

The Reintegration of Young Mothers in Northern Uganda:
Considering Post-War Spaces for Change

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ABSTRACT

The Reintegration of Young Mothers in Northern Uganda: Considering Post-War Spaces for Change

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Over 12,000 girls and women were abducted during Uganda's civil war (1986-2007), and many were forced to be wives. When these young women returned home, they were marginalized by their communities for their participation in the war and having had children out of wedlock. Reintegration programs were created as a means to improve relationships with the community, help youth process the trauma from the war, and develop the skills necessary for a livelihood. Research demonstrates that these programs tend to use deficit-based approaches, essentialize young women as "victims," and pathologize their experiences. Furthermore, the programs do not involve the young women in decisions that concern them. There is a need to create reintegration programs grounded in a critical understanding of marginalization and the barriers these women face at all levels of the socio-ecology.

This project examines three different approaches to the post-war reintegration of war-affected and formerly abducted young mothers in Northern Uganda, as well as the social, political, and cultural barriers to reintegration. Hall's (1994/1999/2004) theory of marginalization and Cornwall and Coelho's (2007) notion of social spaces were used in order to frame this comparison. Each approach or space was assessed on how well it enhanced three factors: competent functioning, social inclusion, and financial stability. Using ethnographic methods, the first approach I investigated consisted was "formal or closed spaces," namely two reintegration programs headed by NGOs. The second approach was a "created space" developed by 20 young

mothers, community members, elders, and myself. Using participatory action research, we collectively created a self-directed, peer-support model of reintegration. The third space was “claimed” by a local group of women who supported each other, saved together, and borrowed money from their group to expand their businesses. This study revealed the need for programs to take a socio-ecological approach to reintegration and to address the structural barriers such as patriarchal values that keep women in poverty. Based on findings concerning the interconnectedness of the three success factors, the benefits of using participatory processes and considering the nature of social spaces, recommendations and a new model for reintegration are put forward.

Keywords: participatory action research, ethnography, feminism, formerly abducted, Uganda, marginalization of youth, social spaces, young mothers, critical pedagogy

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I'd like to acknowledge that this is in fact a family PhD. I could not have continued if my partner, Malcolm Lhombreaud, and my children Allie and Soulaine Theocharides were not there to help me develop ideas when I was stuck staring at blank pages; edit text, forgive me for missing dinners when I was on a jag; and to help me interpret Ugandan culture since we experienced it together. I'll never forget when I approached my partner with, "I'd like to leave my really lucrative government job and go down to one income so I can work with formerly abducted young women on the other side of the planet for months on end. What do you think?" "We'll make it work", he said. Malcolm's support, which included: encouragement, fixing corrupted Excel spreadsheets, finding documents that had simply disappeared, learning more than he ever wanted to know about APA... you've filled my heart my beloved with the deepest kind of appreciation.

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to the all young mothers in Gulu and Pader who have fortitude beyond measure and who have contributed to this work. You have let me into your homes, opened up your lives, inspired me, and I will always, always be grateful to you.

CONTRIBUTION OF AUTHORS

This dissertation contains two co-authored articles. The first, *Navigating the minefield of child soldier research* is an analytical paper and was co-authored with my supervisor, Dr. M. Ayaz Naseem. As the lead author, I was the primary researcher and responsible for the literature review, conducting the analysis, and writing the first draft of the paper. The paper was published by the Child Soldier Initiative.

Forcibly involved women in armed groups in Northern Uganda: Conversations in the literature (2005-2017) was co-authored with Sonia Michaelsen, a PhD student at the Université de Montréal. I originally authored this paper and submitted a version as a course requirement in 2015. As lead author in 2018, Ms Michaelsen and I expanded on the paper and submitted it for publication in December 2018.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|---|------|
| LIST OF TABLES | xvi |
| LIST OF FIGURES | xvii |
| ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS | xix |
| GLOSSARY | xx |
| Introduction: Finding My Feet | 1 |
| Problem Statement | 6 |
| Lack of Research..... | 6 |
| Introduction to Social Spaces..... | 8 |
| Purpose and Objective of the Research | 10 |
| Research Questions..... | 11 |
| Terms Defined | 11 |
| Reflexivity..... | 13 |
| Positionality | 13 |
| Perceptions of the White Researcher | 17 |
| Limitations of this Study..... | 19 |
| Outline | 21 |
| The Birth of the Marginalization of the Acholi | 23 |
| Colonization and the Civil War | 23 |
| Modern Marginalization | 27 |
| Chapter 1: Literature Review - Reintegration and Marginalization | 36 |
| Introduction..... | 36 |
| Essentialized Identities..... | 37 |
| Representation..... | 38 |
| Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR)..... | 42 |
| Barriers to Financial Stability | 46 |
| Patriarchal Values | 46 |
| Culture of Dependency | 53 |
| Barriers to Well-Being..... | 55 |

| | |
|--|-----------|
| Western Assumptions about Mental Health..... | 56 |
| Barriers to Social Inclusion..... | 66 |
| Deterioration of the Extended Family and Clan | 66 |
| Changing Gender Norms | 70 |
| Summary | 74 |
| Marginalization..... | 75 |
| Differentiation..... | 78 |
| Reflectiveness | 79 |
| Voice..... | 81 |
| Eurocentrism..... | 84 |
| Economics..... | 85 |
| Exteriority | 87 |
| Power | 89 |
| Summary | 92 |
| Chapter 2: The Women and the Spaces..... | 95 |
| Overview..... | 95 |
| Power in Social Spaces..... | 96 |
| Visible Power..... | 97 |
| Invisible Power | 97 |
| Hidden Power..... | 98 |
| United Power | 99 |
| Social Spaces in the Context of Development Programs..... | 102 |
| The Content of Space..... | 102 |
| Participation in Social Spaces..... | 104 |
| Empowerment..... | 108 |
| Defining Spaces | 113 |
| Delineating the Formal Space: The Reintegration Program Group (RP Group) | 116 |
| Delineating the Created Space: Women in Motion (WIM) | 123 |

| | |
|---|-----|
| Delineating the Claimed Space: Single Pride (SIP)..... | 131 |
| Summary | 139 |
| Chapter 3: Methodology - Going Fishing | 141 |
| Feminist Approach..... | 145 |
| Feminist Theory..... | 146 |
| Intersectionality..... | 147 |
| Feminist Research as Praxis..... | 149 |
| Reflexivity..... | 151 |
| Representation..... | 151 |
| Ethnography..... | 152 |
| Ethnographic Approach | 154 |
| Ethnographic Action Research..... | 159 |
| Research Design..... | 160 |
| Going Fishing..... | 160 |
| Distinctions in Participation and Phases of Research | 163 |
| Recruitment and Selection of Participants for Phase 1 – Youth in Pader (YIP)..... | 164 |
| Recruitment and Selection of Young Mothers..... | 165 |
| Other Informants..... | 167 |
| Methods and Instruments..... | 168 |
| Consistencies..... | 169 |
| Phase 1: Pader (May – July 2014) | 172 |
| Phase 2: Gulu (April – May 2015)..... | 173 |
| Phase 2: Pader (June 2015)..... | 174 |
| Phase 3: Gulu (November 2015)..... | 176 |
| Phase 4: Gulu (July-August 2016)..... | 177 |
| Phase 4: Pader (August 2016)..... | 178 |
| Phase 5: Gulu (March – June 2017)..... | 178 |
| Data Analysis | 181 |

| | |
|--|------------|
| Constant Comparison Analysis..... | 183 |
| Data Analysis Process..... | 185 |
| Drawing Conclusions and Verifying Data..... | 189 |
| Threats to Trustworthiness..... | 192 |
| Ethical Considerations..... | 194 |
| Fairness..... | 194 |
| Privacy and Confidentiality..... | 195 |
| Local Research Ethics Approval..... | 195 |
| Summary..... | 195 |
| Chapter 4: Findings and Discussion - Barriers to Reintegration..... | 197 |
| Political Forces..... | 200 |
| Representation and Perceptions of Women in Politics..... | 200 |
| The Church as a Political Non-Force..... | 211 |
| Social/Cultural Forces..... | 213 |
| Deterioration of the Extended Family and Clan..... | 213 |
| Changing Gender Roles..... | 216 |
| Community..... | 220 |
| Through the Community’s Eyes..... | 222 |
| The Community through the Young Mother’s Eyes..... | 228 |
| Productivity and Acceptance..... | 229 |
| Family..... | 233 |
| Women as Insignificant Entities..... | 233 |
| Controlled Sexuality..... | 235 |
| Individual..... | 237 |
| Waiting to be Saved: God..... | 240 |
| Waiting to be Saved: NGO..... | 241 |
| Conclusion..... | 245 |
| Chapter 5: Comparison of Spaces - Social Inclusion, Competent Functioning, and Financial Stability..... | 248 |

| | |
|--|------------|
| Social Inclusion..... | 250 |
| Overview..... | 250 |
| Enhanced Social Skills..... | 254 |
| Dependence/Independence..... | 263 |
| Competent Functioning..... | 268 |
| Optimism across Groups..... | 269 |
| Ability to Cope during Stressful Situations | 271 |
| Self-Perception across Groups | 272 |
| Assessment of Methods to Enhance Competent Functioning..... | 278 |
| Quality of Counselling..... | 280 |
| The Role of Peer Support..... | 284 |
| Training, Modelling, Participatory Processes | 290 |
| Financial Stability | 294 |
| Overview..... | 294 |
| YIP/GYA (Formal Space): Grateful for the Crumbs and Struggling to Make ends Meet..... | 297 |
| Single Pride (claimed) and WIM (created): Engaging in Small Businesses..... | 299 |
| Conclusion | 301 |
| Chapter 6: Recommendations and Conclusion | 304 |
| A Word about Funding | 307 |
| Foundational Principles | 309 |
| Address Marginalization, Patriarchal Values at all Layers of the Socio-Ecology..... | 309 |
| Consider Creation of Space, Power Dynamics, and Developing Power Within..... | 309 |
| Engage Women and Community in PAR... .. | 311 |
| Incorporate Peacebuilding and Indigenous Forms of Collective Healing..... | 313 |
| Incorporate Spiritual Beliefs, Indigenous Knowledge and Strength-Based Approaches..... | 313 |
| Conduct Evaluation, Share Findings, and aim for Continuous Improvement | 315 |
| Inputs | 316 |
| Preparation | 316 |

| | |
|--|-----|
| Methods..... | 321 |
| Social Inclusion and Competent Functioning | 325 |
| Financial Stability | 332 |
| Best Practices | 337 |
| Social Change: Outcomes | 341 |
| Outcomes | 341 |
| A Final Word | 343 |
| REFERENCES | 345 |
| LIST OF APPENDICES | 393 |
| Appendix A: Phase 1 - 2014 | 394 |
| Appendix B: Phase 2 - 2015 | 397 |
| Appendix C: Phase 3 - 2015 | 402 |
| Appendix D: Phase 4 - 2016 | 407 |
| Appendix E: Phase 5 - 2017..... | 412 |
| Appendix F: Multi-Phase Documents..... | 420 |

LIST OF TABLES

| | | |
|----------|---|-----|
| Table 1 | Differences Found Between Genres | 39 |
| Table 2 | Application of Hall’s Marginalization Theory... .. | 93 |
| Table 3 | Phases, Dates and Location of Research..... | 164 |
| Table 4 | Participants of Phase 1 | 164 |
| Table 5 | Demographic Data | 167 |
| Table 6 | Other Informants | 168 |
| Table 7 | Summary of Methods Phases 2-5..... | 172 |
| Table 8 | Phase 5 Methods | 179 |
| Table 9 | Key Terms in NVivo..... | 182 |
| Table 10 | Example of Cultural Domain Analysis | 189 |
| Table 11 | Enhancing Trustworthiness..... | 193 |
| Table 12 | Cultural Domain Analysis..... | 221 |
| Table 13 | How often do you feel supported by the community? | 252 |
| Table 14 | How often do you feel accepted by the community? | 253 |
| Table 15 | WIM’s Code of Conduct..... | 260 |
| Table 16 | Level of Confidence..... | 273 |
| Table 17 | Overview of Methods to Enhance Competent Functioning..... | 278 |
| Table 18 | Overview of Financial Stability | 295 |
| Table 19 | Reintegration Program Model..... | 306 |

LIST OF FIGURES

| | | |
|------------|--|------|
| Figure 1. | Ugandan districts affected by LRA..... | xxvi |
| Figure 2. | Illustration of the socio-ecological approach..... | 23 |
| Figure 3. | COPLOT map of cultural orientations..... | 67 |
| Figure 4. | Relationship between power and properties of marginalization..... | 91 |
| Figure 5. | Downtown: Pader, Uganda. May 5, 2014..... | 118 |
| Figure 6. | Downtown: Gulu, Uganda. March 3, 2016..... | 121 |
| Figure 7. | WIM Logo | 128 |
| Figure 8. | Typical dwelling of young mothers..... | 130 |
| Figure 9. | Single Pride (claimed space) at Entrepreneurial Training | 136 |
| Figure 10. | Illustration of alignment between paradigms, methodology and methods | 142 |
| Figure 11. | Layers of informants and direction of information flow | 144 |
| Figure 12. | Phoropter..... | 158 |
| Figure 13. | Word frequency: Transcripts of all young mothers | 187 |
| Figure 14. | Focus group with SIP and WIM | 205 |
| Figure 15. | Hired female dancers during the national election campaign..... | 206 |
| Figure 16. | Group 2 Drawing | 217 |
| Figure 17. | Group 4 Drawing..... | 219 |
| Figure 18. | Word Frequency: Perception of young mother's strengths | 224 |
| Figure 19. | Word Frequency: How do you think the young mother sees herself?..... | 225 |
| Figure 20. | Interconnectedness of factors for reintegration..... | 232 |
| Figure 21. | Word Frequency: How do you feel about yourself?..... | 237 |
| Figure 22. | International Women's Day..... | 243 |
| Figure 23. | Socio-ecological illustration of the barriers to reintegration | 249 |

| | |
|--|-----|
| Figure 24. Influences of different layers of the socio-ecology..... | 251 |
| Figure 25. The relationship between social inclusion and social space | 255 |
| Figure 26. Milestones to political efficacy..... | 268 |
| Figure 27. Tuckman’s Model of Team Development | 287 |
| Figure 28. Small businesses slated for demolition | 296 |
| Figure 29. Interconnectedness of factors for reintegration..... | 302 |
| Figure 30. Certificate Ceremony for Entrepreneurial Training..... | 327 |
| Figure 31. Members of Ugandan police march against gender based violence. | 331 |
| Figure 32. Milestones to political efficacy..... | 341 |

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

| | |
|------|---|
| CBO | Community-Based Organization |
| CEED | Community Empowerment Education Development. A fee-levy NGO based out of Concordia University in Montreal Canada and in Gulu Uganda |
| CIDA | Canadian International Development Agency |
| DDR | Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration |
| GYA | Gulu Youth Advancing. One of two groups which form the Reintegration Program Group (RP Group) and “formal space” for this study |
| IGO | Intergovernmental Organization |
| IDP | Internally Displaced Person |
| INEE | International Network for Education in Emergencies |
| INGO | International Non-Governmental Organization |
| LC | Local Council Member |
| LRA | Lord’s Resistance Army |
| NGO | Non-Governmental Organization |
| NRA | National Resistance Army |
| PTSD | Post Traumatic Stress Disorder |
| SIP | Single Pride is the “claimed space” for this study |
| WIM | Women in Motion is the “created” space for this study |
| UPDF | Uganda People’s Defence Force |
| UBS | Uganda Bureau of Statistics |
| Ush | Ugandan Shilling |
| YIP | Youth in Pader. One of two groups which form the Reintegration Program Group (RP Group) and “formal space” for this study |

GLOSSARY

| | |
|---------------------------|--|
| <i>Acholi</i> | Also spelled Acoli are an ethnolinguistic group of Northern Uganda and South Sudan. The Acholi speak Luo and are believed to have migrated from South Sudan to parts of Northern Uganda. |
| <i>ago</i> | A woman who moves from one man to another or a street child that moves from one venue to another. |
| <i>ajwaki</i> | Healers or diviners |
| Appreciative Inquiry (Ai) | Based on the assumption that knowledge is co-constructed and reality is socially constructed, Cooperrider (1995) and his colleagues created Ai to replace the conventional problem-solving methods for organization development. Appreciative Inquiry involves the practice of asking positive questions to heighten awareness of the value, strength, and potential of ourselves and others. |
| <i>boda bodas</i> | Motorcycle taxis. This is the most common form of transport in Northern Uganda |
| <i>boo</i> | A bitter, slimy green vegetable |
| child soldier | Children associated with armed forces or groups or formerly abducted youth are synonymous terms with which according to the Cape Town Principles and Best Practices is “Any person under 18 years of age who is part of any kind of regular or irregular armed force or armed group in any capacity including but not limited to: cooks, porters, messengers and anyone accompanying such groups, other than family members” |

(UNICEF, 1997, p. 12). These terms have replaced “child soldier” to avoid the perception that children involved in armed groups are primarily combatant boys.

cen Believed by the Acholi to be an angry, polluting, spiritual force of those who have died in a bad way and/or were not buried.

competent functioning Competent (psychological or social) functioning includes: achieving an age-appropriate level of moral maturity, psychological well-being, resilience, self-esteem, ability to cope with challenges, positive social functioning, satisfaction with friendships, and positive attitudes (Barber & Schluterman, 2008; Iacoviello & Charney, 2014).

Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) Program The goal of DDR is to increase security and stability in post conflict countries and includes: disarmament (collection, documentation, and disposal of small arms, ammunition, explosives etc.); demobilization (the formal and controlled discharge of active combatants from armed groups) and reintegration (the process whereby ex-combatants regain their civilian status and gain sustainable employment and income) (United Nations, 2014).

decolonization “The process which engages with imperialism and colonialism at multiple levels. For researchers...[it is] the critical understanding of the underlying assumptions, motivations and values which inform the research process (Tuhiwai Smith, 1999, p. 21)

| | |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| financial stability | The young mothers on this project defined financial stability as having enough funds for food, health care, emergencies, school fees; and acquiring land is within the realm of the possible. |
| <i>gavumenti etu yambe</i> | The government should help us. |
| <i>marginalization</i> | A process through which groups are alienated and peripheralized based on their physical characteristics, experiences, distinctiveness, associations, and environments (Hall, Stevens, & Meleis, 1994). |
| essentialize | Attributing characteristics as natural or even biological to members of a specific group that are the same gender, race, ethnicity, religion etc. This results in inaccurate or stereotypical representations. |
| <i>lakwele</i> | A prostitute or someone with excessive sexual desire. |
| <i>mato oput</i> | An Acholi process for maintaining law and order, resolving disputes and encouraging reconciliation (Murithi, 2002). |
| <i>muzungu or munu</i> | Acholi term used to refer to a foreigner. |
| <i>odii</i> | A green leafy vegetable. |
| <i>oteka lweny</i> | The war has always been there. |
| <i>posho</i> | A dish made of maize, millet or sorghum flour cooked in boiling water to a firm dough-like consistency. |
| posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) | An anxiety disorder which includes the chronic, intrusive and painful recollection of traumatic events which manifests in dreams, hallucinations, or dissociative flashbacks (American Psychological |

Association, 2015). It is characterized by the spontaneous re-experience of the trauma which includes intrusions of traumatic experiences in the form of images or nightmares, avoidance, hyper-arousal, insomnia, irritability, weakened concentration, and agitation (Werner, 2012).

psychosocial

A process of fostering the well-being of individuals and their communities post-conflict with the aim of creating an environment that contains social, economic, judicial, and spiritual support structures (Dybdahl, Norad, Kravic, & Shrestha, 2010).

reflexivity

Reflexivity is at the centre of ethnographic methods and includes reflection on the influence the researcher's biases may have on their data. These reflections become data and are ideally captured as memos or in a journal (Anderson, 1989). Reflexivity engages the researcher in contemplation and questions regarding epistemology, and hermeneutics. It is a recognition that knowledge production is a collective process and inseparable from the social world (Jordan & Yeomans, 1995).

reintegration

“Reintegration is a multidimensional and complex, long-term process through which ex-combatants and their dependents are assisted to (re)settle in post war communities (the social element), become part of the decision-making process (the political element), engage in sustainable civilian employment and livelihoods (the economic aspect), as well as adjust to attitudes and expectations and/or deal with their war-related mental trauma” (Dzinesa, 2007, p. 74).

reintegration

Reintegration programs offer formerly abducted and war-affected youth

| | |
|--------------------|--|
| programs | vocational training, life skills training, psycho-social counselling, access to health care and support to integrate back into their communities. Successful reintegration for young mothers is achieved when she experiences social inclusion (social acceptance and social support), financial stability and competent functioning. |
| resilience | Demonstrated through behaviours that signify: a resistance to risk, personal growth as a result of difficult circumstances, active agency, and flexibility in responses. Resilience is not a personal trait rather it is a response which is dynamic and which can change over time (Rutter, 2012). |
| social inclusion | Young mothers on this project thought that social inclusion included social support and social acceptance. Social support can take the form of financial or material assistance (school fees, food stuffs, clothing and household goods) or a kind neighbour who looks out for their children, or gives advice. The women described the experience of “acceptance” when: the community asks for their opinion or advice on a community-related matter; the community demonstrates respect towards them by listening; and acceptance is also the absence of insults, gossip and name-calling. |
| <i>wangoo</i> | A clan gathering in the evenings around a fire with the purpose of educating children and youth about Acholi culture and history and to put forward expectations of clan members. It includes food, and often entertainment and storytelling (Kiconco, 2015). |
| war-affected young | Some of the participants for this study were abducted while others were |

mothers not. All were impacted by the war. To avoid this awkward phrasing, war-affected young mothers will be used when referring to both groups.

strength-based
versus deficit-based
models From the literature on resilience, a strength-based model attempts to provide a holistic (psychological, social, interpersonal) perspective to enhance positive development in youth (Rhee, Furlong, Turner, & Harari, 2001). A deficit-based model assesses human development through a Western psychological lens and measures negative functioning (Barber & Schluterman, 2008; Brown & Ballou, 1993).

yalo Money put under a daughter in-law's plate by the mother-in-law inviting her to eat the delicacies served.

young mothers For the purposes of this research, young mothers are girls and women between the ages of 15 and 35 who were pregnant or had a child before 18 years of age.

Ugandan Districts Affected by the Lord's Resistance Army



Figure 1. Ugandan districts affected by Lord's Resistance Army in the Northern region of Uganda. Image released by author (D. Dingemans) under the Creative Commons Attribution 2.5 license. Retrieved January 3, 2018 from https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Ugandan_districts_affected_by_Lords_Resistance_Army.png

Introduction: Finding My Feet

(nongo ka tyena)

“If you put a drop of white paint in a bucket of black paint there is no change. But you put a drop of black paint in a bucket of white...” My stepfather always let the sentence hang, manipulating me into filling in the blanks. Growing up in a small French-Canadian town in Northern Ontario with minimum diversity shaped an insular culture and “othered” anyone who was not White and French-speaking. My authoritarian stepfather’s racist comments always felt like sandpaper against my skin. Consequently, I began to challenge him as a teenager. That didn’t work, so I left home and travelled extensively, which helped me to understand how White privilege had shaped his view of the “other”.

Flash forward thirty years. While working as a Learning Specialist for the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, I was tasked to create a two-year learning strategy for police peacekeepers deploying on UN missions. I was invited by the United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations for a one-week conference in Accra, Ghana to provide feedback on their pre-deployment training. I had spent a year in Morocco but had never been to Western Africa. I knew that Ghana had been a principle source of slaves for the New World and had been colonized and brutalized by the Portuguese, Danish and British for over 300 years until they achieved independence in 1957.

As I explored Accra, so aware of my whiteness, I was met with soft gazes, warmth and kindness. I developed a relationship with a vendor on the beach. Each night after the conference, I would seek him out and we had many enriching conversations. At one point I asked him, “Why don’t you hate me?” How is it possible that a people so persecuted by Whites could appear so warm, hospitable and welcoming? I never forgot his answer. He said, “There is no freedom in hate.” In other words, it is actually my race that is in shackles. This is particularly true now if I

consider the current rise of hate speech, hate crimes and racism in Canada (e.g. Meyer, 2017; Naffi, 2017).

I came back to Canada and continued working on the learning strategy, which revealed that peacekeepers needed to learn about potential encounters with children involved in armed conflict. I learned that there are over 300,000 children, 120,000 of whom are girls and young women¹ who are currently active as child soldiers for governmental military organizations, militias, and rebel groups in at least 86 countries worldwide and 46 countries are currently actively recruiting children into armed groups (Child Soldiers International, 2018). According to UNICEF (1999), a child soldier is any person under 18 who participates in any capacity as member of an armed force. Largely abducted from their homes, communities, and refugee camps, these children participate in active combat and/or they provide support functions such as domestics, servants, porters, body guards, drug mules, “bush wives” etc. (Doerrer, Kavazanjian, McConnell, & Van Wie, 2011; McKay, Veale, Worthen, & Wessells, 2010; Tonheim, 2010).

When these children are liberated or escape from rebel or government forces, some get access to reintegration programming. These programs are offered by INGOs, NGOs and CBOs² and provide life skills training, vocational training to establish a livelihood, and they work with community members to foster acceptance of the returning children. It was when I started focussing on the literature on Uganda that I learned that these programs are largely ineffective for several reasons. First, in 2004, the Ugandan government took out an \$8.2M loan from the World Bank for the reintegration of youth. From the onset of mass return of formerly abducted youth in 2002, the state was not prepared, and in the end, less than a quarter of these youth

¹ It is likely that this number is not accurate as information on child soldiers is difficult to obtain (Brett, 2002; Haer, 2017; Mack, 2005; Stevens, 2014).

² INGO – International Non-Governmental Organization, NGO – Non-Governmental Organization, CBO – Community-Based Organization

received reintegration programming (Masaba, 2018; Murungi, 2011). Second, NGOs and INGOs that were responsible for program delivery, did not engage the youth in program design which led to programs, for example, that did not reflect the realities young women faced in the bush or are facing with their communities. Third, programs used “ad-hoc” and deficit-based approaches, treating former abductees as broken people that needed to be fixed (e. g. Akello, Richters, & Reis, 2006; Betancourt et al., 2013; Mazurana, McKay, Carlson, & Kasper, 2002; Murungi, 2011; Shepler, 2005; Tol, Song, & Jordans, 2013; Wessells, 2011).

When young women returned home, they were marginalized for their involvement with rebels³, and for having had children out of wedlock which violates cultural norms. These young mothers continue to struggle with processing the violence they experienced during the war; and face barriers to accessing the education they missed as a result of the war (Carlson & Mazurana, 2006). Furthermore, many are unable to achieve economic stability as most of the women are trained by reintegration programs in the same gendered vocations such as tailoring, hairdressing or tailoring (Mazurana, Carlson, Blattman, & Annan, 2008; Murungi, 2011).

There is no single explanation as to why I felt so connected to the plight of these women and the compulsion to “do something”. Ordinarily, I would have simply done what most good Canadian, middle-class citizens do: throw money at the cause or click “I agree” in response to a poll on “should child soldiering be eradicated?” However, the need I felt to take actual action was unbearable. As I search for explanations, I realize that part of it was that the plight of these girls stirred my instincts as a mother, and perhaps I felt I could “save the poor Africans”. White guilt is another explanation. If I did something, I could then exorcise the racist notions imbued

³ A word about abduction... The women who were abducted into government and rebel forces largely participated unwillingly or as a means to survive (Angucia, 2014). There is anecdotal evidence from locals that a small minority of girls and women in the Lord’s Resistance Army (LRA) allowed themselves to be abducted and willingly participated actively in combat, in committing atrocities and in looting. This is particularly the case for women who achieved higher ranks within the LRA (personal communication, 2014, 2015, and 2017).

by my stepfather. Perhaps I was at a stage in my own personal development where the time had come for me to take my head out of the sand, develop a social conscience and take responsibility for damage done to these women and children by colonialism. Ultimately, I do believe that caring and concern extend beyond rationality and comes from a connection we share with all humanity which makes us inseparable from other beings.

I started with this journey with a belief that my background in program design would allow me to examine existing reintegration programs, find the gaps, and create a new model for reintegration. All that I lacked, I thought, was an understanding of what works and doesn't work in the field and this context. I knew nothing about how the barriers to reintegration operate at every level of the socio-ecology and at the intersections where the impact of colonization⁴ and war reside. Nonetheless, for the next five years, I would find myself immersed in the literature; engrossed in some of the most profound relationships I have had in my life; in and out of Northern Uganda, sitting in huts on packed mud floors in sweltering heat; and listening to stories that both broke and filled my heart.

Each story resulted from the 21-year civil war (1986-2007)⁵ between the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) from the north and the Uganda People's Defence Forces (UPDF) led by the government forces from the south. Thousands of Northern Uganda's Acholi tribe were killed, mutilated, and kidnapped during the war. The war interrupted the childhoods of approximately 30,000 children, who were abducted by both the government and rebel forces (Akello, 2013). Over 12,000 of these children were young women and girls, and approximately 35% of abducted girls under the age of 18 gave birth to at least one child (Annan, Blattman, Mazurana, & Carlson,

⁴ "Colonization" refers to a multidimensional force under-written by Western Christianity, defined by white supremacy, and fuelled by global capitalism" (Grande, 2004. p. 88).

⁵ There have been many civil wars in Uganda. Unless specified, mention of the "civil war" will refer to the conflict that took place from 1986 to 2007 between the UPDF and the LRA.

2011). These girls and women were subjected to forced marriage and forced motherhood, which were based on coercive relationships without the consent of the woman or her family. The couple shared a domicile and domestic responsibilities. Over half of the abducted girls and women had children. When these young mothers returned home, they experienced extreme forms of marginalization from their communities (Denov, 2008; McKay, 2005). Although Annan (2011) and her colleagues posit that the marginalization of these women did not persist long after the war, my research found that ten years post-war; the women continue to be insulted, isolated, and have limited access to formal education and vocational training.

Using critical ethnography and ethnographic action research, I engaged directly with three groups of young mothers in Gulu and Pader Uganda, conceiving each group as a type of social space which is described below. For the first group, I facilitated the creation of a space for 20 young mothers to form a peer support program and to address their own reintegration issues through participatory processes and critical discussions. For the second group, I followed the trajectory of graduates from two existing formal reintegration programs, and I engaged a third group of single mothers who had established their own local savings group.

Simply put, to most people, Northern Uganda is just another war-torn country prone to tribal warfare. But to a young Ugandan mother who may have been abducted during the war or spent years in appalling conditions in a camp for internally displaced people (IDP), or simply lived her youth in fear, her community is essential for her survival. It is a place where she must navigate challenges (overcoming trauma; social exclusion and economic hardship). In this story, I aim to show how these three different spaces both acerbate and ease some of those challenges.

Problem Statement

The current model for the reintegration of formerly abducted young mothers delivered by INGOs, NGOs and CBOs continues to have limited success as programs do not conduct evaluations, identify and address the barriers to reintegration using a socio ecological approach, or explore alternative approaches and perspectives to reintegration. Ultimately the women should be leaving a reintegration program with marketable skills and the competent functioning⁶ necessary to improve their own welfare within their communities. However, there is lack of research on: 1) formerly abducted young mothers; 2) alternative pedagogical approaches that could be used in reintegration programming that may lead to more self-reliance and social change; 3) the interaction of the various components of reintegration (such as social inclusion, competent functioning and economic stability; and 4) the long-term impact of reintegration programming or studies comparing approaches to reintegration.

Lack of Research

First, Tonheim (2010) found a lot of scholarly attention on formerly abducted youth in general in Uganda and Sierra Leone. Within Africa, however, there is little research on formerly abducted young mothers, their children, and self-demobilized girls due to their invisibility, their smaller numbers, and their perceived subordinate roles during the war (Tonheim 2010). A review of the academic, mainstream, and practitioner literature⁷ from 2005 to 2017 revealed that there are 98 articles written about formerly abducted young women in Northern Uganda concerning their recruitment and roles during the war and their reintegration experiences (Savard & Michaelsen, 2018). However, there are only two in-depth studies and a few smaller-scale studies

⁶ Competent functioning is defined on page 12.

