CHAPTER THREE

CHILDREN IN WAR, REINTEGRATION AND CITIZENSHIP

3.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, we present the theoretical framework that provides the analytical themes for our research. The framework is divided into three sections. First, we discuss children in war, how they become part of wars and their experiences both during and after war, in addition to the consequences of being involved in war. In the second section, we examine the meaning and necessity of reintegration, in addition to different types of approaches towards reintegration. This section also pays special attention to understanding the Acholi spiritual world-view in the process of explaining the foundations of community-based reintegration in northern Uganda. This study does not look at reintegration for its own sake but views it as a long-term activity embedded in the life of the community into which social reintegration of war-affected children occurs. For this, the framework sees the concept of citizenship as a normative condition which the reintegration of formerly abducted children aims to ensure. We consider positive citizenship as a normative condition for reintegration because of our presupposition that children's experiences of war affect their sense of being on a personal level as well as their relationship with and sense of being a member of their community. The concept is also seen as appropriate for interpreting the war experiences and the reintegration practices of formerly abducted children in northern Uganda. Therefore, in the third part we will discuss reintegration on the basis of the concept of citizenship.

3.2 CHILDREN IN WAR

In this section we explore the relationship between children and war. This is important for our research because the need for reintegration arises due to children's involvement in war contexts. Here we discuss the widespread use of children, how children become part of wars and how they experience wars, in addition to the consequences of their involvement in active conflict.

3.2.1 The widespread use of children in war

In recent times, there has been a widespread use of children in conflicts even though they do not start wars nor understand their complex causes

(Macmillan, 2009; Van Gog, 2008; Honwana, 2006; McIntyre, 2005; UNICEF, 2004; Sendabo, 2004; World Vision, 2004; Human Rights Watch, 2003; Hill and Langholtz 2003; Skinner, 1999; Machel, 1996). According to UNICEF (2004), the widespread use of children in war occurs in locations such as Myanmar, where there are still many children in the armed forces. UNICEF (2004) also states that there has been an increase in the numbers of children used by armed groups and urban militia in Columbia in recent years to about 14,000. In addition, there was a deliberate policy of raping teenage girls and women to force them to bear their enemy's children in Bosnia, Croatia and Herzegovina in the 1990s (Honwana, 2006; UNICEF, 2004).

After independence in 1975, Mozambique fell into civil war – the opposing parties being the FRELIMO government (Frente de Libertação de Moçambique – Liberation Front of Mozambique) and an armed opposition group RENAMO (Resistência Nacional Moçambicanan – Mozambican National Resistance). This conflict lasted for 16 years and cost thousands of lives, with many children and youths growing up knowing only the horrors of war (Honwana, 2006; Igreja, 2003; Maslen, 1997). It is also said that a great number of youths and children of both sexes joined either the government forces or the opposition armed group and became active participants in the conflict (Leão, 2005).

During the Angolan 1994 Lusaka Peace process, which attempted to demobilize UNITA (União Nacional pela Independência Total de Angola – Union for the Total Independence of Angola), over 9,000 children were registered as being involved in the war (Human Rights Watch, 2003). In the 1998–2002 phase of the same war, informally the numbers are said to have been between 10,000 and 11,000 (Parsons, 2005; Human Rights Watch, 2003). Sendabo (2004) explains that child soldiers in Liberia came from both rural and urban areas and were involved with seven different warring factions, with the majority (74 percent) fighting for Charles Taylor's National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL). All of these studies demonstrate that the involvement of children in the northern Ugandan conflict is part of a worldwide problem. The questions that arise in this respect are: How and why are children so widely involved in conflicts?, and; Do they choose to become involved or are there other factors that precipitate their involvement?

3.2.2 How do children become part of wars?

Children's recruitment into armed groups is similar in most countries. The major reasons why children normally join armed groups include factors related to poverty, employment, protection, forceful recruitment, ideology and power (Honwana, 2006; McIntyre, 2005; Machel, 1996). For example, in Liberia's war, the specific factors related to the recruitment of children

included pressure from anti-government forces, revenge, access to food and their forced abduction (Sendabo, 2004).

In Angola, although UNITA officially denied having abducted children, claiming they only took those who wanted to join them or were without parents, a complicated manner of recruitment was implemented. UNITA used a 'tax' system in the areas that they controlled, whereby traditional authorities (*sobas*) provided young people who were drafted into service. Sometimes children were drafted when they reached a certain age, others through round-ups. Later there were outright abductions of children (Parsons, 2005). In spite of these reports, some young ex-UNITA soldiers deny that they were forcibly conscripted and claim instead to have been motivated to join and fight for UNITA for political reasons (Parsons, 2005). This is a result of UNITA's political education programmes, which were taught in areas under their control. However, were there intervening factors that accelerated the 'decision' to join the armed group? Had it been peace time, would the young people still have been motivated to join? Would they not find going to school, for example, more motivating? Similarly, in Mozambique, Maslen (1997) and Leão (2005) report that many youths and children joined the armed struggles willingly, while others were pressed into service either with a 'gun to their head', by ideological brainwashing or by economic conditions. Many other children, however, were abducted and forced to kill and torture both friends and family in order to ensure a total disconnection from the community – what Amone-P'Olak (2007) refers to as 'burning the bridge'.

However, overall we can conclude that children were conscripted, kidnapped, pressured or duped into joining armed groups (Parsons, 2005; UNICEF, 2004; Human Rights Watch, 2003; Maslen, 1997). Thus far, the literature has shown that armed groups use children because they are easier to condition to become fearless killers with unquestioned obedience than adults (Honwana, 2006; UNICEF, 2005; Parsons, 2005; Aning and McIntyre, 2005; Sendabo, 2004). In relation to young people joining armed groups, the motivations can come from a variety of economic, familial, personal and political influences on the children (Aning and McIntyre, 2005). When children join armed groups under this variety of war time influences writers such as Chelpi-den Hamer (2010) and Richards (2002, 1996) refer to it as agency. For example, Richards (1996: 88) points that the Sierra Leonean youth 'freely admit that at the first news of the RUF insurgency they were tempted to join the rebels and live their dream.' We would rather consider this type of agency with suspicion due to the circumstances under which such decisions are made. It could instead be argued that for younger children, joining armed groups occurs more or less through outright coercion and abduction, while for youths, joining armed groups might involve a semblance

of 'decision-making', as well as coercion through other intervening factors. Studies such as those by Veale and Stavrou (2003) and Human Rights Watch (1997 and 2003) show that most children who became involved in the LRA (Lord's Resistance Army) war were forcefully abducted. The consequences of conflict on children are devastating enough (Hill and Langholtz 2003; Paardekooper, 2002), but the consequences of forceful recruitment in northern Uganda (Eichstaedt, 2009; MacMullin and Loughry, 2004; Veale and Stavrou, 2003; De Temmerman, 2001) might have even more dire consequences. In our research, we aim to develop an understanding of the details and the peculiarities of the process of child abduction in northern Uganda.

3.2.3 How do children experience war?

Generally, children experience war at a very personal level. They become combatants and as such they not only become fighters on the frontline, but also play other roles such as those of spies, cooks, labourers and messengers, while girls also become sex slaves, child mothers and wives (Veale, 2005; UNICEF, 2005; Human Rights Watch, 2003; Machel, 1996). For example, in the Liberian conflict, having fought and carried out other duties normally assigned to them in the bush such as cooking or working as a guard, a porter or a courier, much of the children's experience of war involves such events as seeing other children being killed, the loss of family members and their own mistreatment (Sendabo, 2004). However, in spite of this seemingly negative experience of war, some of the children (32 percent of Sendabo's study sample) expressed pride about their role in war (Sendabo, 2004). Another example are children within the armed groups of Mozambique, who experienced a very rough life with severe discipline and punishment. Physical or sexual abuse, and the threat of death or injury constantly stared the children in the face (Maslen, 1997).

Also, in Angola, children on the frontline acted as cooks, spies, porters, wives and couriers to and from the battle. They were in constant fear of death or being lost, especially in enemy territory. They were forced to carry heavy loads and experienced harsh punishment for breaking rules, being whipped for not following orders (Human Rights Watch, 2003). It is also reported that in order to elicit compliance and break their will to escape, newly captured young children were forced to accept their position through 'incarceration in a deep hole for days' (Parsons, 2005: 54). These experiences, similar, sad and frightening, are instructive for the present study, which seeks to understand such experiences undergone by formerly abducted children in northern Uganda.

3.2.4 Consequences of involvement in conflict for children

When the nature of a conflict is a civil war in the sense of the new wars (Münkler, 2002), it is implied that the community will become the battleground (UNICEF, 2004). Fighting that takes place in the communities where people live has far-reaching consequences for children. These consequences, which are interdependent, include being orphaned, emotional scars, abduction, trauma, displacement and poverty (UNICEF, 2004; Hill and Langholtz 2003). As a result of the children's experience of violence and through their identification with armed groups and the perpetration of violence, when they return to their community their identity has changed (Sendabo, 2004; Hill and Langholtz 2003; Veale and Stavrou, 2003). Children build an identity within their community during their childhood. During war, however, they develop a separate identity through various processes, such as experiencing and at times committing violence. According to Veale and Stavrou (2003: 18), 'the identity of the returning individual may have charged and changed through the violence experienced and through being identified with the group perpetuating violence on the host community'. From this discussion, we can see that the identities of children change from one associated with childhood innocence within a community to one of being a victim through their experience of violence, or even to one of being a victimizer through identification with the group perpetrating violence. According to Sendabo (2004: 62), the experience of violence and identification with the group perpetuating violence 'has made children disoriented with respect to the former way of life'. He adds that the process of being involved in war 'transformed them into adults' (Sendabo, 2004: 63) because the children 'consider themselves as bosses who have fought against bandits and oppressors' (Sendabo, 2004: 62). Hill and Langholtz (2003) also refer to this as exaggerated pride arising from their military identity. These explanations clearly show that the identity of such children changes from that of an innocent to that of a victim and victimiser, and their status changes from child to adult in a young body.

Veale (2005: 106) further explains that 'identification with a social category … provides individual members with a social identity that prescribes appropriate behaviour and ways of thinking and behaving characteristic of the collective group'. In light of this, the removal of children from a community to join an armed group can be said to confuse the sense of identity of children as they shift from a community considered as one social category, to another social category involving a different social identity, that of an armed group. As can be appreciated, the differences between the appropriate behaviour for a civilian in a community and that of a soldier in an armed group further compounds the identity crisis with which a child has to deal. It is likely that the 'appropriate' behaviour and ways of thinking and behaving acquired by

children while engaged with the fighting groups will not be acceptable to the communities to which they return. For example, women and girls who joined the Tigrean Peoples Liberation Front in Ethiopia:

> … adopted the symbols that represented a 'fighter' identity. They rejected the cultural markers of 'femaleness' and adopted more masculine ones … women fighters cut their hair short and wore this boyish, fighter style with pride, in opposition to traditional notions of femininity. Female fighters' body language and social style followed more masculine models, which instantly communicate to civilians their status as fighter. (Veale, 2005: 106-107)

This signifies a change of identity, as also noted by Hill and Langholtz (2003). Do issues such as a change of identity involve more and actually reflect the larger social crisis that these young people find themselves in after personal experiences of conflict?

