘In the village many of the us (former child soldiers) would not know what to do, people hate us and we have no training to do anything, here (in the military) we are the best’. The pride in knowing how to do something and being paid to do it was a reason for many of these returnees to join the UPDF. Since many of these ex-child combatants felt responsible

94 Focus Group held in St. Monica’s, Gulu on the 3rd of October 2008.

for what they did, they felt obligated join the Army and to help capture Kony. Many however joined the military purely on the basis of their need to survive. In the North the popular opinion is that the formerly abducted returnees stand a better chance of being recruited in comparison to those who had never been abducted (Annan, Blattman, & Horton, 2006). This could be tied to the earlier discussions in chapter two of the high tech training of the LRA soldiers and their better performance in comparison to the UPDF soldiers. The easier hiring of former LRA operatives presents complications and antagonism in a region where there are a few job opportunities and the military is seen as a high end opportunity. The fact that more of the local people have missed out on opportunities at employment in the military, because of the returning ex-LRA soldiers is a significant impact of reintegration on the local communities. Reintegration has presented the best employer in the North with a diversity of candidates to recruit and in many cases those who have been formerly abducted are preferred thus negatively affecting the lives of the local communities the returnees are being reintegrated back into.

The reality of reintegration is that many times the formerly abducted children placed back within family structures and the communities are highly dysfunctional. This being because of the traumatic experiences they have gone through, the social criticisms they have to endure daily and the overwhelming responsibility of adapting back to a very different environment. It does take time for these individuals to be transformed to well functioning members of the community. Since the returnees are placed in family environments their families are then tasked with the duty to provide for them. Most of the returnees because of age or lack of skills are unable to provide for themselves and as such their families are forced to step in and provide for them. The economic burden of accepting the formerly abducted children back upon reintegration is a huge implication for the local populations.

For them reintegration is not just a programme it is the reality of feeding an extra person, proving shelter and a means of survival for this person. There are instances in which the returnees come back with health complications. In a survey done by SWAY they found that roughly about one fifth of the youth, abducted and not abducted, have serious health difficulties and in half of these cases the injuries or illness inhibit the ability of these individuals to work (Annan, Blattman, & Horton, 2006). This therefore means that for those families receiving injured or sick returnees they have had to take up the responsibility of caring and providing for them in light of their inability to do so. This care involves providing for them daily, attending to them when they are indisposed and facilitating their medical treatment. This is characteristic of the reintegration realities of some families in Northern Uganda.

It is widely believed that the solution to the North’s economic crisis is agriculture and farming whether in large scale or in plantations formats (Bidwell, 2008). Many of the older respondents were nostalgic about the ability to farm and the access to land seeing this as a solution to their personal problems. Limited accessibility to land has been an issue, with the communities and the returnees not being able to take advantage of the opportunities of agriculture. SWAY records that only 27% of the youth actually have access to land, meaning a very large proportion of them have to depend on other activities for their survival (Annan, Blattman, & Horton, 2006). Reintegration in this case only presents an increase in the number of people who have to compete for the access to land as a way to be economically viable. Many of the respondents in this research when asked about the challenges with the reintegration process, talked about the land crisis upon their return back to their ancestral villages. Though seen as a viable solution reintegration presents a problem or dilemma when it comes to the question of land. Much of the land in Acholi land is held by customary tenure, and land is transferred verbally inter-generationally
Ownership in this case is unwritten and this presents a real problem upon return of families back to their ancestral homes. With land being administered traditionally before the war, with many of elders dead and with the destabilization in natural habitation in the North there is a danger that there will be no clarity over ownership and this could introduce new conflictual issues. The return of the formerly abducted back into the community means that they too are to be part of the land crisis increasing the number of conflicts over a capital resource, land. The land issue will even be more complicated where the formerly abducted persons were responsible for killing their family members, with the argument being that many of them were undeserving of inheritance. The conflicts over land rights only means that it will take longer for the region to take advantage of the one resource in its disposal that could alter the economic crisis. Reintegration has only served to introduce more players in the fight for access to land, thus complicating the existing economic dynamics.

In an environment where economic problems seem to be the greatest concern the respondents held the Government responsible over what should be done to improve their situations and the reintegration process.

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Most of the respondents agreed that more needed to be done to enhance their reintegration experience and they felt that this was the responsibility of the Government. In light of the discussion made in previous chapters that the granting of Amnesty was in itself a social contract between the government and the returning population, it is on this basis that the communities that the returnees are reintegrated to have a right to demand that the government ensure their security so that they can live free from fear and want.

The reintegration process though positively received by many of the members of the local communities had in turn plagued many of the local people with huge economic implications. Any conversation of justice must engage with the economic aspects of justice.

It therefore follows that the reintegration process cannot be judged separate from its economic undertones and must be recognized as a process with huge economic implications for all those concerned. The reinsertion benefits given to the returnees and the members of the community cannot be considered as enough and in this case they are hugely insufficient.\footnote{Mao, N. (2008, August 20). Former Member of Parliament for Gulu. (G. Maina, Interviewer)} It then follows that the reality is these items and the little cash is unable to ensure that individuals reintegrate back properly into the community. The economic constraints of the process have served to only increase the levels of want in these communities.
communities and also among the formerly abducted children. The need to justly restore these communities economically cannot therefore be over emphasised if we are to speak of sustainable post conflict reconstruction.

5.3 Social and Psychological Impacts of Reintegration

Any analysis of the reintegration process must take into account the social and psychological implications of the process. The experiences of both the formerly abducted children and the local communities they are reinserted back into, is crucial to evaluating the implications of amnesty and the pursuit of restorative forms of justice in post conflict settings. While there is an underlying assumption in the Government’s action to promote amnesty is the best solution to ending the crisis in the North the social and psychological dynamics of this decision and action cannot be ignored. A person’s activities, roles and relationships upon return to a society are the main components of their social makeup. The person’s thoughts and feelings and their connection with family and community relationships make up their psychological being (Annan, Blattman, Carlson, & Mazurana, 2008). As discussed in the previous chapter most children indicated that while they were in the reception centres the main activities were mostly socially and psychologically inclined. Many of the programs designed focused more on activities such as sports, theatre or cultural dance (Women’s Commission for Refugee Women and Children, 2007; Annan, Blattman, & Horton, 2006). Counselling was done to help the formerly abducted children with their experiences and their reality of constant rejection from a community that they had previously victimized. While the focus of the reintegration programmes has been very psychological and socially focused, very little is known about the socially and psychologically implications this process has had on the communities and family structures. The impact of reintegration has huge social and psycho social implications for not only the ex-child combatants but also on the community that is forced to take them in. It follows
that any discussion on the efficacy of the reintegration process must engage with these challenges.