⁷ The practitioner literature includes research and annual reports and white papers by international and national NGOs such as War Child, World Vision, UNICEF and the like.

on formerly abducted young women. The first took place in 2007 and surveyed 619 young women across Northern Uganda and produced four articles (e.g. Annan, Blattman, Carlson & Mazurana, 2008; Mazurana, Carlson, Blattman, & Annan, 2008). The second study took place between 2007-2009 and produced over 12 articles, all of which refer to one large-scale study which utilized participatory action research with 10 NGOs, and 658 young mothers in Sierra Leone, Liberia, and Uganda (e.g. Annan, Blattman, Carlson, & Mazurana, 2009).⁸ Akello (2013) conducted a smaller scale study using interviews and focus groups with 42 formerly abducted young mothers and using narrative interviews. Ochen, Jones, and McAuley (2012) engaged 19 young mothers in their study.

Second, although research exists on the benefits of peer support systems in relieving trauma (e.g. Cortes & Buchanan, 2007), and some anecdotal evidence exists that informal peer support systems are beneficial for formerly abducted young women (e.g. Denov, 2007), little is known about the benefits to social inclusion when instituting a formal peer support system. Furthermore, little is known about the impact of raising critical consciousness within reintegration programming and whether this awareness of the intricacies of their marginalization could lead to enhanced well-being or enable war-affected women to become agents of change.

Third, more research is needed on the priorities of youth upon their return and the interaction between social inclusion, financial stability and competent functioning. There is only one recent study that examines priorities for returning youth and the relationship between wellness, social inclusion, and employment (Leeuwen et al., 2018).

Fourth, there is very little research that measures the impact of reintegration programming on social inclusion and financial stability and no research which examines whether traditional

⁸ This large-scale project had four principle investigators (Susan McKay, Angela Veale, Miranda Worthen, and Michael Wessells) and 16 co-investigators. I discuss this project throughout this dissertation and herein will refer to this project as McKay et al. (2007-2009) PAR Project.

reintegration programming results in competent functioning. Research does exist on the protective functions that contribute to resilience in youth after they returned from armed conflict or have survived traumatic events brought on by exposure to political violence (e.g. Barber & Schluterman, 2008; Betancourt & Khan, 2008; Cortes & Buchanan, 2007; Mattoon, 2010; Tedeschi & Calhoun, 2004). However, this literature does not examine how enhancing competent functioning improves the likelihood of successful reintegration. Although there have been three studies that have measured the impact of various reintegration programs on formerly abducted young women and compared the results to a control group (e.g. Ager & Metzler, 2017; Muldoon et al., 2014; Wessells, 2011), there is no research comparing the impact of one model over another.

The existing model of reintegration can be conceptualized as a “formal space,” an official space created by those in power. In order to address the need for a comparative approach to reintegration and to frame this comparison, I used the concept of social spaces (formal, created, and claimed spaces) to create boundaries for these three approaches which are introduced below.

Introduction to Social Spaces

The existing model of reintegration can be conceptualized as a formal or “closed space,” which is defined as an “official or unofficial space to which only certain people or interest groups are invited, and others are excluded” (Guijt, 2005, p. 34). The development of the space is the purview of those in power, and that power is not shared. Concerning reintegration, government bodies create policies and initiatives that allow INGOs to bring in programs such as Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR), all of which were created in closed spaces without the voice of youth. Creators of these formal spaces then decide who will and will not participate in their spaces. Programs are not transparent, youth are not consulted on their

needs, and these programs often duplicate the external structures that marginalize by silencing program recipients. This closed approach contributes to their ineffectiveness.

Reintegration efforts need to be critically framed in a deep-rooted understanding of the constraints and influences within social spaces and need to consider Lefebvre's (1976) notion of “social space” which creates inquiry about the intentions, politics and inherent power dynamics between individuals and what they are bringing into that space. “Space has been shaped and moulded from historical and natural elements, but this has been a political process. Space is political and ideological. It is a product literally filled with ideologies” (p. 31). Although conceived largely by developmental actors as static, social spaces are always evolving. They are seen as a singularity when in fact, these spaces are intrinsically tied to social, historical, political, and cultural factors.

This dissertation examines three approaches to reintegration and frames these approaches using the theory and demarcation of social spaces put forward largely by Cornwall and Coelho (2007). The first approach is framed in a “formal space,” which I named the Reintegration Programs (RP Group). There are two programs in this group: Youth in Pader (YIP) and Gulu Youth Advancing (GYA),⁹ and both are headed by Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs). These organizations operate in Pader and Gulu respectively; they are hierarchal in structure and offer vocational training, counselling, and life skills training. As most reintegration programs now, twelve years post-war, their programs recruit both formerly abducted and war-affected youth. Nineteen young mothers were interviewed from the RP Group.

The second approach (a “created space”) sought to challenge reintegration issues through a space created by 20 young mothers, two NGOs, community members, elders, and myself. This

⁹ Understanding that donors are fickle and in an effort to protect current and future beneficiaries of these NGOs, I have obscured the identities of these organizations. “YIP” and “GYA” are therefore pseudonyms.

approach utilized strength-based methodologies, integrated participatory processes and training, and encouraged critical thinking and fostered peer-support. This group named themselves, “Women in Motion” (WIM).

The third space is what can be called a “claimed” space, which was appropriated by a group of local women. “Single Pride” (SIP) was created by a local group of women to enhance their support systems and economic stability by saving together for small business loans. Twenty-five women from Single Pride were interviewed, and over 30 participated in various training initiatives that were identified as a need by both WIM and SIP.

Purpose and Objective of the Research

The overarching objectives of this doctoral project is first, to collaboratively develop a created space with a group of war-affected and formerly abducted young mothers that will lead to the self-reliance necessary to improve their own welfare; and second, provide insights that come from the study of social spaces that can be applied to reintegration programs in Northern Uganda. Specifically, the purpose of the study is to:

1. Examine the factors that contribute to the marginalization of young mothers.
2. Compare the social inclusion, competent functioning, and financial stability the three groups experience as a result of their engagement in a formal, created, or claimed space.
3. Examine how these spaces can both address and enhance their marginalization.

This research has implications for policy concerning young mothers as it points to the larger political, social, and cultural barriers that need to be addressed for reintegration programs to be successful. It also has implications for reintegration program design, which brings to light the importance of instituting a formal peer support system in order to enhance competent functioning and well-being or considering replacing the training women receive in the same

vocational streams with accelerated education and literacy training. The hope is that this research will lead international development actors to question the current trend of “empowering” women and shift their focus to how they can challenge the patriarchal values that keep women oppressed. This would lead to a remodelling of reintegration programming and more longitudinal evaluations of programs; open up avenues for future research with this war-affected, female population on reintegration; and create development initiatives that result in real, sustainable social change for women.

Research Questions

This study raises and seeks to address two questions which pertain to formerly abducted and war-affected young mothers in Northern Uganda. They are:

1. What factors (social, political, historical, cultural, educational) contribute to the barriers to reintegration and the marginalization of young mothers?
2. What variations can be found in social inclusion, competent functioning, and financial stability when comparing the reintegration experience of young mothers who participated in different spaces, namely, formal, created or claimed spaces?

Terms Defined

Reintegration. Based on the formal definitions below from the literature and interviews with the young mothers, I surmised that successful reintegration includes social inclusion, competent functioning and financial stability. Through this research process, it appears that these three factors are interdependent and interact dynamically.

Reintegration is a multidimensional and complex, long-term process through which ex-combatants and their dependents are assisted to (re)settle in post war communities (the social element), become part of the decision-making process (the political element),

engage in sustainable civilian employment (the economic aspect), as well as adjust to expectations and/or deal with their war-related mental trauma (Dzinesa, 2007, p. 74)

The political objective of formal reintegration is to prevent the former combatant from participating in crime, violence or contributing to the obstruction of peace. Social reintegration involves the sensitization, mediation, and rituals which facilitate the integration of the former combatant into the community. This process typically involves community members, public officials, elders, religious leaders and local and international NGOs (Babatunde, 2013). This is discussed in more detail in Chapters 4 and 5.

Social inclusion. For young mothers,¹⁰ social inclusion includes social support and social acceptance. Social support can take the form of financial or material assistance (school fees, food stuffs, clothing and household goods) or support from a neighbour who looks out for their children or gives them advice. The women described the experience of “acceptance” as the community asking for their advice on a community-related matter, and demonstrating respect towards them by listening; acceptance is also the absence of insults, gossip and name-calling.

Competent functioning. Competent (psychological or social) functioning includes: achieving an age-appropriate level of moral maturity, psychological well-being, resilience, self-esteem, ability to cope with challenges, optimism, positive social functioning, satisfaction with friendships, and positive attitudes (Barber & Schluterman, 2008; Iacoviello & Charney, 2014). It also includes resilience which is demonstrated during times of adversity (Barber, 2013).

Financial stability. The young mothers defined financial stability as having enough funds for food, health care, emergencies, school fees, and acquiring land in the future.

¹⁰ “Young mothers” are defined here as women who had their first child before the age of 18.

Reflexivity

Positionality

Qualitative research acknowledges that meaning is constructed by both the researcher and the contributors to the research. As part of this process, I became increasingly aware of what I was bringing in to shape meaning and what I am leaving out of this dissertation. My commitment has been to scrutinize my interpretation of the social reality of the young mothers within the context of their communities in order to ensure that participants' voices, values, and viewpoints are the primary source of information that guide my interpretation.

It is at this juncture that I would like to underline that most of the data I gathered was from abandoned, currently or formerly abused, hopeful, compassionate, sometimes angry, sometimes bitter women. This likely has influenced how I portray some of the men in this dissertation. The perspective of men (outside of those I interviewed as community members or NGO staff) was largely beyond the scope of this project, so it is here that I apologize and acknowledge that I may have essentialized Ugandan men, and perhaps I should have given them a seat at the table.

The young mothers have memories and interpretations about their own experiences; an understanding of their identity, their values, beliefs, culture; and who they are as mothers, wives, daughters, entrepreneurs, survivors of war, etc. The community have perceptions about the young mothers and the young mothers have perceptions about the community. In an effort access this information, and to corroborate my own interpretation, I gathered multiple perspectives. My interpretations came from the young mothers within their social spaces, my key informant,¹¹ other actors within those social spaces, community members, and from the academic and practitioner literature as well as the popular press. I felt I was both on the outside and inside,

¹¹ Ajok Susan is a local translator and has supported many research projects in Northern Uganda. Susan is my key informant, translator, assistant, and friend.

inseparable from the story.¹² I aimed to capture the women's voices in a way that would be true to them, representative of them, and show how they are evolving as human beings, all the while being extremely mindful to not re-create them for my purposes.

No need to hear your voice when I can talk about you better than you can speak about yourself... Only tell me about your pain...and then I will tell it back to you in a new way. Tell it back to you in such a way that it has become mine, my own. Re-writing you, I write myself anew. I am still the authority. I am still the colonizer, the speaking subject and you are now at the centre of my talk (hooks, 1989, p. 208).

I read this paralyzing quotation a few months before I left for my first field visit to Uganda. Since the start of this project, I reflected on how I would represent these women without "re-writing" them and about the nature of the "authority" I have. What do I need to do in order to avoid essentializing these women and adding yet another study that paints a black and white canvas of the "poor" African woman, living in squalor with a handful of hungry children, made vulnerable by the war, raped and forced to be a child-wife to a domineering brute of a man? Sadly, for most of the young mothers I engaged with, that was part of their story, but it is not the whole story, and it should not define them.

If we only view the margins as sign, marking the condition of our pain and deprivation, then a certain hopelessness and despair, a deep nihilism penetrates in a destructive way the very ground of our being. It is there in that space of collaborative despair that one's creativity, one's imagination is at risk, there that one's mind is fully colonized, there that the freedom one longs for is lost (hooks, 1990, p. 342).

¹² I am an outsider as I am not Ugandan, Acholi, and I do not share the same experiences of the women. I also attempted to stay on the outside to have access to a more objective lens though I recognize that "Objectivity is an illusion—an illusion snuggled in the comforting blanket of positivism—that the world is knowable and secure" (Madison, 2011, p. 139). I am also on the inside as I am shaping reality and co-constructing knowledge with the women as I engage with them socially, in their neighbourhoods during interviews, and during the workshops.

Tuhiwai Smith (1999) argues for the decolonization of research and refutes the Western determination of knowledge. “It galls us that Western researchers and intellectuals can assume to know all that it is possible to know of us, on the basis of their brief encounters with some of us” (p. 1).

The first interviews I conducted for this project were during the program evaluation at Youth in Pader (YIP). Those interviews were akin to an empty dialogue between strangers. Even though I hoped that the data I collected would lead to program improvements at YIP, I still felt as if I was taking something that did not belong to me. I have always wanted this research to contribute something valuable to the lives of these women which could range from the catharsis achieved by sharing their stories, to participating in their own program development to gleaning benefits from the training offered. Embodying this Western notion that conducting research is for the “greater good” (Tuhiwai Smith, 1999), I was mindful of the footprint I left behind and understood that my work would be weighed through the eyes of the colonized. This meant that I needed to be clear about my objectives (Whose research is it? Who owns it? Whose interest does it serve?). It meant critiquing my identity as a researcher and my own privilege which would determine my behaviour during the research process.

In an article about the Zapatista National Liberation Army and their revolution in Chiapas Mexico, the author quotes an Aboriginal woman, who said,

If you have come here to help me,

You are wasting your time ...

But if you have come because

Your liberation is bound up with mine,

Then let us work together (as cited in Cleaver, 1994, p. 141)

In order to create anticolonial social science we must “‘join with’ and ‘learn from’ rather than ‘speak for’ or ‘intervene into’” (Cannella & Lincoln, 2011, p. 83). My “liberation” is tied with the colonized as the process of colonization is dehumanizing to both sides. With the objective of respecting the knowledge, culture, and beliefs that were shared, I was mindful of the disruption and intrusion that is inherent in fieldwork (England, 1994, p. 85). I was sensitive with the questions I asked to reduce the likelihood that the young mothers would experience discomfort, and I was mindful as to how I interpreted their answers. If a woman got emotional, we would stop, and listen, and my translator and I would offer encouragement. I provided healthy, sustaining meals during the workshop and paid for their travel expenses so that they would not be out of pocket for participating in the research or the training. I used strength-based approaches during our workshops, so they would feel encouraged and energized after each focus group and workshop. I was open and warm with the women as I sincerely wanted to connect with each woman, and I genuinely cared and continue to care about their well-being.

I developed a close, personal connection with WIM,¹³ my translator Susan, and the research team over the two years as we developed a program together. With SIP, I felt a closeness as we met over the multiple times during my last field visit. I believe building these relationships created richer, more truthful accounts, but it also served to embed me deeper into the story and their lives. In other words, as authenticity increased so did subjectivity. However regardless of their perceptions of me as a “charity”, “mentor” or a “good Samaritan”, I believe they have entrusted me to share their stories.

¹³ To recap: Women in Motion or WIM comprise the created space; Single Pride (SIP) is the claimed space; and Youth in Pader (YIP) and Gulu Youth Advancing (GYA) make up Reintegration Program (RP Group) or the formal space.

Perceptions of the White Researcher

Three themes emerged that reveal how I was perceived by the women and the community at large. Those who did not know me perceived me as a “charity”; those who did, saw me as “mentor” or as a “good Samaritan”.

The charity. Most of the women of WIM initially saw me, as they see most *munus* [foreigners], as a charity and believed that at some point I would put their children through school or hand them a business to run. In fact, seven women left the group in part because they realized, according to the research team, that “There is no money here... When does a *muzungu* [foreigner] form a group and then doesn’t give money, they did not understand” (Research team member, personal communication, May 27, 2017). Tellingly, when a member of WIM was asked why some of the members left the group, she said, “Some people thought Michelle was there to give money, and they would use this opportunity to make money. Other people thought Michelle was going to take care of them and their children. They never thought that they will have to work for themselves to earn money” (Amarorwot, personal communication, April 18, 2017).¹⁴

It took over three field visits for the women to conclude that I was indeed a “poor student”. At one of their meetings, Susan reported to me that the women believed that “Michelle is the poorest *munu* [foreigner] we have ever met” (personal communication, May 10, 2017). Understanding that these perceptions were fostered by colonization and reinforced by NGOs giving humanitarian aid does not diminish the anguish it causes. This tendency to essentialize me as a “charity” was particularly evident when interviewing the formal group, (Youth in Pader) as a definite pattern emerged from informants’ answers, which aimed to extract funds.

¹⁴With the exception of Ajok Susan, my key informant and translator in Gulu, and the members of the Gulu research team, all contributors to this research were given pseudonyms which includes the young mothers and the local assistant in Pader. Contributors did not choose their own names. Authentic Acholi names were chosen by me as the Office of Research Ethics was concerned that this would bring out emotions around their “nom de la guerre”.

A lot of researchers have come to Uganda in quest of information about the recruitment of children into armed groups and the experience of abduction and reintegration. Many give nothing in return, which have led informants to use the opportunity to get much needed funding for survival or projects. However, this situation puts trustworthiness at risk, which is why I removed myself from interviewing the formal group (Ajok & Savard, 2019).

The mentor. When my translator Susan asked the WIM women how they saw me, they said mego [mother], which is allocated as a form of respect to an older woman who imparts her wisdom. They also referred to me as “teacher” (Apiyo, personal communication, May 2017). Ideally, since we were engaged in a participatory action research project together, I would have liked for at least one of the women to see me as one of many collaborators. Based on the trajectory of our relationship, I believe this could have been achieved.

The good Samaritan. The women of WIM, Single Pride, and some community members did not see me as a researcher but rather “as someone who cares” or as someone “who will help me” (Okeyo and Agutu, personal communication, May 2017). I had a very telling conversation with a director of a local NGO, Owen, who was a regular patron at the youth centre where I lived in Gulu. We had exchanged greetings, but I did not know him until he approached me one evening. The conversation went like this:

“It’s easy to get frustrated here. You people, you move and think quickly. We move and think slowly. You will encounter many frustrations because of this, but you have to remember to appreciate. You have to get the ideas of the people you are working with and listen to them. You have to understand them,” he said.

“So are you saying that if I walk around with blue glasses, and you walk around with yellow glasses, I can never see the world through your yellow glasses?” I asked.

He smiled. “That’s it! Create something green. Do you know how we see *munu* [foreign] women? Three things. First, they are easily annoyed. Second, they are not to be messed with. You cannot hit them or treat them badly. They won’t take it. Third, there are many rich people in your country. You may not be as rich as them, yet, you came here to help. Year after year, I see you trying. You must be patient. It will come” (Owen, personal communication, March 29, 2017).

I was so intent on making this project work and for the women to advance as a result of their participation in this project. This conversation with Owen made me realize that my good intentions as well as my frustration with the pace of the project, and all the obstacles we faced just to keep it alive were also evident. It is for these reasons I chose I chose *Nongo ka tyena* [finding my feet] for the title of this chapter as it is an Acholi expression used when someone is looking for firm footing or solid ground. While I was trying to find my feet, or my way through the research process, the WIM women (created space) were also searching to find meaning individually for their participation within their group.

Limitations of this Study

The limitations of this study include: the transferability of these findings, as they are timing and context-specific; gaps in the data may put into question my interpretation of the lived reality of the formal groups; comparison of women in Gulu with women in Pader could be explained by the variation in field sites; and the need for translation.

To expand on the first limitation, Northern Uganda is experiencing many social transitions right now. The culture is changing due to war and the subsequent tears in the social fabric. Attitudes about traditions are changing, which was likely caused in part by neoliberalism and the influence of foreign NGOs. Therefore, the conclusions that have been drawn from this study need to be situated during the time the study, which was conducted ten years post-war.

Furthermore, most of the participants on this project who had been abducted returned from the war over a decade ago. The benefits that they experienced from participating in this study and from the peer support group may not be a beneficial programming option for young mothers when they first return home post-war; caution should be used if transferring the findings of this study to new returnees in Northern Uganda.

Transferability demands thick descriptions of the setting, context, people, actions, and events studied. Given the measures I put in place to enhance trustworthiness and credibility (see Chapters 3 and 6), I do believe that the reintegration model I put forward (see Chapter 6) is transferable to similar contexts, namely for reintegration programs that are running several years post-war for young single mothers who are marginalized as a result of a strong patriarchal culture.

Second, the original intention of this research was to compare the trajectory of the 26 women in the formal reintegration program in Pader (YIP) to WIM. Although interviews were conducted with YIP in 2015, 2016, and 2017, a lot of this data had to be disposed of, as it had been fabricated (I elaborate on this in Chapter 3). In the end, I was able to use the data from 10 women from YIP (2015 and 2017), which may not have been as fulsome of an account as the five sets of interview data I gathered from WIM.

Third, it is possible that differences between those that occupied the created space in Gulu versus the formal space in Pader could be explained by the different locations. Gulu is a larger town with more opportunities and more economic growth than Pader. It is much more difficult to find work in Pader than Gulu. Most of the women in Pader had no choice but to return to their family home in the villages after graduation where options to earn a living are extremely limited.

I chose to interview young mothers who attended a reintegration program in Pader and Gulu (the formal space). I compared the level of competent functioning of these two program

graduates with those who participated in the self-directed program (created space in Gulu) and with those that participated in a locally-run savings group (claimed space in Gulu) and discussed the results. The findings may have been different had I chosen two different reintegration programs. This decision was based on the assumption that results would be similar as reintegration programs offer similar services and programs.

Finally, most interviews with locals were conducted in English by a foreigner. I would ask a question in English, Susan would translate it into Luo, and then the response would be translated back in English and recorded. Therefore most of what I learned was through Susan. Furthermore, it is customary in Gulu for translators to provide consecutive interpretation; when interpreting two people's messages, summaries of responses are provided rather than verbatim accounts, as interrupting a speaker is considered rude. In a review of the research and within different contexts, Russell (2005) found that consecutive interpretation provides a more accurate account than simultaneous translation. Nonetheless, speaking through a translator or receiving translated messages often eliminates the nuances of the message.

Outline

In Chapter 1, I provide a review of the literature on the reintegration experience of young mothers, the barriers they face, and how they are marginalized. I then use Hall's (1994/1999/2004) theory in conjunction with aspects of Bronfenbrenner's (1979) model to frame the women's marginalization within each layer of the socio-ecology (Bronfenbrenner's theory is explained below). In Chapter 2, I present and critique theories on power and power dynamics which intersect with various other factors present within social spaces. I explicate the theory of social spaces and critique current development trends to insert "empowerment" and "participation" into those spaces. I also elaborate on inconsistencies I found in the theory of

social spaces and offer suggestions on how the theory could be made more relevant for practitioners in the field of development.

In Chapter 3, I describe the methodology for this study (ethnography and ethnographic action research), the feminist lens I used, and the data analysis techniques. Chapters 4 and 5 address the research questions and provide an analysis of the barriers to reintegration and of each social space and how they inhibit and enhance social inclusion, competent functioning, and financial stability. Chapter 6 outlines a new model for reintegration and provides recommendations based on this study of social spaces that may be of interest to development actors who are tasked with creating reintegration programs in the future.

The rest of this chapter provides a brief overview of the historical events that led to the marginalization of the Acholi and the civil war. I provide this overview as I have taken a socio-ecological approach for this research. Bronfenbrenner (1979) suggested that in order to understand human development, a socio-ecological approach is needed, which views the individual as inseparable from layers of social context. As a metaphor, he puts the individual at the heart of a set of Russian dolls. This leads to thinking about individual development in terms of the relationship the individual has with the larger dolls representing functional systems such as community, family, peers, institutions, and the larger social environment. I will be using a modified version of the theory to provide context and to situate the barriers the women face to reintegration. This dissertation starts from the outer layer of the socio-ecology and works its way to the individual as illustrated in Figure 2 below. It should be noted that lines are blurred between these various forces; they do not operate in isolation from each other.

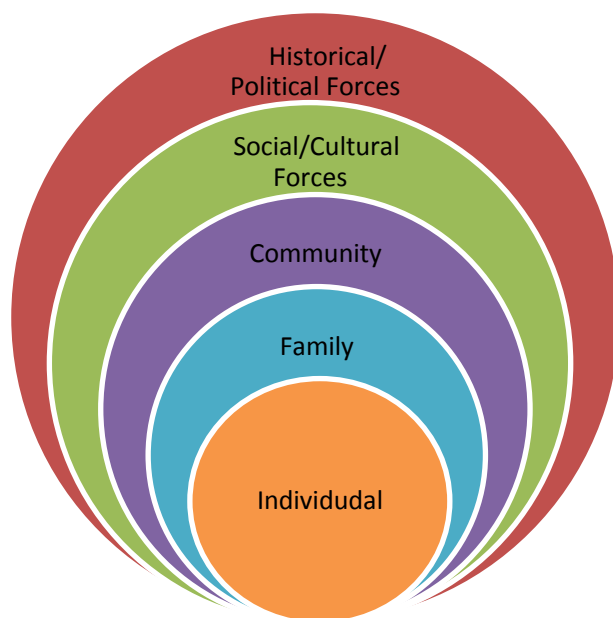


Figure 2. Illustration of the socio-ecological approach used to determine the barriers to reintegration

The Birth of the Marginalization of the Acholi

This section provides a brief account of what led to the marginalization of the Acholi. It begins with colonization, moves to the events that led to the civil war (1986-2007), and describes the systems that maintain the Acholi as the “other”.

Colonization and the Civil War

The marginalization of the North started 200 years before the civil war. From the late 1800s until independence was achieved in 1962, Uganda was under British rule. The country was founded on ‘divide-and-rule’ whereby each region was manipulated to identify against the other (Tornberg, 2012). As the British began colonizing Uganda, they favoured Southern Ugandans (the Baganda), as they were the most receptive to Christianity, formal education, and modernization (Finnström, 2008). The Baganda also helped the British assimilate and conquer other ethnic groups in the region (Mino, 2011). The colonial administration recruited the bureaucratic elite from the centre and the south, whereas Northern Uganda was mainly regarded

as the labour force for the army and the police force (Finnström, 2008). This ethnic division of labour reinforced differences between Northern and Southern Ugandans (Doom & Vlassenroot, 1999) and this “politicized ethnicity” would serve to prevent the colony from forming a coalition strong enough to challenge British rule (Tornberg, 2012, p. 10). Colonial oppression results in intergenerational effects and the reproduction of violence (Tuhiwai Smith, 1999). Memmi (1991) asserts that in time, the colonized begin to “assume the identity of the coloniser,” (p. 136) “reproducing patterns of violence and humiliation” (Memmi in DesRoches, 2013, p. 14). Watts, Diemer and Voight, (2011) assert that colonization leads to “internalization of oppression” (p. 46) and Hall (1994/1999) argues that in extreme cases of marginalization, the marginalized begin to believe what their oppressors believe them to be. I will expand on these theories in Chapters 2 and 4 when I discuss the predominance of violence against women and how formerly abducted and war-affected young women often were found to self-marginalize.

The British developed infrastructure and markets in the south and considered the north as less valuable, dividing the country into “productive” and “non-productive” zones (Tornberg, 2012, p. 13). This value of “productivity” persists today and manifests in meta-narratives evident in every layer of the socio-ecology, which urge the country to forget the past and be productive in order to modernize the country. For example, President Museveni has often scolded the country for being “lazy” and not productive enough (Rumanazi, 2017), and community members tend to be more accepting of formerly abducted youth once they appear to be “productive” (Community member, personal communication, May 6, 2014). I examine productivity as a negative symptom of neoliberalism in more detail in Chapters 4 and 5.

Evidence of this manipulation of ethno-cultural variables is found historically and in many of the political decisions made by the government in Uganda today (Mino, 2011). For example, the British, specifically Christian missionary educators, influenced ethnic identities by creating a

curriculum whereby Ugandan history is presented through a European and Christian lens. Uganda's national curriculum was revised after independence, but significant changes were not made to the history portion of the curriculum; it is still presented through the voice of the colonizer, which extols neoliberal values and "others" the North (Savard, 2016). As an illustrative example, the text below provides a description of the construction of the railway in Uganda by the British in the 1920s.

Africans, who were quite contented with their way of life, were not willing to do construction work and, in some instances, they were downright hostile to the railway project... The line was very expensive and took much longer to build than anticipated. This disappointed the British... The railway generated new commercial opportunities and towns developed... Job opportunities were created for Africans; they became messengers, locomotive drivers, and station managers (Okello, 2011, p. 223-230).

This text creates a colonizer who is fatherly and protective. The father values productivity, and therefore "justifiably" disapproves of the slovenly Africans. The agency of the Ugandans is greatly diminished in the eyes of the father, reducing the Ugandans to the status of ungrateful children. This passage is a means to demonstrate that modernization includes sacrifice and productivity, which is both desirable and rewarded. There is no mention of villages that were destroyed by laying the railroad or the impact on the culture. The text offers one perspective: that of the colonizer (M Savard, 2016). Hartsock (1990) eloquently explains the relationship (which is mirrored in this history text) between the colonizer and the colonized.

The colonized emerge as the image of everything the colonizer is not. Every negative quality is projected onto her/him. The colonized is said to be lazy... The colonized is both wicked and backward, a being who is in some important ways not fully human" (p. 160).

In *Decolonizing Methodologies*, Tuhiwai Smith (1999) asserts that when indigenous people allow others to tell their histories, they become outsiders of that history. “The negation of indigenous views of history was a critical part of asserting colonial ideology, partly because such views were regarded as clearly primitive and incorrect, and mostly because they challenged and resisted the mission of colonization” (p. 31). Re-claiming history is a critical part of decolonization, yet the history curriculum in Uganda continues to be Eurocentric in perspective which leaves students to extrapolate an identity that is closely linked to a colonial past. This puts into question how a post-war identity and healing can commence if history education continues to foster a colonized identity and does not acknowledge a collective, horrific past (Savard, 2016).

Perhaps it was to address this gap in the history curriculum that the Education Ministry (headed by the wife of the President, Janet Museveni) announced in 2017 it was now mandatory that students read President Museveni’s book, *Sowing the Mustard Seed: The Struggle for Freedom and Democracy in Uganda*. Although Museveni donated many copies of the book, the government spent 5% of the Education Ministry’s budget to purchase copies for all the secondary schools in Uganda (Wesonga, 2017). According to the Ministry’s permanent secretary, *Sowing the Mustard Seed*, is intended to “promote a proper understanding, appreciation and loyalty to Uganda’s national identity in a bid to foster peace and national cohesion for development” (Ayebazibwe, 2017, para 3). The book was originally written in 1997 but revised just prior to the last election in 2016, where Museveni removed the names of those who fought for his presidency but who had fallen out of his favour (Wesonga, 2017). The skewed content of the book is best illustrated by the back jacket, which describes the book as a story of Museveni’s “sacrifice” and how he and other young Ugandans “decided to liberate their country from the jaws of helplessness”. It is a story of “unflinching bravery”, “unwavering search for a true, revolutionary, and development-oriented leadership” (Museveni, 2016).

This means that the history curriculum will continue to serve to promote the values of productivity and neoliberalism while Museveni's book will provide a one-sided account of the civil wars he fought in and perpetrated. Furthermore, the role of women in his book largely supports patriarchal structures and portrays women in submissive roles, reinforcing the feminist perspective that history is "the story of a specific form of domination, namely of, literally "his-story" (Tuhiwai Smith, 1999, p. 29).

In sum, the British divided the country which "othered" the North; the history curriculum ignores modern history and silences the North while Museveni's book provides the victor's perspective of a brutal civil war that impoverished the North. Without multiple perspectives to shape an understanding of how Uganda arrived at this juncture, history will likely repeat itself, and this is evident today as the North continues to be marginalized.

Modern Marginalization

Since independence in 1962, Uganda has had nine presidents. All were forced out of office and are now dead with the exception of Yoweri Museveni, who took power in 1986. Several military coups took place after independence, largely between the North and the South. For example, Idi Amin, who was from the North, took power in 1971 and declared himself president. In his eight-year rule, 300,000 Ugandans lost their lives at the hands of the government. Museveni, from south-western Uganda, staged a coup d'état and disrupted this succession of Northern leaders who, with their violent agendas, created national resentment towards the North (Eichelberger, 2015). When these Northern soldiers returned home, they were perceived as "internal strangers" (Shanahan, 2008, p. 10). This notion captures the sense that these returnees were of the community but had become alien to those who had remained at home. They were not trusted, as communities believed that the returnees were carrying *cen*, or evil spirits (Shanahan,

2008). This pattern would repeat itself thirty years later when formerly abducted youth ventured home after the civil war between the government and the LRA.