Apart from changed identities, war-affected children and other ex-combatants are found to suffer from nightmares, extreme aggression when provoked, lack of sleep, mental instability, and physical and mental disturbances leading to long-lasting trauma (Betancourt *et al.*, 2008; De Jong, 2002; Maslen, 1997). These are what Hodgkin and Radstone (2003) refer to as 'traumatic memory'. These symptoms are said to often arise from the excessive use of alcohol and drugs, and the impact of committing and witnessing horror and atrocities such as killing, burning villages and violent robbery (Sendabo, 2004). However, Hodgkin and Radstone (2003) see it not as a result of external events, but as the workings of memory. Notwithstanding these dichotomous views in relation to the symptoms discussed, the memories that war-affected children have concerning their time in conflict are generally horrible and they feel guilty about their actions (Maslen, 1997; Sendabo, 2004). These conditions show that children continue to carry the burden of their experience, such that even though they may physically feel part of the community, mentally they may feel estranged due to their traumatic experiences and the fact that 'children are turned into adults in a relatively short time' (Sendabo, 2004: 60). According to Parsons (2005: 60), 'Their experiences of war simply mark them out as different'. Wessels (1998: 638) also reveals this overwhelming impact of conflict on children:

> Conflicts create extensive emotional psychosocial stress associated with attack, loss of loved ones, separation from parents, and destruction of home and community. Many children develop problems such as flashbacks, nightmares, and social isolation, heightened aggression, depression and diminished future orientation. These problems of mental health and psychosocial functioning persist long after the fighting has ceased …

In previous studies undertaken in northern Uganda, Betancourt (2008) and MacMullin and Loughry (2004) found that exposure to threatening and traumatic situations had an enormous psychological impact on children, leading to significant increases in symptoms of depression, hostility and anxiety over time. Hill and Langholtz (2003) and De Jong (2002) further emphasize the general traumatic consequences of war on children. Related to this, Paardekooper (2002) shows similar traumatic consequences of war on Sudanese refugee children in northern Uganda.

In another study, Derluyn *et al.* (2004) suggest that in such cases symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder were visible. Elaborating on this relationship between violence and the symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder, Yoder (2005: 10) argues that violence and trauma – 'casually used to describe reactions to anything from a stressful day to a brutal murder' – are integrally linked, and explains that violence leads to trauma and unhealed trauma leads to violence. Scheper-Hughes and Bourgois (2004) describe this as violence giving birth to itself and alternatively refer to it as a spiral, chain and mirror but particularly as a continuum of violence. Moreover, the consequences of violence find their way into everyday life and practices, affecting moral sensibilities while influencing behaviour (Scheper-Hughes and Bourgois, 2004; De Jong, 2002). Yoder (2005) further usefully describes traumatic events as involving threats to life, as producing terror and feelings of helplessness, as overwhelming an individual's or a group's ability to cope or respond to threat, and as leading to loss of control. Closely related to this, Scheper-Hughes and Bourgois (2004) show that violence includes an assault on the personhood, dignity and the sense of worth and value of the victim. Scheper-Hughes and Bourgois (2004) add that survivors of violence become 'living-dead', often remaining silent and shunned by kin and community. As Yoder (2005: 24) states: 'Traumatic events shatter the world as we know it, leaving us disordered, disempowered and feeling disconnected from other people and from life'. However, a study of trauma is not the focus of this research, rather we intend to show that children who have been brutally involved in war in northern Uganda undergo 'broken citizenship' which calls for specific forms of reintegration.

3.2.5 Children of war, after the war

When children who have been involved in war return home, their citizenship status and their ability to live meaningfully and participate in their communities is compromised. Sendabo's study reveals that after the Liberian war, 89 percent of the children who had been actively involved in it said they had problems in getting jobs and finding a place at school. Betancourt *et al.* (2008) found similar difficulties concerning their return to school among

children who had been involved in the Sierra Leonean war. Most of the children in Liberia felt rejected and dehumanized and had become beggars as there was nothing else they could do to support themselves (Sendabo, 2004). The study asked the children to make comments: most of them wanted to be reintegrated, needed help for themselves and their families, wanted to go back to school, and some wanted the war in their country and the use of children in war to be stopped (Sendabo, 2004).

In the same line, after the long years of armed conflict, an unknown but substantial number of children in Mozambique today work rather than go to school. The types of work they engage in now differ from their traditional responsibilities of hunting and herding, and range from weeding and harvesting cotton, sesame, sunflower seeds and cashew nuts in rural areas. In the urban centres and especially Maputo, children now work as street vendors, watch boys who looked after parked cars, bus touts and domestic workers, among other jobs (Maslen, 1997). Interesting in the Mozambican case is the fact that many of these consequences of the long-drawn-out war have been observed well after the war 'ended' with the signing of the General Peace Accord in 1992. Is this a representation of the difficulty of re-integrating young people who have been to war? Is this testimony to the long-term nature of reintegration and citizenship re-creation?

In Angola, after demobilization the ex-child soldiers went back to their families and relatives but lacked proper food and shelter there, as well as health care and opportunities for education, despite Angola's commitment to provide for the care and recovery of victims of the conflict. Due to these conditions, some of the children expressed a preference to return to the armed forces, where at least their basic needs could be taken care of (Human Rights Watch, 2003).

3.3 UNDERSTANDING REINTEGRATION

When individuals, especially children, and their communities, experience war conditions that are likely to have negative consequences on the social, psychological and physiological status of those returning, what occurs when they actually return? Can they easily fit back into the community? In our view, re-establishing a connection with the community requires a process of reintegration. In this study, we use the concept of social reintegration to explain and understand the processes that must take place in order for a community to accept children who have been actively involved in armed conflict. Within this section we aim to understand the meaning of reintegration, including why it is necessary and the main approaches employed. As well, through a deeper understanding of Acholi culture, we develop the

notion of community-based reintegration in northern Uganda, and finally will attempt to capture the essence of reintegration.

3.3.1 What is reintegration?

To understand reintegration, we draw from the commonly used concept of Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR). In the aftermath of war or when young people who have participated in war return home, they usually undergo the DDR process. The UN DDR resource centre defines the first two components of the concept as:

> Disarmament is the collection, documentation, control and disposal of small arms, ammunitions, explosives and light and heavy weapons of combatants and often also of the civilian population. Disarmament also includes the development of responsible arms management programmes.
>
> Demobilization is the formal and controlled discharge of active combatants from armed forces or other armed groups. … (UN DDR Resource Centre, http://www.unddr.org/whatisddr.php#9)

This study focuses on the reintegration process for formerly abducted children in northern Uganda, where thousands of children are returning home without guns and as escapees. Because of this, we have concentrated on the understanding of reintegration (R) in isolation from disarmament and demobilization (DD). Another reason for excluding these two components of DDR is that thus far the nature of the conflict in northern Uganda does not warrant the study of disarmament and demobilization. Due to the fact that the children we are studying in northern Uganda were exclusively forcefully abducted, most of those who came back home escaped on their own or were rescued by the Ugandan military. This means that either there were no guns to collect or that they willingly surrendered their arms on their arrival back in the community. This also means that on their decision to escape they had willingly become demobilized from the Lord's Resistance Army rebel group.

According to the UN, Reintegration, as included in DDR, is considered to have two phases:

> Reinsertion is the assistance offered to ex-combatants … prior to the long-term process of reintegration. Reinsertion is a transitional assistance to help cover the basic needs of ex-combatants and their families and can include transitional safety allowances, food, clothes, shelter, medical services, short-term education, training, employment and tools …
>
> Reintegration is the process by which ex-combatants acquire civilian status and gain sustainable employment and income. Reintegration is essentially a social and economic process with an open time-frame, primarily taking place

> in communities at the local level. It is part of the general development of a country and a national responsibility, and often necessitates long-term external assistance. (UN DDR Resource Centre, http://www.unddr.org/whatisddr.php#9)

However, according to Colleta, Kostner and Wiederhofer (1996: 1), 'reinsertion and reintegration are not distinct phases after demobilization. Rather, they form part of a seamless web of transition from military to a civilian life, without a clear beginning or end'. Although our study is not interested in disarmament and demobilization (DD), it is apparent that the UN definition of the entire DDR process is linear in outlook. It progresses from disarming ex-combatants through demobilizing to reintegrating them. Thus, the concept assumes that anyone who requires social reintegration needs to be disarmed and demobilized. It does not envisage a situation where, for example, forcefully abducted children escape from armed groups without their weapons and also effectively demobilize themselves through their escape. Understandably, DDR is security focused (Humphreys and Weinstein, 2007), hence the assumption that all ex-combatants need to be disarmed and demobilized (Humphreys and Weinstein, 2007) before they can be reintegrated.

To its credit, the concept takes note of the importance of communities in the social reintegration process. Clearly, this is important for long-term social reintegration. What is unfortunate, however, is that it has become known that most engagement with the reintegration phase of the DDR process, for various reasons, such as financial constraints, stops at the short-term reinsertion of people who have been involved in fighting (Specker, 2008). If, in practice, Specker's claim that organizations can only commit to a short-term engagement in reinsertion activities is true, then why is reintegration and not reinsertion the preferred nomenclature? Is the term reintegration, therefore, just window-dressing?

Knight and Ozerdem (2004: 500) define reintegration as:

> The process whereby former combatants and their families are reintegrated into the social, economic, and political life of (civilian) communities.

From the above definitions, it is apparent that reintegration concerns a new beginning for ex-combatants after the experiences of war. Kingma (2001: 407) clarifies this process:

> Social reintegration is the process through which the ex-combatant and his or her family feel part of, and are accepted by the community.

Furthermore, he emphasizes the importance of economic reintegration, which is:

> The process by which the households of ex-combatants re-establish their livelihood. (Kingma, 2001: 407)

Kingma's research mentions psychological adjustment as a process of changing attitudes and expectations, and sees coping with psychosocial problems arising from post-traumatic stress disorder as another aspect of reintegration. This definition of reintegration offers valuable themes for analysis in the context of the present study because of the broad base from which it addresses issues that affect children returning from war and the communities to which they return. Furthermore, the long-term view of reintegration presented by Kingma's definition is useful to this study's interest in the reintegration of formerly abducted children who have been reunited with their families within the community for a long period of time. The key issues that the definition mentions, such as re-establishing livelihoods, psychological adjustment and coping with psychosocial imbalances, are considered to be issues that need long-term attention. This point of view justifies the central assumption of this study that reintegration of war-affected children is a long-term activity. When only short-term attention is paid to the issue, the entire process of attempting to re-establish community citizenship can remain problematical.