To be able to effectively discuss social and psychological wellbeing in Uganda it is imperative to understand what these terms mean to an ordinary Acholi person. To the Acholi there is an emphasis placed on one’s role and the contribution of that role to the functioning of society. This society is built on the ideals that the young are meant to obey the elders; the elders are mandated to provide direction for the community; and the different gender roles that govern the community. This therefore means that every individual in the community has to carry out their role so as to ensure that the community runs smoothly and it is this contribution to the family and community that is indicative of a good member of society (Annan, Blattman, & Horton, 2006). Those who do not contribute to this social cohesion are often seen as problematic and uncooperative individuals.

In the course of this research the respondents were asked what they saw as a major challenge in the process of reintegration. A substantial portion of the respondents were concerned about the social and psychological challenges of their reintegration back into the community as indicated in the figure below.

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101 Ibid
Many of the respondents reiterated that upon return there was a demand for them to conform to a particular standard of behaviour so as to be accepted and in many instances because of their earlier socialization many of them failed. The emphasis by the community to have the formerly abducted children conform to particular social status often led to many of them acting out in aggression as a result of them feeling frustrated, disempowered and stressed (Annan, Blattman, Carlson, & Mazurana, 2008). A survey carried out by SWAY found that many of the returnees experienced headaches, chest pains, shaking and other such symptoms of stress (Annan, Blattman, & Horton, 2006).

A critical social problem that reintegration presents is that of parents struggling to parent within the IDP camps. This is made more difficult with the return of the formerly abducted children. Many parents and older community members are afraid of the transformations of the returning children and many are not equipped to deal with the challenge of raising children who had formerly been in the bush. The experiences of abduction have had a profound impact on the character and social habits of the returning children. The reality is that most of these children are not the same people they knew prior to abduction and this presents a new and unique dynamic. This dynamic is further compounded with the congested living set-ups the families live in and the adjustments to
include the formerly abducted children present further adjustment difficulties. The estrangement of the families from their children as a result of the war has grave implications on the social well being of all involved. The ‘new persons’ who return from the bush, changed by their experiences and suffering, present a complex addition to the already complicated social fabric.

Another major social concern in the North has to do with schooling. The education trend in this region is that most individuals go for primary schooling but very few make transition to secondary schools because they cannot afford school fees (Annan, Blattman, & Horton, 2006). The struggle to pay for schooling often leads to episodic schooling and with many opting to engage in child labour so as to ensure they get an education (Annan, Blattman, & Horton, 2006). In many cases there is an expectation that the family networks will provide fees for the returning children. Many of these families however have not had to pay fees for their abducted children, during their time in captivity. With the changing reality in the North most families cannot afford to pay the fees, and this sudden need therefore presents a dilemma which amounts to psychological distress. This situation is further complicated when most of the returning children find their siblings being supported to attain an education. In many instances the families are only able to provide for a particular number of children and the dilemma of choosing what child to support becomes an everyday reality for most of these families. Actions that seem to favour the child who was never abducted could be socially construed as rejecting the returning child. The dilemma of not knowing what to do in these situations is a significant psychological and social concern. On the flip side many of the children that have an opportunity to return to school face social ridicule, rejection and isolation that often lead to them dropping out of school. Many formerly abducted children mostly return to find their parents dead and in many cases they assume parenting roles over their younger siblings and
as such are unable to attend school or take up training. The inability of the society to secure a childhood for many of the children in the North has had grave implications on the social structure.

Asked about their time in captivity most of the respondents of this research said that they still experienced flashbacks and memories of their actions and experiences in the time of captivity. Some interpreted these memories as the spirits of the dead or those they had tortured during their time in captivity. Nightmares, flashbacks and other strange behaviour outside the social norm were often interpreted as ‘Cen’ or evil spirits (Annan, Blattman, & Horton, 2006). The Acholi believe in the spirit world and as such believe that the formerly abducted children unless cleansed will experience some these haunting experiences for what they did during their time in captivity (Harlacher & et al, 2006). The traditional cleansing ceremonies then are a vital tool for ensuring that the returnees are cleansed and freed from ‘Cen’ by appeasing the spirit world (Harlacher & et al, 2006).

Religious disagreements arise as a result of the reintegration process. Upon return from the bush many of the returning children go through reception centers in which they are exposed to Christian teaching. It is on this basis that children then believe that God has forgiven them for their actions and that he has freed them from the burden of their sin. Upon return back into the community there are vicious disagreements where the returnees refuse to be subjected to the traditional rituals and practices of ridding evil spirits. Many of

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103 ‘Cen’ can be interpreted as ghostly vengeance which can be a result of killing someone, defacing a body, or merely seeing a dead body mistreated without a proper burial

the returnees who go through the World Vision reception centre argue that this would conflict with their new found faith. SWAY in their research found that there were some returnees who did not want the traditional ceremonies but their families were adamant they go through the ceremonies (Annan, Blattman, & Horton, 2006). There were however those organizations that did support the traditional process of acceptance and cleansing while some organizations did not regard these methods and advocated for Christian based prayers. These conflicts over belief systems and rituals continue to create a social and psychological rift and conflict between some of the returnees and their communities. The choice over what to believe as an answer to getting rid of ‘Cen’ has profound psychological implications on formerly abducted children and their recipient families.

The constant fear of attacks by the LRA rebels is a reality most of these communities have to live with. The knowledge of a real threat and the inability to shield oneself from this threat is one of the impacts of reintegration. Most of the families and communities have to convince their traumatized young ones that they are protected and that they cannot be attacked by the LRA. Most of the returning children have a real fear of being re-abducted. Most of them fear that if re-abducted they would be killed immediately (Women’s Commission for Refugee Women and Children, 2007). The constant fear in the community of what might happen especially with the failure of the peace deal is a real concern. The constant reassuring of the abductees of better protection is psychologically and socially straining for these communities.