Shortly after Museveni declared himself president, the government's National Resistance Army (NRA) began terrorizing the North (Finnström, 2008). In response to Museveni's attacks, the "Holy Spirit Movement" (HSM) led by Alice Auma began. She claimed that she had been visited by the spirit *Lakwena*, who told her to fight evil and end the massacre of the Acholi people. In his book about Alice Lakwena, Behrend (1999) asserts that the Holy Spirit Movement developed in part as a consequence of a failed reintegration process of the returning soldiers who had fought in the coup d'état. The HSM offered these soldiers redemption through military action and purification through spiritual rituals (Veale & Stavrou, 2003).

Although Lakwena was able to organize some support from the Acholi people, she was defeated by government forces in 1987. That year, Joseph Kony started a similar spiritual movement, the LRA. Again, with little time for reintegration efforts after the HSM, Joseph Kony presented a spiritual movement with a mixed ideology of African mysticism and Christianity in response to the NRM's relentless attacks (Finnström, 2008).

By the late 1990s, the government began to move and/or force Northerners to "protection camps". This resulted in the internal displacement of two million people, 11% of whom died as a result of violence and curable diseases (Finnström, 2008). Torture within the camps was rampant (30% of the atrocities were committed by the Ugandan military), and schools were closed, resulting in a loss of education for many young children (Eichstaedt, 2009). "The LRA raided these protected camps at will, demonstrating the embarrassing weakness of Museveni's tactics and raising the question as to why these people were held in camps in the first place. "Clearly it was not for their protection as they simply were not safe" (p. 137).

The Ugandan government, with its control over the national media, crafted narratives that the war was essentially illegitimate, caused by the barbaric nature of Joseph Kony and the Acholi. Museveni likened the rebels to Satan, hyenas, grasshoppers, biting dogs, and terrorists (Finnström, 2008). The negative discourse became so pervasive that one of the exigencies of the LRA in the 1996 peace talks was to demand the end of the insulting rhetoric (Finnström, 2008). Southern and Western regions of the country were hailed by the media for being better educated, more prosperous, and civilised. However, the Ugandan press represented the north as “the area of thugs who have fought Uganda’s many wars,” and the south and the west as the regions where “the social fabric of the new Uganda of Museveni and the National Resistance Movement” could be found (Bøås, 2004, p. 290).

To move the attention away from economic marginalization of the North and the government’s culpability in the war, the government was careful not to acknowledge Kony as a legitimate player in the political arena. The event became synonymous in the media as “Kony’s War,” which erased the historical fact that it was started by government forces. In fact, I heard many young mothers and community members refer to the LRA as “Kony.” “The community might think I am a bad person, basing on the way Kony treats people.” “My grandmother wouldn’t welcome me with the children on Kony” (Ayange and Apiyo, personal communication, 2015, 2017). In *Sowing the Mustard Seed*, one of the last sections is entitled, “The Problem of Northern Uganda”, Museveni writes:

Those people, who were used to government hand-outs because they were members of the UPC¹⁵ or because they were in the army or the intelligence services, feel completely lost now that the approach is totally different. This is why you hear talk of the North being

¹⁵ The Union of Congolese Patriots (UPC) was a rebel faction in the Democratic Republic of Congo and was provided with soldiers by the Ugandan government. In 2012, Thomas Lubanga the leader of the UPC was the first warlord in history to be convicted by the International Criminal Court for the use of child soldiers.

marginalised...the whole question of the ‘northern problem’ is overdramatized (Museveni, 1997, p. 212-213).

In this comment, not only is Museveni ignoring the economic and political disparity between the North and the South as a result of the war, it reflects a dismissive attitude about the use of child soldiers. Furthermore, his use of the word “problem” frames Northerners as the “other” to blame.

In a later infamous interview, Museveni and other NRM officers are quoted as saying that too much “fuss” had been made about using child soldiers by Western reporters, diplomats and UNICEF” (Dodge & Raundalen, 1991, p. 55). In a videoed interview during the war, Museveni further justified the use of child soldiers by saying:

In Africa here, around the age of four, you learn how to fight. It’s our tradition. If you don’t know, we fight with the sticks, spears, arrows. That’s the tradition. So if you are trying to think that this might disorient them psychologically or socially, that’s not the case. They are never deployed until the right age. But they learn the skills of the warfare (Zeruneith, [YouTube] n.d.).

Although youth may question political discourse, they tend to interpret their own experiences in light of the dominant discourse (Wainryb & Recchia, 2014). Furthermore, finding a sense of meaning in political violence is associated with the likelihood of experiencing less distress (Barber, 2008). This political narrative can only serve to leave the youth conflicted. On one hand, NGOs tell former child soldiers wrought with trauma that their involvement in the war was not their fault; on the other hand, their experiences are dismissed as merely a rite of passage.

Humanitarian aid flooded into Uganda from the United Nations, The World Food Program, World Vision, and the like during the war. Putting the population in camps was a means to control Northern citizens and created a situation where they were completely dependent on aid.

Finnström (2008) suggests that the Ugandan government forces, despite their resources, appeared to consistently be one step behind the LRA, which allowed the humanitarian aid to continue coming in (Eichstaedt, 2009). This offers one explanation for the lack of motivation on the part of the government to end the war. Between 2003 and 2012, the country received more than \$16 billion in foreign aid, and to date, foreign aid makes up 10% of Uganda's GDP or 20% of government revenues (Bergo, 2015). Although a lot of this aid was earmarked for the North, it was often diverted to reduce poverty in the Western and Central regions (Bergo, 2015).

In 2007, Museveni's government launched the *Peace and Recovery and Development Plan* (PRDP), supported by US \$13 million from international donors. The purpose was to "eradicate poverty and improve the welfare of the populace in Northern Uganda" (Republic of Uganda, 2007, p. iii). Although the plan put forward objectives to improve the economy and rebuild and empower communities in the North, the plan has been criticized for being mismanaged (Bath, 2013) and as a means to gain political support. "The primary beneficiaries [of the PRDP] are government connected contractors, the political elite, and employees of government agencies" (Esuruku, 2012, p. 161).

Where did all the money go? Part of the explanation is that the plan was inadequately and disproportionately funded. It covered 55 districts when in fact, there are only 18 districts affected by the civil war (Esuruku, 2012). Another piece of the puzzle is explained by corruption. In 2013, three government officials from the Ministry of Finance and the principle accountant from the Prime Minister's office were charged, as over 14 billion UGX (US \$3.8 million) had been used for personal use or to benefit third parties in Central Uganda (Bath, 2013). Another explanation is offered by Branch (2005), who asserts that humanitarian aid was diverted to the military to help finance the war with the LRA and to provide a defence against the invasion by the Democratic Republic of Congo.

To provide an example, as part of the PRDP, the Minister of Defence and Gulu District Officials created “Labora Farm” as a reintegration initiative for formerly abducted youth. The farm provided formerly abducted youth with a plot of land to grow and sell crops. For their labour, they were fed. With the profits from the crops, two years later, they would receive a loan for a livelihood project (Schomerus & Allen, 2006). The government put Kenneth Banya, an LRA Brigadier General, in charge of the project and the three sub-projects of Labora Farm were run by other ex-LRA commanders. As part of a research project funded by USAID and UNICEF on reception centres for formerly abducted youth, Schomerus and Allen (2006) were part of a team who visited Labora Farm twice, and they conducted interviews with formerly abducted youth. A young mother who had known Kenneth Banya in the bush said, “He was alright in the bush unless you misbehave, then you have to suffer” (Schomerus & Allen, 2006, p. 82).

The farm replicated the LRA hierarchy with the young mothers at the bottom of the rung, who were allegedly exploited both sexually and for their labour (Schomerus & Allen, 2006). The newspaper, *The Daily Monitor*, ran two articles about the farm. In the first, they found evidence that the youth were being used as slaves and denied medical care (Nyakairu, 2006a) and in the second, the journalist reported that three of the LRA commanders had been fired for human rights abuses (Nyakairu, 2006b). This program raises many questions. Why would the government put ex-LRA commanders in a position of power over their former abductees, and why wasn’t the farm monitored more closely?

It is difficult to see much indication of the \$13 million dollars promised by the PRDP in places like Gulu and Pader, considering the income of a Northerner persists at 27% of the national average (Esuruku, 2012). The area continues to be impoverished, with few livelihood opportunities. As mentioned, the war interrupted the education of 30,000 youth. Now, ten years later, the youth need to rely on fewer and fewer INGOs, NGOs, and Community-Based

Organizations (CBOs) who offer reintegration programming and short-term vocational training (Ellison, 2016). The programming they offer tends to be short-term and inadequate, lacks resources (i.e. two counsellors on staff for 350 youth (Savard, 2016), and rarely provides follow-up, largely due to lack of government funding and support (Eichelberger & Eichelberger, 2015; Stout, 2013; Tornberg, 2012).

In the 2015/2016 budget, Museveni's government allocated 1.632 trillion shillings to defence (Kayiwa, 2015), but none of the budget was allocated directly for reintegration of formerly abducted youth or poverty reduction in the North. The government continues to marginalize the Acholi, which serves as a barrier to reintegration success.

The purpose of this historical account of pre- and post-colonization was to put forward four themes that were found in the literature and which are pervasive throughout my study. These themes are relevant to the reintegration of formerly abducted young mothers and offer a part of the explanation for their current marginalization. First, using a strategy of "divide and rule", the colonizers fractured the relationship between the Northern and Southern regions. This division was reinforced by subsequent leaders post-independence, culminating into a 21-year civil war, and continues today in the form of economic marginalization.

The second theme frames how youth continue to be exposed to skewed narratives such of those in the history textbooks and of those of the current regime which inhibits their ability make sense of the war and to establish a post-war identity that could potentially shape a different future. The neglect of the government for the well-being of formerly abducted youth, their rising personal profits from humanitarian aid and the war, and the narratives that reinforce the colonial ideology that the North is "primitive" and a place full of "thugs" serves to exteriorize the Acholi and sets them apart from the benefits and justice available to the societal centre.

Third, the constant flow humanitarian aid has created a national economic dependency on the West, and this dependency has trickled down to the recipients of aid where some individuals continue to “wait to be saved”. The damaging influence of this aid on Ugandan values and culture has been devastating as the aid comes with Western neoliberal values. “The fact that burgers and coke are available throughout the world doesn’t speak to the quality of the food, rather to the power and dominance of the country that produced them” (Fanon, 2008, p. vii). It is interesting to note that in 2017, Ghanaian President Nana Akufo-Addo delivered a speech, *A Ghana Beyond Aid* and said, “It is time to build our economies that are not dependent on charity and handouts... we are not disclaiming aid, but we do want to discard a mindset of dependency... it is unhealthy for both the giver and the receiver” (Kwateng-Yeboah, 2018, para 3). There is no indication that Museveni will be making such a brave move anytime in the near future. I will elaborate more on each of these themes in the next few chapters.

The final theme comes from adherence to the colonial values of modernization and productivity which are echoed by the current government. Communities and reintegration programs are influenced by these values, which promote “leaving the past behind” and “moving on,” These messages are not conducive to healing the wounds of war. Reintegration programs manifest this ideology by producing programs that provide a quick fix and churn out graduates as quickly as possible. There appears to be a lack of understanding of the complexity of this post-war context. What is missing is an understanding of the broader socio-ecological forces that create barriers to reintegration which foster the marginalization of formerly abducted young women and a strategy to address these barriers.

In the next chapter I examine the gaps in reintegration programming which stems from how formerly abducted young women are represented and defined in the literature. I then look at the success factors that contribute to reintegration, the barriers to achieving reintegration and

argue that reintegration programs are not addressing these barriers as they are not considering the outer layers of the socio-ecology that serve to marginalize these women. I then provide an outline of Hall's (1994/1999/2004) theory of marginalization to argue that reintegration programs are in fact currently contributing to the marginalization of young mothers.

Chapter 1: Literature Review - Reintegration and Marginalization

I was abducted in 2006 and I returned in 2008. My mother and father are all dead. My grandmother is still alive, and she lives in the *Lacek Ocot*. When I came, I was welcomed at the reception centre at World Vision. When we got there, I contacted my grandmother, and my grandmother told me that she won't welcome me with the children of Kony — the rebel. If I want to live with her, I should first give back his children to the bush and then return home. Until now, she mentions that she will not take me and my rebel children. I stand like their only remaining parent. Their father is dead, and I don't want them to hear that word — that they belong to the rebels. I would rather not take them to my grandmother's because I don't want them to be stigmatized (Apiyo, personal communication, May 14, 2015).

Introduction

Apiyo's¹⁶ description provides an excellent snapshot of a formerly abducted young mother returning from the war. When young men returned home from the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), some of the returnees reintegrated (also with difficulty). Others joined the militia or African rebel groups, or they became bandits, continuing the cycle of violence (Elbert, Weierstall, & Schauer, 2010). However, for Apiyo and many other young mothers who returned home, they experienced discrimination, alienation, insults, and beatings by their communities for their participation in the war and for violating gender norms (Annan, Blattman, Mazurana, & Carlson, 2011). Furthermore their children, who were born in captivity, were also rejected because of their "bush" lineage and/or for their unknown paternity (Apiyo, 2008; Worthen, McKay, Veale, & Wessells, 2011). Some of these women have expressed a desire to return to the

¹⁶ With the exception of Ajok Susan, my key informant and translator in Gulu, and the members of the research team, all contributors to this research were given pseudonyms.

LRA, as the marginalization they experienced from their communities was unbearable (Apio, 2008). “When I returned, I had lost hope. I found it very useless to have returned home. I still wanted to go back and live among the abducted people. I never felt good about myself... All my hopes had been broken up into pieces” (Asciro, personal communication, June 22, 2017). This excerpt provides insights into the experience and impact of marginalization and points to the potential threat of former abductees returning to armed groups if they are not successfully reintegrated.

In this chapter, I examine the gaps in reintegration programming and argue that both the context and the process/experience of marginalization are not well understood by reintegration programs. I begin by describing how formerly abducted young women are represented and defined in the literature as this has greatly influenced the decisions made concerning reintegration program design. As mentioned, reintegration programs need to address the barriers to financial stability, well-being, and social inclusion. To discuss these barriers, I address the research question:

What factors (for example, social, political, historical, cultural, educational) contribute to the barriers to reintegration and the marginalization of young mothers?

I then argue that reintegration programs are not addressing these barriers as they are taking a localized approach to reintegration and focussing on local issues as opposed to the outer layers of the socio-ecology that serve to marginalize these women. At the end of the chapter, I provide an outline of Hall’s (1994/1999/2004) theory of marginalization and argue that reintegration programs may in fact be contributing to the marginalization of young mothers.

Essentialized Identities

The tone, the language, and the conceptualization of formerly abducted young mothers in the literature reflect how these young women are understood and influences program design

decisions. Based on a review of the academic, practitioner, and mainstream literature written from 2005 to 2017, I found representations of formerly abducted young women as problematic.

The literature on the recruitment, retention, and reintegration of formerly abducted women provides deep insights into the oppression, struggles, and agency of these women. I would like to be clear that the purpose of this section is not to question the value of this important body of literature. The aim of this chapter is to build on this body of literature by identifying representations that essentialize girls associated with armed groups in a way that marginalizes them further (Savard & Naseem, 2015). My aim is to help researchers and practitioners understand the women in a more nuanced way.

Representation

The article review gleaned 98 academic, practitioner, and popular press articles concerning formerly abducted girls and women in Northern Uganda (Savard & Michaelsen, 2018). After reviewing the first 20 articles, specific themes emerged such as victimization, sexual slavery, agency, and resilience. A content analysis was used for several dimensions, one of which was for the victim-agency dichotomy. Articles that referred to formerly abducted females as “victims” had a predominant tone of despair and pity or used descriptors such as “hopeless” and were coded under the category of “victim”. Articles were coded under “agency” when the author(s) used the word “agency;” or when they explored the degree of choice females exerted during their time in the bush, such as if they planned an escape or used self-serving strategies while with the LRA. Some articles recognized the duality in the experience of forcibly involved females, having been both abducted as well as perpetrators of violence. These articles were coded as having a mixed approach. We did a simple word search for the phrases “sex slave” and “resilience” and coded them respectively.

Table 1

Differences Found Between Genres

| | Use of “sex slave” | Use of “victim” | Use of “agency” | Use of “resilience” |
|--------------------|--------------------|-----------------|-----------------|---------------------|
| Academic | 25% | 17% | 43% | 53% |
| Practitioner | 50% | 50% | 14% | 32% |
| Popular Press | 35% | 20% | 25% | .05% |
| Overall Mean Total | 32% | 25% | 32% | 38% |

The practitioner literature makes the most references to “sexual slavery” and “victim” and has low occurrences for the use of “agency”. This is the literature that reports on reintegration programs and applied research, which indicates a deficit-laden perspective (Savard & Michaelsen, 2018). Overall, over 25% of the articles considered forcibly involved women and girls as victims (e.g. Akumu & Amony, 2005; Spellings, 2008). These articles rarely acknowledged their agency and represented the women as incapable of surviving without help. However, over 32% did acknowledge the women’s agency (e.g. Ochen, 2015; Denov, 2007), and 12% recognized the duality in women’s experiences with armed forces, whereby they could simultaneously be victims (e.g. kidnapped) yet also display agency (e.g. planning an escape) (e.g. Katz, 2015; Martin, 2009).

It is interesting that more articles were found which recognized the women’s agency (32%), and resilience (38%) than as victims (25%). However, I believe that over a quarter of all articles referring to formerly abducted young women exclusively as “victims” and 32% referring to the women as “sex slaves” is problematic. This is actually ironic; marginalized individuals tend to be even more resilient than the mainstream, as they have experienced more risk and

therefore have developed survival strategies that are not practiced by the societal centre (Hall et al., 1994).

Words such as, “forced wives” and “bush wives” and as mentioned, “sex slaves” are also littered throughout the literature. Using these terms creates an image of woman serving one function and a composite of one thing, which is far from the reality. The choice of descriptors to use is an important one, as it renders the women as either passive victims or agents of change, a choice which influences program design decisions.

The consistent narrative in the literature serves to reconfirm existing gender norms of women as passive victims and is based on an assumption that formerly abducted girls and women were forced against their will to perform sexual functions and to commit atrocities in their communities. They are predominantly portrayed as silent, forced wives in in tangential supporting roles and as victims of sexual slavery (Denov, 2007). Stout (2013) argues that a general picture has emerged in which these girls are positioned as objects in the literature, rather than subjects in their own narrative, “ignoring the multiplicity of their experiences and renders them “invisible post-conflict” (Stout 2013, p. 54).

Examining three projects on formerly abducted girls and women in Angola (Stavrou, 2004); Sierra Leone (Maclure & Denov, 2006); and Mozambique, Sierra Leone, and Northern Uganda (McKay & Mazurana, 2004); Denov (2007) found that the studies reveal girls’ remarkable attempts to protect themselves during situations of severe violence and insecurity, and bring about change for themselves by themselves (Savard & Naseem, 2015).

Challenging the predominant portrayals of girls as emblematic victims, the studies underscore the resourceful and ingenious ways in which girls attempted to avoid, minimize, or resist wartime abuses, patriarchal power structures, and the culture of violence that surrounded them (Denov, 2007, p. 3).

Most of the articles describe this population as “vulnerable,” but Denov (2007) argues that “vulnerability” overshadows their self-efficacy, resilience, and skills, which needs to be incorporated into reintegration programming. Devereux and Sabates-Wheeler (2011) argue that “vulnerability” used by those in social protection often conceive of the term too narrowly. That is, they only focus on economics – the vulnerable are at risk for future poverty. As an example, in a handbook by Child Soldiers International advising reintegration programmers, the author states, “If they [young mothers] are already struggling to make a living, introducing competition may increase the number of vulnerable girls and women (de la Soudière 2017, p. 36).” In this statement, vulnerability refers only to the financial stability that would elude these young mothers if competition was introduced. Devereux and Sabates-Wheeler (2011) argue that a broader definition of vulnerability is needed. In the case of young mothers, other domains or “vulnerabilities” could include the social (gender-bias), physical (gender-based violence) and psychological domains (insecurity resulting from living alone).

I am not suggesting that formerly abducted young women were not victims of abduction, rape, forced marriage etc. I am advocating (as Denov, 2007; McKay & Mazurana, 2004; Stout, 2013) for a more fulsome, nuanced portrayal of these women’s experiences; there is enough research to support the notion that the young women actively resisted and found ingenious ways to maintain their security, such as rising in the ranks or marrying powerful commanders.

It should be noted that the majority of the literature that represents women as victims was written either during the war or within three years after the war. This tendency appears to diminish after 2010, and there appears to be a growing understanding that abducted youth in general did demonstrate agency. “Scholars and professionals do no longer only view the child as a victim of war but also as a survivor of war and an agent who actively seeks to cope with the adversities s/he faces” (Tonheim, 2010, p. 17).

When the women in this dissertation project were asked to describe themselves, not one used the word “victim” or “vulnerable;” however, the community members often described them as “ashamed,” “not proud,” “feels guilty,” or “fearful” (Community Members 17, 21, 26, 27, personal communication, May 2015). Research findings and representations of the women, to a degree, flow into the practitioner literature, which results in NGOs designing programs based on these representations. This lack of understanding of their role during the war led to their exclusion from acquiring reintegration benefits and fully participating in the Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Program (DDR).

Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR)

When war draws to a close, the United Nations and donor agencies through INGOs and NGOs will implement a Disarmament Demobilization and Reintegration Program (DDR). Within that program, they provide benefits to ex-combatants in exchange for relinquishing arms. Though the participation of girls and women in DDR in Uganda is not well documented (Stout, 2013), globally, approximately 5% of female ex-combatants participate in DDR (Irin, 2013) which is precisely why the program has been criticized for not reaching girls and women and for their lack of awareness of the specific needs of females engaged with armed groups (Coulter, Persson, & Utas, 2008; Hobson, 2005; Keairns, 2002; McKay & Mazurana, 2004; Specht & Attree, 2006; Worthen, McKay, Veale, & Wessells, 2011). One of the reasons for this lack of awareness could be explained by how the women are represented in the literature. DDR was not for the victims, rather the perpetrators. Furthermore, although the literature acknowledges their role as soldiers, it underlines the support, domestic, and sexual roles of formerly abducted young women. Other reasons for their omission include:

- The narrow definition of ‘combatant’ (Mazurana, 2005). This is despite UNICEF’s (1999) definition that a child soldier is “any person under 18 years of age who is part of any kind of regular or irregular armed force or armed group in any capacity” (p. 12).
- Poor communication from UNICEF. Many of the returning young women did not see themselves as a “child” soldier and did not think they were eligible (Stout, 2013).
- The claimant needed to relinquish a weapon. Most girls had their weapons taken away as a condition of leaving the bush, and since they could not produce weapon, they were not provided with DDR benefits (McKay, 2004) (this is also an indication that the support functions that many girls and women provided were not as valid as those with fighter status).
- Many chose not to participate, as they did not want to be identified with the rebel forces. This would increase the likelihood that they would be marginalized and decrease the probability that they would get married and have access to land, property, and child support (McKay, 2004).

Stavrou (2004) found similar DDR practices during the civil war in Angola (1975-2002) and maintains that DDR programming was primarily designed for males, and girls were thought to be only involved with ‘women’s work’; consequently, the military status of girls was not officially recognized. In a study examining the experiences of young mothers in Uganda, Baines (2008) found that 73% of the women referred to themselves as “soldiers as well as housewives, who had fought in either offensive or defensive battles against the UPDF [Uganda People’s Defence Force], or participated in raids against civilians and in a few cases, committed atrocities against civilians” (p. 3). It is hard to know whether it is an urban legend but several informants told me of the brutality of the “one-breasted commander” in the LRA who had had one breast

shot off but still used to fight with her child on her back. “In the LRA, it was survival of the fittest. Women were involved in spiritual cleansing ceremonies to make the fight a success, but whoever was the strongest survived and would take leadership. The women who proved themselves strong and brutal could lead” (Ajok Susan, personal communication, March 2, 2018).

In response to this omission of massive numbers of young women, a consultant was deployed by UNICEF to assess their DDR initiatives and reintegration programs. Although the consultant dedicates three sentences to the topic of gender equity, he does recommend that “Girl soldiers need to be systematically targeted as a priority group” (Legrand, 1999, p. 22). By 2006, the United Nations created the *Integrated Disarmament Demobilization and Reintegration Standards* which acknowledged a need for a gendered approach to DDR.

DDR planners have been unaware of the presence and roles of girls associated with fighting forces, are ill informed about appropriate responses to their needs, and therefore often design programmes that unintentionally prevent girls’ entrance to these programmes and damage their chances of long-term recovery (United Nations, 2006, 6.1, p. 10).

Although there was recognition of the omission of girls and women who were forcibly involved with the LRA as early as 1999, Apiyo (mentioned at the beginning of this chapter) said that she did not benefit from DDR, reintegration programming, nor was she provided with any formal assistance upon her return. She was given an “amnesty card,” which comes with a one-time payment of \$100 CAD but never received the money. She believes it is because she came back from the “bush” in 2008 the war was over, and she was too late to receive benefits (Apiyo, personal communication, May 2015). Two years later, Susan (translator and key informant) and I asked Apiyo again about her amnesty benefits, but the young mother never followed-up.

As mentioned in the Introduction, reintegration programming is intended to contribute to the process whereby youth are assisted to (re)settle in post-war communities, provided with

training to establish a livelihood, and supported to process their war-related trauma (Dzinesa, 2007). The literature, however, is inadequate in defining standards, measures, and outcomes for successful reintegration (Humphreys & Weinstein, 2007; Kiconco, 2015). Furthermore, there have been very few longitudinal studies evaluating the success of reintegration or the factors that prevent youth from engaging in further violence (Humphreys & Weinstein, 2007). Specifically in Northern Uganda, the nature and determinants of successful reintegration remain poorly understood (Annan, Brier, & Aryemo, 2009; August, 2012). Therefore, it is not surprising that since clear measures are absent, many reintegration programs in Northern Uganda have had limited success, particularly for women (Annan, et al., 2008; Betancourt, et al., 2013; Martin, 2009; Schomerus & Allen, 2006; Tol, Song & Jordans, 2013).

As an example, in a qualitative study engaging 35 young mothers, Murungi (2011) found that only two of the women had reintegrated successfully into their communities. When the study was completed, Murungi attributed the lack of reintegration success to a lack of “preparedness,” as the community had to accommodate the reintegration of so many formerly abducted youth at once. Ten years post-war, this can no longer explain why so many young mothers continue to struggle with social inclusion.

In the next section, I outline some of the barriers the young women face to obtain financial stability, well-being, and social inclusion. I begin the section with a discussion on how patriarchal values and a culture of dependency are barriers to specifically financial stability. The following discussion on patriarchal values is intentionally detailed. I will refer back to this section throughout this dissertation, as it provides part of the social and cultural context for this project.

Barriers to Financial Stability

Patriarchal Values

Patriarchal values entrust power and control to men, thereby allocating women as insignificant actors in social, economic, and political structures (Coulter et al., 2008). Consequently, this inhibits the economic participation of women, restricts them from entering male dominated fields of employment, and limiting their earning potential.

There are three predominant themes I found in the literature and in discussion with informants concerning patriarchal values: proper behaviour and the social consequences for women who violate gender norms, women as reproductive assets, and women as valuable property or insignificant entities. Reflecting on these themes, I found Glick and Fiske's (2011) theory of *Benevolent and Hostile Sexism* particularly useful in understanding the ways women in Uganda are both idealized and vilified and how this is reflected in mechanisms such as patriarchal values, sexual reproduction, and role differentiations.

Glick & Fiske (2011) assert that *benevolent sexism* rewards women if they demonstrate conventional roles such as nurturers and remain dependent on men financially or for protection. Hostile sexism frames women negatively if they try to usurp men's power (such as entering a male-dominated trade). Over 20 years ago, the researchers developed a measure for both hostile and benevolent sexism. Cross-national comparisons show that both go hand-in-hand; that is, nations that endorse hostile sexism also endorse benevolent sexism, and both predict gender inequity (Glick & Fiske, 2001). These types of sexism ring of the "Madonna-whore" dichotomy, which is recognized in literary arts, psychology, and feminism (Glick & Fiske, 2001). The Madonna is virtuous, passive, and domestic, while the literary "harpies" such as Eve, Pandora, Circe (Greek), Sirens, Aabyou (Jewish), Pontianak (Indonesian), Lady Midday (Slavic), and

Lamashtu (Mesopotamian) are demonized and attributed with masculine traits, as they exercise power, domination, and violence.

Defining a woman's "proper behaviour". Although I will discuss how gender norms are changing later in this chapter, the patriarchy in Northern Uganda still defines the "proper" place of girls and women in Acholi society (Carlson & Mazurana, 2006; Stout, 2013) which is largely based on androcentric assumptions. Young women are expected to demonstrate chastity and to be virgins before marriage (Finnström, 2008). Traditionally, a bride price is paid for a young girl, and she is married between the age of 12 to 16 (Kiconco, 2015). Almost immediately after marriage, the girls or women are expected to reproduce, take good care of the home and children, and cook for the homestead (Kiconco, 2015). Women are expected to be silent. Even at the level of the national government, a group of researchers found that female legislators were less likely to instigate a debate. "Women's socialization is blamed for some women's inability to lead effectively in Parliament's debates. Some female members chose to remain silent in order to conform to cultural expectations of how women are supposed to behave" (Refki, et al., 2017, p. 18). Glick and Fiske (2001) argue that it is the socialization of women that silences them and benevolent sexism that rewards them for their silence.

As an example, Susan relayed a story that is widely told among the Acholi that both men and women find extremely funny. A woman went to a witch doctor to charm her husband into loving her again. Promising the woman adoration from her husband, the witch doctor gave her a large amulet to put in her mouth. Every time this woman saw her husband, she inserted the amulet in her mouth, and eventually her husband began to love her again (personal communication, May 7, 2017). The message for women obviously is that a silent woman is a loved woman.

Some of the violations of gender norms include: participating in the war; being raped; having children out of wedlock; neglecting their responsibilities as a wife or mother; living on their own apart from their husbands or families; or for becoming too aggressive, “stubborn,” or “spoiled” (Annan, Blattman, Mazurana, & Carlson, 2009; Denov, 2008). Several studies have shown that when girls and women adhered to traditional gender norms, they had an easier, more welcoming transition into their communities after the war (e. g. Coulter et al., 2008; McKay et al., 2011). However, in Chapter 5, I discuss how simple respectful conduct towards community members also facilitates reintegration.

The young mothers engaged in the McKay et al. (2007-2009) PAR Project¹⁷ described successful reintegration as “being involved in actively improving their lives, showing good mothering and self-care skills, and demonstrating behaviours consistent with community and gender norms” (McKay, et al., 2011, p. 18). For those who do not adhere to strict codes of behaviour, they likely face social exclusion and structural barriers to establishing a livelihood and maintaining their security (Coulter et al., 2008; Hobson, 2005; Tonheim, 2010).

These strict codes of behaviour are reinforced in many reintegration programs as girls are often provided with advice on how to: “behave properly” in the community, internalize a sense of “vulnerability, innocence and victimhood,” “forget their time in the bush,” and forgive those who committed atrocities (Akello, Reis, & Richters, 2010, p. 232-234). This is a result of traditional views that war is a man’s domain, and girls and women are on the periphery and merely casualties of war. In other words, the assumptions of what men and “normal” women do and not do is so ingrained, it is perceived as natural and goes unquestioned (Stout, 2013). This leads to a key question: Should girls and young women obtain support for their reintegration

¹⁷ As mentioned in the Introduction, the McKay et al. (2007-2009) PAR Project was a large-scale research project engaging four principle investigators, 16 co-investigators, 2 NGOs and 658 young mothers in Liberia, Sierra Leone and Uganda.

based on their unique requirements as well as their strengths and resilience¹⁸, or should the focus be on re-programming the women to fit into a patriarchal system? The perspective chosen will shape reintegration programming. Reintegration programs have a unique opportunity to advance the equity and status of women, particularly at this time as gender norms are in flux.