Kingma's definitions (2001), however, pose challenges and problems. The notion of social reintegration considered as a process of feeling part of a community does not identify clear elements of *how* to feel part of the community. Similarly, Knight and Ozerdem's (2004) process of reintegrating into social, economic and political life of communities appears to be oblivious to the fact that communities into which reintegration has to occur have also been wounded by conflict. In fact, such communities are often as wounded as those who are returning to them. The present study, though aware of the shortcomings of these definitions will also rely on the definitions provided by Kingma due to their advantages. On this basis we reconstruct the definition of reintegration as *the process by which formerly abducted children begin a new life with their families and their community after the bitter experiences of war by creating positive economic and social relationships.*

Community perception of the meaning of reintegration

In attempting to construct a grass-roots perception of the meaning of reintegration in his study of child soldiers in Liberia, Sendabo's (2004) participants explained that reintegration means bringing ex-child soldiers back into the value system and creating a sense of normality such as existed before the civil war. This is required because the children's positions have changed:

their relationship to their parents has changed and they are no longer children. Explaining this further:

> When you see someone coming from fighting you have certain prejudices …. When former child soldiers come back from the war front and roam around, the community does not accept them easily. People in the community have to see that these excombatants are making some changes. Therefore, reintegration is considered to have happened or [be] successful 'when the former child soldiers start to settle in the community, get married and start farming, then gradually they become accepted'. Only when they engage in activities of their community, members of the community admit them readily for faster reintegration. Only then the community feels much more comfortable with the former child soldiers' return and acceptance will be easy. When former child soldiers return to their families and are accepted, the change of attitude from war to normal life starts. The more the children are accepted and become part of the society, the more they will be rehabilitated and reintegrated. (Sendabo, 2004: 66)

This quotation shows the two-sided nature of reintegration in the community setting, that is, the changed position and nature of the returning children and the prejudiced attitude towards and perception of the children in the community. The quotation also spells out that reintegration has to take place in the existing social framework of the community, involving such activities as farming and marrying, which involve a change of attitude from a war mentality to that of normal life. On this basis, elements of the reintegration process can therefore be seen to include involvement in such activities as farming, getting married and being seen to be settling into the community and making positive changes in attitude. On the part of the community, an attitude of acceptance is also considered to be important. Successful reintegration calls for a careful balancing and adjustment by the two parties to reach a new social equilibrium that takes into account the positions and histories of both the returning children and the community to which they return. According to Sendabo (2004: 67), the children should 'respect the rights and freedoms of others' while 'those who are hurt and wounded accept those offenders and are able to coexist'. The above emphasizes the importance of the re-establishment of relationships in the reintegration process. Acceptance and non-acceptance within the community will depend on how a stable mutual relationship unfolds between the children and the community. This opens a critical window through which the present study can examine the dynamics of how formerly abducted children mutually build relationships with the community. What are the challenges that come with this rebuilding of relationships in the attempt to become co-citizens in a war-torn community?

Institutionally based (formal) versus community-based (informal) reintegration

On the basis of the above, we identify two recognizable paths for reintegration. The first is the institutionally based and UN-defined method of reintegration – often taken up and adopted by NGOs and other institutions. The UN definition of DDR in general and reinsertion and reintegration in particular emphasizes the offering of assistance to ex-combatants. According to the definition, such assistance should be given within a particular timeframe. More specifically it emphasizes external financial assistance. The essence of these definitions in the context of the institution of the UN itself as the origin of this concept is the basis for what this study refers to as institutional approaches to reintegration. The UN Department of Peace Keeping Operations usually leads the planning of the (DD) Reintegration in collaboration with other agencies, thus furthering the institutionalization of reintegration in the context of formal peace-keeping operations. NGOs are also given a prominent role in these institutionalized reintegration processes. However, in different contexts, NGOs usually also provide expertise in different ways, including running childcare centres for demobilized children and the implementation of reintegration programmes (UN Resource Centre, http://unddr.org/whatisddr.php). Northern Uganda may not have had a formal peace-keeping operation, but this understanding of the institutionalization of reintegration comes close to the operations of many institutions assisting formerly abducted children in northern Uganda. This research examines the efforts that are being made by institutions and the activities that are being conducted in relation to reintegrating formerly abducted children.

Goodhand (2006) found that NGOs have a high-tolerance risk in terms of their ability to manoeuvre their activities in active conflict and are able to conflict-proof themselves in live conflict conditions, underlining the importance of NGOs in particular (but also institutions in general) in armed conflicts. He further found NGO activities to be important in building community resilience, enabling households and people to manage risk and avoid bottom-up violence. Despite these positive aspects of NGO involvement in conflict situations, Goodhand's research also points out that in the context of Sri Lanka and Afghanistan, NGO assistance was rarely central to people's coping and survival strategies and that the role of community networks, among other aspects, was of greater importance than the more visible but transient NGO interventions. These findings caution us about the dangers of using exclusive pathways for reintegration. Do they point to the need for complementarity in relation to institutionalized NGO-based interventions and community-based interventions?

More specifically, two factors explain why NGOs are heavily involved in the implementation of the so-called R phase of the DDR programmes. First, international agencies subcontract work to NGOs and, second, NGOs are in contact with communities and ex-combatants (Specker, 2008). We assume that this subcontracting provides the setting for establishing a hierarchy and for the institutionalization of not only the general humanitarian 'industry' but also reintegration practices. Specker (2008) refers to this as the top-down blueprint approach to reintegration and argues that such an approach makes it is easy to overlook some needy groups, such as children.

The second path towards reintegration is the more informal community-based process of reintegration. There are differences between these two processes. According to Paardekooper (2002: 73), 'programmes carried out in war-stricken communities in developing countries sometimes offer material support such as income generating activities'. She adds that creative activities, games, recreational activities, amongst other means, are also used. Based on these activities, social reintegration as perceived and practised by the institutions (NGOs) is found to target the individual. It is expressed in the provision of material support and in the practical training in various trades that is provided. In contrast, community perceptions based on relationship-building express the desire to see the war child develop the ability to belong to and espouse the values of the community (Sendabo, 2004). This discourse summarizes informal community-based reintegration as:

> … improved his or her life and behaviour not only materially but also relationshipwise. To better relate and do away with the language that separated them; to begin to speak peace language … community life … that made them proud … this takes time … it may be long. (Sendabo, 2004: 68)

This model of reintegration as envisaged by Sendabo's study also implicitly contains the ideas of forgiveness and restorative justice, as opposed to retributive justice. According to Zehr (2001), retributive justice is based on the Western legal system. Its strength lies in its encouragement of human rights. However, retributive justice tends to be punitive, conflictual, impersonal and state-centred. Furthermore, it excludes the victims by ignoring their needs. As a result, it is weak on healing the wounds resulting from certain action due to the separation of justice and healing. Restorative justice, however, places both the victim and offender on centre stage, as Zehr (2001) explains. For example, offenders are encouraged to understand and take responsibility for the harm they have done. Dialogue is encouraged and the community also plays a central role. This method relies on the central assumption that justice can and should promote healing. Zehr (2001) adds that restorative justice is the oldest form of justice and that it is not only dominant in African cultures, indigenous cultures of New Zealand and North

America, but indeed provides the basis for the justice system of the forebears of European cultures. In accordance with Zehr's explanation of restorative and retributive justice, it appears to make sense that forgiveness and restorative justice are needed in rebuilding relationships, especially after a war that has involved children who have played a role in the atrocities committed.

Notwithstanding the above, Sendabo's understanding of community-based reintegration should not be perceived as excluding the need for material support and assistance in gaining a relevant livelihood. In this study, we will examine how both institution-based *and* community-based approaches are used to reintegrate formerly abducted children in northern Uganda. We will ask whether the two-phased definition of reintegration provided by the UN DDR Resource Centre mentioned above points to the possibility of complementarity. We here posit that community-based reintegration represents the long-term phase, while institution-based reintegration addresses the notion of a short-term reinsertion. Moreover, that each community is unique implies that the measurement of long-term community-based reintegration in one post-conflict community may not be the same for another, although the underlying processes might be similar and transferable.

3.3.2 The necessity for reintegration

This subsection aims to understand why reintegration is necessary. It examines the reasons why, if any, social reintegration has to occur. Can the negative war experiences of the formerly abducted children, poverty and prevailing living conditions, uncertainty about the future and the specific contexts in which war children return explain why reintegration is necessary?

Children's negative experiences of war and wounded communities

The need for reintegration derives from the experiences of children in war, as explained in the relevant subsection above. In addition, when war children return home they may find that the dynamics within the community – which may also have been involved in the war – have also changed. There might be large-scale societal disruption (Baines, 2005; Sendabo, 2004), some age-long traditions may have broken down. One example of these changing dynamics might be parents no longer having control over their children. The implication for the children is that their parents and communities, as part of their social support network, may not be able to help them readjust to the societal values of their community (Amone-P'Olak, 2007; Sendabo, 2004). Also, when the children return home, they may have little or no respect for their parents and existing traditional norms (Hill and Langholtz, 2003). According to Sendabo (2004), many consider themselves to be more important than their parents because they had fought rebels or oppressors. This discussion points to a two-pronged argument concerning children who

have changed due to their experience of war and who return to a wounded community that has also changed through the experience of war. Our argument here is that because both the children and the community have changed, social reintegration becomes even more necessary.

Poverty and living in bad conditions

The need for reintegration arises in some societies, such as Angola, where ex-child soldiers seem to have been neglected. According to Parsons, (2005: 58), children who were involved in the conflict in Angola 'have a lack of economic position'. The children are said to have related that there was a lack of assistance from the government. They were living in bad conditions; sometimes so bad that they considered returning to military service in order to gain access to decent meals and shelter (Parsons, 2005). According to Humphreys and Weinstein (2007), one reason for reintegration (and demobilization) is to discourage a return to service within armed military groups. Aggravating bad living conditions for the children returning from the conflict, families are often not able to provide proper care due to poverty (Human Rights Watch, 2003). In addition to a lack of counselling to help them face their troubled past, facing poverty is unlikely to assist children to become responsible and productive members of society. Living in bad conditions in addition to returning to a family that is so poor that it cannot even support a child returning from war is another reason that makes reintegration necessary. It is hoped that through appropriate social reintegration strategies, children returning from war can renegotiate their socioeconomic position within their community.