In this research the kind of relationships formed by the formerly abducted children were examined. Members of the community were of the opinion that the returnees did mix with the other people in the community. They were careful to note however that most of these children who were formerly abducted have very close relationships with each other because
of their common experience. Many of formerly abducted children explained that it was easier to maintain their relationships with their comrades from the bush because they felt that they could trust them with the details of what happened to them in the bush without fear of adverse repercussions (Annan, Blattman, & Horton, 2006). However it is observable that many of these children and youth do try to form relationships with other people within the community and this has been a positive impact of reintegration.

The return of the abductees back into their communities has created turmoil within the community structures, this being because of the atrocities committed by these formerly abducted children on local populations. A re-socialization of the community to regard these individuals as victims and not offenders is an uphill task socially and psychologically (Women’s Commission for Refugee Women and Children, 2007). Despite the efforts made by the returnees to integrate and relate within communities, there are those members of the community who are unable to get past what they did whilst in LRA ranks. This then leads to excessive stigmatization and discriminative treatment against the returnees placing them in emotional duress. The constant rejection by members of the community is one of the negative effects of the process of reintegration that the formerly abducted children have had to endure. The conflicts that erupt as a result have negative implications on the social cohesion of the community.

When female children were abducted many of the parents of the abducted girls were constantly worried that their daughters would return home with a child or pregnant and many of them are often unsure of whether they would accept these children (Women’s Commission for Refugee Women and Children, 2007). These children are often associated with the rebels and their presence is a constant reminder of the painful events of the

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Over 80% of the girls interviewed for the purposes of this research returned back to their homes with children. SWAY estimates that about 11% of the demobilized and reintegrated girls came back with children (Annan, Blattman, Carlson, & Mazurana, 2008). The social dynamics of reintegrating young mothers is different in comparison to integrating young males or females without children with this group displays higher levels of distress (Annan, Blattman, Carlson, & Mazurana, 2008). Most of these girls go through the social pressure of not being fully accepted back into the community with their children. The communities and families are under constant distress of how to react and to embrace these children brought into the community. This situation has caused major social distractions within the family social fabric.

The reintegration process has also evidenced a strain in the societal relationships. Many of the older individuals struggle with advising and guiding the young. There has been a cultural degradation of the traditional value system of the Acholi with the war and causing a cultural loss which has changed and altered the relationships between the different generations (Annan, Blattman, & Horton, 2006). The elders no longer have the economic means to provide for their families as they did previously and this incapacity has deprived them of their status (Annan, Blattman, & Horton, 2006). The war has robbed the older generation of the pride of providing and protecting since the LRA has been notorious for abducting children and the displacements have rendered the communities poor. These experiences have disempowered and belittled the elders who at one time held prestigious positions within the communities and commanded respect. The hierarchy that existed before is not as clear and the generation gap between the young and old has widened (Annan, Blattman, & Horton, 2006). The return of youth who did not feel protected by

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the hierarchy of power within their communities has served to create further social upheaval and disrespect for the social structure causing the elderly in the community social and psychological distress.

When asked to describe some of the activities that the formerly abducted children were involved in many individuals described them as petty thieves, rapists, or some other criminal activity. Most of these children act out of their frustration and their lack of something to do, but those who are able to return to their families and are well accepted hardly have violent tendencies. 108 SWAT in their recent research amongst the youth found that those individuals who had more family connectedness and social support were more likely to have a lower level of emotional distress and better social functioning (Annan, Blattman, & Horton, 2006). This is extremely difficult in instances where the formerly abducted children have no family support as a result of death or the war. There have been high incidences of family members being killed in this region and the death resulting could greatly contribute to the emotional distress and violence. The result of this is that members of the community are subject to violent outburst and have increased fear. The roll over effects of the war in this regard greatly compromises the security and freedoms of the community at large in the North.

Alcohol abuse seems to be commonplace in the North. There are high incidences of male alcoholism (Annan, Blattman, & Horton, 2006). 109 As a consequence many of the returnees are subjected to abuse and violent trends from drunken members of the community. The violence seems to be trigged by those who feel frustrated and angry with the LRA activities

108 Op cit
109 Ibid
and the returnees are usually the recipients. There is also violence that erupts when those who have been reintegrated rise up in their defence or usually as a result of their frustration.

An interesting social and psychological implication of reintegration has to do with the returnees not being accepted and sometimes being persecuted by the parents and families of those who were abducted but had not yet returned. Returnees tell us that the relatives of unreturned youth would angrily ask them why they returned, and why their own children had not been fortunate. The frustrations and actions of these families often increase the emotional distress of the formerly abducted children and create social conflict between families. There is also heightened uproar against the returning faction of the community whenever and wherever there is rebel activity in the region. Unable to react against the LRA, the community seems to turn against those who have returned (Annan, Blattman, & Horton, 2006).

The social and psychological concerns present in the reintegration process have had an impact on both the local communities and on the returnees. The reintegration process can be improved if these implications of reintegration are considered in its programming. Such consideration will go a long way in ensuring that the people of northern Uganda recruited or not, live free from fear.

5.4 Gender Implications of the Reintegration

Not much is known about how the LRA war has impacted on the female population of the Acholi community, more especially those who were abducted. What seems clear is that the experiences of abduction, violence and even return of women have been fundamentally different from those of their male counterparts (Annan, Blattman, Carlson, & Mazurana, 2008). While the experiences of the formerly abducted girls are less recorded in
comparison to their male counterparts, even far less is known about the impact of the reintegration process on the female members of the Acholi community. Very little has been done to find out what their experiences with reintegration are and how they are coping with the return process. It is unfortunate to observe that the girls and women in the recipient communities have limited access to benefits when peace and demobilization come (De Watteville, 2002). This is true for all the females across the board those abducted for different duties within the LRA, the wives of commanders and the women in the recipient Acholi community. In their defense reintegration actors in the region have argued for the equal treatment given to the girls and boys, men and women in the course of the process.