Unfortunately, they continue to create programs that reinforce traditional gender norms, which contribute to the oppression of young women.

Women as reproductive assets. Munene, Schwartz and Kibanja (2005) found that women remain poor and underprivileged in Uganda, as they are largely considered for their reproductive roles. Sexual abuse, sexual slavery, ownership and disposal of women, and bride wealth all are part of Ugandan culture, which explains why abduction flourished during the insurgency. Schomerus and Allen (2006) claimed that abducting a wife was actually part of Acholi tradition and was practiced long before the war. This is not entirely accurate. Abduction of women only happened during a tribal war to rob another tribe of “their reproductive assets” (coined by Schomerus and Allen (2006). Warring tribes would abduct women as wives and give them to loyal soldiers, but men would also be abducted to work as slaves (Ajok Susan, personal communication, March 2, 2018). Women continue to be valued when they produce children, but when they do not, or cannot, they are perceived as an aberration (Carovano, 1992).¹⁹ For example, one of the women who volunteered on this project, Alanyo, was having serious challenges with her marriage. She had twins and a little girl. After giving birth to a second set of twins, she secretly began using birth control. She did not want any more children, but her

¹⁸ Resilience: Demonstrated through behaviours that signify: a resistance to risk; personal growth as a result of difficult circumstances; active agency; and flexibility in responses. Resilience is not a personal trait rather it is a response which is dynamic and which can change over time (Rutter, 2012).

¹⁹ It is interesting to note that in a large scale health survey, the Uganda Bureau of Statistic (UBOS, 2007) dedicates a chapter to report on the country’s “fertility” and all the information gathered is about female fertility. The absence of data on men suggests that the responsibility of fertility and production rests on women.

husband desperately wanted to have a boy. He got angry with her when she was failing to get pregnant. “You have weak family blood”, the husband asserted. This is based on the belief that strong women have boys. He took her forcefully to the doctor to determine if she was now barren. Her husband threatened to “throw her out”, if she was unable to produce more children. When they went to the doctor for Alanyo to be tested, she confided in the doctor about her use of birth control. Although the doctor kept her confidence, in order to secure a home for herself and her children, the following month she was pregnant with baby number six (Field notes, May 22, 2017). This story follows classic patterns of masculinity and femininity, whereby men are active and dominant, and women are submissive to the needs of men. This serves to destabilize female agency, as there is no negotiation for reproduction (Stout, 2013). Faith-based reintegration programs advocate for abstinence, but the formal reintegration programs engaged in this project did not address reproductive health or the rights women have to govern their own bodies.

Women as valued property or insignificant entities. Although this theme appears dichotomous, women are valued as long as they serve the needs of men, since significant wealth is necessary to pay the bride price. This personifies the dominant group (men) as well-deserved of their property, but this property holds a heavy burden, which is characteristic of benevolent sexism (Glick & Fiske, 2001). Conversely, if the bride does not abide by a strict code of behaviour, the woman is devalued and often abandoned (personal communication, May 7, 2017). This is indicative of hostile sexism, as it is a means for men to justify their privileges in situations where a woman does not behave according to established gender norms (Glick & Fiske, 2001).

The LRA gave young abducted girls to commanders to be their wives, and female abductees were also given to the Sudanese in exchange for weapons (Mischkowski, 2007), which positions women as sexual objects for the pleasure of men (Kiconco, 2015) and as property. The

LRA used rape to strategically terrorize the Acholi (Amnesty International USA, 1997), but within its rank and file, the LRA controlled relationships and had strict rules about rape. Although rape could occur within a “marriage”, the LRA forbade soldiers to rape a girl or woman who did not *belong* to them. Furthermore, a girl was also not allowed to have relations with a man who was not her husband (Mischkowski, 2007). Breaking these rules resulted in death (Mischkowski, 2005). When these girls and women returned home, they were considered “spoilt,” “ruined,” and as “having lost their value” (Ager, et al., 2010, p. 72).

With very few options to obtain financial stability due to lack of education, skills or opportunity, the research on young mothers has countless stories about young women engaging in prostitution or transactional sex in order to survive (eg. Burman & McKay, 2007; Coulter, Persson, & Utas, 2008; McKay et al., 2011). It is not uncommon for a woman to trade sex with one partner to secure support for themselves and their children. Boothby, Strang, and Wessells (2006) argue that formerly abducted women post-conflict may be discouraged in using “the strengths they have developed to make new choices and seek broader opportunities” (p.7). If Boothby and his colleagues are suggesting that women have a choice as to whether or not to engage in prostitution; I would argue that impoverished young mothers do not perceive a gambit of choices. The role of reintegration perhaps is to build on their resilience and strengths and to raise their awareness of how they are marginalized, so that they will perceive choices and see themselves as entitled to choices.

Patriarchal values influence the positionality of women, which limit their livelihood options (Kiconco, 2015). In her book, *Theorizing Patriarchy*, Walby (1990) categorizes patriarchy into six structures: the patriarchal mode of production, patriarchal relations in paid work, patriarchal relations in the state, male violence, patriarchal relations in sexuality, and patriarchal relations in cultural institutions. Pertinent to this section is patriarchal relations in

paid work, which Walby (1990) argues manifests as the “exclusion” and “segregation” strategies. The former limits a woman’s access to certain areas or all areas of employment. For example, in reintegration programs in Uganda, brick laying, motorcycle maintenance, and computer repair, (trades with higher potential earnings), are allocated to young men. Most of the women decide themselves to reject these trades, as they have been led to believe that this is “men’s work.” Although women are free to choose these trades, I have seen them steered to more “gender appropriate” trades such as hairdressing or catering. The second strategy, segregation, according to Walby (1990), minimizes the competition between men and women and prevents women from working in those fields. An example is creating full time work options for men and part time for women. Most of the women on this study said that they worked part time, as they did not recognize that the work they did on the family farm or in the home as “work”. Reintegration programs are not doing enough to address patriarchal values. They could be engaging men in discussions about gender norms or engaging with advocacy groups for women. As a minimum, they should be opening up markets as opposed to training women for saturated markets (McKay & Mazurana, 2004).

Patriarchal values diminish the value of girls and women and reduce them to property and as a tool for pleasure. These gendered preconceptions of women and girls are pervasive and “[have] resulted in [reintegration] programming that continues to be unresponsive to, and unreflective of, their [young women] needs” (Stout, 2013. p. 61). It also underlines that if reintegration programs are to be successful, they need to first see how these values manifest within their own programs, and second, they need to create initiatives to strategically highlight and address these values with both participants and their communities. Some researchers argue that the Acholi no longer depend on the patriarchy; rather, they turn to NGOs for the services and support they need (Martin, 2009). The “culture of dependency” is discussed in the next section as

a barrier to financial stability, though the impact of foreign influences is discussed throughout this dissertation.

Culture of Dependency

When civilians were forced to live in the IDP camps during the war, and community productive assets were destroyed, civilians had little access to land cultivation, livestock, or any sort of income (Finnström, 2008). Western humanitarian aid organizations provided the only source of food. Post-war, they offered amnesty packages to some returnees, which included a lump sum of money. This legacy of hand-outs from Western NGOs has instilled a “culture of dependency” among the Acholi (Weber, 2013) and is recognized by Ugandans as a problematic social issue.

Within the community in Gulu, leaders have discouraged their citizens from *miya miya*, which means “give me, give me” and is equivalent to a cry of a cat that waits to be served food. There is a similar saying in Lugandan, *gavumenti etu yambe*, which means “the government should help us” (Ajok Susan, personal communication, April 2018). In an interview, a Local Council (LC) member expressed serious concern that some of his constituents are waiting to be helped by the government rather than dealing with their financial problem themselves. He said that he often responds to these complaints with, “Will the government also solve your family matters?” (LC 3, personal communication, June 2, 2014).

In a study on community perceptions of NGOs in Gulu, Michaelsen (2017) found that within the focus groups she conducted, youth expressed concern about western NGOs and their impact on their communities. Seventeen of the participants mentioned “dependency” and the resulting “laziness” as a serious issue.

NGOs have spread laziness in a way that people just sit and wait to be given supplies... distributing free food is the negative impact. Those days when we were young, we would

dig [farm] knowing your food wouldn't come from anywhere else. But now people dig, thinking maybe [someone] will come and give you a jerry can [a container for water/irrigation]. Maybe another will come and construct for us houses, or maybe the other will come and give the kids school fees. That is what promotes laziness (pp. 30-31).

Participants in the Michaelsen (2017) study also expressed concern that parents too have become “lazy” and “neglectful” as many put their children in orphanages run by NGOs (p. 31) as opposed to finding the financial means to care for their children. Given their strong views on dependency, it is interesting that out of 60 participants, only four believed that Gulu and its citizens would be fine without NGOs.

Within the context of Uganda, Lepp (2008) conducted in-depth interviews with local citizens of Bigodi village in western Uganda to gain their perspectives on the development of tourism and the newfound presence of foreigners within their community. Although the locals believed the foreign presence caused locals to be dependent on foreigners and their money, Lepp (2008) was not convinced and conducted a study to determine if Bigodi villagers could be characterized by an external locus of control.²⁰ Using a comparative approach, Lepp found that the tourist industry did not create dependency; rather, dependency was a result of the predominance of an external locus of control found among villagers. Conversely, communities characterized by an internal locus of control were found to be associated with self-reliance. I also found evidence of an external locus of control among the young mothers.

In a qualitative study examining the reintegration experiences of eleven youth in Uganda, Corbin (2008) found that the youth attributed their dependency on families and NGOs to

²⁰ Individuals with an internal locus of control will largely react to situations with a belief that the outcome is the result of their own actions. An external locus of control characterizes those who perceive what happens to them as independent of their own actions (Lepp, 2008). The four indicators of an external locus of control in Lepp's study include: “the world is governed by luck or chance, the world is difficult, the world is governed by politically unresponsive powerful others, and the world is unjust” (Rotter in Lepp, 2008, p. 1210)

structural barriers that prevent employment. There are indeed few opportunities for non-self-starters in Northern Uganda. Given this research, it remains unclear whether a culture of dependency is a result of foreign influences, an external locus of control, or limited economic opportunities. Since young women often cannot return and live with their families or husbands and need to live on their own, a certain amount of self-reliance is required. Waiting for an NGO or a man to step up and provide is a barrier to successful reintegration. This impact of a culture of dependency is discussed in greater detail in Chapter 4.

Barriers to Well-Being

As mentioned, since so much of the literature on formerly abducted women sought deficits or used deficit-based approaches, there is ample evidence that these women suffer from low self-worth, low self-esteem, lack of confidence, depression, anxiety, and so on (Klasen, Gehrke, Metzner, Blotevogel, & Okello, 2013; de la Soudière, 2017; Veale, Mckay, Worthen, & Wessells, 2013; Worthen, Veale, Mckay, & Wessells, 2010). The causes of this negative functioning are no doubt due to abduction, the sexual violence and marginalization they experienced, and the frustration inherent in living in poverty. Reintegration needs active participation, and therefore, reintegration programs need to focus on enhancing competent functioning and relieving trauma. Though there is little research on enhancing competent functioning, there is a significant amount of research on the mental health of formerly abducted young women, the interventions provided, and the model of counselling predominantly used. I have identified this model for mental health predominantly used in Northern Uganda as a barrier to well-being, as it is largely grounded in Western Eurocentric thought as opposed to indigenous assumptions about mental health. These Western models have been found to have limited success as again, it appears that context and cultural beliefs are not well understood.

Western Assumptions about Mental Health

After a disaster, emergency, or conflict, Western child protection “experts” fly in and provide assistance based on their theoretical constructs about how the event has impacted the population. Locals are grateful for any help, and they defer their beliefs to Western scientific knowledge. Knowledge is often not shared or co-created, but imposed by Western NGOs creating a form of “psychological imperialism, which leads to the marginalization of cultural beliefs in healing and managing psychological stress” (Kostelny, 2006, p. 21-22).

Summerfield (1999) puts forward that clinical interventions to victims of political violence are based on a number of assumptions. These assumptions are: 1) there is a universal reaction to stressful events; 2) responses to trauma can be captured by the PTSD framework; and 3) traumatized victims need professional help, such as opportunities to ‘work through’ their experiences. Summerfield argues that there is no evidence that war-affected populations want these imported approaches, particularly as they tend to ignore indigenous rituals and traditions for healing.

1) Universal reaction to trauma. The Western assumptions outlined by Summerfield (1999) ring of Eurocentrism, as there are a wide range of responses to political violence. It cannot be presumed that there is a universal impact on the individual (Barber, 2008; Wilson, 2007). Based on Western responses to post-war conditions in Rwanda, Cambodia, Nicaragua and Bosnia-Herzegovina, Summerfield argued that the use of culturally inappropriate Western tools to assess trauma is based on an assumption that reactions to stressful events will lead to psychopathology, which ignores the suffering that occurs collectively within a social context.

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) is an anxiety disorder which includes numerous symptoms resulting from the chronic, intrusive, and painful recollection of traumatic events (such as rape, natural disasters, life-threatening events, etc.) (American Psychological

Association, 2015). The PTSD construct focusses on deficits, ignores competent functioning, and often lacks cross-cultural applicability. For example, in a study of 22 immigrant Central American women and their children who had observed the horrors of war, such as bombings and homicides, the researchers found that only 2 out of the 22 children presented with PTSD symptoms (Locke et al., 1996). Also, in a review of 95 empirical studies on the impact of war on children, Barber (2008a) found that some studies did not find long-term psychological problems and depression in children after traumatic events, while smaller and less controlled studies tended to find a higher percentage of children with psychological problems.

In a meta-analysis of 290 articles written between 1980 and 2005 on PTSD, Tolin and Foa (2006) found that although women tended to have less exposure to traumatic events than men, women were at greater risk of developing PTSD. They speculated that women had more exposure to sexual assault, but when they controlled for this type of violence, the symptom rates remained the same. Other researchers argue that women have more ongoing stressors, that they are biologically more vulnerable, or that PTSD symptoms persist as women tend to blame themselves for events (Olf in Annan et al., 2011). This speculative research trickles down to reintegration programming and translates into a focus on counselling for women, with less attention on their economic and educational needs (Stout, 2013). For returning boys and men, the opposite is the case. “To the extent that girls are presumed to be the “most” traumatized group of former child soldiers, there is the risk of creating a situation where men get the jobs, and women the counselling” (Stout, 2013, p. 53).

Park (2009) examined the gendered discourse at a reintegration program in Sierra Leone. According to the staff at this program, “girls’ laziness, dependence, and vanity led to their victimization both during and after the war; thus, their characters must be reformed to avert further victimization” (p. 158). Fostering independence, according to Park, became an indicator

of progress according to this reintegration program, as it addressed the pathology of dependence prevalent in the Global South. Park also argues that NGOs work to shape recipient thinking and behaviour based on the Western premise that we are all masters of our own lives and futures, while ignoring the material inequities and marginalization these women face on a daily basis.

There is evidence that children demonstrate agency in ingenious ways during political violence. This in itself is cause to challenge the effectiveness of treating trauma survivors as passive or as victims (Boyden, 2003). Analyzing competent functioning is becoming more commonplace in the research on youth and war. Researchers who test for competent functioning have often found it while 20% of those who test for negative functioning do not find it (Barber, 2008). The challenge in the research is not the difficulty in detecting competent functioning but rather a “lack of effort to test for them in the first place” (p. 290). If a reintegration program is based on the deficits of youth instead of the strengths, how high will programs aim in providing youth with a positive trajectory for their future?

2) Trauma can be captured by the PTSD framework. Humanitarian aid agencies have been criticized for using PTSD as a diagnosis in an African context, as it focusses on the individual responses to trauma instead of considering the individual within their social context.

A diagnosis of PTSD alone is poorly predictive of the capacity to pay the psychological costs of a war, to keep going despite hardship, nor a reliable indicator of a need for psychological treatment... This is not just a conceptual issue, but also an ethical one, given the danger of misunderstanding and indeed dehumanizing survivors via reductionist labelling (Summerfield, 1999, p. 1454).

The study of PTSD has generated a notable body of knowledge, yet it lacks a cross-cultural understanding of trauma, healing practices, and human adaptation (Wilson, 2005). For example, bodily symptoms in some cultures are seen as a spiritual distress as opposed to mental

dysfunction; therefore, psychological counselling may not be the answer. It is likely that the Western conceptualization of PTSD is not readily understood in Uganda as unlike the West, Ugandans do not utilize a psychobiological explanations of illness or human behaviour (Wilson, 2007). Explanations for reactions to traumatic events in Uganda are often a combination of Christian beliefs (being punished by God for a wrongdoing) and traditional spiritual beliefs (being a victim of a curse) (Okello James, personal communication, May 2015).

As an example, *The Guardian* ran an article on the survivors of the Amoko massacre, which occurred during the civil war in Northern Uganda. The massacre took 19 lives, including the father of Patrick Okello. Before escaping from the LRA the night his father died, Okello dug a shallow grave for his fathers' remains. Okello now sees ghosts and believes that this is the result of his father's vengeance for the inadequate burial.

If Patrick were to see a doctor in Kitgum, he might be diagnosed with a trauma-related psychological condition, such as PTSD. But *in the absence* [emphasis added] of formal medical assistance, this rural community have traditional stories to make sense of what they've been through and what still takes place (Storr, 2012, para 16).

The author of the article completely dismisses Acholi cosmology by saying that the locals will make sense of Patrick's symptoms because of "an absence of formal medical assistance." Is Acholi cosmology then informal or unsanctioned? Faith-based reintegration programs also tend to dismiss Acholi cosmology.²¹ World Vision is an American, faith-based NGO and one of the largest reintegration programs in Gulu. In World Vision's *Memorandum and Articles of Association*, they state that their primary business is "to assist in improving and ameliorating the moral and social conditions of humanity, to provide services to God's people which will enable

²¹ It should be noted that 13% of Ugandans are Muslim and 76% are Christian (UBOS & OECD, 2015), though many Ugandans meld Christian beliefs with African cosmology.

them to accomplish more quickly and efficiently the Great Commission of advancing the Kingdom of God on earth” (Whaites, 1999, p. 141). For former abductees, that translated into counselling that encouraged youth to confess, repent their sins, forget past deeds, forgive the LRA, and accept the word of the Lord (Akello et al., 2006). Those who did not divulge their sins were considered “difficult cases” and stayed longer at World Vision’s centre if there was space. The average stay at the centre was three weeks. World Vision’s approach to counselling and their individual as opposed to community focus to reintegration has had limited success (Akello et al., 2006).

Psychologists who conduct research in Uganda or work at NGOs that focus on the occurrence of PTSD have left behind a framework and inadequately trained counsellors for reintegration programs to diagnose and treat PTSD symptoms (Schomerus & Allen, 2006). Counsellors are often community members who have had as little as two days of training. (Bannink-Mbazzi & Lorschiedter, 2009) and 52% of those who counselled returning abductees at receptions centres stated that they had received no training at all (Schomerus & Allen, 2006).

3) Traumatized victims need professional help. Based on Western science, professional help includes reliving trauma and talk therapies. For those who run faith-based organizations, professional help is grounded in Christian beliefs. This section illustrates that these types of therapies leave no room for a culturally-appropriate responses to trauma, nor do they acknowledge indigenous explanations and therapies which are found in Acholi cosmology.

Reliving trauma and talk therapies. Bonanno (2004) conducted research on Freudian psychotherapies that encourage individuals who have suffered a loss to work through the negative thoughts, memories, and emotions. Bonanno (2004) found that not only have these methods proven to be ineffective, but in some cases, they have caused harm. The researcher questions the need to relive trauma during therapy and challenges the notion that to suppress

emotions related to the trauma in the long-term is harmful. In a second study, Bonnano (2003) and his colleagues worked with a sample of 163 young women, half of whom had documented histories of childhood sexual abuse. The researchers found those who did not voluntarily disclose the stories of their abuse demonstrated better adjustment than those who did disclose (Bonanno, Noll, Putnam, O'Neill, & Trickett, 2003). In another study with 129 formerly abducted young women and girls in Northern Uganda, the researchers compared mental health outcomes between those who attended a reintegration program and received counselling with those who self-reintegrated. The researcher found no significant difference in mental health, specifically for anxiety and depression (Muldoon et al., 2014).

Rituals in some cultures are essential for healing, whereas healing through talk therapy or emotional expression is considered taboo. For example, in an effort to understand how mental health and therapy was comprehended by local people in Angola, Honwana (1998) conducted focus groups and interviews in five provinces. She found that many believed that spirits of the dead were responsible for mental illness and talking about the past, or trauma specifically, could invite wicked, spiritual forces to intrude.

With the Acholi, divulging the emotions behind a war time experience is considered inappropriate. While I was in Gulu in 2017, my translator had to attend a re-burial of a family member. Many people were buried during the war on municipal land, and now the Local Council is asking citizens to rebury their family members on their family land. During the re-burial, attendees are not supposed to cry. To cry is to invite bad luck (Ajok Susan, personal communication, June 1, 2017).

Akello (2010) and her colleagues examined how coping strategies were used by children in Northern Uganda. The sample was male and female children between 9-16 years old who had spent their entire lives in a war zone. In their narratives, children expressed how they were met

with indignation, condemnation, and irritation when expressing their suffering. To learn about culturally appropriate responses to trauma, the researchers read a story about a fictitious boy, *Otika*, to seven groups of children. It was a story about a boy who had lost his father. The boy was withdrawn, depressed, and often crying. Participants were asked for their impressions of this boy and what advice they would give him. The consensus was that the fictitious boy was acting inappropriately. One of the participants said,

He needs to be told that other people have experienced worst things than him. For example, there is a woman in Cereleno who lost all her children, but she is strong, she does her work normally...*Otika* should be beaten for his constant crying. It irritates people when he keeps on crying and showing his *can* [distress] (Akello et al., 2010, p. 215-216).

As in the reburial rituals described earlier, emotional responses may not be culturally appropriate, and to ask youth to share their feelings, which would elicit an emotional response, may be inappropriate.

Acholi cosmology. During an interview in Northern Uganda, a young mother, Aloyo, described her reintegration experience to me. She explained how her husband (a former LRA commander) had been killed. As mentioned, according the Acholi traditions, a married woman should live with her husband's family. Soon after she moved in with her in-laws, her mother-in-law became convinced that the young mother was "bad luck" and that she would bring misfortune to the family. She said that her mother-in-law put a curse on her, which caused her to experience many physical ailments such as anxiety, sleeplessness, an upset stomach, headaches, etc. The young mother went to see a witch doctor to have the curse removed and learned that she needed to purchase a goat as a sacrifice to satisfy the spirits. Goats are expensive, so it took a while for her to save up and to buy one. On her journey back to see the witch doctor, the goat died. This made the young woman even more agitated; she began to believe that she was indeed

“bad luck” (personal communication, May 2015). At the time, this young woman was receiving livelihood training, psychosocial counselling, and bible study from a faith-based NGO. Perhaps instead of counselling, they should have offered her a goat or at least acknowledge her dilemma and work with her to provide a culturally suitable solution to her anxiety. In 2017, she told me that she bought the goat, went back to the witch doctor who performed a ritual and is now free of all symptoms of anxiety (April 19, 2017).

Acholiland is a region very rich in traditional rituals. Embedded in a distinctive cosmology, often combined with a Christian or Muslim faith, rituals are for most Acholi seen as a necessary act of healing, purification, crossing of boundaries, returning back to the village, reconciliation, or otherwise bringing the youth and the community in harmony with their ancestors (Maeland, 2010, p. 5).

In recent years, traditional knowledge has become more valued in the fields of archaeology, botany, ecology, and biology (Nicholas, 2018). Recently, scientists have “discovered” that fire hawks in Northern Australia use tools to spread forest fires to increase their food source. The *Alawa* people have known this for generations. There does not appear to be evidence of an appreciation of traditional knowledge (TK) in the field of psychology or specifically when treating reactions to trauma.

Despite the wide acknowledgement of their demonstrated value, many scientists continue to have had an uneasy alliance with TK and Indigenous oral histories. On the one hand, TK and other types of local knowledge are valued when they support or supplement archaeological, or other scientific evidence (Nicholas, 2018, para 10).

I found several examples where indigenous knowledge was discounted or diminished. “Rehabilitation should be a combination of Western models and local models... There are culturally-specific things that cannot be learned and need to be considered” (Johnson, Morantz,

Seignior, Zayed, & Whitman, 2012). Johnson and her colleagues are suggesting that in order to build a successful program, there needs to be at least part of the program developed using Western thinking, and local models can take care of those culturally specific “things”. This colonial type of thinking (“we have the answer”) is unlikely to contribute to building a reintegration strategy that is grounded in culture and community.

Mpyangu (2010) conducted a study on the rituals in Northern Uganda with an aim to educate reintegration program designers on the belief system inherent in Acholi cosmology and their significance for the successful reintegration of formerly abducted females. Based on ethnographic fieldwork and interviews with 14 formerly abducted girls, community elders, social workers and a religious leader, the author describes Acholi cosmology, specifically the role of evils spirits, and the necessity to eradicate these spirits through rituals. As an example, if a former female abductee has seen people being killed, has touched dead bodies, and/or has seen dead bodies, the Acholi believe that she will likely be susceptible to *cen* (an angry, polluting, spiritual force of those who have died in a bad way and/or were not buried properly) (Akello, 2013; Mpyangu, 2010; Murungi, 2011). It is believed that *cen* not only haunts the killer or a person who finds a dead body, but the whole clan for generations, to the extent that they believe that the clan’s children will be born insane (Finnström, 2008).

When I returned, I found a hard life because I came back with two children from captivity. Personally, I was a child mother, so I had no one to take me up. People used to isolate me and my children. They told others not to associate with my children because of *cen*. They thought my children were possessed (Justice and Reconciliation Project, 2008, p. 7-8)

Therefore, to avoid the evil entering their clan, a cleansing must be done. To remove *cen*, clan elders and community members attend a ritual while healers or diviners (*ajwaki*) engage ancestors. The living are required to perform the ritual, which in turn obligates ancestors in the

spirit world to provide protection to clan members. The victim is then reconciled with the community (Finnström, 2008). The belief is that a traumatic memory is socially constructed and therefore can be socially deconstructed. These rituals are cultural tools which facilitate the social reintegration of *most* girls, but not all. As an added layer of complexity, youth who spent a substantial amount of time with the LRA were more susceptible to the LRA's Christian ideology, which denounces Acholi cosmology. When they returned, they had become born again Christians and refused these rituals (Finnström, 2008). "Reintegration has typically been defined by outsiders who have not taken into account local cosmology and practices. Put bluntly, most reintegration planners and programmers do not think much about employing spiritually grounded methods..." (Mpyangu, 2010 p. 112). Regardless of beliefs in rituals or prayer, reintegration programs need to incorporate these belief systems appropriately into their efforts.

Salvation through Christian beliefs. World Vision based their reintegration programming on a Pentecostal ideology, equated healing with forgiveness, and rejected traditional rituals to remove cen. World Vision saw Acholi practices as witchcraft and sorcery, which "cannot be in conjunction with Christianity" (p'Anywar and Ruben in Finnström, 2008, p. 162). The program, "St. Martha's Hope" is also a faith-based organization based in Gulu that provides vocational training, literacy, child care, entrepreneurial skills, and counselling. Again, they do not offer youth traditional cleansing ceremonies but counsel them through discipleship classes. In an interview with one of the staff members, she explained the counselling process.

This counseling... has awakened them and helped them get up on their feet again. Then it is also making them know who God is and to depend on Jesus Christ. Without Christ in their lives, we always tell them the walk of this life is not easy. So that's why we depend on God in whatever thing we do. We always tell them to depend on God because without Him they will fail (Staff member, personal communication, April 26, 2017)

Whether or not faith facilitates coping with trauma and stress will not be debated here, but I bring up this example to question the cultural impact on introducing Western notions of mental health and healing (scientific and Christian). It was a goat, not God or talk therapy that helped Apiyo overcome her anxiety and nightmares. This is not to say that reintegration programs should discount all Western approaches; however, it appears to be a barrier to healing when it does not fit within the worldview of the recipient.

Barriers to Social Inclusion

As mentioned, single mothers are marginalized for having had children out of wedlock, which violates cultural norms and therefore they face many barriers to social inclusion. These barriers are created by patriarchal values, which are based on a strict code of gender norms and neoliberal policies, which demand productivity and leave little room to address social issues. In this section, I will discuss two social issues that are by-products of the war and explain how these issues act as a barrier to social inclusion. These issues are the deterioration of the extended family and clan and changing gender norms. I will begin with a discussion on cultural value orientation theory to provide context for these issues.

Deterioration of the Extended Family and Clan

The role of culture²² and its relationship to the plight of the family structure in Northern Uganda can be understood by examining cultural value orientations. These are collective beliefs that serve as standards or criteria that guide actions and are ordered to form a system of priorities (Schwartz, 2006). This does not imply that every individual conforms to one set of cultural values; rather, people of a cultural group tend to embrace or lean towards particular orientations.

²² Spencer-Oatey (2012) conducted a literature review and found 164 different definitions for culture. Simply put, culture is a set of assumptions, values, and orientations shared by a group of people which influence behaviour and interpretations of meaning.

Based on a review of the cultural values of 70 cultural groups, 80 samples of participants (n=180-280), using two types of questionnaires²³, Schwartz (2006) put forward a theory of cultural value orientations.²⁴ Significant for this paper, the researcher found Sub-Saharan cultures were high in the value of “embeddedness” and low in “autonomy,” which indicates that meaning and identity are derived through social relationships rather than the cultivation of individual uniqueness. In highly embedded cultures, meaning comes by identifying with the group, participating in its shared way of life, and striving toward its shared goals. As a comparison, a number of countries in the Global North cluster around autonomy. This is illustrated in Figure 3 below.

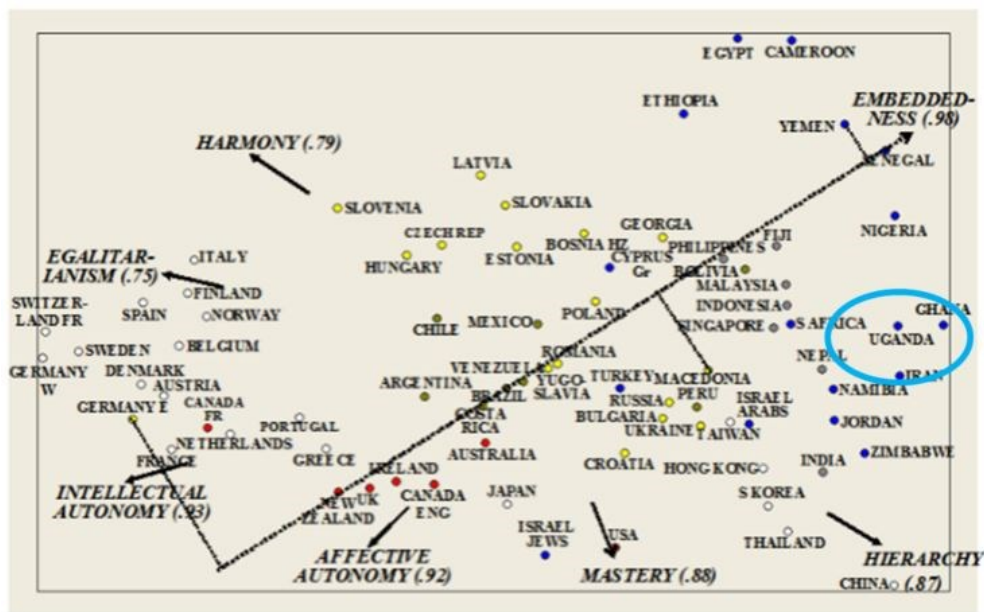


Figure 3. COPLLOT map of 77 national groups on seven cultural orientations. Reprinted from “National culture as value orientations: Consequences of value differences and cultural distance”, (p. 558), by S. Swartz, 2014, in V. A. Ginsburgh and D. Throsby (Eds.) Handbook of the Economics of Art and Culture, Volume 2, Amsterdam: Elsevier, Copyright 2014 by Elsevier. Reprinted with permission.