Reintegration addresses uncertainty about the future

Because of the poverty of the communities in question, there is a need for programmes that help war children, which at the same time should be tailored to the needs of the communities to which the children finally return (Human Rights Watch, 2003). Is this a call for inclusive programmes, without which there is a possibility that the future of the children and the community to which they return becomes uncertain? Could inclusive programmes provide for social rehabilitation, reintegration, community cohesion and the peaceful reintegration of former combatants in a bid to secure their future? According to Human Rights Watch (2003: 21), reintegration is necessary to alleviate 'uncertainty about the future'. We are inclined to agree with this position – that reintegration might be necessary to address the uncertainty that children and their communities feel in the aftermath of war.

Reintegration as context specific phenomenon

From the above, it is clear that societies facing the problem of children who have been to war ought to develop methodologies and strategies for rehabilitation and reintegration based on specific contexts, taking into account such factors as the causes of the conflict and the principle actors involved. For example, Peters (2006) argues that rather than the popular explanation of the cause of the Sierra Leonean conflict as a disaffected youth culture, the real cause was an agrarian crisis. He thus suggests that a good reintegration strategy would need to make agricultural activities attractive to Sierra Leone's ex-combatants. Within this broad central argument, Peters further demonstrates that there are different paths towards reintegration for ex-combatants who return to rural or urban settings. Even within differing rural settings to which ex-combatants returned, reintegration was related to the resources available, upon which ex-combatants could base their livelihoods (Peters, 2006: 135–166).

Van Gog (2008) reveals another possible factor involved in reintegration in the human agency and personal drive of young women in Sierra Leone who had returned from the war. Learning from these different experiences may yield successful reintegration practices (best practices) for a particular country (Sendabo. 2004: 64).

All of the above reasons for reintegration provide useful indications of the themes we need for analysis. For example, this research is interested in the war experiences of formerly abducted children and their reintegration into society. From chapter two, we know that the society into which these children return is wounded and broken and consequently has problems providing livelihoods in the aftermath of conflict. We will be examining how this wounded community is reintegrating its formerly abducted children.

3.3.3 Approaches to reintegration

In this subsection, we aim to understand the various approaches to reintegration. This will shed light on how reintegration occurs. First, we will examine the approaches to the psychosocial problems of war-affected children. Second, we will present the institutional reintegration initiatives undertaken by UNICEF, followed by an examination of traditional healing in the context of reintegration. Before examining whether reintegration efforts have been successful, we will also look at schooling as a contributing factor in reintegration. Through these different themes, we hope to show how reintegration is practised from different perspectives.

Various approaches to the psychosocial problems of war-affected children

Betancourt *et al.* (2008) and Maslen (1997) explain that approaches to the psychosocial problems of war-affected children vary. Both studies identify the

clinical approach, with Maslen (1997) pointing out that this approach adopts Western expertise in child psychology and psychiatry. It involves diagnosis and talking a patient through their problem. Such treatment addresses a child's individual trauma history and targets the specific psychopathology.

Writing about Mozambique, Maslen (1997) contrasts this clinical approach with healing mechanisms within the Mozambican communities involving religious rites and traditional healing rituals. He shows that Western notions of healing such as playing with toys in a room were less preferred to a family-based, unstructured, work-and-play-together-with-family-members mechanism. Maslen's (1997) study helps us to see how reintegration occurs using the two approaches we have identified above, the institutional and community-based approaches.

Related to this, Betancourt *et al.* (2008) identify the psychosocial paradigm as another approach. They consider that psychosocial interventions aim at wider psychosocial needs rather than focusing on particular disorders. The focus is on helping children to interact with the outside world in a healthy manner. Furthermore, they state that psychosocial intervention is grounded in the view that community and family support will make reintegration successful. They explain that psychosocial responses emphasize local participation, restoring connections to families and communities, recreating social networks and providing children with the capacity to deal with the challenges they face during reintegration.

In addition to the two major approaches we have discussed, Betancourt *et al.* (2008) identify two other approaches that marry the psychosocial and clinical approaches. These are the integrated approach and the ecological approach. They find the integrated approach to be a holistic method which treats the psychosocial and clinical approaches as complimentary in order to harness the synergy between them. The ecological approach views war children as being embedded within a social ecology, that is, an environment that nurtures physical and emotional needs. This social ecology includes the family, community, peers, school, cultural and political belief systems. According to Betancourt *et al.* (2008), following this approach, it is important to develop services that strengthen this social ecology, which is generally shattered by war. This conclusion by Betancourt *et al.* is relevant considering that a longitudinal study by Boothby (2006) on what happen to children who have been to war when they grow up in Mozambique found out that neither institutional reintegration nor traditional healing practices put a complete end to experiences of trauma.

On the basis of these studies by Betancourt *et al.* (2008) and Maslen (1997), we can see that the clinical approach is individually oriented and closely relates to the institutional framework for reintegration, while the psychosocial approach (Betancourt *et al.*, 2008), the traditional healing rituals

and the family-based activities (Maslen, 1997) are located within the community-based framework of reintegration identified above. These approaches assist the present study to develop its aim of understanding how family and community-based traditional healing rituals are helping in the reintegration of formerly abducted children. The ideas developed also help us to reflect upon the individually oriented reintegration practices mainly found within the institutionally based practices.

In subsequent sections, we would like to further develop these ideas about institutional reintegration, community reintegration initiatives, traditional rituals, and schooling as reintegration. In addition, we will examine whether such reintegration practices have been successful, using examples from Angola and Mozambique.

Institutional reintegration: UNICEF initiatives in Africa

UNICEF is the world body for the welfare and enhancement of children's rights. In response to the enormous challenges faced by children who have been involved in war, it has both implemented and supported reintegration initiatives in African countries (but also elsewhere) to help children caught up in war make the transition from combatants to civilians (UNICEF, 2004). For this reason, it is important to look at its activities related to the reintegration of war-affected children. According to its own report, 'Childhood under threat', as of 2004 there were reintegration programmes running in Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Liberia, Somalia and Sudan. In Burundi, the programme included support for the families of children who had been involved in conflict, enrolling them in appropriate educational courses, setting up relevant projects and establishing small businesses for youth. In the DRC, the children received psychological and medical care, basic education and help in tracing their families, in addition to vocational training, shared accommodation, a food allowance and encouragement for older children to begin income-generating activities. In Liberia, there were awareness campaigns, not only to prepare the children for demobilization and reintegration but also to prepare their families and communities for their return. According to the same report, in Somalia, children benefited from vocational training in skills such as electrical installation, driving, computing and office management, as well as from counselling. They were also given courses in conflict resolution. All of these activities in Somalia were carried out over a six-month period (UNICEF, 2004: 53). The components of these activities are interesting to note because of their similarity. Across the different countries they focus on what the children can do. Most of the activities, such as learning to drive and other forms of vocational training, as well as psychological and medical care, focus on the children as individuals. As is apparent, these types of activities are

attached to institutions of one form or another. In this respect, the questions that arise are: Were the problems similar or the same for all of the children who needed to be reintegrated regardless of their country of origin? Are these activities caught in an institutional framework of reintegration because UNICEF is part of the UN which originally defined the idea of DDR, as seen above? These issues regarding the institutional components of reintegration initiatives are important to our study, which aims to understand how institutional reintegration is undertaken in northern Uganda.

Community reintegration initiatives

Reintegration does not stop at formally structured activities for people in or by institutions, as we have seen in the preceding section. People who have been involved in conflict eventually return home to live in a normal society. They have to renegotiate and build a relationship with the community to which they return and are involved in various relational issues on a daily basis. There is therefore a need for reintegration initiatives to be located within the community. Sendabo's (2004) study of the reintegration of child soldiers in Liberia gives us an idea of some of the elements involved in community-based reintegration practices. The study discusses such activities as speaking out or telling stories, sharing experiences, listening carefully and drama, as well as cultural activities, all of which are used for social reintegration and when contextually appropriate for trauma healing and reconciliation. Sendabo (2004) adds that some of the techniques used included traditional and religious healing and reconciliation rituals, some of which involved the children telling their story to a listening ear. The purpose of the storytelling and listening was firstly for the problem to be understood, and following this, for healing to be conducted, whether traditional or religious (through prayer). In addition to these different techniques, counselling was also provided. It was based on both Western and traditional notions. The latter form of counselling involved seeking advice from an elder to help resolve social and psychological problems. According to Sendabo (2004), if the process was done carefully, it would always reach a point where an offender confessed and the offended forgave them, becoming a reconciliation process.

From West Africa to the Horn of Africa, according to Veale (2005), for the women and girls that fought with the Tigrean People's Liberation Front in Ethiopia, being reintegrated meant becoming sociable, getting along with others and eliciting their support and help when needed. This meant they had to renegotiate their identity from that of 'fighter girls' to include sociability, economic responsibility and participation in education, as well as learning disciplines such as working hard to start your own business, or even joining some of the women's associations (Veale, 2005: 117–118). This idea of renegotiating identities to achieve something that is acceptable to the

community raises the issue of what happens to the 'acquired' identity. Could the 'acquired' fighter girl identity be completely erased? Could some of the fighter girl skills be relevant for negotiating survival after conflict? The set of community-based skills that had to be developed by the 'fighter girls' and by extension all ex-combatants to be considered reintegrated – such as to be hard working, sociable, own a business and join associations – seem to be related to community citizenship which we will discuss later in this chapter. These insights are crucial for the present research as, in the following, we will consider active and responsible citizenship as a central norm and measure of successful reintegration.

Related to the reintegration experiences in Liberia and Ethiopia, Corbin's (2008) research on the return home of formerly abducted children in northern Uganda found that elements such as family support, reconnection to culture and community acceptance were important community resources for social reintegration. We postulate that these societal resources do assist in making reconciliation and the renegotiation of identities possible, as occurred in Liberia (Sendabo, 2004) and Ethiopia (Veale, 2005).

Traditional healing as reintegration

The idea of traditional healing considered as a reintegration initiative flows from a certain philosophy and involves specific acts. It is premised on the availability of local resources, skills, knowledge and a specific world-view. According to Igreja (2003), studies from non-Western societies on local strategies and practices used to recover from the prolonged effects of war are underrepresented. However, he argues that 'the availability, accessibility and quality of local resources play a vital role in the recovery process because they provide a rationale of suffering that fits with the explanatory models of the traumatized individuals and families' (Igreja, 2003: 461). His own study, exploring the role of Gamba spirits and healers in Mozambique (2003), as well as Honwana's (2006) study of traditional healing processes undergone by war-affected children in Angola and Mozambique, provide examples of how local resources, specifically traditional rituals, are used in community-based reintegration activities. Another approach is taken in the study by Tol *et al.* (2005), which addresses the adaptation of Western-oriented psychosocial counselling in Nepal such that it becomes culturally relevant for torture victims. Related to this, De Jong's (2002) work on trauma, war and violence also addresses mental-health issues in a sociocultural context, discussing countries and regions as far apart as Cambodia, Gaza, the Congo and Uganda. The study addresses different issues, ranging from the mental health of refugees to terrorism and the participation of traditional healers in improving mental health. These studies show the importance of community-

based resources and the need for healing practices to be culturally relevant in the aftermath of prolonged conflict and its devastating effects.