It is important to note that the women have special needs that have to be taken into consideration in the course of reintegration if the process is to be considered effective. What is fundamentally wrong with the reintegration programmes is that it fails to recognize the special circumstances of girls, for example their return with children, their higher exposure to sexually transmitted diseases, these factors are not often not considered when drafting the reintegration programmes. Though gender has been treated as a side issue in the reintegration debate it is imperative that more consideration be given to it because in addressing the gender issues the post conflict recovery process could be greatly enhanced. Without an understanding of who is at risk of violence (and from whom), the factors that affect violence and acceptance, a sense of the long-term impacts of war violence, it is impossible to be able to design effective and relevant reintegration programs. The Survey of War Affected Youth (SWAY) report of 2008 argues that the downside of failing to understand the plight of a necessary group in a community will often lead to wrong programming based on immediate and observable needs and possibly erroneous

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assumptions about who needs help and what sort of help ought to be provided (Annan, Blattman, Carlson, & Mazurana, 2008).

When girls join the armed forces, they are subject to brutal treatment, they are often forced to become wives of commanders, or serve as slaves or porters. Many of the girls in the course of their abduction are raped and in the process, end up pregnant, give birth in harsh conditions and even face the possibility of being dumped along the way and left to die if they are unable to cope with the armed groups’ conditions (Fox, 2004). SWAY reports that over one quarter of the girls abducted are forcibly married and over 11% of the returning girls come back with children making their reintegration needs unique (Annan, Blattman, Carlson, & Mazurana, 2008). Yet in practice we find that because the girls did not play an active combat role they are not often seen as a primary group of respondents in need of assistance and in many instances they are short-changed when it comes to receiving reintegration assistance.

A significant number of the female returnees come back to the communities with children and many of these programmes fail to cater for these special circumstances. In carrying out the empirical study this research asked the young child mothers how they managed to survive, many of the girls said that their family members and relatives had chipped in to support them to take care of the child. The return of the girls with their children has presented a burden that was unplanned for by many of these communities. Most of the families now have to take care of a child that they had not planned for. The chances also of the girls doing anything to enhance their lives are greatly reduced by having a child. Most of the girls who return from the bush are unable to go to school or to join any vocation teaching centre because they bear the responsibility of taking care of their
In Northern Uganda one in every five females has no education and only one in every three is functionally literate with most of the returning females with children unable, disallowed, or unwilling to attend school (Annan, Blattman, Carlson, & Mazurana, 2008).

The lack of skills or education amongst many of the females then means that their access to economic opportunities is greatly deterred. The economic constraints on their family units are very evident. The income earned by the females, and the days worked are lower in comparison to their male counterparts. The lack of income generation by many of the returning females is a strain on the family structures that took them in upon reintegration because they are faced with the task of providing for them. This is an adverse impact on communities and families that are struggling and living in the harsh conditions of IDP camps.

With the war in Northern Uganda many young men were taken in to the ranks of the LRA. During war many of the females in society have had to take up economic roles to be able to provide for their families and communities. Upon reintegration these roles are however conferred back to the returning males. The result of this is that with most of the manual labour and farming done in the North, it becomes easier to hire the returning male persons thus reducing the opportunities for the women and the girls to find work. This has grave implications for many women who are widows and are responsible over households. The failure of reintegration programming to take into account the plight of working women in the North upon the return of the ex-combatants speaks to inefficacy of these programmes.

111 Sister Rosemary. (2008, September 1). St Monica’s Director. (G. Maina, Interviewer)
Another economic impediment has to do with the access to land. Land is an essential commodity in any successful reintegration strategy as a means in which the returnees and communities can make a living. Due to the patriachal structure of the Acholi community it is difficult and will be difficult when the local communities return back to their ancestral lands for the females to have access or ownership of land. This therefore means that the female population has little hope of owning the means of production and will consistently be employed for meagre wages. Effective reintegration processes must make a case for land distribution to the female members of societies to ensure that they have opportunity to economically support themselves. The return of more men from the LRA ranks has adverse repercussions on women hoping to be able to get land to support their survival and that of their families.

Upon their return female returnees have more difficulty reintegrating back into the community. This is especially more difficult for those who return with children. Many of them are shunned by their communities with many of their families refusing to accept responsibility for the ‘bush babies’.¹¹² Many of the communities regard these children as Kony’s children and they have a difficult time accepting these children and this is even more psychologically traumatizing for the girls who have to accept and take care of these children. When discussing labelling with the researcher, many of the girls admitted that they had been subjected to excessive labelling and abuse. Many of the girls complained that they were often treated as outsiders by the members of the community.

¹¹² These are babies that the girls had as a result of the sexual relationships they were forced to have in the bush
Figure 13 - Labelling is worse for the returning girls

Many of the girls had psychosocial challenges with returning back into normal life. Due to the discriminative Acholi culture most of these girls had no hope of being married and the strain of having to provide for them for a lifetime made many of their families reject them. The likelihood of getting a suitor in the community after their experiences is very unlikely and even in the rare chances that this happened most of the girls are so traumatized that they are unable to maintain these relationships.\textsuperscript{113} This is different from the male experience where most of them easily marry the girls in the community and this is supported. The traditional cleansing ceremonies that seem to work well for the men are problematic for the female abductees and many of them remain in need of the more psychological help to readjust back into the society. It is also difficult to re-socialize the girls to the patriarchal structures of societies when they have been used to power and after long durations from their communities. Many of the girls are normally violent because they have been hardened by their experiences and the traditional systems of power may not make sense to the girls upon their return back into the community.\textsuperscript{114}

\textsuperscript{113} Opongo, E. (2008, October 24). Local Elder. (G. Maina, Interviewer)

Many of these girls face the risk of contracting STDs, HIV/AIDS as a result of their abduction. Health risks however are a concern even for the female members of the community who were not abducted. The return and reintegration of the formerly abducted person presents a unique challenge to the females. With most of the returnees having being exposed to risky sexual experiences while in the bush many of them face a great risk of contracting sexually transmitted diseases. Their health is hugely dependent on free access to health facilities. In a recent review done on the programmes supported by Save the Children it was found that in some of the reception facilities children had been tested for HIV and other medical conditions, however children were unaware of their results, and were not always empowered enough to understand what the tests were for and how they could access the results (Hassan, 2008). The fact that not all the returning formerly abducted children were tested and even those tested were not informed of the results is indicative of a larger health problem (Hassan, 2008). It is even more concerning that in reintegration to encourage reconciliation many of these returning individuals who have been exposed to such diseases are often encouraged to marry the girls in the community. The implication of this action is that there is a continued widespread of HIV/Aids in the North. Currently the prevalence of HIV in Northern Uganda is twice that in the country and 59% of those living with Aids as per the UNAIDS report of 2008 were women. The burden of caring for individuals who return with these diseases or any other health complications is an impact that the local community has to bear. Accepting and reconciling with a large mass of people who need or will need assistance and may infect others is a tragic impact that reintegration programming does not seem to take into account. The inability of reintegration debate to calculate the adverse health implications the war and the reintegration process has on the female members of the local community is a demonstration of the weakness of the reintegration process.
The reintegration process only identifies the returnee as the recipient of any benefits. The programming fails to recognize that most of these individuals fall into family units and in many cases the returning males are encouraged to marry the local girls. The programmes however fail to recognize the family units that this person is being taken into needs support. Due to the different socialization that these male persons have gone through there is a tendency to misappropriate the limited resources that are given.\textsuperscript{115} It is important therefore that if it is the intention of the reintegration process that the reinsertion packages make a difference these must be given in the context of the family unit.