²³ Portrait Values Questionnaire and the Schwartz Value Survey

²⁴ It should be noted that the research conducted by Schwartz likely reflects the values of the dominant culture and not subtle differences in values shared by the sub-groups within the culture.

During the war over 30,000 young children were abducted, children killed neighbours, everyone lost family members and often were not able to bury them, food was scarce, and no one was safe. This created mass mistrust, and consequently, the cultural practice of being embedded in a collective has deteriorated in Northern Uganda (Branch, 2008). For example, instead of a large clan caring for a young mother and her child, the responsibility for her survival has shifted to the nuclear family. Many nuclear families do not have the means to feed family members, which forces the young women to live on their own, an endeavour largely unheard of in Northern Uganda before the war (Ajok Susan, June 1, 2018).

Clans used to be hierarchical and patriarchal in structure, and the role of chiefs, elders, men, and women used to be clear (Branch, 2008). During the war, many elders and chiefs died, and many clan members were displaced or left the North. “The war and displacement of people has changed the Acholi. There is no community in terms of what was... In essence, the conflict has broken down the very fabric of Acholi society” (Kiconco, 2015, p. 81). The Acholi traditionally had very strong kinship systems, where family and clan leaders would govern homesteads and villages. They would gather in the evenings around a fire and would educate children and youth about their culture and history and put forward expectations of clan members, and there would be entertainment and telling of folk tales. This was the cultural practice of *wango* and a time to feed everyone in the homestead (Kiconco, 2015).

The Acholi traditional society thrived on communalism, collective action, and respect and observance for long-established traditions and institutions. Such included the norms for child upbringing and general relations among children and parents and other people within the society. Many social events were organised to encourage social integration and the appreciation of the society cultures among its own children. In Acholiland, we have always said that orphans would be fed via the *wango*. This was based on the fact that in any

Acholi homestead, food would be served outside at the *wangoo*, and all people would eat together... (a clan elder, as quoted in Ochen, 2014, p. 243).

Wangoo continued for centuries throughout colonial occupations, independence, and tribal wars. However, it became unsafe to gather the clan together during the civil war. Densely populated IDP camps were also not conducive for this ceremony. “Living in camps for over a decade, people were cut off from the culture that had nurtured them for generations and were forced to adopt new understanding/view of life—the centre of Acholi society in rural life was disrupted, transforming gender and age roles and relations in the extended family” (Kiconco, 2015, p. 83). With the familial structure shaken, it has also disrupted the transmission of traditional values from the elderly to young people (Carlson & Mazurana, 2006).

The Local Council (LC) system was introduced during the war for municipal leadership, and LCs largely took over the role of elders (i.e. land issues, disputes, punishments for crimes impacting the community). This caused clan lines and roles to further blur. After the war, many clans became fragmented, which led to disputes over land and land sales (Branch, 2008). In fact, while in Pader, I witnessed the judgment and beating of a man who had sold his family land without the clan’s permission. “In short, Acholi elders and chiefs have lost a lot of their power of social regulation, their role of mediating conflicts, and their role as political leaders (Branch, 2008, p. 10).

Research on the psychological consequences of war suggests that family cohesiveness and social support are important protective factors and are associated with a reduction in symptoms of distress (Betancourt, et al., 2011). Therefore, the reintegration process must include “fostering and rebuilding family and community relations, as it is critical to improving the long-term psychosocial adjustment of youth” (p. 27). However, this need for the protection from the family comes at a time when the structures, traditions and embeddedness within a community, and clan

and family roles are in flux. After the war, development organizations took over to provide support, often drawing on “modern resources” such the local council system and other community support groups which subordinated traditional systems (Ochen, 2014) that were already quite fragile. Ochen (2014) critiques the current model of reintegration and argues that it continues to be framed in the “emergency context” and points to a lack of understanding regarding the “emergent context” (p. 242).

To conclude, the Acholi traditional systems in place to take care of the vulnerable broke down during the war. Support for young mothers shifted to either the nuclear family, who often did not have the means, or to NGOs, who could have worked to strengthen clans but sought support from local political systems that were in their infancy. As Kiconco (2015) mentions above, not only have the role of the elder been disrupted as a result of the war, but the roles of men and women are also in flux.

Changing Gender Norms

Before colonization, women had important economic and social roles in the societies that made up Uganda (Datzberger & Le Mat, 2018). Women were also considered by many ethnic groups “sacred custodians next to God regarding life” (p. 64). Although the patriarchal structure already existed in Uganda, and social roles were well-defined, this view of women was diminished during colonial rule, as British Victorian gender norms were imported alongside Christianity.

The multiple conflicts that occurred during colonization and post-independence required the forced recruitment of men. Not unlike the change in gender roles in Europe and America during WWII, women began providing for families and took on the duties of the men, which included farming, fetching water, collecting wood, etc. (Datzberger, McCully & Smith, 2015). “The forceful implementation of Christianity also produced a new form of patriarchy, giving

men and women new roles and identities throughout Uganda” (p. 64). In sum, colonization and Christianity served to reshape gender norms in Uganda and established a deep-rooted patriarchy. These new norms eventually became “tradition,” but during the civil war with the LRA, women at home took on non-traditional roles as the patriarchal authority broke down during displacement (as explained above). Post-war, many youth and women reported being reticent to return to their village as this authority struggled for re-assertion (Branch, 2013).

As the hierarchy of clans was undergoing change, INGOs and NGOs entered the North in droves to provide humanitarian aid. Reintegration programs, often using a rights-based approach, left a large Western footprint on the culture. “NGO interventions, government development projects, women’s and children’s rights promotion – all these are recognised as having had a dramatic impact on Acholi society” (Branch, 2008, p. 7). For example, in a poverty-reduction project which gave heifers to women, one woman reported, “At the beginning, I was happy and worked hard to earn this money. Now my husband takes all the money. He did this because he believed that with that money, I had become stubborn and independent” (Munene et al., 2005, p. 28).

Examining livelihood and human security, a research team from Tufts University interviewed elders, IDP camp leaders, medical personnel, NGO and INGO UN officials. Elders attributed the “breakdown of Acholi culture” to women who were challenging traditional gender norms by “no longer acting as housewives should.” “Unruly” women were disciplined for a “poor work ethic” in the home, their “offensive” behaviour towards their husbands, and a refusal to have sex (Carlson & Mazurana, 2006, para 3). A clan leader explained that the behaviour of women and their newfound financial independence from men resulted not only in domestic violence, but also in the break-up of households.

Men leave their wives because the women are ‘unruly’, hence creating female-headed or single households: ‘Because of the big-headed women there are female-headed households within the camp ... The men tell them to take their rights and leave and so they end up living alone in their own households’ (Carlson & Mazurana, 2006, para 6).

In the study on community perceptions of NGOs in Gulu, Michaelsen (2017) found that for Western NGOs, providing training on gender equality and women’s rights was “non-negotiable,” as this is the formula currently used by NGOs to advance the equity of women. One of Michaelsen’ male participants said, “These NGOs that say they are promoting women's rights sometimes just make women big-headed. You find women becoming stubborn because they know they won't be hurt by men just because they have rights that support them” (p. 32). This Western, rights-based approach is not only fostering resistance, it is indeed alienating men which Tufts University project found was leading to an increase in gender-based violence (Carlson & Mazurana, 2006).

Many of the women on this project relayed stories of physical and sexual abuse committed by their husbands, boyfriends, teachers, *boda bodas* (motorcycle taxi drivers), and the like. Nearly all the girls who were abducted during the war were sexually exploited and while living at IDP camps. Girls and young women lived in constant threat of sexual violence from soldiers, neighbours, and the police who would attack them while they were in the camps, fetching water, foraging for food, or tending the fields (Mischkowski, 2007). Ten years post-war, outside marriage, there is a significant amount of evidence that girls continue to be at a particularly high risk of sexual victimization. UNICEF (2010) reported that over one-fifth of girls and 36% of married women between 15 to 19 have been sexually violated in Uganda. Branch (2008) however argues that the physical abuse of women is an attempt for men to regain the authority they lost

during the war and occurs in a culture that supports the corporal punishment of men, women, and children who commit social infractions.

As with Uganda, gender-based violence²⁵ continued in Liberia post-war. A group of ethnographers examined the discourse and tensions between NGOs (who were in Liberia promoting human rights) and locals regarding gender-based violence. The researchers found that NGOs attributed the root cause of gender-based violence to “the ‘traditional oppression of women and their status as ‘property’ under the law” (Abramowitz & Moran, 2012, p. 134). Pointing out the tendency of NGOs to blame local culture for violations of human, women or child’s rights, the researchers found that the locals attributed the violence to their struggle with structural uncertainty and undetermined gender roles. “Women who sought protection from male violence but wished to remain in a household with men, and men who struggled to ‘be men’ in spaces in which women were challenging their authority, were all in a limbo of social and legal ambiguity” (p. 133). Therefore, tensions were created between NGOs and locals; NGOs were urging women to embrace autonomy, their rights, and a Liberian identity at a time when the state was still rebuilding and had insufficient resources to guarantee those rights (Abramowitz & Moran, 2012). The same scenario continues post-war in Uganda where women are getting training on their rights while the men get “sensitization training” and grow in resentment as gender roles are changing and challenging the patriarchy. Martin (2009) raises an important question: “Although many people do not condone patriarchal societies, does the international

²⁵ Gender-based violence is an umbrella term for any harmful act that is experienced against a person’s will that is ascribed to gender differences. The term underlines the gender dimension of the perpetrator’s act and occurs as a result of the relationship between females’ subordinate status in society and their subsequent increased vulnerability to violence. Men and boys may also be subjected to gender-based violence, especially of a sexual nature (Abramowitz & Moran, 2012) .

community have the right to impose a different or 'better' social structure upon the society in which they are working?" (p. 119).

Summary

The barriers to effective reintegration programming and social reintegration are evident at all levels of the socio-ecology. The lack of national government support which stems from the historical north/south divide, mentioned in the Introduction, points to a deliberate lack of investment in the reintegration and post-war recovery of the North. Changes in authorities and roles within the clan and extended and nuclear family have left young mothers largely to fend for themselves. A predominant patriarchal culture leads to the marginalization and discrimination of girls and young women and essentializes them as passive victims of the war. This characterization is adopted by many reintegration programs consequently producing interventions that are largely unsuitable, deficit-based and support patriarchal norms.

The approach to reintegration largely incorporates Western constructs such as PTSD and psychotherapy, which further marginalizes indigenous ways of healing. Although there is an abundance of research on PTSD, there is a substantial gap in understanding the full gambit of social and emotional effects of political violence on youth (Barber & Schluterman, 2008; Stout, 2013). Those reintegration programs that focus on the occurrence of PTSD, label the presence of suffering as a psychiatric or traumatic disorder, and treat the suffering with “talk therapy”; serve to ignore indigenous conceptions of mental health and ways of healing.

Reintegration needs to include a cultural understanding of the inseparability of the individual from the community and the collective trauma Acholi all share (Munene Schwartz, & Kibanja, 2005). In a report produced for the International Conflict Research Institute (INCORE), Clancy and Hamber (2008) examined the academic and practitioner literature on psychotherapeutic approaches to dealing with mass trauma. They concluded that psychosocial

approaches are more beneficial than psychotherapy, as it shifts the focus away from the individual trauma and deficits. They argue that for social transformation, healing and peacebuilding; the focus needs to be on strengths, assets, resilience, and collective processes that build on indigenous support systems and cultural practices.

As with many developmental initiatives, reintegration programs are often designed without consultation with the “target audience.” “Because the choices of the communities are often not actually made by them, the lack of sustainability and ownership of the projects comes as no surprise” (Tendler & Serrano, 1999, p. 154). Therefore, research is needed that considers the social, cultural, and political context of the barriers the women face with reintegration and on the scars made by colonization, war, patriarchal structures and marginalization. In the next section, I briefly discuss how Hall’s (1994/1999/2004) theory of marginalization as a conceptual framework can lead to insights about the experience of formerly abducted girls and young women and to solutions as to how reintegration programming can be improved.

Marginalization

As mentioned, marginalization is a process whereby groups are alienated and peripheralized based on their physical characteristics, experiences, distinctiveness, associations, and environments (Hall, Stevens, & Meleis, 1994). To develop more relevant theory for research and practice for the field of nursing concerning groups outside the mainstream, Hall (1994/1999/2004) and her colleagues analyzed the concept of marginalization. The researchers put forward a number of properties to explain the process through which a group is marginalized, that is, how they are set apart or peripheralized based on conceptions of identity, affiliations, experiences and environments (Hall et al., 1994). This was an effort to address the needs of

peripheralized populations²⁶ who are often not included in health research and lack access to services, and therefore, their needs are not fully understood by health care practitioners. Furthermore, the research that does exist on diverse populations is often premised on a mainstream bias. In other words, it the “centre” which determines acceptable knowledge, attitudes, beliefs, and behaviours and establishes the periphery (Galtung, 1971). Hartsock (1990) explains it as: if anything is A, it is A. Anything not A is something else. Everything is A or not A. This leads to the questions: In whose interests is it to preserve dichotomies? Who benefits least from disorder?

Conceptually, marginalization serves to draw a line between the mainstream and the periphery and creates “us and them” and “others” specific groups. The process of “othering” is then used to reinforce positions of dominance and subordination (Vasas, 2005) which serve to cast out diverse groups. These boundaries or margins can be established on the basis of politics, economics, gender, race, religion, sexual orientation, values, cultural norms and the like. As mentioned, marginalization leads to vulnerability, which includes risk (i.e. greater exposure to damaging aspects of the environment) and resilience (Hall, et al., 1994).

To scrutinize and elaborate on the concept of marginalization, in 1994, Hall and her colleagues described seven properties of marginalization, all of which carry potential risk and the protective function of resilience. These principles are: intermediacy, differentiation, power, secrecy, reflectiveness, voice, and liminality. In 1999, Hall added seven more properties to increase the theory’s global relevance, and these include: exteriority, constraint, Eurocentrism, economics, seduction, testimonies and hope.

²⁶ Peripheralized populations are groups who are pushed to the edges of the societal centre to varying degrees by the mainstream and/or those in power (Hall et al., 1994). Those who have power and influence can be found at every level of the social ecology and can include but are not limited to the central government, local communities, families, and the like.

Hall's theory has been applied in several other fields. For example, Boyle, Hodnicki, & Ferrell (1999) used Hall's theory to examine how racism shaped the experiences of a group of rural African American mothers when their adult children were diagnosed with HIV. Cuttler and Malone (2005) used Hall's theory to explain how "autocentrism" works to marginalize neighbourhoods and groups who advocate for safer streets. Hauser (2008) examined the impact of marginalization on the health of the homeless and their use of local emergency departments. Hauser (2008) found that Hall's theory lacked a visual representation, and operational definitions. I also found some of Hall's properties quite abstract in need of more development, and some were far too open for interpretation, which is a weakness of the theory. For example, Burman & McKay (2007) conducted a study regarding the marginalization of formerly abducted young women in Sierra Leone and used Hall's property of "intermediacy". Hall et al. (1994) described this property as the protective interface between the person and environment. I interpreted intermediacy as an explanation for how the marginalized protect themselves and put a barrier between themselves and the centre. Burman and McKay (2007) interpreted this principle as a "socio-cultural barrier" constructed by communities (p. 318).

Hall's model was useful and applicable in the analysis of the marginalization of young mothers, but the model is lacking in some of the areas, which were explored by Vasas (2005) such as considering marginalized epistemologies (such as indigenous ways of healing or spiritual ways of knowing), marginalized ontologies such as the experience of inequality, and an analysis of the how the binaries of marginalization may inhibit exploring the processes "between margins" (p. 91).

It is with these gaps in mind that I chose to focus on what I considered the more well-developed properties, namely: differentiation, reflectiveness, voice, Eurocentrism, economics, exteriority, and power. Inherent within each property are factors pertaining to risk and resilience,

which shed light on the facets of marginalization that prove to be a barrier to the reintegration of formerly abducted young mothers in Northern Uganda.

Differentiation

Differentiation is defined as the “establishment and maintenance of distinct identities through boundary maintenance” (Hall et al., 1994, p. 26). The centre holds an identity based on shared experiences and repels those with diverse experiences and establishes “outsiders”.²⁷ It is ironic that the margins and centre create their identity and draw meanings only from each other. Neither can exist without the other. Establishing behaviour, values, and norms that are acceptable and those that are not, serves to reinforce the identity of the moral centre. Those on the edge are alienated not only from the centre but exist in isolation from each other. As this distance increases from the “hypothetical homogenous centre”, so does diversity (p. 26). To understand how this property impacts equality and creates uniformity, it is useful to discuss it in relation to the work of Galtung (1975) and his colleagues who put forward ten value dimensions to measure the human development of a society. At the heart of this theory is the right to live and to satisfy a fundamental need for creativity and freedom. This is expressed in cultural and structural pluralism where diversity of ideas and social structures are respected. Differentiation is the polar opposite of this value dimension, whereby diversity is pushed to the periphery. Those who want to be part of the centre need to lose aspects of their uniqueness and to make sacrifices. Fanon (2008) expresses the cost of those sacrifices. “The colonized is elevated above his jungle status

²⁷ In an explanation regarding structural violence and the nature of imperialism, Galtung (1971) discusses the relationship between two collectivities: centre and periphery nations. He puts forward that each nation has both a centre and periphery and that imperialism ties the centre of the periphery nation to the center of the center nation. The centre of the periphery sees themselves as partners with the center nation as they benefit while this creates disharmony within the periphery of the periphery nation. As described above, this creates a situation whereby the centre needs the periphery to establish an identity and vice versa.

in proportion to his adoption of the mother country's cultural standards. He becomes whiter as he renounces his blackness, his jungle" (p. 9).

Girls and women who initially returned from the war who had been sexually abused or impregnated experienced high rates of stigmatization (Annan et al., 2011), as this violates the norms of the moral centre. In fact, upon their return, some of the girls were not even picked up from the reception centre but were left there to fend for themselves and their children (Akello et al., 2006). These women further differentiated themselves from traditional women, as some were prone to violent behaviour upon their return; they had learned military skills, and some obtained leadership roles during the war (Wessells, 2006). The families and communities based their moral foundation on gender norms rooted within the patriarchal centre. Rather than teaching them to "behave" in an attempt to return to traditional roles which as mentioned are in flux, their new strengths and skills could form the foundation of reintegration programming and serve to gently challenge existing gender norms.

Reflectiveness

As a result of being stigmatized, alienated, and isolated from the centre, the marginalized internalize their experiences and need to spend emotional energy reflecting on reconciling negative images (Hall et al., 1994). The young mothers who were stigmatized as a result of having children with rebels internalize their own new identities as well as the mainstream stereotypic images of women allocated to their categories (Akello et al., 2010) "which results in another kind of inner fragmentation, a splitting of the self-image" (Hall et al., 1994, p. 30) and can lead to profound isolation. The introspective effort needed to resolve this can be accomplished with the help of supportive others and by "embracing empowering, powerful counter-cultural images" (p. 30). The formerly abducted young women's experiences are not only different than those at the centre; the way they perceive their experiences is different. (This

will be discussed in-depth in Chapters 4 and 5). The communities see these women as having violated gender norms, while the young women see themselves as having been unprotected by the community and forced to be wives and mothers (McKay, 2004).

Young women, with limited knowledge of others like them, may only have access to stereotypes to define themselves. The following three examples point to an improvement in well-being when war-affected young women are able to reflect and share their experiences. First, in a study using in-depth interviews with 80 formerly abducted youth in Sierra Leone, Denov (2010) found that sharing war-time experiences served as a protective function from community stigma and rejection.²⁸ Second, in a mixed method study with 145 formerly abducted youth in Nepal, Morley and Kohrt (2013) found that “peer support predicted increased hope, decreased functional impairment, and decreased PTSD symptoms” (p. 714) . Finally, in a qualitative case study examining the gaps in reintegration programming in Northern Uganda, Martin (2009) also found that creating peer support removes the sense of isolation that young women feel after returning from the LRA.

I was abducted/I stayed in the bush so many years/I was given to five men/I had kids with three of them/They all died/I have HIV/My mother died... etc. It was like an eye opener, knowing that [we] were not alone. If any recovery program is to be successful, you need to put these people together (M. M. in Martin, 2009, p. 103).

Therefore, fostering peer networks between formerly abducted women and engaging them in discussions about the nature of their marginalization appears to enhance their well-being.

²⁸ Previously I argued that research has shown that re-living trauma with a counsellor is not likely to be effective. Sharing stories informally with peers has been found to alleviate symptoms of trauma (e.g. (Morley & Kohrt, 2013; Peltonen, Qouta, Diab, & Punamäki, 2014).

Voice

In 1994, Hall described voice as a property of marginalization concerning how the centre expresses concepts using majority structures and language, which serve to devalue or exclude those on the periphery, but argues that those at the margins have another way of communicating, which characterizes the marginalized (Hall et al., 1994). Hall goes on at length to describe how the marginalized use, transform, re-appropriate, and create resistance through language.

Therefore, voice characterizes the fundamental differences in how the centre and the periphery express themselves. In 1999, however, Hall uses voice in relation to the specific experiences of the marginalized and describes voice as an “expression of one's experiences as valid and different from the dominant myths and the risks of being silenced” (p. 89). Voice concerns the expression of the experiences of the marginalized who risk having that expression silenced.

Although Hall (1999) does not discuss the psychosocial benefits of being heard, this second definition is akin to how hooks (1990) describes the voice of the marginalized. “Moving from silence into speech is for the oppressed, the colonized, the exploited, and those who stand and struggle side by side, a gesture of defiance that heals, that makes new life and new growth possible” (p. 339).

Hall's principle of voice also does not name those forces that silence or describe the consequences for not remaining silent. In this dissertation project, some of these forces include patriarchal norms, horizontal power stemming from social hierarchies, gerontocratic leadership, social positioning, and family lineage. Earlier, I discussed the work of Branch (2005) and his interviews with elders in Gulu and described the consequences of women using their voice. “Women could be caned for refusing to work or to cook, for refusing to have sex with their husbands, or for breaking other social norms” (p. 17). Nussbaum (2005) describes how the threat

of bodily violence has silenced women for centuries and quotes Catharine MacKinnon who wrote “Take your foot off our necks, then you will hear in what tongue women speak” (p. 172).

I will assume that the intent behind Hall’s 1999 definition of voice was to expand the meaning behind the original property, and I will incorporate both definitions as well as the notion of silence. To rephrase, voice characterizes resistance and the fundamental differences in how the centre and the periphery express themselves. Voice also illuminates the differences in experiences, the forces that silence those experiences, and how those experiences are heard.

Formerly abducted women missed years of education, and relatively few got beyond primary school. Therefore, many are either illiterate in their tribal language and/or do not know how to read, speak, or write English, the national language of Uganda. English is taught as a separate subject until Primary 4. At that time, English becomes the language of instruction (Ssentanda & Nakayiza, 2015). English is the language of the government and the educated, and those without English language skills are indeed peripheralized. Imagine a young woman who was in Primary 3 when she was abducted. After six years in captivity, she returns and wants to go back to school. If she could raise enough for school fees, at 14 years-old, she can try to get into an accelerated program or she can continue her education with 8 year-olds, as she would not have the language skills to join her cohort.

Contributors from Women in Motion (WIM – created space) often spoke about their lack of access to health services, justice, and employment opportunities because of their poor understanding of English. In a conversation about equality, Laker, who went as far as Primary

6,²⁹ describes the lack of equity concerning medical care, and another woman, Lamaro, sees equality beyond her reach because of her limited English.

I also think that in terms of medical care, the more educated people get medical care faster. If they go to hospital, they know how to express themselves. They know how to tell the doctor what the problem is. If you are uneducated, there are times when you sit there and you don't know how to express yourself in English. Some of these doctors don't know the local language. So, if you fail to express yourself, your child may die while you look on (Laker, personal communication, May 18, 2015).

I'm not equal in terms of finances, in terms of education; I didn't go to school, and I don't even know how to speak and write English, I don't even listen to any word (Lamaro, personal communication, May 16, 2015).

As described in the previous chapter, it is the British colonizers who peripheralized the uneducated. Fanon (2008) dedicated a substantial part of his book, *White Skin Black Masks*, to describe the deleterious effects of taking on the colonizer's language and how it is used to marginalize. "To speak a language is to take on a world, a culture. The Antilles Negro who wants to be white will be the whiter as he gains greater mastery of the cultural tool that language is" (p. 26).

In the McKay et al. (2007-2009) PAR Project, storytelling and drama were used by the young mothers to raise awareness with the community about their experiences. With storytelling, narrators interact with the audience, which changes the power relationship. That is, it disrupts the silence allocated to the marginalized (Hall, 1999). By sharing their stories with the community,

²⁹ The school system in Uganda has six years of primary school, known as P1-P6. Upon successful completion of the *Primary Leaving Exam*, students enter secondary school (S1-S4). Following S4 the students take the UNEB *Uganda National Examination Board* to enter S5 and S6 for specialized study.

they effectively brought their narrow context to a central place and created a bridge between the periphery and the mainstream.

As mentioned in the Introduction, to address the exclusion of girls in DDR, UNICEF implemented the *Girls Left behind Program*, which ran for three years. An evaluation was conducted for *nine* days and consisted of a document review, a visit to the program office, a community meeting with program recipients, and a visit to speak with *two* formerly abducted girls. The evaluator concluded that “both programs had been effectively implemented and the large majority have reintegrated well” (Williamson, 2005, p. 17). It is extremely unsettling to think that UNICEF’s future interventions for girls would be based on two testimonies. For reintegration programs to be successful, they need to give young women a voice in the decisions made about their welfare. This includes the active participation in the design, development and evaluation of programs.

Eurocentrism

Social Darwinism defined the hierarchy of cultures from the primitive to the cultured, with the understanding that primitive cultures could be seen as building blocks to more sophisticated societies (Tuhiwai Smith, 1999). This is Eurocentrism, which is concerned with an interpretation of history that places Western knowledge, values, and development as superior to those of non-Western cultures (Hall, 1999). This provides a justification for dominance. “It is supported by denigration of people in the Third World as undeveloped, as well as racism, sexism, global capitalism, unregulated ‘free’ markets, and consumerism” (p. 97).

Within his World Systems Analysis, Wallerstein (2013) discusses various theories to explain the hegemonic role the United States played after 1945. As one explanation, Wallerstein (2013) analyzes modernization theory which puts forward that the ‘developed’ world was not ontologically different from the underdeveloped world, but merely ahead of it. The

underdeveloped could simply “catch up” by embracing the model of development and by changing their socio-cultural practices. This Eurocentric view upholds that there is one path in development, and that is from “tradition” to “modernity”, which results in the constraint of diverse and parallel paths. Leaving traditional and Indigenous socio-cultural practices related to health behind in favour of Western approaches exemplifies both modernity and Eurocentrism.

There appears to be an assumption by many Western NGOs that the wisdom does not exist within Uganda to appropriately deal with traumatic reactions post-war. The Western framework applied at NGOs largely ignores the social, cultural, and religious domains (Mpyangu, 2010). It focusses on the pathology of the individual and creates a framework based on an individualistic culture, which is alien to Uganda and rarely incorporates Indigenous methods and rituals of healing. The risk is subordinating Ugandan beliefs to Western science. Evidence of resilience would be to establish which Western constructs work well in Uganda and to integrate those into an indigenous framework—not the other way around.

Economics

The property of economics affects the access the marginalized have to resources. Hall (1994) and her colleagues use Marxist theory to describe the economic exploitation and dehumanizing impact that neoliberalism has had on the unemployed and underemployed. Economic oppression can lead to detrimental effects such as malnutrition, loss of housing, debt accumulation, increased substance use, etc. This property is described as both a consequence of marginalization and as a form of social oppression.

Pertinent to a discussion on the property of economics is Bourdieu's (2011) theory of cultural and social capital. Cultural capital relates to the economic capital achieved through scholastic investment. This capital eludes the lower social classes, and the young mothers of Northern Uganda for that matter. Social capital concerns connections or social networks that can

be turned into economic capital. Barriers between social classes, as I observed in Uganda, do not permit lower classes to build their social capital with upper classes. One of the young mothers said, “There are educated people who live in good houses, feed well, and live to good standard. I am not equal to them... If you are a poor person and you go for help, they won’t welcome you (Amarorwot, personal communication, May 12, 2015). Therefore, young mothers are largely excluded from building the cultural and social capital that could improve their welfare.

As mentioned, there is a large economic divide between the North and the South in Uganda, which is maintained by a pervasive meta-narrative promoting productivity and modernization. The narrative carries undertones of reaching for the economic benefits enjoyed by the West and leaving old traditions behind. Museveni states,

The head of state in our circumstances is like a teacher: He goes around with chalk explaining. If you say there is a separation of the state [and the Movement], you miss a lot because the main job in a backwards society is mobilization to create that consensus through explanation (Nyamnjoh & Englund, 2004, p. 108).

The subtext here is that Uganda needs to catch up to the modern West. However, Museveni is ambiguous and has often stressed the importance of finding “African solutions to African problems” (Nyamnjoh & Englund, 2004, p. 109), but his continuous push to “modernize” rings of capitalist reductionism.³⁰ Therefore the “other” is the one who is backwards and does not contribute to modernization, which points to the disadvantaged formerly abducted youth in the north of the country.

There is ample evidence that formerly abducted girls and women are economically marginalized (Annan et al, 2008; Munene et al., 2005; Vindevogel, Broekaert, & Derluyn, 2013).

³⁰ Capitalist reductionism: The belief that there is a correlation between economic development and social improvement (Hall, 1999)

Reintegration programs need to enhance the economic opportunities of both formerly abducted and war-affected girls and women by offering accelerated education programs or in-depth training on entrepreneurial skills as opposed to “female appropriate” vocational training such as tailoring and hairdressing.

Exteriority

Exteriority refers to those outside the social bounds who are excluded from social protection or from accessing resources. The exteriorized are considered “non-human,” or as described by Fanon, “the wretched of the earth.” The exteriorized others are often either considered expendable or are demonized when they come to the attention of those on the social interior (Hall, 2004). They are made to feel “useless,” “worthless,” and as “spoiled meat” (Aloyo, Acen, Apiyo, personal communication, May 2015).

Aligned with the property of voice, the appeals of the exteriorized are not likely to be heard as they are not perceived as reasonable (Hall, 1999). The use of formerly abducted girls and women as prostitutes, or the tradition of bride price, exteriorizes women as sources of capital. The high incidence of rape is indicative of exteriorizing these women as objects for sexual gratification. Risks associated with exteriority include poverty, poor health, and devaluation of the self (Hall, 1999). Within Hall's (2004) framework, formerly abducted young mothers are “exteriorized” which results in, as mentioned, a devaluation of the self, a lack confidence, and self-esteem. This “invisible power” stemming from patriarchal norms and traditions that permeate the culture socializes marginalized groups to feel subordinate, apathetic, powerless, and unworthy, as well as potentially hostile and angry (VeneKlasen & Miller, 2002).

Hall's concept of exteriorization is particularly useful when conceptualizing the marginalization of formerly abducted girls and women as they are indeed invisible to the centre. However, there are two gaps that I have identified. First, exteriorization is put forward by Hall as

a general property of marginalization; in other words, it applies to all groups of marginalized people. I would argue that not all marginalized groups are invisible, and that exteriorization occurs when marginalization manifests at multiple layers of the social ecology, as is the case with formerly abducted girls and women. On the outer layer, patriarchal values serve to marginalize women to keep them dependent and subservient. Exteriorization is evident at the community and family level. As mentioned, when the girls returned home, they were often rejected by their immediate families (Annan et al., 2011; Onyango & Worthen, 2010). Since many were married to rebels, and many of those rebels died during the war, these women and their children are perceived as “extra mouths to feed” by their in-laws and often need to endure chronic insults (Laker, Amarorwot, Aloyo, personal communication, May 2015; Atim, Atieno, personal communication, April 2017; Akiya, personal communication, June 2017). At the individual level, the young women “self-marginalize,” or as Kincheloe (2008) puts forward, “the oppressed eventually come to see the world through the oppressor’s eyes” (p. 71).