Honwana (2006), Igreja, (2003) and Tol *et al.* (2005) explain the philosophy behind and practices of traditional healing used in the context of killings and other forms of violence. For example, in Mozambique, N'Fukua and Gamba attack people in order to avenge innocent victims of violence (Igreja, 2003). Honwana explains that the spirits of those killed during war are a threat to those who were involved in combat (2006: 106). The restless spirits of those who were not properly buried are called Mpfhukwa and they are able to harm their killers, as well as the latter's family and kin and those passing the places where they were killed (Honwana, 2006: 108). These beliefs about the causes of illness are not only found in Africa. Tol *et al.* (2005) show that in Nepal there is a belief that illness is caused by spirits who are hungry. They attack humans and cause illness when not appeased by food offerings, for example. These beliefs about illness in Mozambique and Nepal resemble the belief in spirit attacks, or *cen*, as it is called among the Acholi in northern Uganda.

Ritual performance provides the remedy for illnesses caused by spirits (Honwana, 2006; Harlacher *et al.*, 2006; Baines, 2005; Tol *et al.*, 2005; Igreja, 2003; Behrend, 1999). Rituals are performed for the immediate cleansing and healing of victims or to undermine an intergenerational transmission of spirit attacks. For example, in Angola the ritual of stepping on an egg was performed by soldiers returning from war to symbolize a break with the past (Honwana, 2006). In Nepal, shamanic rituals are performed through spirit possession or trance to cure illnesses (Tol et. al., 2005). In addition, in Mozambique, Igreja (2003) shows an elaborate process that involves playing drums, singing, going into a trance and the use of herbs. In these cases, the rituals are either a treatment for an actual illnesses or a preventive measure to protect future generations. Igreja's (2003) study in Mozambique revealed the trans-generational manifestation of the N'Fukua (referred to as Mpfhukwa by (Honwana, 2006) and Gamba spirits on families. Its victims experience extreme physical and psychological suffering. The present study examines the use of traditional rituals to help heal formerly abducted children in northern Uganda.

In Honwana's (2006) view, ritual purification, ritual separation from the past and ritual healing involving cleansing and protection are key to traditional processes of healing. Moreover, such rituals are aimed at seeking forgiveness, appeasing the dead and preventing further afflictions emanating from the dead. Following such rituals, the dead should no longer find reason to avenge their improper treatment. The unique perspective arising from these studies is the informal nature of reintegration that is embedded in local culture. The studies also take into account the long-term notion of

reintegration. The present study looks at how traditional rituals are used as part of community-based reintegration practices in northern Uganda. Can the use of traditional healing methods create the right space for recreating citizenship?

Schooling as reintegration

When children who have been actively involved in conflict return to their communities, many also return to school. Parents or caregivers encourage this, as well as it being a personal wish on the part of the children (Betancourt *et al.*, 2008; The Woodrow Wilson School, 2006). This means that schooling becomes part of the community-based space of reintegration. A study by the Woodrow Wilson School (2006) concludes that schooling is important for reintegration because it is a meaningful activity. It found that ex-combatants in Mozambique mention education as an unfulfilled expectation in their reintegration process. The same study found that young black people who had joined the liberation movement in South Africa were later keen to pursue formal education. These findings emphasize that young people who have been participants in active conflicts generally find education important.

According to Betancourt *et al.* (2008), education supports social reintegration in a number of ways. They posit that literacy and the learning of skills provide economic security for returning children, that attending school and undertaking training help them attain a sense of normality and safety in day-to-day life, in addition to building confidence and a sense of purpose as well as a new sense of identity other than that of the soldier. Furthermore, Betancourt *et al.* (2008) state that schools provide an important place for children of war to interact with their peers in the community. According to the Woodrow Wilson School (2006), in the short term, education and training help to achieve the goals of maintaining peace and security by keeping children who have returned from captivity engaged. Education and training on their own may not offer jobs in the long term but in the medium term they are the engines providing the knowledge and skills needed for meaningful participation in the community as a citizen. Education is also important because it counteracts the continued marginalization of returned children by increasing their capabilities and the opportunities available to them (The Woodrow Wilson School, 2006).

Despite the importance of returning to school, for children who have been involved in war this entails some difficulties and is not always a comfortable experience (Betancourt *et al.*, 2008; The Woodrow Wilson School, 2006). Sendabo's research in Liberia shows some of the difficulties that children who return from active war face when they return to school:

> For many excombatants going back to school is a high priority. Yet, there are several problems to make this a reality. Schooling in Liberia is not free of

> charge. There must be someone who is paying his or her school fee. Another problem is related to their past life as soldiers. … many former child soldiers are hesitant to go back to school. One reason is that they have lost many years without going to school, and they feel ashamed of going to back to school and sitting together with small children. Some are afraid of stigma. (Sendabo, 2004: 83)

Similar difficulties concerning returning to schooling were found in northern Uganda by the Woodrow Wilson School (2006), which listed family and financial obligations, the children's advanced age compared to their level of schooling and the school protocol and class structure, all of which were inhibiting social factors affecting the schooling of formerly abducted children. Many of them gave up and dropped out of school. Our study draws from these findings to understand how useful schooling is in the reintegration process. We ask the children about their experiences of schooling and schools as a space where reintegration might take place as a positive experience.

Have reintegration efforts been successful?

According to Humphreys and Weinstein (2007: 532), 'despite the confidence of policy makers in the impact of DDR programmes, there have been few systematic efforts to evaluate the determinants of successful reintegration by ex-combatants after conflict'. However, Corbin (2008: 167) states that 'two important indicators of reintegration include reunification with family and reinsertion into community'. Regardless of these different positions concerning the success or failure of reintegration, studies in Angola (Human Rights Watch, 2003) and Mozambique (Maslen, 1997) show that reintegration efforts in relation to war children have had differing degrees of success. In Angola, the demobilization and especially the reintegration of children who had been involved in the conflict appears to have been haphazard. Children who had been caught up in the war were neglected or ignored because the 2002 Memorandum of Understanding between UNITA and the government of Angola did not address the issue of these children (Human Rights Watch, 2003). Moreover, when they left for home 'they were given a worn pair of trousers and a t-shirt'. An NGO worker noted that 'this is not our idea of rehabilitation' (Human Rights Watch, 2003: 18). However, by the time Human Rights Watch was writing this report in 2003, a community-based government programme promoting family and community rehabilitation as a means to the rehabilitation of children had been planned.

In contrast to the Angolan scenario, in Mozambique an ILO study evaluating the reintegration programme indicated that most former war children seemed to have been reintegrated well and that it was difficult to distinguish between them and other members of the community. Furthermore, the study shows that in Maputo structural distinctions between households

with ex-combatants and those without did not exist. However, ex-soldiers themselves expressed reservations about the extent of the training programmes they were involved in. The training appeared to have targeted only a few, mainly men, and excluded women and children from both RENAMO and FRELIMO (Maslen, 1997: 9-11). In addition, people 'were trained in unmarketable skills, and were sometimes given poor quality kits which they later had to sell' (Maslen, 1997: 13). From this, we infer that the training provided did not relate to the employment market. The suggestion is that no real employment opportunities were gained in turn implying that no survey of the job market might have been done. One individual also raised concerns that the programme focused on material and not psychosocial issues. Also, because there were no opportunities to discuss experiences of war between returned soldiers and the community, reconciliation was not formally provided for, although it occurred informally, often supported by the Church (Maslen, 1997: 14). From the studies in Angola and Mozambique, one cannot simply categorize reintegration activities as successful or otherwise. We can also see that the categorization of social reintegration activities as successful or otherwise depends on who is asking or answering the question. This makes the question of the success or not of social reintegration programmes appear to be political. Nonetheless, the present study takes the Angolan and Mozambican experiences of social reintegration efforts into account. These experiences will inform our aim of understanding how formerly abducted children have undergone social reintegration at both the institutional and community levels in northern Uganda.

3.3.4 A foundation for community-based reintegration in northern Uganda

Thus far in this chapter we have explained the involvement of children in war, the impact of their involvement in war on them and the attempts to reintegrate them. We have also identified some approaches to reintegration. The institutional approach to reintegration seems to clearly originate from the UN, but thus far we have not established a clear origin for community-based reintegration initiatives. In this section, we attempt to determine the cultural elements supporting community-based reintegration in northern Uganda by exploring the cultural context in which community-based reintegration is taking place. To focus our study, we will consider whether there are culturally based, endogenous philosophies for reintegration in northern Uganda. Endogenous methods of reintegration are context and culture specific (Kanyandago, 2008). I do not refer to 'context and culture specificity' as a cultural ideal concerned with uncompromising indigenous traditions that pamper cultural sensitivities – that is, cultural relativism in the extreme (Afshari, 2001). Rather, the phrase 'context and culture specificity' is used to

refer to what we consider to be the importance of the historicity, preservation and willed adaptations of a particular culture. It is close to the idea of endogeneity that is resident in a community, explained by Kanyandago (2008) as: in whatever people do they have to build on who they are and what they have. In other words, each group has a knowledge system which evolves and develops over time in tandem with the cultural and physical environment. Kanyandago (2008) adds that this system offers a unique way of responding to the problems of a people and is made up of their beliefs, values, religion and science. He argues that an endogenous system is open to outside resources that are usually borrowed and appropriated in order to make them locally relevant.

I borrow Kanyandago's idea of endogeneity to explain that however changing and adapting a community might be, it has a resilient way of life, with values and practices that have developed over time. We reason that these values and practices can be relied upon during social shocks and disequilibrium such as occur in the context of involvement in large-scale armed conflicts. This study examines how the Acholi have drawn on, among other things, their endogenous knowledge, expressed in their time-tested values and practices, to cope with the social upheaval caused by the two-decade long conflict. Specifically, we aim to understand how the Acholi have used their social and traditional knowledge and values to reintegrate the formerly abducted children for a long-term co-existence and to enable the meaningful participation of the children in the community as citizens.

Furthermore, because the social reintegration of children of war aims to fit them back into the community (Kingma, 2001; UN Resource Centre), we consider it relevant to understand what kind of community the Acholi people are trying to fit the children back-into. In other words, what are the characteristics of the 'acceptable' and integrated Acholi community into which the children need to reintegrate? Notable here is that we prefer the notion of an 'integrated' community. Our reasoning for this is that, considering that the Acholi community has been wounded (chapter 2), the values they draw on for the social reintegration of formerly abducted children must come from the community as it was before it broke down during the conflict. In contrast to the war-torn community we find the pre-war community to be more integrated, whole and better.