The process of reintegration raises a number of gender considerations. To ensure that the reintegration process is successful the impacts the process has on the gender dynamics within the community must be taken into consideration to ensure that all people equitably live free from want and fear. It is evident that the reintegration process being implemented in the North of Uganda has only further enhanced the fear and want of the local female populations. Their lack of skill, absence of support to learn a skill and their inability to get work has greatly enhanced their inability to provide for themselves. Their want has increased with the return of a larger population of males who have taken up their traditional roles thus displacing the women. The violence, abuse and further stigmatization of the female returnees have increased their level of fear. The programming currently in place only seeks to put back the returnees into the community. The reinsertion packages are the same for men and women alike failing to take into account the dynamics of returning females. The fact that many of these girls have children is ignored and the failure to address the real needs of the female returnees renders the process of reintegration weak. Post conflict reconstruction can only be considered effective if all the members of the community are positively gaining from the process.

5.5 Conclusion: The success of reintegration in the midst of its implications on the local community

It is evident from the arguments made that the success of the reintegration programmes is pegged on economic empowerment, the social/psychological balance, the achievement of peace with a regard for justice and the equitable distribution of resource and opportunity to all regardless of gender. The economic inability of the members of these communities is a critical component to consider when one speaks of reintegration. It is not enough to have programming if it fails to capture the economic realities and implications of the society. One has to ask whether the reintegration process in itself is making the lives of the people in the North better or worse. The competition introduced by the programming is also an area that needs to be addressed. The moral question that follows would be whether it is acceptable to better the lives of those in the bush at the expense of those who were not abducted and in many cases were the victims. The economic implications of reintegration cannot and must not be ignored if the process is to be considered reasonably successful.

One can also not underestimate the social and psychological concerns at play in Northern Uganda following the process of reintegration. It is possible to disregard these concerns when designing reintegration programming, however any such action could render the whole process ineffective. The relationships formed are a good indication of whether the process has been successful or not. The acceptance of the returning children, the social burden of accepting them and psychological sacrifice of having to forgive their aggressions are important impacts of the process. The discussion above is indicative of the fact that social and psychological concerns in the region are real and the implications need to be considered to ensure a successful reintegration process. It may not be possible to achieve a society in absolute social cohesion and without psychological dilemmas; however it is
possible to achieve a society with only reasonable concerns. The discussion points to an increased fear among all members of this community, with the returnees afraid of rejection and stigma. The members of the community are also afraid for their lives, their security and their peace of mind. The reintegration process can and should do more to dispel some of the sociological and psychological concerns in Northern Uganda to ensure there is freedom from fear.

Of absolute importance is the implication of reintegration on gender. It is clear from the discussion in this chapter that the reintegration process being implemented in the North has only further enhanced the fear and want of the local female populations. Failure to skill and train the female populations has greatly enhanced their inability to provide for themselves. Their want has increased with the return of a larger population of males who have taken up their traditional roles thus displacing the women. Programming that continues to ignore the unique dynamics of returning females can only with time be rendered unsuccessful. The fact that many of returning girls have a child or children to take care of is a significant issue of consideration. The failure to address the real needs of the female returnees is an ineffective element of the reintegration process and needs to be addressed if successful reintegration is to be attained.

The Juba peace process intended to bring closure to the Northern Uganda conflict and disarm Joseph Kony’s LRA. This process has since failed to achieve this objective with Kony failing again to appear at the Ri-Kwangba assembly point to sign the Final Peace Agreement (FPA) (International Crisis Group, 2008). The dilemma is that without the peace agreement the people of Northern Uganda will continue to live in fear. The return process will be greatly undermined by the constant fear of attacks from the LRA. The people in the North have no faith in the Government protecting them as they have failed
to do so in the past. Kony’s activities of abducting children in the Congo does not instil any confidence that he has ceased from his trend of violence (McGreal, 2008). The people as a result continue to fear moving back to their homes and villages and proper reintegration fails to take place in the absence of this return. In the absence of peace one is left to wonder whether reintegration efforts in the North are indeed making a lasting difference. Issues of justice constantly come to fold when the members of the community struggle with accepting former ex-combatants back into the community. Though amnesty is hailed as the most appropriate solution to the violence and to ending the war, one has to wonder how effective this process will be in ensuring lasting peace. Justice must be seen to be done, to ensure that there is not only a reconciliation of persons but a restoration of communities.

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CHAPTER SIX

Conclusions

6.1 Findings of the Research

This research was prompted by unanswered questions as to whether the efforts carried out for post conflict reconstruction as concerns formerly abducted children were relevant and useful in restoring societies and fostering sustainable peace. This thesis sought to analyse the process of reintegration as is carried out in Northern Uganda. The discussions on reintegration in this work did not only focus on the process of restoring formerly abducted children back into communities but also engaged in an assessment of how the reintegration process affects the local communities in Northern Uganda. As discussed in the chapters of this work, the whole post conflict agenda in North Uganda rests on the principles and laws of amnesty and the rationale for this rests on the objective of restoring societies that have previously been torn apart by war. The current reintegration initiatives and programming in North Uganda though well intentioned has not been well articulated and planned out. The practice of different actors is indicative of the manner in which the reintegration agenda can often be mismatched to local realities. This thesis therefore sought to investigate whether the efforts of the government, the international community and local indigenous actors were contributing to the freedom from fear and want for all involved.