The researchers on the McKay et al. 2007-2009 PAR project mentioned above argued that facilitating the empowerment of these young women is the starting point for their future development (McKay et al., 2011). The intent of empowerment is to bring in marginalized groups into the decision-making process, which leads to their understanding that they have the capacity to and are entitled to make decisions regarding matters that affect them (Rowlands, 1997). Again on the McKay et al. 2007-2009 PAR Project, the young mothers were taught how to do research. They then identified their challenges and solutions to address each challenge. Through sharing their stories, peer support, and support from those involved in the project, the young mothers were able to begin to see themselves as “rights bearers” and therefore began to reject pejorative labels used by the community (Worthen et al., 2010, p. 157). The women on this project may have been “empowered” as group and individually, but the “choices” open to them remain

confined within a patriarchal socio-political context. These structures need to bend and change before the women can experience enhanced equity and reintegration.

Power

Hall (1994) and her colleagues define the property of power as “influence exerted by those at the centre of a community over the periphery and vice versa” (p. 27). Hierarchical power flows from the centre to the periphery with a view that the periphery is in need of “development.” This is met with resistance. Many reintegration programs as mentioned use deficit-based approaches, characterize young women as “vulnerable” and as “victims,” and often do not acknowledge their agency, resilience, and capabilities. Therefore, reintegration programs focussing on risk are missing key indicators of reintegration success, which could surface if the resilience of young women was better understood. As an example, Boyden (2003) examined the interaction between the perceptions of childhood and the characterization of vulnerability and dependence with post-war remedial care. The researcher argues that children need be seen as active agents and competent survivors, yet they are often not included in the decisions that affect them. Boyden (2003) argues that those programs that recognize children as active agents have shifted from developing psychological interventions at the individual level and now focus on social reconstruction, social reconciliation, and healing.

Hall (1999) asserts that when working with marginalized population, participatory methods, which are more inclusive, are more likely to be accepted than traditional, hierarchical approaches as this shifts power from hierarchical to horizontal. The purpose of the McKay et al. (2007-2009) PAR Project was to learn how young mothers perceive successful reintegration and to facilitate the development of initiatives instigated by the young mothers. The project resulted in the young mothers reporting improved family and community relations, better health for themselves and their children, increased ability to provide for children, and a decrease in

engaging in sex work. This project demonstrates that reintegration programs that recognize horizontal power and listen to the needs of the women increase the likelihood of success.

Hall et al., (1994) deals with power as a singularity; that is, power is defined in isolation of the other properties. However, in 1999, Hall incorporated Foucault's notions of power in her conceptualization of horizontal and vertical power, as Foucault examined power relationships and how they work to pressure groups into conformity. She acknowledged that "power is not possessed by people but is dynamic, moving through web-like social networks" (p. 92). Hall linked her conceptualization of power to the property of constraint, which is the result of power exerted by the societal centre in the form of discipline or physical incarceration. Hall's theory needs to create more linkages between properties. For example, I found that all of the properties analyzed here have power as its source. I would argue that power is not a distinct property but should be viewed as an umbrella which casts a shadow over each of the properties. This will lead researchers and practitioners to examine the interaction between power and the property under scrutiny. Figure 4 illustrates the relationship between power with the other properties discussed. For example, the property of voice includes the power to silence; economic, the power to withhold resources; exteriority, the power to push groups to the periphery and so on.

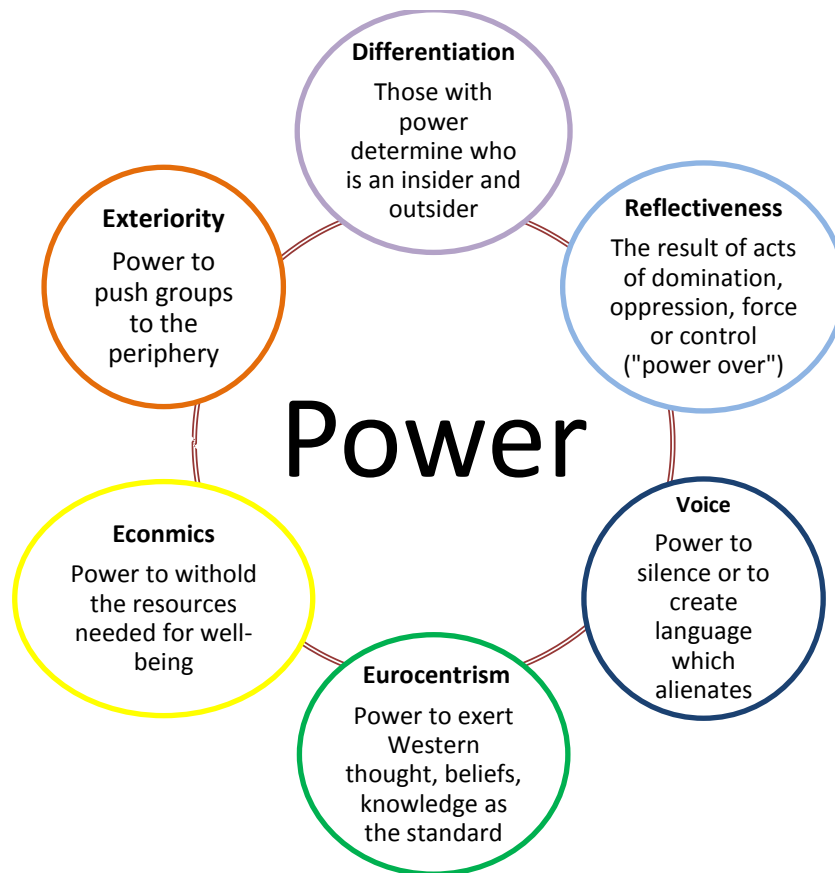


Figure 4. An illustration of the relationship between power and some of the other properties of marginalization proposed by Hall (1994/1999/2004).

Another gap in Hall’s theory concerns “resistance.” Within her theory, Hall does not acknowledge the resistance that is part of marginalization and that some choose to stay at the margins in order to exercise that resistance. Marginalization “is also the site of radical possibility, space of resistance...I was not speaking of a marginality one wishes to lose, to give up or surrender as part of moving into the center, but rather as a site one stays in, clings to even, because it nourishes resistance” (hooks, 1990, p. 341). It is at the margins that one can say “no” to the colonizer and the oppressor. The African-American poet Maya Angelou, embodies the resistance I saw the young mothers demonstrate in this excerpt of her poem, *Still I Rise*.

Did you want to see me broken?
Bowed head and lowered eyes?
Shoulders falling down like teardrops,
Weakened by my soulful cries?/
Does my haughtiness offend you?
Don't you take it awful hard?
'Cause I laugh like I've got gold mines
Diggin' in my own backyard./
You may shoot me with your words,
You may cut me with your eyes,
You may kill me with your hatefulness,
But still, like air, I'll rise (Angelou, 1978, n. p.)

Summary

This chapter began with a discussion on the barriers to reintegration and described the limitations of reintegration programs, which at times create an additional barrier to reintegration. I described Hall's theory as an interpretive framework, which prompts questions to test each property and examine interrelationships leading to an understanding of the nuances of the marginalization.

Table 2 below summarizes each property and the questions each elicit.

Table 2

Application of Hall's Marginalization Theory

| Property | Definition | Questions |
|-----------------|---|--|
| Differentiation | The “establishment and maintenance distinct identities through boundary maintenance” (Hall et al., 1994, p. 26). | How are social, cultural, political or economic factors used to differentiate the marginalized? |
| Power | Hierarchical power flows from the centre to the periphery and horizontal power flows back and is exerted as a form of resistance to the hegemonic centre (Hall et al., 1994). | What forms of resistance are demonstrated by the women and by the societal centre? Are there equalizing forces? Which groups demonstrate more horizontal/hierarchical power? How does Hall's conceptualization of power compare to VeneKlausen (see Chapter 2) |
| Voice | Voice characterizes resistance, and the fundamental differences in how the centre and the periphery express themselves. Voice also illuminates the differences in experiences, the forces that silence those experiences and how those experiences are heard. | How does the colonizer's language (English) serve to further marginalize the women? Do the women have the courage to openly share their experiences and if so, what factors need to be in play? What forces silence the women and do they demonstrate resistance to those forces? |
| Eurocentrism | Eurocentrism is concerned with an interpretation of history that places Western knowledge and values as superior to those of non-Western cultures (Hall, 1999). | How specifically does Eurocentrism manifest in reintegration programming and how are Indigenous systems and knowledge marginalized? How does marginalization of these systems influence/impact the women? How can a synergy be created between systems? An example of this principle is presented in the above discussion on the universal reaction to trauma. |
| Economic | The principle of economics affects the access the marginalized have to resources such as those found in the education, transportation, and health care systems (Hall, 1999). | What types of systemic sustainable interventions would reduce the economic marginalization of the women, increase their financial stability and access to resources? |
| Exteriority | Exteriority refers to those outside the social bounds who are excluded from social protection or resources. The exteriorized are considered “non-human”, expendable or demonized. | What are the sources that exteriorize? How does it manifest externally in communities and internally within the women. |

All of the gaps found in reintegration programming described above were considered when creating a space for 20 war-affected young mothers. In the next chapter, I outline the theoretical framework of social spaces put forward by Cornwall and Coelho (2007) and Gaventa, (2006). Within this framework, I will introduce the reader to each group of women who contributed and shaped this project.

Chapter 2: The Women and the Spaces

I've been to Uganda five times now. At the end of each field, trip I leave with the arrogant notion that I understand a little more about the culture and something about the phenomena that I am studying. When I arrive for the next visit, I realize I know nothing. Each visit is like peeling an onion: The stories make my eyes sting, and I'm confronted with layers and layers of meaning (Field notes, May 1, 2017).

Overview

The ethnographic field note above is one of hundreds that I wrote as I went in and out of Northern Uganda over the course of three years. This study was an examination of the lived experiences of war-affected and formerly abducted young mothers as they struggled to achieve financial stability, social inclusion, and well-being. Each woman participated in one of three types of social spaces designed to facilitate their reintegration.

In the previous chapter, I identified the gaps found in the literature regarding reintegration programming and provided the cultural and socio-political context for this project in order to begin addressing the first research question which is: What factors (social, political, historical, cultural, educational) contribute to the barriers to reintegration and the marginalization of young mothers? I summarized the literature on the barriers to reintegration and began with how formerly abducted young mothers are represented in the literature and how this may serve to create deficit-based interventions. I then discussed the barriers to financial stability, well-being and social inclusion and argued that reintegration programs need to pay closer attention to the socio/political/cultural/gendered context. Throughout the chapter, I described in detail the pervasive impact of patriarchal values on women lives. The chapter was concluded with an overview and critique of Hall's (1994/1999/2004) theory of marginalization which will be used

as a framework to describe the experiences, resistance, and resilience of formerly abducted and war-affect young mothers. But who are these “young mothers”?

I have divided the discussion in this chapter into four parts. In the first part, I present and critique theories on power and power dynamics which intersect with various other factors present within social spaces. These factors include the intention and nature of the space and whether it is a created, invited, or participatory space. In the second part, I explicate the theory of social spaces and critique current international development trends to insert “empowerment” and “participation” into those spaces. I also elaborate on inconsistencies I found in the research on social spaces and offer suggestions on how the theory could be made more relevant for practitioners in the field of development. I then define and describe the formal, created, and claimed spaces of this project, explain how each space was conceived, situate the young mothers and myself in those spaces, and describe how I initially engaged with the women.

The aim of this chapter is to provide a framework for the research, introduce the reader to the women; provide a preview of the methodology, and to begin engaging with the question:

What variations can be found in social inclusion, competent functioning, and financial stability when comparing the reintegration experience of young mothers who participated in different spaces, namely, formal, created, or claimed spaces?

Power in Social Spaces

VeneKlasen & Miller (2002) describe an advocacy project in Zimbabwe that set out to change unjust laws concerning widows and property rights. Upon the death of a woman’s husband in Zimbabwe, the family of the deceased (the in-laws) take control of the estate and often leave the grieving wife homeless (this injustice persists today). A group of widows went all the way to the Supreme Court, but their battle was never won. Although the issue appeared to be

with the in-laws, it was in fact with tradition and culture. “While the activists navigated the formal procedures of public politics with skill, the invisible power of culture and vested interests defeated them” (p. 40). The researchers go on to argue that to pursue social change requires an in-depth strategy that identifies and addresses visible, hidden, and invisible power, which is found within oppressive political spheres and structures. In other words, power must be understood in relation to space and how spaces for engagement are created (Brock, Cornwall, & Gaventa, 2001; Gaventa, 2006).

Visible Power

“Visible power” dictates the observable rules inherent in political decision-making (VeneKlasen & Miller, 2002). In Hall's (1999) theory, this type of power is described as vertical and uni-directional, flowing from the societal centre to the periphery. Visible power is held by formal institutions and officials, and the instruments used are found in policies, laws, and rules which serve to advance discrimination by silencing the affected groups. As an example, to get more political support for the national party, Local Council Members who support the National Resistance Movement (NRM) are known to provide more lenient punishments for petty crimes or disputes if the offender will agree to take “a yellow card.” Accepting the card implies a commitment and loyalty to Museveni and the NRM. Since it means the citizen is then part of the “club,” it facilitates finding a job, getting good medical care, and getting better service from the bureaucracy (Ajok Susan, personal communication, June 1, 2018). Visible power can be challenged through negotiation, policy research, the media, and the like.

Invisible Power

“Invisible power” can be held by structures, processes, practices, and norms that can shape meaning and understanding about roles and needs. It may block the flow of information or

conceal information from the primary players involved (Veneklasen & Miller, 2002). Invisible power evokes “reflectiveness,” which according to Hall (1994) and her colleagues, is the process needed to reconcile negative and conflicting messages that come from the societal centre. Invisible power can take the form of culture, traditions, practices, or narratives that serve to inhibit social change or promote a competing agenda. As an example, some of the young mothers block the “competing agenda” of changing gender norms. When the women were asked about what they thought was important to teach a boy or a girl, it became evident that it is also the women who are responsible for promoting and maintaining patriarchal values. About half the women have traditional values about parenting, whereby girls should be prepared for motherhood, expected to maintain good hygiene, taught how to cook, and to keep the “home in good order;” boys are taught the importance of taking responsibility for a household and to be respectful of girls (Argo, Ocolo, Adhiambo, personal communication, April, June, 2017). The need to teach girls specifically to be respectful of others came up repeatedly. Specific behaviours imparted by the more traditional mothers for girls included that their girls should not use the “language of boys,” they should “keep their legs closed,” and be “selfless” (Atim, Atieno, Awino, personal communication, April 2017). Invisible power is addressed by increasing political awareness, sharing stories, affirming resistance, and through action research (VeneKlasen & Miller, 2002).

Hidden Power

“Hidden power” is very similar to Hall, Stevens, and Meleis' (1994) principle of “differentiation” and “voice” where the societal centre establishes who is an outsider and silences those outside the moral centre. Hidden power controls the agenda and influences who can and cannot participate in decision-making. Governmental institutions or the media determine who gets heard and who does not, who/what is mainstream, and who is invisible. The

marginalized and “their grievances are made invisible by intimidation, misinformation, and cooption” (VeneKlasen & Miller, 2002, p. 40). Hidden power is silent and contrasts sharply to “power over,” which expresses itself through domination, oppression, force or control, or resistance to change and transformation (VeneKlasen & Miller, 2002, p. 39).

In the aforementioned review of the mainstream, practitioner, and academic literature on formerly abducted young women in Northern Uganda, only 19 articles were found in the mainstream media from 2005 to 2017 (Savard & Michaelsen, 2018). This lack of coverage by the media renders these girls and women as invisible, which perhaps explains why they were excluded from the UN’s DDR process for so long. Hidden power can be mitigated by advocating for marginalized groups, strengthening social organizations, mobilizing around shared concerns, and by legitimizing the issues of marginal groups (VenekKlasen & Miller, 2002).

United Power

VeneKlasen and Miller (2002) argue that power can operate as a binary; however, details of how power can manifest in positive or productive terms is largely absent from their theory. The researchers do put forward three other forms of power, namely, “power with” (building collective strength based on support and collaboration), “power to” (self-determination enhanced by mutual support which nurtures “power with”), and “power within” (“self-worth and the common human search for dignity and fulfillment”) (p. 39). They argue that these forms of power can be harnessed to help form more equitable relationships within social spaces. The concepts of “power to” and “power within” are so scantily detailed by Veneklasen and Miller (2002), and it is unclear how these forms of power contribute to more “equitable relationships.” Therefore, I would like to expand on their notion of “power with.”

There exists a type of power that is rooted in a deep sense of compassion and desire to contribute to the unity of a group. “United power,” I will call it, is both individual and collective

and is grounded in an intention for group members in a space to be respected, heard, and to achieve their aims. At the core of this is a collective understanding of the needs of the group, an understanding of what it will take for the group to move forward, and a willingness to put individual ego and personal agendas aside to achieve the aims of the group. This notion describes the principle of “*itai doshin*” (many in body and one in mind), which was conceived by a 12th century Buddhist monk. “If the spirit of many in body but one in mind prevails among the people, they will achieve all their goals, whereas if one in body but different in mind, they can achieve nothing remarkable” (Nichiren, 1999, p. 618). The unity described here is not akin to conformity or imposed by “power over;” rather, there is a respect for the uniqueness of each individual and what each group member brings to the group at the core of this philosophy.

Daisaku Ikeda, president of the Buddhist lay organization Soka Gakkai International, states that *itai doshin* is achieved when people treasure and bring out the best in each other. Conversely, “‘many in body and many in mind’ is a situation of utter disunity, while ‘one in body and one in mind’ is one controlled by group thinking in which individuality is ignored, and totalitarianism ultimately results” (SGI, 2005, para 4). An example of united power can be found in a youth project and the work of the Social Action Committee of *Villa Libertad*, a public school offering both primary and secondary education, situated in one of the worst slums in Managua. Surrounding Villa Libertad was a number of gangs active in the drug trade. The community and the school saw these youth as dangerous criminals, which served to maintain the prevailing discourse on punitive crime control (Maclure & Sotelo, 2004b). The Ministry of Education said that the problem needed to be “fixed through the conventions of punishment, re-education and rehabilitation” (p. 418). The school itself had a lot of violence and a high drop-out rate.

In the early 1990s, clashes started between students or teachers with gang members. The director, Doña Esmeralda Espinoza stated, “There were nights that I would take youths who had

been beaten up, shot or stabbed to the Carlos Marx Hospital. School desertion was tremendous, especially for the night shift, because that is when they attacked the most” (Maclure & Sotelo, 2004a, p. 97). Police refused to attend calls from the school because it was too dangerous, or they demanded overtime pay. The Ministry of Education did nothing, so Espinoza formed the Social Action Committee with parents and community members to address the violence.

The committee decided to approach the gang members and invited them to the school for a discussion. They were able to come to an agreement. In exchange for a gang-free perimeter around the school, the school would organize recreational activities and dances. Within two years, the violence drastically reduced. The committee then began to do outreach and enticed many of these gang members to return to school. Within ten years, over 100 gang members completed their high school, 78 went on to further studies, and five received scholarships (Maclure & Sotelo, 2004a). The Social Action Committee demonstrated united power. That is, through their unity, single-mindedness, collective strength, compassion, and respect for these youth involved with gangs, they were able to achieve their goal: to reduce the violence around the school and to encourage the gang youth to continue their studies.

All forms of power are dynamic and fluid. It is through an analysis of power relations that the researcher or international development actor can begin to see the type of power that needs to be challenged or harnessed for social change to ensue. To consider power (visible, hidden, invisible, and united) and its dynamics within the context of the space it occupies challenges the tendency to separate and study the individual components of any given space as power permeates all aspects of space. By including power as part of the analysis of spaces for engagement increases the likelihood that spaces will remain safe, inclusive, collaborative, and productive.

Social Spaces in the Context of Development Programs

Before situating the three groups of women within their social spaces and describing the elements that pertain to reintegration programming, I will put forward three considerations for the development of social spaces, which are the content of space, participation in social spaces and the notion of empowerment.

The Content of Space

“Production” not only includes the making of products and materials, but according to Lefebvre (1968), it includes the creation of social time, space, and the production of social relationships with human beings who are in the process of their own self-development. “Space is a social product . . . it is not simply “there,” a neutral container waiting to be filled, but is a dynamic, humanly constructed means of control, and hence of domination, of power” (Lefebvre, 1991, p. 24). Building on Lefebvre (1991) concept of space, Cornwall (2004) adds that “a space can be emptied or filled, permeable or sealed; it can be an opening, an invitation to speak or act. Spaces can also be clamped shut, voided of meaning, or depopulated...” (p. 1). Within that context of space, new identities emerge, social relationships are formed, and how actors interact within that space will vary. Are the participants invited? Who is included and who is excluded, and who decides (Brock et al., 2001)? Spaces also contain the interaction of the perceptions the development actors have about the contributors and the perceptions the contributors have about the development actors. All of these factors influence the dynamics of the space.

Lefebvre (1991) argued that programs aiming for social change need the creation or re-appropriation of space at its foundation. “Any revolutionary ‘project’ today, whether utopian or realistic, must, if it is to avoid hopeless banality, make the re-appropriation of the body, in association with the re-appropriation of space, into a non-negotiable part of its agenda” (p. 166-

167). International development programs which are founded on a belief that space is neutral and create interventions in isolation of politics, economics, history (colonization³¹), culture (patriarchal values), or “everyday life” that occupy that space are destined for inadequacy. “Ideologies do not produce space: rather, they are in space, and of it” (p. 210).

A poignant example of the lack of consideration for the context and the content of space comes from Lesotho. Ferguson (1990) conducted an analysis on a poverty-reduction project instigated by World Bank and the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA). Examining reports produced by the World Bank, the author found that Lesotho was framed by the development actors as a peasant society. Reports also exaggerated the importance of agriculture when in fact, Lesotho’s economy depended on a large wage labour market located in South African mines. The development project resulted in millions of dollars in the sale of farm equipment from Canada. It also presented an all too common example of a poverty-reduction project which gives beneficiaries what the development actors have, as opposed to what the recipients really need and exemplifies how development actors fail to think outside the dominant development discourses (Ferguson, 1990).

The World Bank attributed the causes of poverty in Lesotho to a lack of skills of the farmers and the inhospitable geography. The government was portrayed as a “neutral instrument of its solution” (p. 69) when in fact, the national government was very much a part of the problem. “Lesotho is presented as a nation of farmers, not wage labourers; a country with a geography but no history; with people, but no classes; values but no structures; administrators but no rulers; bureaucracy, but no politics” (p. 66). A series of very costly blunders were made which included: building 12 water supply systems, only one of which was working after three

³¹“Colonization” refers to a multidimensional force under-written by Western Christianity, defined by white supremacy, and fuelled by global capitalism” (Grande, 2004, p. 88)

years; developing fish farming, which failed due to overfeeding; and building half an abattoir and then realizing there was not enough money to complete the rest.

Throughout Ferguson's book, it is evident that the development actors were largely unaware of the power dynamics, culture, and economics behind the space they were creating, which cost over \$22 million US for the first two phases. It appears that they chose not to know the reality because what Lesotho really needed was not something the World Bank or CIDA could offer. It is a case of the dominant reinventing the marginalized for their own purposes (Vizenor in Ferguson, 1990).

As the notion of "participation" in development was just becoming in vogue, the Lesotho project did create a *District Development Committee* for community engagement. The committee largely held ruling party members as advancing their status, social capital³² and gaining profit could be made through participation. This space was ultimately shaped by those who were invited and in the end; the committee did not effectively represent the views or the needs of the citizens in the area. Although this was an invited space, it mirrored the hierarchy that existed in the community. Furthermore, the decision-making power resided with the development actors on this project who reduced poverty to a technical problem that their expertise could solve. They did leave infrastructure behind, but despite their efforts to engage locals in the development of these interventions, the recipients were left with less than when the project started (Ferguson, 1990).

Participation in Social Spaces

The International Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE, 2012) consists of 16 INGOs and defines participation as "being involved in and influencing processes, decisions and activities" (p. 121) and encourages inclusive community participation "in the analysis, planning,

³² Social capital concerns connections or social networks that can be turned into economic capital (Bourdieu, 2011).

design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of education responses” (p. 22). Community engagement is now considered a driver in development. It means integrating participants into the decision-making, policy development process, and service delivery. Nonetheless, there is research which suggests that there is resistance concerning this developmental trend of creating participatory spaces for marginalized groups (e.g. Cornwall & Coelho, 2007; Ferguson, 1990).

Although development actors may create a participatory space in hope of producing social change and invite members of a marginalized group to engage, the capacity of these spaces and participants may be limited by a variety factors such as: 1) selection criteria used for participation, 2) communication skills, 3) unclear or hidden expectations, and 4) cultural norms, or lack of cultural/historical knowledge on the part of development actors (Cornwall, 2002; Cornwall & Coelho, 2007).

First, the participants who engage within an invited space need to represent the needs of the people the development actors aim to serve. In the Lesotho project for poverty reduction, the “invited” space ended up containing high-ranking officials, and unbeknownst to the development actors, were being monitored by the government. This resulted in the misrepresentation of the target population (the poor) and served to reinforce existing societal hierarchies instead of challenging them. Although development actors intended to create a transformative, inclusive invited space, in the end, it was a closed space. This is a type of space whereby “decisions affecting public life are made without extending the limits of inclusion” and the subsequent conversations within the space produce knowledge by the privileged that is fundamentally tied to the existing hierarchy (Arshad-Ayaz & Naseem, 2017, p. 7). In my project, the leader of Single Pride (SIP) selected participants based on their attendance to SIP meetings. Participation in the workshops was presented as a reward. Again, this leads to considering the inequities that can result in the creation of space.

Second, participants may not have the language or the skills to communicate their needs, nor may the development actors provide them with the skills they need to communicate with the people they meet there (Cornwall & Coelho, 2007). In one of the formal spaces on this project, (Youth in Pader - YIP), some of the vocational training was in English; consequently, many of the youth did not grasp all the instruction. Third, locals may not fully understand how to participate or the rules of engagement as they enter the space themselves bound by cultural norms. Fourth, the development actors may not understand how locals organize themselves or consider historical domination between members and the impact these have when bringing people together (Cornwall & Coelho, 2007). As an example, the Lesotho project introduced the commercialization of animals to the Thaba Tseka area, but locals resisted and sabotaged CIDA's efforts. Commercial production of animals defied their traditions as they used these animals to raise social capital. Creating spaces does not bracket differences in status, education, and life experience or rid them of the disposition, ethos, culture, or the history participants bring with them (Bourdieu in Cornwall and Coelho, 2007). Given this complexity of power, social relationships, the expectations, and dispositions of those who enter a space, how do these factors fundamentally impact the participation created in that space?

Cornwall (2002) claims that a participatory space may in fact be reproducing the same power structures that a developmental intervention is trying to change, that these spaces are never neutral, and that there is a lack of acknowledgement of the power relations that permeate and produce the space. "Simply plucking out 'poor people' and asking them what they would like, want, or need risks producing echoes of the very discourses that disempower, as well as legitimacy for solutions that may further deepen their misery" (p. 25).

Cornwall and Coelho (2007) assert that creating a space in order to give a voice to the marginalized assumes that those citizens had no capacity to do so before the development actors

took control. Development then is an attempt to shift mind-sets from passive recipients to active participants who will take ownership of the outcomes of interventions. This serves to recast “the people or ‘the poor’ as neither passive beneficiaries nor consumers empowered to make choices, but as agents: the ‘makers and shapers’ of their own development” (p. 16).

The “poor” and marginalized who participate in these groups need to believe in their capacity to be “makers and shakers.” However, not only do the exteriorized suffer from a lifetime of oppression, “appeals are not likely to be understood or legitimized by the dominant group because the exteriorized often do not have access to language rules and the norms of ‘rationality’” (Hall, 1999, p. 95). In other words, the marginalized are not privy to the exclusive communications shared by the dominant group. As an example, in 1998, the government of Bangladesh initiated efforts to enhance community participation in the public health sector. Mahmud (2007) analyzed the barriers in establishing participation in this project. He cites a landless woman who reported “I am poor and ignorant, what will I say? Those who are more knowledgeable speak more” (p. 17). Similarly, while interviewing Ayaa, a young mother from the created space, she said of the group dynamics, “I feel extremely inferior to those who are educated; I feel excluded. For example, if there are two friends, and they are talking in English, then to me, I would keep my distance because I am not educated” (personal communication, May 13, 2015). Simply by creating participatory spaces does not foster social activism in those that feel powerless.

In Bangladesh, as in Uganda, most people rely on the state to provide rights and to create a good society. Mahmud (2007) found that the poor in Bangladesh believe they have limited responsibility and little ability to influence public processes and are more likely to participate in informal spaces that are more directly related to livelihood pursuits. Under the formal conditions that were created for the health sector reform project mentioned above, the contributors in

Bangladesh saw themselves more as beneficiaries of the program, as opposed to citizens to be actively engaged in social change (Cornwall & Coelho, 2007). This is not to say that a contributor cannot also be a beneficiary, but the problem lies with the different expectations the contributors bring into the space. In Mahmud's project, public engagement was seen with suspicion. People were reticent to participate as they doubted that they would be able to make a difference (Mahmud, 2007).

Similarly, Mohanty (2007) examined institutional democratic spaces created by the Indian state to encourage the participation of tribal groups and specifically women in a community watershed project. Again, the participatory space only served to further marginalize the women. "Women are not encouraged to speak because they do not know the political language of the public space or the language of the state" (p. 92).

Participation by the poor and the exteriorized is not straightforward. Development actors need to recognize the preconditions that have to be in place for entry into participatory spaces. "Much depends on who enters these spaces, on whose terms and with what 'epistemic authority'" (Chandoke, 2003, p. 7). It appears that existing social inequities can be mirrored in participatory spaces. In Mahmud's study, elderly women were silenced both inside and outside the created spaces. In my project, the young mothers in the created space who were the least educated were silenced by both the group and their communities, yet the aim of all these projects was to "empower" the women.

Empowerment

The notion of empowerment is overused and now cliché. A headline in *The Conversation* reads, "Empowering women lies at the centre of controlling population growth in Africa" (Ezeh, 2018). The author discusses how empowering women in sub-Saharan Africa will serve to control the alarming population growth predicted over the next 60 years. However the author does not

explain how to empower African women or mention the education that is needed for men to contribute to lowering population growth. As a much disputed concept with multiple definitions peppered through the literature, “empowerment” is deeply embedded within the jargon used by those in the field of international development. In fact, gender equality and “women’s empowerment” rates third on the list of the eight Millennium Development Goals (Kabeer, 2005) and “women’s empowerment” is cited 32 times in *Canada’s Feminist International Assistance Policy* (Global Affairs Canada, 2017a).

In a news release by Global Affairs Canada, The Minister of International Development and La Francophonie stated, “Focusing Canada’s international assistance on the full empowerment of women and girls is the most effective way for our international assistance to make a difference in the world. Sustainable development, peace, and growth that works for everyone are not possible unless women and girls are valued and empowered” [emphasis added] (Global Affairs Canada, 2017). I am not suggesting that the Minister is misinformed. Rather, the term empowerment is so embedded within the development discourse that no one questions its meaning, which assumes that power can be transmitted from a program to a program recipient. Empowerment used to be associated with a process whereby people discovered their own human potential but now it has become an instrument for managing interventions (Cornwall, 2002). Cornwall and Brock (2005) provide insights into current thought on empowerment.

‘Participation’ and ‘empowerment,’ words that are ‘warmly persuasive’ and fulsomely positive, promise an entirely different way of doing business. Harnessed in the service of ‘poverty reduction’ and decorated with the clamours of ‘civil society’ and ‘the voices of the poor’, they speak of an agenda for transformation that combines no-nonsense pragmatism with almost unimpeachable moral authority. It is easy enough to get caught up in the emotive calls for action, to feel that, in the midst of all the uncertainties of the day,

international institutions are working together for the good, and that they have now got the story right and are really going to make a difference (p. 1043).