We appreciate that the answer to the question of the nature of the integrated Acholi community tends towards an idealization, but the consideration of this question is important for the grounding and understanding of reintegration practices at the community level. It points to the fact that reintegration into a community does not occur in a vacuum; there are specific values and ways of life that are important to and shape a community. This research investigates the fact that formerly abducted

children might have disassociated themselves from acceptable values and ways of life due to their horrific experiences of war, as both victims and perpetrators. They need to reacquire these cherished values and ways of life in order to be considered reintegrated. The process of reacquiring those values and ways of life, which is undergone by supposedly damaged children, considered as victims and perpetrators, demands certain activities and attitudes from both the formerly abducted children and members of the community. In the following, we will attempt to develop an understanding of the ideal – or what we have described above as the integrated – Acholi community, which embodies acceptable values and ways of life.

The integrated Acholi community

To talk about an 'integrated' Acholi community means discussing its history and 'traditional', pre-colonial character, at least up to the colonial period. After the Luo migrations from southern Sudan and intermingling with the Bunyoro Kitara Kingdom, by around the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries the Acholi had settled in their present-day homeland (Harlacher *et al.*, 2006 and Atkinson, 1994). The Acholi chiefdoms were organized on the basis of chiefs and subjects, the latter paying tribute in both kind and service to the former. The chiefs in turn were expected to be generous to their subjects. The ruler was to have distinct leadership abilities and qualities, including generosity, intelligence, good listening skills and the ability to speak persuasively, in addition to an excellent sense of judgment and the ability to mediate and arbitrate inter and intra-clan conflicts (Harlacher *et al.*, 2006; Atkinson, 1994).

However, according to Atkinson (1994), the subjects belonging to different clans were in charge of their own affairs and livelihoods. They engaged in clan-based forms of production such as agriculture, cattle-keeping and hunting and also had their own clan-based religious beliefs and practices. Clan heads and elders had important roles regarding the settling of internal disputes and performing chiefdom-wide rituals pertaining to different aspects of life and the community. The regular performance of such rituals enhanced the cohesion of a particular clan and/or chiefdom. Examples of these rituals include sowing and harvesting rituals and rituals related to the spirit (*jok*) of the area and the ancestral shrines (Harlacher *et al.*, 2006). This form of organization and arrangement ensured political, military and economic security. It further ensured the unquestionable citizenship of clan members (Atkinson, 1994) and thus a peaceful coexistence within Acholi society. In addition to the organization based around clans, the leadership qualities of chiefs and clan leaders, and chiefdom-wide rituals, the Acholi people were bound together by common activities, such as hunting, life at the 'fire place'

(*wang oo*) and 'communal work' (*awak*). Marriages also deepened the relationship between different clans (Harlacher *et al.*, 2006).

This description refers to the 'glorious' Acholi of the past, as indicated above, and many of these relationship-cementing activities and rituals have been adversely affected by contact with the outside world and the long years of conflict on Acholi land (Baines, 2005). Notwithstanding this, today, in the wake of the devastating impact of the two-decade war on the Acholi community, there is an attempt to reconstruct or think critically about the relevance of this 'eroded' Acholi culture in light of the reintegration of both the war-affected children and the wider community itself (Harlacher *et al.*, 2006; Baines, 2005). As Harlacher *et al.* (2006) suggest, in such a rethinking of the role of Acholi culture in the reintegration of members of a society itself broken by war, the fire place and Acholi traditional dances are considered two important cultural institutions. The fire place is seen as the 'informal school of the Acholi' (AVSI, 2002, quoted in Harlacher *et al.*, 2006: 37), where central elements of the cultural heritage are taught and passed on from generation to generation. The fire place functions as both a centre of entertainment and education. It is here that young people would be taught their kinship relations within and outside the village. This was to ensure that sexual relationships did not occur between relatives and to enforce the taboo against incest (Harlacher *et al.*, 2006). To what extent has this information about taboos, rituals and expected behaviour – transmitted at the fire place as social norms using stories and riddles – been negated by the bush experience of mass rape, forced marriages and other atrocious activities that the children have experienced? Here lies one of the complexities of the social reintegration exercise in northern Uganda: children who have experienced many negative events as a result of war are returning to wounded communities which no longer possess social structures such as the *wang oo* that could have been useful for the reintegration of the children.

The Acholi cultural dances, considered as a cultural institution, seem to be organized around life's major events and/or societal elements and structures that matter to the group. According to Harlacher *et al.* (2006), as Acholi society is organized around the clan chiefs, the *bwola* dance is to honour the chief. The *myel awal wilyel* is the funeral dance and *larakaraka*, traditionally performed by the youth, is a courtship dance. From informal conversation with the research assistants involved in this study about general Acholi culture in general, I learnt that the *apiti* is a women's social dance. It is clear from the events and occasions for which these dances are performed that their function is to educate, entertain and act as a tool for social cohesion. Following these revelations, we hypothesize that as the Acholi danced, they experienced a common identity, entertained themselves and taught the younger generation their values and norms. It is these values that are now

being sought, with the Acholi seeking recourse to their traditional rituals, including dances, for reintegration purposes at reception centres and during traditional rituals.

It can be inferred that the kind of social organization just described also had its own communal social service and welfare system embedded in it, assisting the disadvantaged such as orphans. Harlacher *et al.* (2006) state that families from the same homestead ate together and we add that this would have been a means of facilitating this welfare system. During the long years of conflict, it is this kind of integrated societal system that would have broken down, but nonetheless this is the situation into which the war-affected children return in order to be reintegrated (Baines, 2005). The dynamics between this broken society and its ability to reintegrate the war-affected children is of key importance to this study.

The above has shown that younger generations were educated about acceptable behaviour, taboos and rituals, which are actually manifestations of the spiritual, at the *wang oo*. Therefore, to complete the picture of the integrated Acholi society and its importance to the reintegration of formerly abducted children, there is a need to understand the spiritual world-view of the Acholi. This is because the actual traditional rituals that the war-affected children go through for the purpose of reintegration are based on this spiritual world-view.

The Acholi spiritual world-view[4]

The justification for the use of traditional cultural methods in the reintegration process relies on the importance of a distinct spiritual world-view of the Acholi. Acholi spirituality and the ensuing traditional cultural practices emanate from this world-view. As is apparent above, an Acholi individual is entirely rooted in the community and the clan. Following this, even spiritual wellbeing is based on harmony between the community or clan and the self. Thus, the ancestral spirits (the living-dead), as part of the community, and other spirits, guide the Acholi in the maintenance of harmony and wellbeing. If harmony and moral codes are broken, either by individuals or the community, the spirits become angry and can send misfortune, poor health and conflict to remind the community that something has gone wrong (Baines, 2005; Behrend, 1999). The spirits, collectively called *joggi* (plural), *jok,* (singular) reside and live in specific objects and places, such as rocks, rivers, forests and mountains and as such,

[4] It has to be noted that although the spiritual world-view of the Acholi has been present in the community for as long as it has existed, much of it was not recorded; renewed interest has developed in this spiritual world-view in particular and the Acholi culture in general in the final days of the conflict, as culture has come to be seen as part of the remedy for the devastating social effects of the war.

these abodes of the spirits are respected and revered (Behrend, 1999). The Acholi also depend on *joggi* for agricultural success, hunting and victory in times of war. To prevent disasters and ask for favours, sacrifices are made (Harlacher *et al*., 2006).

Joggi are not only invoked in relation to productive and life-enhancing activities. They are also responsible for righting wrongs, guiding societal morals and maintaining social order. When the moral and social order of a part of the Acholi community is disturbed, an individual or family may be attacked by a *jok* or *joggi.* Such an attack manifests itself in misfortunes or illnesses called *cen,* described by the elders as:

> … the entrance of an angry spirit into the physical body of a person or persons that seeks appeasement, usually in the form of a sacrifice or, in the case of a 'wrongful death', compensation and reconciliation between the clan of the offended and offender. … *cen* … will haunt the wrongdoers by entering their mind or body in form of visions and nightmares that may result in mental illness and sickness until the wrong is made right. *Cen* can also send nightmares and sickness to the rest of the family of the individual involved, so threatens not only the individual, but the family and community. (Baines, 2005: 12)

There may be several reasons why *cen* occurs, but it is said to mainly become manifest or afflict for three reasons. The first is related to death and/or dying. When someone dies due to the neglect of the family or when driven away from home in anger, *cen* will afflict the wrongdoers in order to avenge the spirit of such a dead person. Related to this, *cen* may also afflict an individual who comes across the body of someone who has been killed violently or someone who passes through an area where killing has taken place. It is believed that the spirits of such dead people will haunt the area in order to avenge their death (Baines, 2005 and Harlacher *et al*, 2006). Secondly, *cen* manifests in someone who purposely commits murder and where this murder has not been atoned for. Not only the individual but also the family members of the murderer and clan elders have a duty to right the wrong. Thirdly, an individual may inherit *cen* from the wrongdoing of parents or earlier generations (Baines, 2005). This is because *cen* is said to sometimes become manifest or afflict over a long period of time, pending confession or the righting of the offence committed. Sometimes *cen* will not afflict the wrongdoer but become manifest in the second generation (Baines, 2005 and Harlacher *et al*., 2006) and thus target the family lineage. Our research explains that this world-view has been compromised by conflict generally, but in particular by the war experiences of formerly abducted children, resulting in undesirable consequences.

General Acholi traditional rituals

When *cen* afflicts and/or becomes manifest due to a breakdown in societal or communal harmony, there are remedies to appease the spirits and make amends. The remedies take the form of rituals. The following section presents some of the prevalent Acholi traditional rituals. In Uganda, the Acholi are one of the ethnic groups with a very rich and vibrant culture, with many traditional rituals that have various purposes. Harlacher *et al.* (2006) and Baines (2005) have explained in detail some of those related to reintegration. *Nyono tonggweno* (stepping on the egg), a cleansing ceremony, for example, was traditionally performed at the entrance to the clan settlement or homestead when an individual had been away from home. It was related to the belief that while away from home one could come into contact with spirits that could bring bad luck to the individual and the whole community. The *nyono tonggweno* has been extremely widely used after the return of abducted children. Almost all returnees have had to be cleansed in this way in order to be welcomed and accepted back home.

Other rituals that Harlacher *et al.* (2006) and Baines (2005) describe include *Lwoko pik wang* (washing away tears) – normally performed for an individual who had already been mourned for, being thought to be dead – *moyo tipu* (cleansing the spirit), *tumu kir* (cleansing for a taboo committed) and *mato oput* (drinking the *oput* – a bitter herb), a reconciliation ceremony held after someone has killed another. There are also rituals that focus on the individual, such as the *moyo kom* and *kwero merok. Moyo kom* is held to cleanse the individual from personal spiritual impurity, while *kwero merok* is undertaken to cleanse an individual who has killed during war. Most of these rituals involve a long process but they always start with an explicit expression by the individual or their family of a need for a particular ritual to either defend against *cen* or cure it, depending on individual circumstances. The processes for each of the rituals are different, with further variations in different places according to Harlacher *et al.* (2006). Our research aims to demonstrate the use of these rituals in the reintegration process.