To better analyse the reintegration experience of formerly abducted children and the consequential impacts of the process on the local recipient communities, the following questions were raised: How is the reintegration process administered in Northern Uganda?
Is the content of the reintegration process in Northern Uganda relevant? To what extent does the reintegration process merge with the long term development initiatives of the communities and the country? How does the process of reintegration in Northern Uganda founded on the principles of amnesty address issues of justice for crimes committed by formerly abducted children? How does the Acholi community grapple with issues of restorative justice? Do the programmes give special attention to the specific issue of gender? Do the reintegration programmes alleviate fear and want in both the lives of the returnees and among members of the local community? These questions focussed the attention of this work to the activities of the governmental, non-governmental, religious, and local indigenous organisations and their efforts to restore formerly abducted children.

In this research on the reintegration process it was imperative that the researcher engage in a retrospective exercise that sought to address the root causes of the war. An in-depth understanding of the political history of this country and analysis of the often highlighted causes of the LRA conflict form a necessary foundation to understanding the plight of children in war. The LRA which has contended with the current government of Uganda has often been dismissed as a movement that is lacking in ideology and proper cause for the war and violence. It is fact that the LRA has failed to mobilise the local populations in fighting the Government and has been responsible for the merciless violence and killing of the Acholi people. It is also true however that the social contract of the Northern populations has repeatedly been violated by a state that has done little to ensure their safety and security. This analysis begs the question, whether in a properly articulated rebel regime the Acholi people would feel a need to express their frustration through such a movement and strive against the ruling government. This contribution supports a central argument of this work, that reintegration must not only be done well but must also address the root causes and vulnerabilities that have led to the war. The government must stand to honour
its obligation to serve and protect the Acholi people, and in this way fortify the loyalty of this community. It is only in such redress to the concerns of want and fear of the Acholi people that the reintegration process can serve meaningful purpose. Any resolve that does not address the root causes of war is only temporary and such a society will only be webbed in a vicious cycle of war and ‘temporal peace’.

Uganda presents a clear example of a state post colonial identity crisis. The dynamics of state consolidation cannot be ignored when addressing issues of marginalisation and war. The local politics in Uganda have clearly displayed the dilemma of most African states plagued by the contingency of their colonial history. African ruling elites such as Yoweri Museveni still find expression in the colonial systems of governance, observed in the manner in which he consolidates his support and rule on the basis of the divide and rule policy. It is such ideology that has fostered and encouraged an enormous gap between the North and the South, with the North continuing to be further marginalised. It is the negative manipulation of ethnicity which condemns the practice of politics and that continues to put the concerns of Northern communities and their reconstruction to the periphery of government concern and agenda.

To be able to effectively analyse the process of reintegration there is need to identify particular ideals that serve as bench marks to what would be considered as acceptable reintegration. The human security framework formed a useful theoretical foundation from which the researcher was able to question the reintegration realities. It is the prioritisation of the needs and fears of the individual that formed an essential tool in helping to formulate questions that would probe the utility of the reintegration practice. This work has engaged with the normative and legalistic provisions that exist in the protection of vulnerable groups and children. International law on the subject of children and war
embraces and expresses a broad range of issues and concerns of human security. The old understanding and framing of international law did elevate the state as the only subject of international law. This frame laid great emphasis on the principles of sovereignty and non-intervention. With the development of international human rights there has been a shift in this position with international law now focussing on the welfare of the individual or group. It is this shift that obligates the international community to act to ensure the safety and security of individuals affected by war. It is also by this standard bench marks that the activities of all actors can be observed and analysed for their utility to ensuring a freedom from fear and want.

This work did establish that the reintegration component of DDR has often been confused with the practice of reinsertion. The act of re-introducing formerly abducted children back to their communities has often been deemed as reintegration. A pertinent contribution of this work has been the deeper investigation of the after-reinsertion phase to understand the experiences of the reintegrated community. This work did engage different members of the reintegrated community in analysing whether this process had enabled them to secure reasonable freedom from fear and want. It is evident that reintegration experiences are unique and differ from community to community and at times from individual to individual.

The failure to properly articulate and equip the formerly abducted children to ensure their survival in their respective communities is perhaps one of the biggest criticisms of this process. The DDR process cannot be considered in isolation to the social, cultural, economic and political surroundings if it is to alleviate fear and want. The socio-economic implications that follow the process of reintegration cannot be under-emphasised. The local communities have faced numerous challenges that result from the return of the
formerly abducted children. To speak of successful reintegration there is urgent need to ensure whole community reintegration. There must be a cultivated balance between the communities and returnees to ensure that the whole community affected by war is healing to reasonable recovery.

There is a tendency by different actors to presume a lack of local agency when drafting and implementing reintegration programmes. This is however not the case, as the Acholi community does enjoy the presence of strong agency. The local community has representation through tribal chiefs and elders. These individuals have been active and vocal in their involvement to lead their people. It is therefore imperative that reintegration initiatives engage this local agency in the crafting and shaping of policies geared towards reintegrating formerly abducted children. Human security presupposes that when individuals are made the focus of security, there is an empowerment that comes along with this which obligates them to participate in ensuring their own security. This work has recognised that there is a need for communities to be involved and to contribute to ensure that there is freedom from fear and want for all. It is in such action that the reintegration process can be useful and relevant. The urgency and importance of the DDR process cannot be disregarded as it has the potential to contribute to positive peace building and post conflict reconstruction.

Every post conflict environment presents its own challenges and therefore reintegration practices are non-transferable as what works in one area may not be the solution or strategy in a different area. The assumption that reintegration can be generic and transferable from one post-conflict scenario to another is another weakness that has been levelled against the process. There is a tendency to replicate successful programmes, but as established in this work different environments demand for different attention and allocation of resources.
The failure by organisations to consolidate and coordinate their activities so as to ensure complementarity is also another downside of the reintegration process in Northern Uganda. This has been evidenced by different organisations training in a similar skill thus flooding the market with an excessive supply of one skill. There is great potential for growth and useful training of formerly abducted children, but this is fully dependent on institutional conversation. There is need for actors engaged in this process to compare and restructure programmes and practice. This will not only enhance best practice but will also ensure that the skills taught to formerly abducted children match existing demand.