But what does this overused term mean? At the heart of empowerment is the ability to make choices. In other words, disempowerment means to be denied choice, while empowerment is reserved for those who have been denied the ability to make choices and who acquire the ability (Kabeer, 2005). To have a choice means to have alternatives to choose from and to perceive the existence of those alternatives. “Poverty and disempowerment generally go hand in hand, because an inability to meet one’s basic needs – and the resulting dependence on powerful others to do so – rules out the capacity for meaningful choice” (p. 14). Institutional biases, patriarchal and cultural norms, and the impact of colonization and the war all serve to limit women’s choices in Northern Uganda, which impedes their agency to act on their own behalf. Can developmental actors actually “empower” these women when real choices, options, or alternatives are not available? (Savard, 2018) As an example, after the civil war in Uganda, NGOs continued to attempt to relieve poverty, but many had little understanding of the culture, the needs of the poor, and they were bound by tight budgets; they provided “quick fixes” that were largely ineffective (Bainomugisha, 2010). In an interview with an executive from an NGO who had lived in Uganda for seven years said,

They [NGOs] decide, ‘let’s give women chickens and then hope that leads to empowerment.’ Okay, it doesn’t. ‘Let’s stop giving chickens because the group spent all the money from the sale of the chickens.’ The vulnerable continue to get short-term benefits from NGOs, which does not empower or alleviate poverty (personal communication, July 21, 2016).

In 2018, the Canadian government allocated \$150 million to related activities in developing countries over the next five years. With so much on the line, development actors

need to realize that whatever they believe empowerment includes will shape their thinking and the initiatives they put forward (Savard, 2018). Here are three stories of women who were recipients of training aimed to ‘empower.’

Lamaro was abducted by rebels and given as a gift to a commander. Her community continues to marginalize her, as she had children out of wedlock. She recently got married but her husband beats her. If she leaves him and lives on her own, with a grade 3 education, she and her children will likely face starvation.

Akello has three children and is secretly taking birth control. Since her husband wants her to keep having children and does not understand why she is not producing, he has threatened to kick her out if it turns out that she is now barren.

Adoch’s new boyfriend is HIV-positive. He does not like using condoms, so she continues to have unprotected sex with him. She knows that at some point in the future she will likely be infected with the virus, but she accepts that risk since he is paying for her children’s school fees.

Lamaro, Akello, and Adoch all attended programs provided by NGOs that aimed to “empower,” which appears to be perceived by NGOs as a process, an outcome, or some combination of the two, whereby the acquisition of technical and life skills will lead the women to the self-perception of rights-bearer. Programs rarely consider the cultural context and the limited opportunities the women will have to use this knowledge once they complete the training. They may now know their rights, but they still don’t have a lot of options to choose from to deal with their dilemmas because women’s concerns are peripheralized within communities and local government in Northern Uganda (Savard, 2018). Realistically, they have two choices: they can put up with their situations or live independently with their children. This second option would alienate them from their own families and decrease the likelihood that they will marry again, which increases the risk that they will live in poverty (Savard, 2018).

The drive to “empower” ignores the structural barriers to achieving material equality. Also, it focusses on skills training. In the case of Uganda (and in Sierra Leone for that matter), this means training women in gendered low-income fields and entrepreneurial skills. The notion is that the skills training will lead to the development of independent businesses (Park, 2009). This disregards the viability of small enterprises within Northern Uganda’s fragile economy and puts the responsibility of poverty on the shoulders of the women. Failure is then seen as an individual flaw or a lack of “empowerment” (Stout, 2013, p. 66). It is a means to off-load the “responsibilities for risks” and the “transformative strategy” to individual subjects (Park, 2009, p. 158). The agents that created the space to empower are no longer accountable and the responsibility has been passed on the individual who can self-regulate.

Cornwall and Brock (2005) argue that the quest to “empower” is simply a means to provide some development actors legitimacy and direction for their ill-conceived interventions. The project in Lesotho discussed above is a prime example. Those involved only saw development as the answer because that is what they offered. Others with sincere intentions to alleviate poverty or “empower” women assume the state has the ability/desire to evoke positive change yet empowering the poor would in turn disempower the state, which means that hegemonic forces emanating from the state need to be challenged to improve the welfare of the poor (Ferguson, 1990). If development actors want to see significant social change, rather than “empowerment,” Ferguson (1990) advocates for international development actors and governments to politicize their efforts, put sanctions in place, and partner with labour unions, advocacy groups, and cooperatives.

In the case of Uganda, the power for positive change for these women lies in the purview of the state but the political will to make substantial changes is absent. Therefore, rather than empowering women in Uganda in a system that doesn’t provide choices, development actors

should reconsider their understanding of empowerment and how it stems from how they see program recipients. This notion of granting empowerment comes from a position of power over. Rather than perceiving program recipients as “poor,” “vulnerable,” and as “victims”, as the literature indicates, (e. g. Angucia, 2014; Savard & Michaelsen, 2018), strengths, skills, resilience, and their war and post-war experiences need to be acknowledged. This naturally leads to using strength-based approaches in programs and providing opportunities for program recipients to share their experiences, and build on their strengths and the power within. Programs need to work with active women’s groups, government, and communities to address patriarchal values, increase opportunities for women, and create a climate that supports their growth and equity. One solution is for development actors to engage with governments and communities to address the structural barriers to reintegration. Cornwall (2004) argues for increasing the permeability of boundaries between state and non-state actors. Donor dollars would be put to better use if allocated to creating more markets in the North, educating men on the impact and results of patriarchal values, and providing more equitable access to education, health care, and social services. Simply empowering through vocational training is not enough, as it does not address the structural barriers or social norms that keep women in poverty.

Defining Spaces

For the purpose of this dissertation and demarcating the three social spaces for reintegration, (formal, created and claimed), Cornwall and Coelho (2007) and Gaventa (2006) provide insights into the complexities that occupy a social space while the works of Brock et al., (2001), VeneKlasen and Miller (2002), and Hall (2004) uncover the power dynamics that operate within those spaces. Delineating the spaces for this project was a challenge as the boundaries of these spaces are not clearly defined in the literature. As a theoretical framework, perhaps the borderlands of space should remain fluid and concrete boundaries set out by some criteria may

not serve the theory. However, what is held within the boundaries of these social spaces is vital knowledge for development actors. It points to considerations for: the construction of space; the specific power dynamics at play; the nature of participation needed; the dispositions, expectations, and social relationships of the participants within each space (Brock et al., 2001; Cornwall, 2002); and the structural barriers outside the space which may sabotage the *raison d'être* of the space.

Several inconsistencies regarding the definition and boundaries of space is found in the literature. Mahmud (2004/2007) writes of “informal,” “invited,” and “participatory” spaces but does not define these. For participatory spaces, however, Mahmud (2004) lists the “boundaries” for that space which include “poverty,” “power inequalities,” “low self-esteem” and “invisibility” (p. 16). I would argue that these are barriers to participation and not boundaries of spaces. Cornwall and Brock (2005) refer to “policy” and “supranational spaces,” and again, no definition is provided, though they are similar to what Gaventa (2006) defines as a “closed space” wherein “decisions are made by a set of actors behind closed doors, without any pretence of broadening the boundaries for inclusion” (p. 26). Brock, Cornwall and Gaventa (2001) explain that a “negotiated space” is a “site in which different poverty discourses and policy actors interact...these spaces are permeated with power relations and bound by forms of discourse... raising questions about who participates, with which view of poverty and to what effect” (p. 7). Elements of this definition for a negotiated space can be found in Cornwall and Coelho's (2007) (2007) “participatory spaces,” which “provide venues for civil society engagement but can actively stimulate the creation of new political collectivities” (p. 7). For consistency, should we conceive these political arenas as a “negotiated” or “participatory” space or both?

Gaventa (2006) uses “participatory spaces” as an umbrella term for “closed,” “invited,” and “created/claimed” spaces. Gaventa also merges created and claimed spaces which muddle

the differences of a space created by development actors or claimed by locals. These spaces would certainly hold different power dynamics and social relationships. Cornwall (2002) however defines claimed spaces as those which emerge “out of sets of common concerns... may consist of spaces in which like-minded people join together in common pursuits” (p. 13). Soja (1996) refers to claimed spaces as “third spaces,” or the margins, a space where participants are motivated to join these in rejection of hegemonic spaces (Soja in Gaventa, 2006, p. 27). These claimed spaces range from ones created by social movements and community associations, to those simply involving natural places where people gather to debate, discuss and resist, and which are outside of the institutionalised policy arenas. But for Gaventa (2006), it is power which shapes the boundaries of space, and “what is possible within them, and who may enter, with which identities, discourses and interests” (p. 26). This does not offer insights into the more nuanced aspects of space or answer questions such as whether a formal space can also be an invited space?

Questions regarding the metamorphose of these spaces (such as whether a created space can become a claimed space) is not considered by Cornwall, Coelho or Gaventa, but re-appropriation of space is articulated by (Lefebvre, 1991). “The diversion and re-appropriation of space are of great significance, for they teach us much about the production of new spaces... Groups take up residence in spaces whose pre-existing form, having been designed for some other purpose...” But Lefebvre goes on to say, “diversion is in itself merely appropriation, not creation - a re-appropriation” (pp. 167-168). An example of re-appropriating a space would be when a type of social action committee becomes dormant and then starts again with new members. The framework, code of conduct, policies etc., of the old committee may remain, and they would be appropriated by new members. Therefore, the re-appropriation of space does not answer an important question for sustainable development, and that is: If a local invited space

continues long after the development actors go home, and continues to evolve, do the qualities of the invited space begin to resemble a claimed space? I will explore this question further in Chapter 5 when I discuss the changes that I noticed within the created space, *Women in Motion*.

In a large-scale evaluation of civil society participation programs implemented by the *Network of Co-Financing Agencies*, the researchers used “participatory spaces” as the framework for the evaluation of these programs. They understood participatory spaces as follows:

These spaces exist in dynamic relationship to one another, and are constantly opening and closing through struggles for legitimacy and resistance, co-optation and transformation.

Closed spaces may seek to restore legitimacy by creating invited spaces... Similarly, power gained in one space, through new skills, capacity and experiences can be used to enter and affect other spaces (Guijt, 2005, p. 141).

Although the author of this report does not define the boundaries of the spaces or articulate the qualities of the spaces under review, the author does advance the notion of the fluidity of these spaces and the metamorphoses that can take place.

Given the understanding I obtained from the literature, the gaps I found in the theory of social spaces, and as a result of studying the nature of each space on this project, in the section below I have further defined the qualities and fluidity of the formal, created and claimed spaces³³ for this project.

Delineating the Formal Space: The Reintegration Program Group (RP Group)

Adapting the definitions from the literature, reintegration programs created by NGOs will be considered “formal spaces” because they are created from “above”, they uphold current

³³ To recap: *Women in Motion* or WIM comprise the created space; *Single Pride* (SIP) is the claimed space; and *Youth in Pader* (YIP) and *Gulu Youth Advancing* (GYA) make up *Reintegration Program* (RP Group) or the formal space

political thought, and ideas are institutionalized. Generally, formal spaces do not share decision-making power with beneficiaries (Cornwall, 2004; Guijt, 2005), and women are not often heard, resulting in women seeking more participatory spaces (Cornwall & Edwards, 2010).

Based on my observations, I would add that in a formal space, expertise and knowledge remain under the control of the institution or development actors, and the agency of the recipients remains confined. This was also observed by Brock et al. (2001) in the context of developing policy for poverty reduction. Since agency was not exercised by recipients, they then became beneficiaries of a project, as opposed to active agents responsible for its development.

Lefebvre (1991) argues that capitalism has imprinted “the total occupation of all pre-existing space and upon the production of new space” (Lefebvre, 1991, p. 326). The Ugandan government’s love affair with neoliberalism and calling for production and modernization is also reflected in the institution of formal reintegration programs, whereby participants are perceived as successful if they are seen as “productive” and contributing to modernization (personal communication, May 6, 2014). The need for capitalism in development also represents the initial early Western view, whereby poverty is a result of underdevelopment rather than a “systematic denial of social and economic rights” [and] “modernisation is prioritised over poverty reduction” (Brock et al., 2001, pp. 9-10). In the case of Uganda, keeping the North poor allows for humanitarian aid to continue. I am not suggesting that the formal reintegration programs deliberately create programs that do little to elevate women out of poverty, but their lack of government funding puts to question whether real poverty reduction in the North is on the government’s agenda.

The formal space in this project is comprised of young mothers who attended a formal reintegration program for over six months. Ten of these women attended *Youth in Pader* (YIP), while nine young mothers attended programs in Gulu. This group was named *Gulu Youth*

Advancing (GYA).³⁴ To provide context, I will begin by describing the field sites and the program before defining the nature of the formal space.

Youth in Pader (YIP): Pader, Uganda. The level of trauma experienced by people in Pader through the war and through abduction is immense. Pader did not exist before the war. It was part of Kitgum district. Near the end of the war, it became a district, then a settlement, and then a camp for internally displaced people (IDP). Now almost a decade later, many of the huts created for the IDPs still stand and many of the original camp occupants purchased the land and still live there. However, the area is wrought with land disputes.



Figure 5. Downtown: Pader, Uganda. May 5, 2014.

The town has 178,000 people and one main road which has too many guest houses for a town of this size. Up until seven years ago, hundreds of NGO staff members lived in these guest houses, but now a few dozen remain, and only six offer reintegration programming. I made

³⁴ Understanding that donors are fickle and in an effort to protect current and future beneficiaries of these CBOs and NGOs, I have obscured the identities of these organizations. “YIP” and “GYA” are therefore pseudonyms.

arrangements from Canada to conduct an evaluation at Youth in Pader. This evaluation would become the first phase of my research.

Youth in Pader (YIP) is a community-based organization that operates in the districts of Pader and Agago Districts. The half-acre, run-down compound is surrounded by a chain-linked fence with 24 hour security. The organization's mandate is to provide "social protection to poor vulnerable children and communities."³⁵ This includes successfully reintegrating youth and former child soldiers into their communities. To achieve this mandate, YIP provided six months of 1) psycho-social counselling, 2) literacy training, 3) life skills training, and 4) vocational training to an intake of approximately 350 students twice a year. Other program elements included that students were required to complete community service regularly while at YIP; and students had to produce a business plan in order to get funding to launch their businesses.

When a new group arrives, students complete the *Guidance Program Needs Survey* and select ten areas where they would like support. Choices include: alcohol/drug abuse; sexual, psychological, physical abuse; coping with stress; career awareness etc. Based on the results of the survey, specific group counselling sessions are designed. I was told that these are held twice a week for 1-2 hours depending on the needs. Students also receive individual counselling. This is determined by teachers identifying students in need or students self-selecting. Each session is approximately one hour. Students also have the option of seeking counselling in small groups. I was also told that YIP does community outreach. In the end, I was extremely sceptical that for 350 students, two counsellors could: prepare and run group counselling, plan and deliver life skills training, offer individual counselling, conduct follow-up visits with students, counsel families, and attend to all the administration that is inherent in the job.

³⁵ Website not provided to preserve anonymity.

The student dorms are crowded and unsanitary, and some of the students choose to sleep outside. Many of the young mothers at YIP mentioned that they did not feel safe in the dorms. They had to take showers in the toilet area, and they did not have the space or the facilities to adequately take care of their children. Children under two-years are supervised by caregivers, but the rest of the children have nothing to do while their mothers are in class. They run around the compound or hang around outside the gate, which puts their security at risk.

In 2015, I went back to YIP and recruited 26 young mothers who were recent graduates to participate in this research. These 26 women were found and re-interviewed in 2016 and in 2017 by my local assistant, Okello Kenneth. Quite by chance, I learned that Okello may not actually have interviewed the women, and I strongly suspect that he falsified the data, so it all had to be destroyed (more details on this breach of trust can be found in the next chapter). I went back to Pader in 2017 and found ten of the original 26 women. In the end, I have authentic data from 26 women from 2015 and 10 from 2017.

Gulu Youth Advancing (GYA): Gulu Uganda. Gulu is mid-sized town in Northern Uganda and has a population of approximately 450,000 people, the majority of which is from the Acholi tribe (80%). Gulu was severely affected during the war but it is now experiencing some economic growth. It has a new paved main road that goes to South Sudan which facilitates trade, a large new market, street lights, three hospitals, and 37 public schools. It used to contain hundreds of NGOs; now only dozens can be found.

As mentioned, Gulu Youth Advancing (GYA) is the name chosen for a group of nine young mothers who attended three different reintegration programs. These programs offer psychosocial support, vocational training, and one offers basic literacy training and sessions in peace education to facilitate “forgiveness and reconciliation” with the war-affected community in Gulu. Some use drama, dance, music, and traditional cleansing ceremonies to promote

healing. They facilitate social inclusion with the community by offering counselling to families. Two of the programs also extend micro-financing to ex-combatants and the poor in their community to start businesses. Nine young mothers who had graduated from these programs were recruited for this project and interviewed in 2017. The young mothers who graduated from either YIP or GYA represent the “formal space” and are referred to herein as the Reintegration Program Group (RP Group).



Figure 6. Downtown: Gulu, Uganda. March 3, 2016.

The women of the RP Group. In 2015, my translator Okello and I spoke to the administration at Youth in Pader (YIP) and gathered 26 young mothers on their last day of school. We described our project, obtained consent, and then began to go through each question to gather demographic information. Most of the women had their children present, so it was a chaotic environment. Children were crying and running around, and the women looked tired. Okello and I started the interviews, but it did not take long to realize that their answers were calculated, and that they were using the interview as an opportunity to get funding from me for school fees for their children, medical expenses, start-up capital for the businesses, etc. In other

words, they perceived me as a “charity” (which I described in the Introduction). I found that this perception could be changed somewhat by demonstrating that the informant is valued beyond their role as a research subject. Since I did not have the resources or the time to develop a relationship with this group or with Gulu Youth Advancing (GYA), I concluded that I would likely continue to obtain the same type of answers. Therefore, I trained my translator in Gulu (Susan) to conduct the interviews with GYA and the translator in Pader (Okello) to conduct those with YIP graduates.

Most of the RP Group had been abducted as children. Particularly in GYA, all had been abducted and remained with the rebels on average for seven years, and some returned as late as 2016, where they found very few services available for their recovery and reintegration. Considering the amount of time spent in the bush, this group also had the least amount of education, and they continue to struggle with social inclusion. Given the length of time the women had spent in the bush, these women were very accustomed to giving interviews, and most of them provided very lengthy narratives.

As organizations, both GYA and YIP are hierarchal in structure with a set curriculum. They maintain order in their schools through visible one-way power. Some of the women mentioned that they did not feel “heard” by the program and had few choices. For example, the women from GYA were not given a real choice as to which vocation they would like to pursue, whereby at YIP they were given a choice but were steered towards hairdressing, catering or tailoring in most cases. In a comparable program for women running in Sri Lanka’s former warzone, one of the program recipients stated, “I never considered what I liked to do; I ‘chose’ this training in sewing because it was the only option.” After a pause, she continued, “I suppose because, this is a fitting job, for girls” (Cronin-Furman, Gowrinathan, & Zakaria, 2017, p. 12).

The act of the school “silencing” their students also surfaced during the evaluation at YIP the year before. Forty-five students at YIP were asked “Do you think you have an equal chance to participate in group counselling sessions?” Data was divided into males and females and between minors and adults. Although no significant difference was found between genders or age groups in response to this question, it is still worthy to note that 24.4% responded “no” to this question. Students were then asked why they felt silenced. Some students attributed the inequality to shyness related to public speaking, or to the sense of shame they felt about their participation in the war, but most students pointed to the amount of time allocated for group counselling and said that there wasn’t enough time for all ideas to be shared. A few students felt “shut down” and said that if they had complaints or if the counsellor deemed their comments to be irrelevant, they would be prevented from speaking. A few of girls stated that boys were given more time to speak and they felt that what they had to say was not as important as what the boys had to say. Comments included: “I would raise my hand and I was told that others wanted to talk so to sit down. Girls don't get the same chances as boys.” “I felt that since I was young, they did not respect our views.” “The time given to students is limited. The right to speak then is in the hands of the counsellor. He manages the time.” The young mothers who graduated from YIP in 2015 were not asked this question, but it is likely that this power dynamic between students and YIP persisted as the leadership, and the counsellors have remained the same.

Delineating the Created Space: Women in Motion (WIM)

The created space conceived here most closely resembles the “invited spaces,” conceived by Cornwall’s (2002) and Brock (2001) and her colleagues. “Invited spaces”, according to Cornwall (2002), are rich in participation, defined by those who create the space, and spear-headed by institutions. Invited spaces are “spaces of possibility, in which power takes a more productive and positive form: whether in enabling citizens to transgress positions as passive

recipients and assert their rights or in contestations over ‘governmentality’ (Cornwall & Coelho, 2007, p. 15). The created space conceptualized for this project was not established by an institution but by two local NGOs, community members, local volunteers, and myself (herein known as the “research team”), and 20 formerly abducted and war-affected young mothers.

Brock (2001) and her colleague’s notion of invited spaces is within the context of policy deliberation or other consultative processes with an aim to reduce poverty. In theory, these spaces allow the “voices of the poor” to be heard (p. 24). Unlike the created space I conceived, in Brock’s invited space, the framework for the space is “created from above” (p. 24). The framework for our created space was created collaboratively. Herein lies another inconsistency in the literature, whereby the both the formal and invited spaces are created by institutions “imbued with institutional imperatives” (p. 24) and hierarchical in organization.

For people living in poverty, subject to discrimination and exclusion from mainstream society, the experience of entering a participatory space can be extremely intimidating. How they talk and what they talk about may be perceived by professionals as scarcely coherent or relevant; their participation may be viewed by the powerful as chaotic, disruptive and unproductive (Brock et al., 2001, p. 19).

The created space described above reflects Hall’s (1994) principle of *Voice* whereby the mainstream expresses concepts using majority structures and language, which serve to exclude those on the periphery. Women in Motion, as a created space, continuously struggled to overcome differences in status, language, and education. Nonetheless, I think it took great courage for the women to walk through the door and to agree to create this space with a *munu* (a foreigner) they did not know, and with only a few acquaintances by their side. On one hand, there is power in being part of a group that is oppressed because of the strength in numbers;

however, there are also risks, such as openly identifying with a specific marginalized group (Hall, 1999).

Women in Motion (WIM). After I conducted the evaluation at YIP in 2014, I then returned to Gulu to volunteer for the organization, “Community Empowerment Education Development” (CEED), which is a fee-levy NGO based at Concordia University in Montréal, Canada that brings students to work on youth development projects in Gulu. While in Gulu, a local NGO, Vine Community Initiative (Vine), approached CEED for a researcher to conduct a project on the needs of war-affected young mothers and to build a model for social reintegration. I met with Vine, and we created a research team which consisted of two members of Vine, one member from the Ugandan Women’s Action Program (UWAP), two local volunteers, one lecturer from Gulu University, and two government child protection officers. We met to discuss the challenges facing young mothers and began developing a research design based on participatory action research. The local research team wanted this project to lead to: 1) the development of the young mothers which included enhanced competent functioning, 2) greater awareness about the marginalization of young mothers, and 3) more resources available for young mothers. The group decided that we would recruit 20 young mothers for this project.

Through miscommunication, initially both Vine and UWAP recruited 20 participants each. Each NGO argued to proceed with their own 20 women, while the other group would wait for the second iteration of this project. If we were to become a cohesive research team, we could not have all the participants coming from one NGO. We also discussed how a group of 40 was too large for our limited resources. Therefore each NGO selected 10 participants. (The act of merging ten women from each NGO proved to be extremely problematic in the future. I will discuss some of these challenges in Chapter 5). The 20 women represented the created space and later named themselves “Women in Motion” (WIM).

The first workshop for WIM was a three-day overnight stay at the CEED compound. I rented two vans to bring the women to the compound. The facility has four large huts which sleeps 20, a large common room, a kitchen, a washroom, and shower facilities. It is beautifully designed, clean, and comfortable. When the women arrived, some appeared shy, cautious, and out of their comfort zone, while others appeared confident and excited. All were wearing their Sunday best and flooded the space with colour. Four of the women brought their children, who stayed close to their mothers initially. I bought a few toys for the children (games, puzzles, art supplies and a soccer ball) which they played with while at CEED. I then gave these toys to the children when they left on the third day. I later learned that the little boy who got the soccer ball became very possessive of that ball and would sleep with it at night. A few weeks later, one of the neighbourhood children slapped the boy around and stole the ball. This would represent the first regret and the first part of the footprint that I would leave behind.

Along the same lines, I am committed to reporting the mistakes I made during this research project to ensure that these blunders are not repeated by other researchers or practitioners. In the previous chapter I mentioned the McKay et al. (2007-2009) PAR Project.³⁶ The purpose of the study was very similar to mine. The researchers published over 12 articles on this three-year project whereby “substantial improvements were made” in the lives of the women (Worthen, Onyango, Wessells, Veale, & McKay, 2013, p. 147). With the exception of some community members wanting more control of the project and some of the young mothers wanting decisions made for them, almost nothing went awry. Really? I am not questioning the achievements of this project; rather, I suspect that there must have been challenges and taxing situations that do not

³⁶ As mentioned in the Introduction, the McKay et al. (2007-2009) PAR Project was a large-scale research project engaging four principle investigators, 16 co-investigators, 2 NGOs and 658 young mothers in Liberia, Sierra Leone and Uganda.

appear in the publication of results. Reporting processes that led to unanticipated failures are just as important to recount as those that led to improving the welfare of these young women.

The details about the methodology and the sessions we provided over the course of the weekend will be outlined in the next chapter; however, I will say that we had a very ambitious, detailed work plan for the weekend. At times, it appeared to me that the facilitators were off-track and off-topic, but in the end, we found ourselves where we needed to be, despite different perceptions of time management and expectations concerning what would be provided during the workshop. As an example, within minutes of the women arriving at the compound, all the soap I put out went missing. The women later began to complain that there was no soap, no slippers in the huts, and that only a comforter was provided, no sheet. Many of the women had attended other workshops by *munus* and had come to expect certain standards.

Most of the women participated actively during the sessions, though some hesitated to speak, and others looked completely bored. In fact, in the session after dinner, two of the women fell asleep in the leather couches. As Cornwall (2001) cautions, participants may enter a space without the skills to participate or communicate in that space. I believe some of the women felt very awkward that weekend, but in time, most of women became active contributors.

The purpose of the project was articulated to the women as an opportunity for young mothers to form a peer network, to build on their strengths, and to design their own support and economic initiatives based on their needs. To manage expectations, I told the women that I was not a donor and that this project would not result in any kind of financial hand-out. I was not going to pay school fees for their children or set up businesses for them. The same narrative was given repeatedly. In reference to “invited spaces,” Cornwall and Coelho (2002) state, “Some actors inevitably arrive at the table with ideas, impressions and knowledge that no amount of

facilitation or deliberation can budge; to expect any less is to profoundly depoliticise the process of deliberation...” (p. 24).

I did not realize the invisible power that was at play during that first weekend. For years these women had seen foreigners distribute humanitarian aid. This would impact their perceptions of all foreigners. It took “deliberation,” which led them to understand that I was not a donor, and it led me to hold a fundraising event to raise money for the group. It is interesting that many months later WIM would select a logo (see Figure 7 below) to represent their group that symbolizes the push-pull dynamics.

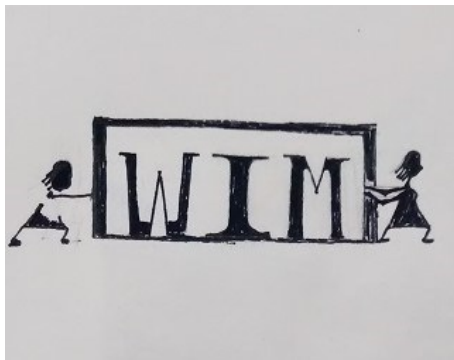


Figure 7. WIM Logo. Theocharides, A. (Artist). (2016, July 20). Reprinted with permission.

At dinner time, they piled their plates with beans, *posho*, beef, rice, and *boo*. The first 18 women took so much food that most of the research team had none. But they ate it all; nothing went to waste. This “behaviour” upset the two cooks who insisted that they had made enough food. Susan was also embarrassed and insisted that she would dole out the food hereon in. After dinner, my husband helped with the dishes. Some of the women remarked to me how lucky I was to have a man who would clean. When I told them he also did laundry, they laughed hysterically. We laughed a lot that weekend. They sat close to each other while working on a craft in the evening, shared their stories, listened to each other and there was a kindness and gentleness that

permeated the space. On the second day, they again mentioned that there was no soap in the bathroom. I decided to do nothing and to wait and see what they would do about the situation.

Also on the second day, we had two inspirational speakers. Both these women had lived through the war, the death of their spouses and family members, and lost their family land yet managed to get themselves educated, start a business, and become very successful as single mothers. Two years later, many of the young mothers identified the inspirational talk of one of the speakers as a turning point in their lives. This type of modelling would prove to be very effective, and I will discuss this in greater detail in Chapter 5.

By day three, they still had no soap. In the end, they pooled their money (25¢ in total) and one of the young mothers went out and bought a bar of soap. This small incident is another example of our push-pull relationship. Whereby, they would pull for more resources and I would push for them to figure it out and to take action for themselves. In the end, the woman who led the soap solution later became the Chairperson of WIM.

The women left the weekend energized and determined to continue meeting as a group twice a month with the two local NGOs. Before they left, I gave them a gift of tea, sugar and salt, which is customary, and then the vans came back and took them home. In the weeks that followed, I interviewed each woman in her home, which was often a thatched-roof hut (see Figure 8 below). The interviewing process is described in greater detail in Chapter 4.



Figure 8. Typical dwelling of young mothers. (2016, July 14).

As for the power dynamic created in this participatory space, it is relevant that I am a White, “rich” foreigner with a “big” education, which makes me the most powerful person in the room, as I could potentially be a benefactor. I firmly doubt that anything could change this deep historically/culturally-rooted perception except to be aware of it and do what I could to ensure that this power imbalance did not disrupt multivocality. When it came to decision-making, all eyes turned to me. Recognizing this, I emphasized that each participant in this project brings something unique. The local NGOs, elders, and assistants bring their previous project experience working with marginalized populations and an understanding of the socio-political, cultural context. The women also bring this contextual knowledge as well as their personal experiences and their goals. I bring knowledge of processes and the ability to design the training they identify they need. I consciously resisted the temptation to make decisions for the group, shape their goals, or suggest interventions, as I recognized that it is their collective experiential knowledge that will ensure the cultural appropriateness of this project and ultimately its success.

There were other power imbalances or power struggles within the group, such as between the NGOs and the women, between the NGOs, and between the women themselves. Within the

group, hidden power was exerted by the more educated women who created insiders and outsiders. This was evident when some of the less educated women reported that the educated women were not respecting their views (personal communication, June, 2014). As mentioned, Cornwall (2002) argued that participatory spaces may in fact be reproducing the same power structures that the developmental intervention is trying to change. I was trying to address the marginalization of these young mothers in their communities, yet within the group, they focussed on their differences and chose to marginalize a subgroup. These power struggles percolated into mistrust between the NGOs and the NGOs and the women. A year later, the project almost fell apart until a professional counsellor facilitated a discussion and addressed the conflict that was severing the group.

Delineating the Claimed Space: Single Pride (SIP)

Fraser (1993) analyzed Habermas' singular notion of public sphere, "whereas the proliferation of a multiplicity of publics represents a departure from, rather than an advance toward, democracy" (p. 66) and argues for "alternative publics" (p. 67) which is akin to Cornwall's (2002) "claimed space". Fraser recognized that marginalized groups could more easily and freely find their voice by creating their own spaces. Cornwall and Coelho (2007) maintain that the needs of marginal groups are often not heard by the state and that there is little political will or capacity to address the inequities and concerns of these groups.

Fraser (1993) describes claimed spaces as functioning for both withdrawal and re-groupment as well as a milieu for preparing to engage about issues with a wider audience. Claimed spaces emerge out of common struggles and concerns. They bring together like-minded people who work together to reach mutually agreed-upon objectives (Cornwall, 2002; Gaventa, 2006) and are conducive to sharing information and establishing solidarity (Guijt, 2005). The claimed space in this project consisted of a group of local (largely) single mothers who have

been meeting weekly to: save money individually; borrow from the group to build their businesses; develop a range of skills; and to provide support, advice and counselling.