3.3.5 Recapturing children in war and reintegration

Thus far we have learnt that there is widespread use of children in conflicts and their involvement in these conflicts has devastating consequences for the children, both during and after the conflict. Civil society – NGOs and multinational organizations – carry out reintegration activities at the more formal levels, often influenced by the UN process of DDR. They provide or at least arrange for psychosocial and vocational training programmes, almost universally teaching tailoring, carpentry, welding and motor vehicle mechanics, among other courses. Noting this heavy dependence on the private sector for both short-term reinsertion and long-term reintegration, Specker (2008)

points out that the private sector has a weak capacity to absorb their own trainees and that they do not have the capacity to provide adequate training.

What we have termed the institutionally based, short-term activities originating with the UN are explicitly referred to as reintegration initiatives. In contrast, what we have identified as community-based, long-term and context and culture-specific reintegration practices are not explicitly or officially known as reintegration activities. As such, less attention has been paid to these processes in the reintegration literature. Van Gog (2008: 11) also arrived at the same conclusion, stating that 'attention to reintegration appears to be focused predominantly on the moment of return to a community. What happens after reunification or sometime after the war remains underrepresented in the literature…'. This study addresses this gap by emphasizing that both institution-based and community-based reintegration practices are important.

We have also learnt that in the informal community-based reintegration approaches described by Sendabo, Honwana and Igreja, families and communities have drawn on their own cultures. It appears that politicians use state resources to fight wars but when it comes to post-conflict redress through activities such as reintegration, the use of state resources is limited. We have further learnt from the above that most of the institutional/NGO-based reintegration practices are heavily biased towards individual ex-combatants – providing training and material assistance. This points to a gap in either the awareness of or action in relation to community-based reintegration practices. Most importantly, thus far we have identified two approaches to reintegration – the institution-based and the community-based approaches. In order to gain a deeper understanding of the cultural context of reintegration, we have also provided an insight into the appropriate Acholi culture. We will use the two approaches we have identified as themes with which to analyse data, and also examine how institutions and communities in northern Uganda are reintegrating formerly abducted children. Our research looks at what constitutes reintegration in an institutional context, as well as examining the daily community-based activities which formerly abducted children are involved in within their own environment, including school. For us the daily activities of children in their own environment relate to the idea of citizenship. For this reason, we understand an attempt to reintegrate war-affected children after devastating war experiences as the attempt to re-create their citizenship. In the following section we will link reintegration to citizenship.

3.4 REINTEGRATION AS CITIZENSHIP RE-CREATION

In reflecting on the reintegration of formerly abducted children, this study finds citizenship re-creation to be the point at which an individual can be considered reintegrated. This therefore means that we see citizenship re-creation as a normative condition for reintegration. Our assumption underlying this statement is that when children are abducted and forcefully conscripted to engage in violent and atrocious activities, they break their citizenship status within their community. Their forced conscription also halts their active participation in their community. Miraftab and Wills (2005) explain that the places and frameworks within which people live are their spaces for practising citizenship. What individuals do in such a space then become 'situated practices of citizenship' (Miraftab and Wills, 2005: 201). On this basis, we reason that the spaces in which children live out their citizenship are either distorted or violated due to their abduction. Consequently, we therefore define citizenship as *the ability of the formerly abducted children to positively engage in daily activities over a long period of time to sustain their day-to-day lives.* Hence, the aims of this study include understanding the link between reintegration and citizenship. To this end we will examine the definition of citizenship offered by Lister (1997), Aleinikoff (1986), Miraftab and Wills (2005) and Leonard (2007). We will also present five models of citizenship constructed by Lister *et al.* (2005), followed by the notion of communitarian citizenship which is drawn from the various definitions and models of citizenship. The aim of presenting the definitions and models of citizenship is to identify elements in the notion of citizenship that are useful in explaining reintegration in the context of our analysis. Thus, in the analysis of our findings in chapter 8, we will aim to explain reintegration in the light of the concept of citizenship. Below, in the final part of this section, we will discuss the link between the elements of citizenship and reintegration that are identified.

3.4.1 The meaning of citizenship

As concepts, 'citizen' or 'citizenship' usually evoke the relationship between an individual and a nation, such as Uganda. Leonard (2007: 487) refers to it as 'national identity over and above divisive group identities'. Quoting Helve and Wallace (2001), Leonard (2007) further explains that citizenship is increasingly defined as involving membership of a nation-state. Clearly, this notion presupposes or anticipates a state. Viewing citizenship from this perspective, Lister (1997) explains that citizenship has as its lowest common denominator membership of a community. She adds that it is also about the relationship between individual citizens and the state, in addition to the

relationship between individuals within a community. Aleinikoff (1986: 1488) expresses a similar idea succinctly:

> Citizenship is not a right held against the state: it is a relationship with the state or, perhaps, a relationship among persons in the state. It is membership in a common venture.

Such a nation-state based form of citizenship carries with it benefits such as the ability to travel with the country's passport, a claim for protection and the right to vote and hold office. This type of citizenship is also loaded with the allegiance of the individual to the state (Aleinikoff, 1986). From this, we deduce that rights and obligations are important characteristics of such a relationship and/or membership. Lister (1997) emphasizes that the main debates about citizenship revolve around the balance between rights and obligations. The two approaches to understanding citizenship – rights (liberal) and obligations (republican) – see citizenship in terms of status and practice respectively (Lister, 1997). Citizenship as status prioritizes the rights of the individual, while as practice the concept prioritizes the interests of the wider society (Lister, 1997). These twin ideas of citizen rights and obligations are closely related to the practice of service men in what Mjøset and Van Holde (2002) refer to as 'citizen-soldiers' where they show that in the late eighteenth century conscription into the military service in the US and France was linked to the acquisition and protection of citizenship rights. In the nineteenth century, however, this type of military conscription for citizenship protection was abandoned in European states to be largely replaced by politically motivated and human rights oriented conscription. For our study, what is important is how abduction has affected community membership and the rights of formerly abducted children in northern Uganda. How have their actions in captivity, as a situated practice of citizenship, (Miraftab and Wills, 2005) affected their citizenship?

Further exploration of the meaning of citizenship by Lister (1997) emphasizes the importance of human agency in the understanding of citizenship. She states 'citizenship as participation represents an expression of human agency … citizenship as rights enables people to act as agents' (Lister, 1997: 36) of their social transformation. Essentially, human agency characterizes or defines individuals as autonomous, purposive actors who are capable of choice, and these actions and choices are processes of self-development – a process of becoming the person one chooses to be (Lister, 1997). She adds that human agency is a journey of self-definition and power, undertaken by human subjects who have the ability to exercise control over their lives by acting upon and potentially changing the world.

Of importance is that human agency functions in a web of social relations because individual citizens are social beings. In addition, individual

self-development occurs in the context of social relations and necessarily involves engagement in collective activities directed towards collective as well as individual benefits. Because human agency concerns the personal power to make choices and transform social or other circumstances, it is a concept that cannot conceive of disadvantaged and or excluded groups or citizens as 'victims', because their survival depends on the exercise of their personal power (Lister, 1997): 'Thus agency is not simply about the capacity to choose and act but it is also about a conscious capacity which is important to the individual's self-identity. The development of a conscious sense of agency … is crucial to breaking the chains of victimhood and [the] emergence of full and active citizens' (Lister, 1997: 38). We consider Lister's (1997) idea of active citizenship and agency to be related to the ideas of situated practices of citizenship and spaces for citizenship as explained above by Miraftab and Mills (2005). These ideas about active citizenship, agency and spaces for the practice of situated citizenship also seem to relate to what Young (2007) refers to as the social practices that individuals engage in beyond the state; as civic actions on different geographical levels (Young, 2007: 414). Briefly stated, we consider these actions to be those daily activities that people undertake to sustain their day-to-day lives. Our study wishes to understand how the war experiences of formerly abducted children have affected their agency – their daily activities and day-to-day lives. We also aim to develop an understanding of how the children's agency has helped their social reintegration, if at all.

Five models of citizenship

In view of the many characteristics that citizenship may have, in a study examining young British people's understanding of what it means to be a citizen, Lister *et al.* (2005: 114-117) came up with five models of citizenship:

1. *Universal status model* – being a person and belonging to a community
2. *Respectable economic independence model* – working, owning a house, paying bills and taxes
3. *Constructive social participation model* – abiding by the law, helping other people and generally having a positive impact in the community
4. *Social contractual model* – referring to rights and one's responsibilities to the community
5. *Right to voice model* – the right and genuine opportunity to have a say and be heard

This classification succinctly states the elements that comprise the relationship between an individual and the nation-state and the relationship between individuals as members of the same community, as explained by Young (2007), Miraftab and Mills (2005), Lister (1997) and Aleinikoff (1986) above. Put simply, the five models also point to the fact that an individual is a 'good' citizen if they abide by the law, pay their taxes and fulfil their responsibilities to the community. Alternatively, the individual may also be a 'bad' citizen if they fail to fulfil those responsibilities to their community. Above all, individuals should have the chance to be themselves and belong. These five models, developed in a non-violent conflict situation, may appear irrelevant to the study of children in conflict conditions. It may also be too ambitious to use all of the elements to explain the lives of those abducted and their reintegration. However, we will use some of the elements provided, such as participation, being and belonging and the right to have a voice. These will act as reference points in our analysis of war experiences and reintegration practices in the light of the concept of citizenship (see also chapter 8).

3.4.2 Communitarian citizenship

The five models of citizenship (Lister *et al.*, 2005), the notion that citizenship is as much about relationships between individuals within the state as with the state (Lister, 1997), and the notion that citizenship involves membership of a community with a common venture (Aleinikoff, 1986) are aspects of citizenship considered from a communitarian perspective. Aleinikoff's (1986: 1494) explanation below helps us to understand the notion of communitarian citizenship:

> Community theory begins with individuals situated in a real society, not in a hypothetical state of nature or on the brink of contract … He is defined – or constituted – in part by his relationships, roles and allegiances. His relationship with the state is based on his identification with and immersion in the society's history, traditions and core assumptions and purposes. … the bywords of communitarian theory are solidarity, responsibility and civic virtue … From the communitarian perspective, citizenship is seen as an organic relationship …

Stressing the importance of communitarian citizenship, without negating the notion of nation-state citizenship, Ong (2006) shows that today citizenship claims are not based on territorialized notions concerning nation-states but situated in contexts, which ground resources, entitlements and protection. In other words, there are several different arenas, depending on the context, for the practice of citizenship as a means of improving the quality of human life (Ong, 2006). Furthermore, Miraftab and Wills (2005: 201) explain that the state is not the only legitimate source of citizenship, adding that:

> This new drama of citizenship is performed not only in the high courts of justice and ministerial corridors of government institutions but also in the streets of the city, the squatter camps of hope and despair and the everyday life spaces of those excluded from the state's citizenship project. … breeding grounds for emerging citizenship practices.