Despite these weaknesses which can be resolved this work recognises that in post conflict states, systems are often weak and structures are so run down that this could so easily undermine any logical and good effort to properly reintegrate. It therefore logically follows that one would question whether the DDR process is possible in the context of poverty. It is clear from preceding discussion that the objectives and process of reintegration has good intention and cause, but the terrain and environment recipient of this process is difficult and complicated. It is therefore the contention of this thesis that while the terrain is uniquely complex, there is need to integrate unique methods and innovative programmes which involve the local community to ensure meaningful reintegration.

The adoption and use of amnesty centred initiatives to foster peace-building in Northern Uganda is indicative of a pragmatism that exists in the international debate on the reconstruction of post conflict states and the urgency of the international community to attain peace urgently and at all cost. This ideal position is often fraught with concerns over sustainability. There are for example real concerns over the moral standing of those that have returned after committing inhumane aggressions. There is an assumption by policy
makers that it is possible for communities to completely blot out their painful experiences and embrace those that have irreparably offended them. Can peace really be sacrificed to attain peace? Can restorative justice ensure contentment amongst those aggrieved so as to break the cycle of conflict? This work recognises that in post conflict situations, restoration as opposed to retribution is probably best but one cannot be so simpleton as to think that in and of itself amnesty can ensure sustainable peace. Arguments against impunity do logically demand that perpetrators of the day be brought to book, but how can the system of justice punish those who have also been victims of war and grave atrocities. The issue of justice and redress to victims of the grievous acts of the returnees informs this research of the complex dynamics of restoring communities. In a vicious cycle of war, who has more claim to the victim status? Is it the victims of the crimes committed by the formerly abducted children or is it the children who have themselves been excessively victimised and indoctrinated.

An underlying question of this work is what are we reintegrating formerly abducted children back into? Where the environments of return are clouded with uncertainty and extreme poverty, can we really speak of reintegration? The success of any reintegration programmes must be hinged on economic empowerment, the social/psychological balance, peace and a sense of justice. Where these factors do not hold constant there is a challenge in ensuring successful reintegration. The success of the formerly abducted children should never be at the expense of others in the local community. Dilemmas exist in situations where securing a vulnerable returnee works to insecure another member community and all policy and practice on reintegration must take cognisance of this dynamic.

The Acholi people of Northern Ugandans have held hope that there would be a peace accord signed between the LRA and the Government. Due to factors discussed in an
earlier chapter of this work, this has failed to happen. Many of the Acholi people are sceptical of what everyone now refers to as the post-conflict environment. The failure of the warring parties to agree on peace is a legitimate concern. There are doubts that reintegration programmes created in this environment can make lasting difference. Though the government is insistent that they have done all they can to ensure peace, there are many who question whether this is actually true. Without any formal agreement by the rebels to end the war, the consistent atrocities of the LRA in the neighbouring states, the Democratic Republic of Congo and the Central African Republic, only serve to question whether there can really be peace without peace.

The third chapter of this work discusses the fundamental objectives of DDR and in effect those of the reintegration process. The process of reintegration serves to transform formerly abducted children deprived and victimised by war into responsible citizens. This transformation aims to overhaul children who have been used as instruments of war into reasonable civilians. This process also works to engage communities in accepting back children who have repeatedly abused, killed and terrorised them. It begs the question as to whether the expectations made of the reintegration process are in any way realistic. It is evident from the discussions made through this thesis that the demands placed on the understanding of reintegration are ideal at best. It is however these objectives that lay out the benchmark by which these programmes can constantly check themselves for relevance and efficacy. So while the objectives of the reintegration process in a uniquely poor and complex terrain may be unrealistic, they do offer useful and insightful ideals, which all programmes must strive to achieve. This therefore does inform the conclusion that reintegration is a process and must be approached as such. It is a process that is useful to ensuring that formerly abducted children and local communities heal from their plight in war. The criticisms made of the process in this work therefore do not serve to dismiss the
utility and importance of this process, rather to strengthen what the researcher believes to be a most useful component of post conflict reconstruction. The criticisms are therefore aimed at feeding into the process to ensure that programmes move closer to the ideals voiced out in the objectives of the reintegration process.

6.2 Thesis Contributions

This research contributes extensively to the post conflict experience of formerly abducted children. This work makes analysis of whether the process is relevant to the Northern Uganda community and whether it makes a significant contribution to sustainable peace in the region. The fact that the local community and the international community are engaging in the reintegration process does not allow the presumption to be made that the process is successful. This work therefore by delving into this analysis makes a useful contribution not only to understanding reintegration but to assessing its intrinsic value to the Northern Uganda community.

This research also contributes to the analytical study of the impact of the reintegration process on the local community. Often discussions and literature on reintegration revolve around the child soldiers and returning ex-combatants. A unique contribution of this work is the detailed analysis of the impacts of this process on the members of society. How does reintegration interpret itself to an elderly person, a woman, a child or man in the community? Here the research delves into the social, economic, psychosocial and legalistic impacts of reintegration, questioning whether the process does really serve to alleviate fear and want. This contribution also does serve to investigate whether the reintegration process has been one sided and solely focussed on the returnees to the complete exclusion of the local communities.
This research employs and explores the human security framework as a theoretical tool to understanding and addressing post conflict reconstruction. The use of this framework to identify the significant security concerns in Northern Uganda and the subsequent engagement of this theory to capture the protection of both the formerly abducted children and communities is significant. This theory has also been used as an explanation over why the international community must intervene in the Northern Uganda conflict. It is this framework that gives the researcher the unique platform to question the activities of international and non-governmental actors in reintegration. Human security explains why all actors in reintegration must do their best to ensure that societies achieve durable positive peace.

Another unique contribution of this work is the discussion over the other actors of reintegration in chapter four of this work. Often literature has been more focussed on the reception centres for formerly abducted children. Most research has revolved around the acclaimed organisations and their reception activities. This work has gone beyond looking at the reception centres and engages with other actors that are concerned with teaching skill and reintegrating formerly abducted children once they are reinserted back into community. This research recognises the crucial role played by these actors in contributing to the security of formerly abducted children.

Often the concepts and practice of amnesty and restorative justice have been accepted at face value as being the best alternative to ensuring peace in post conflict states. This research however probes deeper into questioning the amnesty process and whether this is the best alternative. There is extensive discussion over the usefulness of this alternative and the reasons why this has often been seen as the better alternative to ensuring that the Northern communities revert from a life of war. There are also significant queries as to
whether this alternative is capable of ensuring sustainable peace and security in years to come.

This work also engages with the gender dynamics that arise from the reintegration process. This work goes beyond investigating the plight of returning girls but also seeks to understand what the reintegration process would mean to the women populations in Northern Uganda. The debate over gender roles and the shift in traditional roles during the war and the subsequent restoration of gender roles in post conflict reconstruction raises interesting insight to the impact of the process on women.

6.3 Recommendations for Future Research

Though this research delved into the utility of the reintegration process in alleviating fear and want and securing the formerly abducted children in Northern Uganda, more research can be done into the efficacy of the reintegration programming. A survey of a larger sample of respondents and field interactions of their experiences can better inform a judgement on the efficacy of the reintegration process. This work was limited in its sample size due to time and logistical constraints. A much more widespread enquiry of the reintegration process from the recipients would be a critical contribution to the debate on efficacy and would serve to better inform policy on the reintegration aspect of post conflict reconstruction.

More research needs to be done on the gender aspect of the reintegration process. Though this work sheds light on some of the struggles of the female gender in reintegration, more research needs to be done to inform better policy in this area. Since the gender component of this research was only a component of a wider discussion, future research solely on this issue could prove invaluable to improving post conflict interventions. Societal gender roles
and socialisations and how these fundamentally change during war and revert back in post conflict scenarios are issues in need of further research and understanding.

An interesting observation of this work was that institutions that attempted to mix the male and female genders in the process of reintegration tended to be unsuccessful. A study of the SOWAC institution in Gulu for example was indicative of the failure of such initiative. This thesis points out that a possible reason for this failure has to do with the fact that such a structure presumes the hierarchy of authority in the bush. It would therefore be interesting to engage in a study of the social relationships and networks of formerly abducted children with each other.

Different organisations aid the process of reintegration for both the formerly abducted children and local communities. This work delves into identifying critical actors that assist returnees adapt back into the community. Though this work does extensively discuss some of the activities and challenges of these organisations it is a recommendation of this work that more research needs to be done on the different organisations that engage in reintegration. Often literature focuses on the big organisations with reception centres that facilitate the return of formerly abducted children. It is however imperative that more work be done on the local indigenous organisations that tend to not only masses of children but also to handfuls of abductees. Such research would then work to inform policy on what can improve the reintegration experience of formerly abducted children.
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  http://www.un DDR.org/countryprogrammes.php?c=37


  http://209.85.229.132/search?q=c a c h e:ysWfd0z8v8IJ:www.un DDR.org/iddrs/05/30.php+girls+make+up+about+30%25+of+the+returning+children,+however+ra rely+do+they+go+through+the+formal+process+of+reintegration&cd=1&hl=en &ct=clnk


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APPENDICES

Appendix One Part A
Structure of Interview with Officials of Organisations Conducting Reintegration Programming

- What are the main objectives of the organizations reintegration?
- What are the main activities of your programme?
- What are the ages of the ex-child combatants taken on
- What is the procedure of admitting them into the programmes, are there any specific requirements?
- Do you teach the FAPS any particular skills?
- What are some of the challenges the programme faces?
- Who is responsible for drafting the programmes implemented?
- Do you involve the locals in crafting the programmes that you implement for the ex CS?
- How many case workers are in these organizations and where are they from?
- To what extent does the Amnesty Act guide the activities of the different programmes?
- Do the programmes and activities of these organizations have a religious bias?
- What are the sources of funding for these activities?
- How many ex-CS are currently being catered for?
- How long do the children stay in the centers?
- What are the follow-up actions the organization takes after placing the children in communities?
- Are the opinions of these children sought after when developing programmes?
## Appendix One Part B
### List of Interviews with Programme Officials

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*Some of the names of the officials are Pseudonyms to protect the identities of the respondents.*
Appendix Two Part A
Structure of Questionnaire with Formerly Abducted Children in Gulu, Northern Uganda

- When did you return?
- Did you report to a reception centres? If yes, which reception centres did you attend?
- How long did you stay in the reception centre?
- What do you do now?
- How did the community receive you?
- Who are your friends?
- Do the organizations still call on you – (Follow Up)?
- Did you receive the amnesty pack?
- What is your biggest challenge now?
- Did you learn any skills?
- What activities were you involved in when in the reception centres?
- Are you labelled by the community?
- Who do you turn to when in trouble? (Is it a member of the community or is it a former colleague in the LRA?)
- Do you have access to medical services? Can you afford?
- Did the counselling you receive at the reception centres help you adjust to the society?
- Do you still receive counselling?
- Do you still experience the effect of your time in captivity? (combat exposure)
- For the child mothers, who assists in taking care of the children?
- Who do you trust in your community?
• Did you return back to your family and are you with your family currently?

• Did you find the reception centre useful?

• How do you think the process can be improved?

• What is your opinion about the resettlement packages?
### Appendix Two Part B

**List of Interviews with Formerly Abducted Children**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interview Participant Number</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Home town</th>
<th>Gender*</th>
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</table>
*Some of the names are Pseudonyms to protect the identities of the respondents.
Appendix Three Part A
Structure of Interview with Members of the Local Community

- What do you think about their reintegration process of formerly abducted children currently taking place in your community?
- How are these former ex-CS accepted back into the community? What are some of the traditional rituals performed?
- What is the government doing to aid reintegration of FACs?
- What is your opinion about the resettlement packages that are given to the FACs?
- What mechanisms exist to address victims of atrocities committed by FACs?
- What are the impacts of reintegration process of FACs in the local community? (List impacts)
- What are some of the activities that returnees are involved in?
- Do the returnee children mix with the rest of the children in the community?
- Do FACs have access to the health facilities?
- How do communities assist former girl child soldiers adopt back into the community?
- What in your opinion are some of the main challenges on the reintegration process?
- Do you get to participate in how reintegration is done in your community? If yes how?
- How in your opinion can the process of reintegration be improved?
- On a scale of 1 to 10 how would you rate the process of reintegration?
- In your opinion which organization has a done a good job in reintegration FACs?
## Appendix Three Part B
### List of Interviews with Members of the Local Community

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interview Participant Number</th>
<th>Name *</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Age Estimate</th>
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*Some of the names are Pseudonyms to protect the identities of the respondents.*