From this, we suppose that these everyday life spaces are the communities in which people live their daily lives.

According to Mamdani (2002), in countries such as Uganda, Rwanda and Congo, and indeed most of the colonized countries of Africa, people's spaces and the practice of citizenship in daily life are solidly rooted in culture, ethnicity and ancestry. He adds that culture, ethnicity and ancestry, as grounds for practising citizenship, are, however, influenced by politics. This can lead to what Leonard, in the context of studying children's citizenship in the politically sensitive society of Northern Ireland, refers to as 'competing identities' (Leonard, 2007: 488). In this study, we postulate that for formerly abducted children in northern Uganda the everyday spaces for practising citizenship were the LRA rebel camps, the internally displaced people's camps and now the 'new villages' – the communities to which they have returned. This study will further examine the complex notion of communitarian citizenship because it has more potential to explain and support the notion that the need to re-create relationships with and by the formerly abducted children of northern Uganda within their own community is a priority. We will attempt to explain the community-based reintegration practices in which formerly abducted children are engaged in the light of the idea of communitarian citizenship.

Because the reintegration practices take place within the community, we need an explanatory framework for 'community'. Laar (1999: 6) points out that there are disagreements about the definition of community, but with reference to other scholars he identifies the feeling of membership, that of belonging, shared socio-emotional ties, a perception of similarity to others and a network of supportive relationships as elements of community. Bujo (2001) shows that the African community is a function of the palaver, communion, a relationship with the ancestors, and with the living and the dead. Bujo's ideas concerning community also explain the basis of traditional reintegration practices among the Acholi. Citizenship re-creation for war-affected children entails an assessment of these elements of community. The thesis here is that for the war-affected children to feel and act like citizens in their communities they should have a sense of community and re-establish their broken relationships with each other, their families, the dead (those they killed), the relatives of the dead and the spirit world. This reconnection, considered as a reintegration through a process of reconciliation with the

different categories described, could in turn guarantee the basis for a re-created citizenship. Our research uses these categories of reintegration to explain the performance of traditional rituals for the purpose of the reintegration of formerly abducted children in northern Uganda.

Community defined

Thus, drawing on the ideas of Bujo (2001) and Laar (1999), this study defines community as the basic, natural and informal setup of a group of people. A community consists of families, relatives, neighbours and friends, as well as relationships, norms, values and rules. This community exists in space and time, and caters for its members, who are also its citizens, who have a responsibility to ensure its continuity while adjusting to changes that arise due to new ideas, but also violent shocks such as conflict. However, such a community would also require some structure or structures in order to deal with different aspects of life. In relation to the situation in northern Uganda, conflict, war and especially the children becoming both victims and perpetrators, have broken and disrupted the coherence and embeddedness of this community. The rationale behind the social reintegration of children is that it is imperative to re-create positive relationships for the common good of both the war-affected children and the community.

3.4.3 The link between citizenship and reintegration

Reintegration can draw on the virtues of citizenship, defined in the literature (Young, 2007; Miraftab and Wills, 2005; Lister, 1997; Aleinikoff, 1986) as membership of a group or community, with rights and obligations as well as status, and as a practice, in addition to human agency. Inclusion, social relationships and identities qualify these citizenship characteristics, with all being fuelled by participation aimed at collective activity (Lister, 2007; Leonard, 2007; Miraftab and Wills, 2005). This study will use some of these virtues of citizenship for analytical purposes.

During conflict, community membership, as expressed in terms of belonging, is often lost through the violence meted out to individuals and communities. Indeed, in some conflicts, being a member of a certain community makes one a target of violence – consider, for example, the Rwandan genocide (Mamdani, 2002; Gourevitch, 1999). Reintegration can borrow from citizenship by invoking the need to belong and be part of a community through reconciliation and reparation. Our assumption here is that community membership during an active conflict is also often reflected in either skewed or distorted rights and obligations. In the case of war-affected children, the need to focus on rights and obligations in the community is made urgent due to their considerably distorted identity – being both soldiers and civilians (Sendabo, 2004; Hill and Langholtz, 2003).

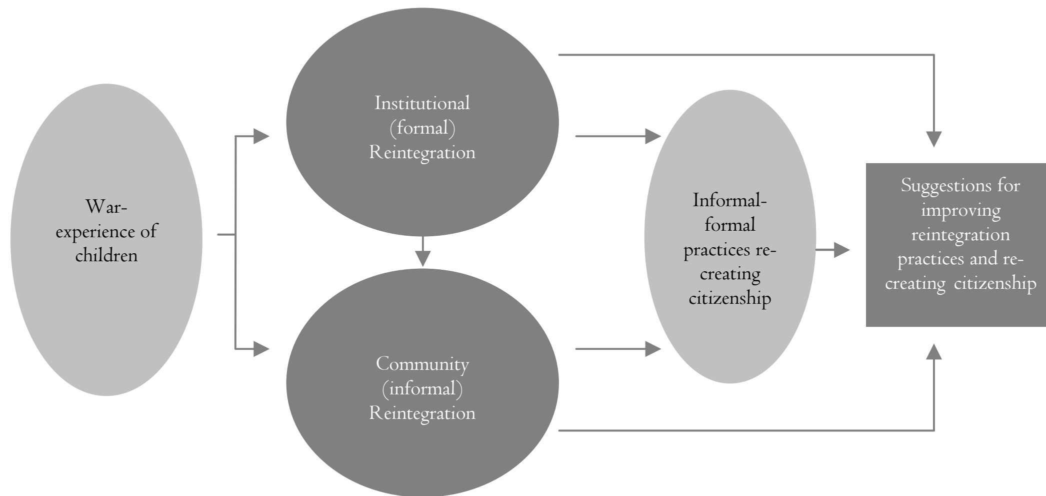
During the period of active conflict in northern Uganda, formerly abducted children brutalized communities and engaged in numerous atrocities in their role as unwilling soldiers (see, for example, Betancourt *et al.*, 2008; Amone-P'Olak, 2004; Veale and Stavrou, 2003; Human Rights Watch, 2003). There is a need for them to understand that in a post-conflict situation they have obligations towards the community to be socially more productive and acceptable. Perhaps social acceptance by the community might also be the gateway to full rights as members of the community.

Reintegration may further draw on citizenship considered as social participation (Miraftab and Wills, 2005; Lister *et al.*, 2005; Lister, 1997). Skills concerned with participation in the community following conflict are important because of the possibilities they create for ex-combatants, who might be treated as victims. Participation, however, puts a premium on the capacities and the survival skills acquired while in captivity that might be relevant to their social reintegration. The identity and skills acquired as a result of involvement in combat (Veale, 2005) might be used as stepping-stones for various community-building activities. As shown by Sendabo (2004) and Veale (2005), in Liberia and Ethiopia, to be seen to be participating in community activities is important for reintegration and benefits all members of the community.

At a local level a sense of identity helps the individual to engage in community affairs. After the traumatic experiences, abducted children, whose actions may have driven a wedge between them and their communities, need to begin to participate in community activities (Laar, 1999; Bujo, 2001) as a gesture of reparation to the community to which they have returned. Indeed, participation is meaningless if people in a neighbourhood and/or community do not identify with each other and with the community. The concept of 'participating with' is important in the context of a post-conflict community and the reintegration process, with community-based reintegration being about investing in social relationships using indigenous culture and value systems (Kanyandago, 2008) to re-create a society (Bujo, 2001).

The inclusive participation of individuals in a post-conflict community may in turn lead to the creation of spaces for citizenship as status and as a practice (Miraftab and Mills, 2005). Inclusive participation also guarantees agency (Lister, 1997) for reintegration. In this regard, awareness and the practice of situated citizenship becomes an important element.

Figure 1: The conceptual model: children in war, reintegration and citizenship recreation



The conceptual model presents children's experience of war conditions and a long-running war, the adverse affects of which mainly target children (UNICEF, 2005). The appropriate reintegration of these war-affected children is a critical step towards citizenship re-creation. Reintegration of war-affected children ought to extend beyond formal, institutionally based short-term counselling, skills training and provision of basic needs, as most of the literature on reintegration shows, including Maslen (1997), UNICEF (2005; 2003) and Parsons (2005). We borrow from Honwana (2006), Sendabo (2004) and Igreja (2003) to include appropriate mechanisms such as culturally specific, community-based approaches for reintegration in the communities to which the children finally return to live. The positive experiences of reintegration in both the community and institutions by children of war are part of the processes of citizenship re-creation. Citizenship, considered as membership, status, practice, agency and participation (Lister, 2005; Lister *et al.*, 1997; Aleinikoff, 1986) in the community, can be considered equivalent to reintegration.

On the basis of the above we assume that the failure to involve the community in the reintegration process or use appropriate methods may at best place the war-affected children and the community at a crossroads and in the worst-case scenario in a situation of conflict and societal insecurity. In addition, the failure to properly accept and reintegrate the children back into society and give them the opportunity to have an efficacious livelihood as well

as confidence in the community they once terrorized, spells doom in a post-war region. A reintegration process that is both formal and informal, institutionally based and community-based, translates into a citizenship re-creation process that develops positive experiences and relationships. This ensures a mutual learning experience for the children and the community, which can then, through feedback, be translated into good practices of citizenship.

3.5 CONCLUDING REMARKS

The theoretical framework presented here in three parts will provide the basis for our data presentation and analytical framework in subsequent chapters. The first part presented the difficult experiences undergone by children during the war, thus justifying the need for a reintegration process. This is important for our study in framing the presentation and analysis of our findings on children's war experiences in northern Uganda. The second part aimed to explain reintegration, tracing and identifying two approaches to reintegration – the formal, short-term institutional approach and the informal, long-term, community-based approach. We will use these to present our findings concerning the institutional approaches and the community-based approaches to reintegration in northern Uganda. The third part of the framework sought to find a link between reintegration and citizenship, and explained that to be considered reintegrated is to have become a citizen. For example, to develop one's sense of being, a degree of participation and having agency within one's community is part of the process of reintegration. These elements of citizenship will be used as reference points in our analysis of our findings.

after a focus groupd discussion at Coo-pe

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"We the feedback team … make the work very original, actual and critical of what has been happening … somebody who has not been here, who reads the text, may wonder … is this true? … the experience of these children … but because I am confirming, he is confirming, [Lucy and other research assistants] were in the field during the interview, there are voice recordings …
[G]oing to the field, to the community to collect data [coming] back to present [the findings] that process is a moment of clarifying …"
(Feedback team members)

focus group discussion with elders at Anaka

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