Susan invited me to meet with her very successful savings group. I learned that “Single Pride” (SIP) was started by Susan (who is not single) and her good friend. To grow their group, they did outreach in the community. They found that some of the women they approached lied about their marital status and would say that their husbands were away or in the hospital when in fact, these women had been abandoned by their husbands or widowed. The women who were interested in forming the group told two friends who told two friends, and now the group consists of 42 women. What they found during recruitment is noteworthy as it demonstrates the stigma of being a single mother, but it also is relevant that most of the women in Single Pride are connected to someone else in the group, and many share the same neighbourhoods. This is an important distinction. The administration of the formal space (RP Group) decided who would participate and who would not. For the created space, the NGOs approached women who met the criteria within a finite pool. Single Pride allowed their members to populate the group.

The women of Single Pride gather for two hours after church every week. The women’s ages range from 18 – 50, and they each have between one to seven children. With a start-up capital of \$2 in 2015, within seven months this group had collectively saved \$635 or 1.9m UGX, which would have been enough to start the group in a small craft business or to pay for one child to attend high school for a year. This savings group offers counselling to its members and brings in instructors to teach the women various income generating activities (IGA) (i.e. tie-dye, liquid soap production, and bead making) and life skills (i.e. financial management). The goal of the group is to “achieve more acceptance and to be models in the community” (personal communication, July 25, 2016). In effect, this group claimed their space and created their own reintegration program. Compared to the other two groups, none of these women had been

abducted, but all had been affected by the war. Single Pride members tend to be older and more educated than the women in WIM or the RP Group, and almost all the women were working in some capacity.

I went to a Single Pride meeting on a Sunday afternoon at the leader's home. A few women were sitting on couches and chairs, but the majority were on a large straw mat on the floor, as it was a small room and there were about 25 women there. A few women came in late and paid the required "late fine". About half of the meeting was "business" and had a very formal tone. The women would hand over money to the leader to pay their loans or would allocate it to be saved in their account. This is commonly known to the Acholi as *bol ni cup*. *Bol* means to throw, and *ni cup* signifies the act of throwing into a box or tin. All the money gathered was then re-distributed by the treasurer as new loans. I noticed that the need for loans was much greater than the amount the women saved in their accounts. The women who wanted small loans received them, but the women who wanted more substantial loans had to settle for a smaller amount. All transactions were diligently recorded by hand in a ledger. When the business side was over, the room exploded with chatter, laughter, and commotion. For the last hour, some of the women talked about their struggles, and then they discussed a few upcoming group activities and planned for the next meeting.

After the meeting, the leader approached me and asked if I could provide the group with training. I explained that I was interested in learning more about their successful women's groups and asked her if I could include the group in my study the following year, and in return I would offer workshops and training. She agreed. In the interim, I arranged for a short workshop for the women on entrepreneurial skills.

I met with the leader of Single Pride again the following year and asked her to randomly select 20 members of her savings group who were single mothers and who had had a child before

the age of 18. In the end, she contacted about six members whom she thought "deserved" the training based on their attendance to Single Pride meetings. She chose not to select the two pregnant women in the group, as it was a sign that these women had a partner. This was not discouraged, but it made the women "lower members" since the purpose of the group was to support single mothers (Ajok Susan, personal communication, April 13, 2017). As mentioned, social spaces are impacted based on who is included and excluded and who decides (Brock et al., 2001). I would add that the reason for inclusion and exclusion, in this case, a form of favouritism, played a role in shaping that space.

The first focus group for Single Pride therefore had six attendees. Both Susan and I were distraught. Susan felt that she had let me down, and I had designed the day for 20 participants and had arranged catering for 25 people. The Single Pride women took it upon themselves to go out into Gulu and to find more participants. I gave them a bit of money and off they went on a fleet of *boda bodas* [motorcycle taxis]. Less than an hour later, they came back with nine more Single Pride women, for a total of 15. Since the cap of 20 was not explained to the group, other Single Pride members learned about the training and felt resentment for not being selected and started showing up for subsequent workshops. In the end, 35 women came to the training (as no one was turned away), and 20 were surveyed and interviewed.

During the interviews with SIP members, I asked questions about the structure of the group, conflict within the group, and social relationships. The group is hierarchical and has an elected executive who enforce a number of punitive policies. For example, fines are paid for missing meetings, tardiness, or if loans are not paid on time. They also have a very strict code of conduct. If a woman gossips about another Single Pride member, she is warned. If it persists, she is asked to leave the group. Everyone abides and respects these rules.

Most of the ten other leaders of savings groups whom I interviewed also prohibited gossip within their groups or had fines for engaging in gossip, as they know the damage and conflict that can emerge. The leader of the very successful Gulu Mobile Catering Group said, “Gossip can be stopped. If you don’t stop it, the group leaders will give you punishment, and if you don’t want to respect the punishment, you are out of the group” (personal communication, April 24, 2017). When WIM and the research team discussed incorporating the rule of “no gossip” into their constitution, one woman said, “We don’t need a rule about gossip. Nothing can stop a woman from gossiping” (personal communication, April 20, 2017). hooks (1986) argues that sexism teaches women to hate women both consciously and unconsciously. This manifests in daily behaviours such as engaging in conflict, petty jealousies, competitiveness, and malicious gossip. This socialized sexism manifests in film, books, and media, where women are rarely portrayed as having positive, healthy relationships. Rather, they are pitted against each other.³⁷ This is convenient; solidarity between women may advance a feminist movement. This notion is similar to the British colonial strategy described earlier of “divide and rule.”

Throughout the project, WIM gossiped about each other, had arguments, and marginalized members. For training purposes, I merged WIM and Single Pride, and both groups gossiped about each other. For example, one Single Pride member was overheard saying about a WIM member, “She looks like a prostitute in that short skirt” (Ajok Susan, personal communication, May 6, 2017). This did not go over well. Generally, people gossip as a means of shaming another to behave according to social norms (Palmer, 2015). However, Rosenberg's (2012) theory on non-violent communication asserts that gossip reflects unmet personal needs. Given their array

³⁷ Many examples can be found in mass media of the propagation of dissention between women. For example, see the television programs: “New Girl”, *Girl Fight*, which aired December 2, 2014 on Fox; See “Station 19”, *Stronger Together* which aired April 19, 2018, 20:00-21:25.

of personal needs, (financial stability, social inclusion, respect, belongingness etc.), Rosenberg's explanation is the most likely.

The women in SIP however, fulfil their need for social inclusion within their group. They see each other socially, care about each other, and reported that they have never had a conflict within the group. In SIP, the women speak freely, work together, and share a common goal. They embody united power, as they build on their collective strengths, demonstrate compassion for each other, and collectively work towards lifting each other out of poverty.



Figure 9. Single Pride (claimed space) at Entrepreneurial Training. UWAP Training Centre: Gulu, Uganda. (2017, April 24). Reprinted with permission.³⁸

I learned of the profound empathy of this group through the story of Adyero. This young mother had five children. She is a very young, energetic woman and took on the position of secretary for the group. Late in her first year with the group, she started missing a lot of meetings as she had a sick child. She brought the child to a meeting and the women remarked that he was

³⁸ Although the women gave their consent to be photographed and for their photos to be published, to preserve their anonymity, their faces have been concealed.

very listless and frail. She gave the child a bottle of dry tea leaves and sugar to drink because it was the only drink the young mother could afford. The baby then spent three weeks in the hospital, where he was diagnosed with malnutrition. The little boy fought hard, but he passed away in the hospital. Single Pride members went to visit Adyero and did their best to console and encourage her. She returned to the group one month after the burial of her son. At this meeting, the women sat in silence. They were all at a loss for words and “were afraid to speak”. Slowly the counsellor began to speak. “At the meeting when she returned she brought a picture of the son for the members to see. It was a very sad moment. Every one cried, but we tried to make her strong to move on by giving her encouraging words.” This young mother expressed deep regret, and said she would have done anything to keep her young son alive (Ajok Susan. personal communication, April 25, 2017). When I heard this emotional story, the depth of compassion, and collective strength of the group became very evident. It was as if they had all lost a child.

When asked about their strengths, some of the women mentioned that their strength comes from their membership to Single Pride. “They [Single Pride] help if you present your problem to them. They help talk to you and they advise you on how to go about the problem” (Achieng, personal communication, March 27, 2017). This is in sharp contrast to WIM who did form new bonds as a result of this project and later found support in the group. However, I do not believe they achieved the same level of attachment and camaraderie that I saw in SIP. That is, until I contributed to shattering the camaraderie shared by SIP members which I’ll relate below.

While in Uganda in 2017, through Susan, I provided a \$300US interest-free loan to Single Pride to distribute for micro-financing loans to its members. The money was returned in three months, as per our agreement, while I was still in Uganda. After I returned to Canada, I then lent an additional \$300, again through Susan, as a three-month loan, renewable once, which was to be managed by the treasurer of the group. I knew the treasurer well. We had had several meals

together, she invited me to her home, and I employed her briefly to help with the project. Just before the loan renewal, the treasurer took half the loan, as well as some SIP money, abandoned her children, and disappeared. The treasurer was a single mother who was struggling financially and who had no support from the father for her children. What we did not know was that she also had a long line of creditors. I suspect she left Gulu as she was in a lot of debt and wanted the father to step up, which he did, and he now he supports their children.

This act of betrayal by the treasurer and the loss of the loan turned this harmonious group into an acrimonious one. Fingers started to point. Arguments within the group erupted, and the women took sides on who was responsible for paying back the loan. “It was Susan’s fault for getting the loan and not protecting it.” “The treasurer was Susan’s friend; therefore Susan should pay the stolen money back.” Some of women who had borrowed from my loan started to feel that they did not need to pay it back. It was no longer a loan from Michelle. It was *munu* money. I became objectified.

I found several definitions of objectification in the literature which include that: “objectification is a process of dehumanization” (Tuhiwai Smith, 1999, p. 39). It is “a process that involves viewing people in ways that facilitate using them for personal gain” (Gruenfeld, Inesi, Magee, & Galinsky, 2008, p. 112). Nussbaum's (1999) puts forward several properties of objectification and asserts that it is the assumption of instrumentality and includes: denial that the objectified (or target) has autonomy; “fungibility” (the target is interchangeable with others of the same category or type); and a denial of subjectivity (the target’s experiences are not a concern) (p. 218). I was indeed dehumanized, my name (identity) was removed from the loan, and there appeared to be a lack of concern as to how I may be impacted by non-payment. I was no longer an autonomous entity but exchangeable with other donors. There is an abundance of literature on the objectification of the marginalized who participate in programs and research

projects (e.g. Bulbeck, 2007; Gruenfeld et al., 2008). There appears however to be a research gap in understanding if there is an impact on poverty-reduction project outcomes when project implementers are objectified or dehumanized. Nonetheless, I wrestled with the footprint I had left behind with SIP, with the notion of “do no harm” and thought about simply forgiving the loan, but that would be from a position of “power over” rather than from respect. Therefore, I have asked for the funds back.

Summary

In this chapter, I described the theory of social spaces within the context of development projects where intention behind creating the space; criteria for inclusion/exclusion; and the dispositions/experience/history/culture of those who enter those spaces all intersect with the development actors’ notion of empowerment and participation. I elaborated on inconsistencies I found in the research on social spaces and suggested that terminology and demarcation of the spaces is needed for this theory to be more valuable for practitioners in development.

In describing the nature of social spaces, Cornwall (2001) asks who is included, excluded, and who decides. For the spaces created for this research, an authority decided who would participate and who would not. The women may have expressed interest in going to a reintegration program, being part of Single Pride, or this research, but the authority to participate came from above. The women entered those spaces with different expectations and skills sets. The level and quality of participation varied between groups depending on their dispositions and individual expectations and skills. Finally, the fact that I entered these spaces changed the rules of participation and created formality, foreignness, and a potential opportunity. This meant that it would take time for both the women and I to feel comfortable and to communicate sincerely within these spaces. I had to become accustomed to listening to stories that chilled my heart as a mother, rattled me as woman, and which released profound personal despair. Some of those

stories, I figuratively put in a concrete box and threw them over the Atlantic on my way home as they were too grotesque to ever commit to paper and would serve no one if they had a voice. It would not have been reasonable to include every story in this dissertation, but I also acknowledge that I made the choice of which stories would and would not be included. Knowing that these choices would shape the readers understanding of this project, the NGOs and the women, I chose “signature stories”³⁹ and those where I felt I understood what the story meant to the contributor. I also engaged in reflexivity, as mentioned, to avoid selecting stories based on my biases or assumptions about the meaning of the data. This internal process, digesting and selecting stories and engaging in reflexivity, was all going on while I participated as a member or observer of these social spaces. Though Cornwall and Coelho (2007) recognize that people bring in different dispositions into social spaces, it is also worthy to mention that they also bring in their inner worlds and those worlds interact within each space.

The purpose of providing the social spaces framework for this research and situating the women, the research team, and myself within those spaces was to introduce the reader to players, the dynamics of the three social spaces, and to provide a preview of the methodology. In the next chapter I detail the methodology. I begin with a description of the feminist, critical lens that frames and informs the design of this project and then describe the methods used during the five phases of this research project. I then describe the data collection methods and data analysis techniques. Before concluding the chapter with a discussion on the verification of data, I describe two separate incidences that nearly brought this project to a grinding halt.

³⁹ Signature stories are the stories people like to tell about themselves or situations that they feel comfortable narrating. These stories provide insights into the inner workings of the narrators, turning points in their lives such as, great victories or defeats etc. (Kenyon & Randall, 1997).

Chapter 3: Methodology - Going Fishing

I have often heard people in Gulu and Pader tell jokes about the war. Many of these stories have “audacity” as a central theme. They tell stories about a boy refusing to eat in protest while in the hands of the Lord’s Resistance Army (LRA) or of an old abducted man who scolded an LRA commander for asking him to carry a heavy load for days through the bush. To Ugandans this is ridiculously funny. How does an observer interpret this story? a) Ugandans are simply peculiar? b) They are in denial over the atrocities of the war? c) Humour provides respite from the war? Each explanation suffers from cultural relativism and from “the thrill of learning singular things” (Bloch in Geertz, 1973, p. 8). The partial answer to this question is c) which is the need for humour as a result of *oteka lweny* (the war has always been there). “The people of Acholi do not live in denial. Only a psychologist would reason it that way. The war was there. We didn’t know how long it would last. We had to find joy, or we would go mad” (Ajok Susan, personal communication, May 16, 2018). Humour, a strong part of traditional storytelling, was used to get through those hard times and to make sense of the war. The complete answer is found in situating Ugandans within a broader set of traditions, culture, and history. It is for this interpretivist framework, its reliance on storytelling, adherence to context and the process of peeling layer after layer of meaning (Geertz, 1973) that I chose ethnography for this project and critical feminism as the analytical lens.

I started this project with a keen interest in understanding the forces that marginalize formerly abducted young mothers and how power, domination, and control manifest not only in their daily lives but also within formal (Reintegration Program (RP Group), created (Women in Motion - WIM), and claimed spaces (Single Pride - SIP). I realized that these marginalizing forces occur at every level of the socio-ecology and the causes are deeply rooted in colonization, and patriarchal values. I turned to feminist and post-colonial theorists such as hooks (1989;

1990), Lather (1988; 1995), Olesen (2011) and Tuhiwai Smith (1999) to explain how power is embedded in social structures and social relationships. In order to work towards social change a praxis orientation was needed, therefore, with a local research team we created a space using Participatory Action Research (PAR) for 20 young mothers to further develop our mutual understanding of their marginalization, and to develop a new model for reintegration.

I begin this chapter with a description of the feminist, critical lens that frames and informs the design of this project. I then discuss the research design, methodology, data collection instruments and the data analysis techniques I used. The chapter concludes with verification of data, an outline of the threats to trustworthiness and how each threat was mitigated, and ethical considerations. Before moving to the methodology, which includes both ethnography and PAR, I want to discuss the alignment and tensions between the paradigms.

Ely (1997) and her colleagues advocate for theoretical models to be conceived of as nested as opposed to hierarchical. Figure 10 below illustrates the nested aspects of this project.

| Critical Paradigm | Interpretivist Paradigm | Participatory Paradigm |
|---|---|---|
| Aim: Uncover sources of domination and control ↓ | Aim: Understanding the forces that shape experiences, values and beliefs ↓ | Aim: Create a space for the women have a voice and to design their own program |
| Feminism | | ↓ |
| Critical Ethnography | | |
| Feminist Ethnography | | |
| Ethnographic Action Research | | |
| Methods | | |
| Interviews Focus Groups Observation Ethnographic methods | | PAR Methods: Engaging WIM in the research, design, delivery and evaluation of their own program. Critical pedagogy embedded within PAR processes |

Figure 10. Illustration of alignment between paradigms, methodology and methods.

In *Paradigmatic Controversies*, Lincoln, Lynham, and Guba (2011) differentiate between five research paradigms and outline their ontological, epistemological and methodological differences. In their 2011 version of this analysis, they describe how paradigms are beginning to “interbreed” (p. 97). Hence the dotted lines in the Figure 10 above signify a blurring of the lines between paradigms. Lincoln and her colleagues argue that it is now more useful to discuss convergence as opposed to contention between paradigms (see also Kincheloe, 2001). Using the criteria established by Lincoln (2011) and her colleagues, I found confluence between the interpretivist and participatory paradigm. Both seek through qualitative approaches to uncover the complexity of social processes. However, PAR is a collaborative process whereby design decisions are made collectively with contributors whereas ethnographic methods do not usually engage their informants in these decisions.

In order to create and study a social space, I engaged Women in Motion (WIM – created space) in design decisions and implemented that part of the study using PAR. I merged PAR with ethnography and the *Social Analysis System (SAS²)*⁴⁰ as it allowed for deeper reflection during PAR processes while critical ethnography fostered the examination of power relations affecting actors in these spaces. In the end, this framework, grounded in a socio-ecological approach, allowed for multiple entry points for research. As an illustration of these multiple entry points, Figure *II* below illustrates: the actors involved in the project, communication flow, influences of each layer, and my positionality.

⁴⁰ SAS² broadens the approach and outputs of PAR processes with a set of 50 tools aimed at collaborative inquiry with a focus on collective learning within a cultural socio-political context (Chevalier & Buckles, 2008). Examples of SAS² tools used include: Option Domain; Action Research Training; and Ends and Means.

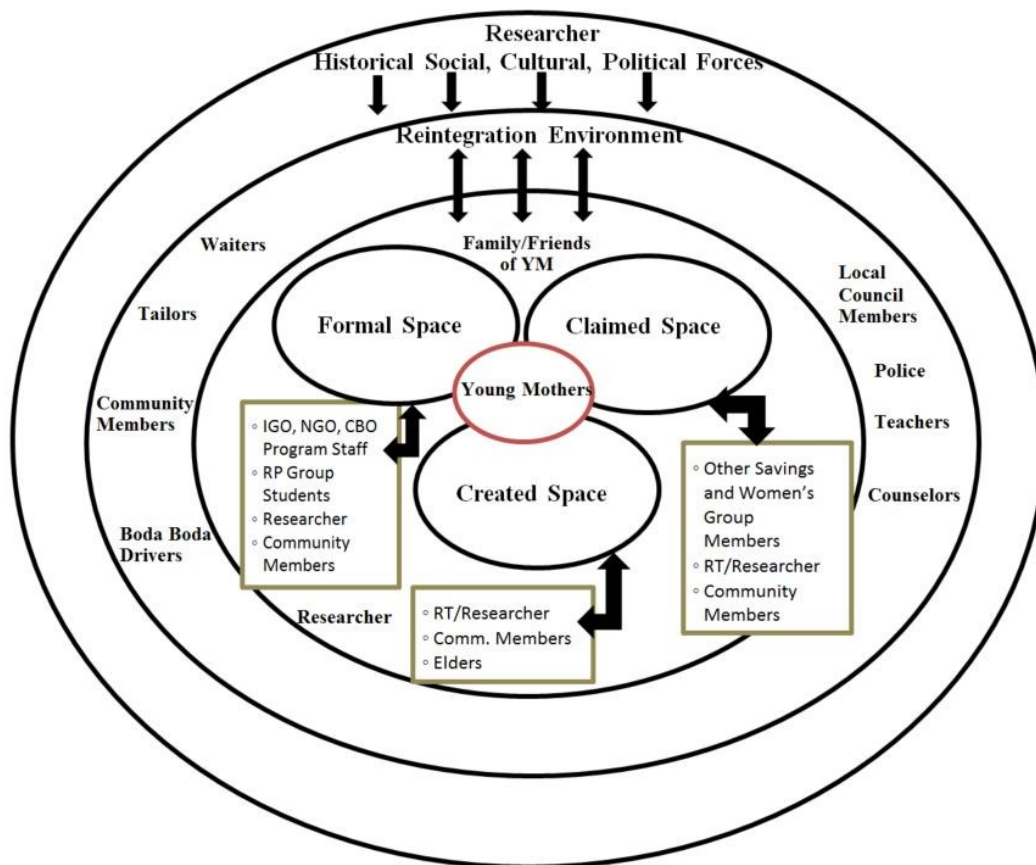


Figure 11. Layers of informants and direction of information flow

Building on the discussion I started in the Introduction regarding positionality, at the outer layer of the socio-ecology are the forces and actors at play which influence all other layers (i.e. historical, political forces). Data gathered at this layer was obtained from the academic and practitioner literature, newspapers and reports, history textbooks, and ethnographies written about Uganda.

The information and the influence from the outer layer are unidirectional in that the reintegration environment did not appear to inform or influence the political forces. The next layer contains the actors I encountered, as a result of living in Gulu and Pader, who provided perceptions on reintegration, young single mothers, the culture, traditions etc. The third layer contains the formal, claimed and created spaces of which the young mothers are central. Here,

there are bi-directional arrows which demonstrate the flow of information from outside the space and from inside the space to the environment where one informs and influences the other. The intermittent field visits to Uganda gave me opportunity to be both an outsider looking in while at other times I was fully engaged as an insider embedded within PAR processes all the while tuning a critical feminist lens.

Feminist Approach

There is no feminist research paradigm according to Olesen (2011), rather feminists draw from multiple theoretical orientations. Now in the “third wave”,⁴¹ feminism is largely informed by critical theory, postcolonial and postmodern thinking. The aim of inquiry is “discover[ing] the truth as it relates to social power struggles” (Lincoln et al., 2011, p. 106). It questions how binaries can structure a researcher’s arguments and seeks to find hierarchies at play (Lather, 1995). Feminist research is “messy”, largely interpretivist and a departure from positivism.

Positivist perspectives create boundaries whereas feminist research pushes the boundaries (Jenkins, 2007). A good example of this is Lather and Smithies (1997), *Troubling the Angels* which describes how a group of women made sense of living with HIV/AIDS. The authors purposely wrote a “messy” text which did not provide a linear read and interpretation. The multiple levels within the narrative force the readers to take a different stand other than just a sympathetic one. The researcher did not want to evoke sympathy but action which is part of the purpose of feminist research and in turn, my work.

“If there is a dominant theme in feminist research, it is the issue of knowledge. Whose knowledge? Where and how was it obtained, by whom, from whom and for what purposes?”

⁴¹ The first of wave of feminism covers nearly two hundred years and ended in the 1950s. Ideas were liberal and the aim was to create equality between the sexes. The second wave lasted thirty to forty years and emerged out of anti-war and civil rights movements. In the third wave, post-modern post-structural and transnational feminism emerged (Naseem, n.d.).

(Olesen, 2011, p. 129). The feminist researcher looks at knowledge as dynamic, changing and evolving (Olesen, 2011); and as a series of windows where one opens to the next which causes another to open and so on...

In an effort to survey the tangled web of feminist theorization, Naseem (n.d.) describes how feminism is categorized by scholars into either issues and debates or as strands of feminism. The diversity within feminist theorization is a testament to the complex issues women have faced through time. Despite the diversity, Naseem (n.d.) argues that each branch of feminist theorization aims at exposing gender biases within different levels of the socio-ecology.

Reinharz (1993) gathered and analyzed a large sample of feminist research in a quest to categorize the research and to create insights into “the feminist perspective”. After identifying multiple methods used by feminist researchers, she also found that feminist research: consistently is guided by feminist theory; aims to create social change through a praxis-orientation; utilizes reflexivity; is concerned with representation; and endeavors to create relationships with people. Consequently, I define both my work and myself as a feminist. I used a feminist, praxis-oriented approach as a means to understand and to support the improvement of groups of formerly abducted and war-affected women in Uganda.

Feminist Theory

Tuhiwai Smith (1999) argues that the perspective of early feminists, who were largely White, academics and trained in the West, assumed that the breadth of oppression experienced by women had a universal quality which ignored the “interlocking relationships between race, gender and class which makes oppression a complex sociological and psychological condition” (p. 167). Black feminism originated out of a reaction to the ethnocentrism found in Liberal and Marxist feminism. It was based on the premise that Black women have a different relationship with oppression. Earlier feminist movements had ignored their situation and experience with

racism. They argued that race, class, and sex are experienced simultaneously. hooks (1986; 1989) argued that the scholarship of Black women has been ignored. “Feminist theory would have much to offer if it showed women ways in which racism and sexism are immutably connected rather than pitting one struggle against the other, or blatantly dismissing racism” (hooks, 1986, p. 132). Bryson and Campling (1999) argued this issue should not be understood as gender + race + class, rather the experience is exponential, that is, gender x race x class.

Intersectionality

The concept of “intersectionality”, coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw (1989), was conceived to address the struggles Black women and women of colour experience that were not captured by feminist or anti-racist theories. It recognizes where the feminist researcher can look for patterns of meaning and power where gender, race, and other categories of difference interact and the result of these interactions (Davis, 2008). “Intersectionality” was hailed as one of the most significant contributions to women’s studies as it recognizes the diversity among women, in terms of class, race and hetero-normativity (Davis, 2008).

However, it is not entirely clear whether intersectionality is in fact a theory, concept, a tool for analysis, or a crossroads. Davis (2008) argues that intersectionality is vague, scholars are unsure what it actually is or how to use it. In an effort to comprehend how intersectionality became so entrenched in feminist theory and so widely debated among scholars that it has reached the status of “classic”, Davis (2008) investigated the characteristics of successful social theories. She found that in the case of intersectionality, the theory actually addresses several gaps in feminist scholarship. First, it acknowledges that feminist theory was excluding many groups of women; second, the theory was not concerned with the issue of difference and third, feminist theory needed to include the interaction of race, class, colour and gender. It provided a shift from strictly a Western feminist perspective to one that could be shared (Davis, 2008).

Another characteristic of successful theories is to provide a novel twist. In the case of intersectionality, the twist is that it can act as a bridge between critical feminist theory and critical methodology. The theory needs to appeal to both generalists and specialists and it must be able to “thrive on ambiguity and incompleteness... The more incoherent a theory is, the more it will require synthesis and elaboration” (p. 77). In other words, it is actually the theory’s weaknesses that contribute to its success. I would add that intersectionality creates a powerful visual image in one’s mind eye that makes the theory accessible. It inspires creative reflection on women’s lives and demands that we engage critically with our assumptions. After acknowledging the interaction that occurs at intersections, as Davis (2008) argues above, it is unclear how to apply this theory to an intervention that would address the compound effect of intersectionality.

Almost 25 years after Crenshaw coined the term, a heated twitter exchange occurred between Taylor Swift and Nicki Minaj with an intersectional undercurrent. Ms. Minaj argued that as a Black female artist, she was being overlooked by the music industry. Ms. Swift simply did not understand. This would lead HuffPost to accuse Swift of “White feminism” (Blay, 2015). Black, Chicana, and Native American feminism arose as a reaction to mainstream feminism as it was criticized for ignoring intersectionality; excluding the experience of anyone who is not White; disregarding current race-related issues; and overlooking the role whiteness plays in shaping feminist views (Blay & Gray, 2015).

The historical divide between white and subaltern women suggests that what has long passed as ‘mainstream’ feminism is actually ‘white-stream’ feminism, that is, a feminist discourse that is not only dominated by white women but also principally structured on the basis of white, middle-class experience, serving their ethno-political interests and capital investments (Grande, 2006, p. 125).

Currently, the notion of intersectionality and structural racism has become so popularized that there is growing media coverage on “intersectional feminism” (e.g. Aries, 2017; Dastagir, 2017; Vidal, 2014). However, none of these mainstream media articles actually articulate a definition of “intersectionality” or “intersectional feminism”. I would argue that intersectionality is the compounding effect of factors which marginalize. In the case of my research in Uganda it is socio-political positionality x armed violence (abduction) x gender norms. Although the women in this project shared the same race, sexual orientation, ethnicity and spiritual beliefs (largely) and the compound effect of intersectionality, their experiences varied widely depending on whether they had been abducted, length of abduction, whether they finished primary school, secured a livelihood, benefitted from family support, or had a man in their life. Therefore intersectionality facilitates the interpretation of their lived reality as a group, however, the diversity of their individual experiences need also be considered when seeking sources of domination and control as well as developing interventions that will improve their welfare.

Feminist Research as Praxis

The focus of feminist research is on the process as opposed to the product (England, 1994; Lather, 1995). In other words, feminist research uses a praxis-oriented methodology which is committed to consciousness raising which evokes social change resulting from the research process itself. It involves the reciprocal shaping of praxis and theory through dialogue and reflexivity with the knowledge that the social change produced is “recognized as generated from people in a relationship” (Lather, 1988, p. 571). I merged the notion of feminist consciousness raising with Freire’s concept of conscientizacao, a process in which “knowing subjects, achieve a deepening awareness both of the sociocultural reality that shapes their lives and of their capacity to transform that reality” (Cruz, 2013, p. 510) and applied it during focus groups with WIM and

SIP⁴² where we discussed the nature and sources of their marginalization and their capacity to work towards social change.

Lather (1988) gives several examples of praxis-oriented projects. One of the projects used PAR to engage a group of lower income women about the sources of their economic marginalization. The women were trained to do research and consequently went on to develop a network and supported other underemployed women. It was a result of the research process, and the inclusion of the women in knowledge production, that social transformation and meaning emerged.

As another example, a study was conducted through a partnership between Columbia University and ChildFund, an NGO who had several reintegration centres in Sierra Leone. They used participatory processes to learn how formerly abducted girls viewed successful reintegration. They conducted 14 focus groups in 10 communities across Sierra Leone. Community members and 166 formerly abducted young women participated. At each of the ten sites, facilitators asked the formerly abducted girls, “How can you tell if a girl is doing well?” They had a series of objects on hand which represented different emotional states. They asked the girls to select which objects matched their view of successful reintegration. After approximately 10 indicators were identified, the girls were asked to rank the indicators from most to least important. Through median ranking, the product of the research included the priorities of the young women. This research was transformative in that ChildFund then looked at its programming to assess how distant their programming was from the actual needs of the

⁴² To recap: Women in Motion or WIM comprise the created space; Single Pride (SIP) is the claimed space; and Youth in Pader (YIP) and Gulu Youth Advancing (GYA) make up Reintegration Program (RP Group) or the formal space

girls (Stark et al., 2009). In this study the knowledge produced informed practice, the process they used was meaningful and the girls were not only “given” a voice, they were heard.

Reflexivity

England (1994) challenges the myth that researchers need to remain neutral and detached in order to avoid contaminating the data. This neutrality puts the researcher outside the research process which she argues is not possible. The researcher’s story is intertwined with the informants and both are changed as result of the research process (McNamara, 2009). Feminist research questions the process of research and the researcher’s conceptualizations of power and control, freedom and oppression, gender, race and social justice (Lincoln, Lynham, & Guba, 2011). Since the researcher is invested and engaged in the process, reflexivity needs to take place. It is the “analytical scrutiny of the self as researcher” which induces a self-discovery that can lead to new insights about the research questions (England, 1994, p. 82). Researchers need to locate themselves in their own work and determine how their location affects the questions they ask. Reflexivity is an examination of the researchers, and informants’ constructs, the research data and the researcher's ideological biases (Anderson, 1989). It is through reflexivity that the researcher can acknowledge their biases; look for those biases within their research and “cauterize those feelings” (M. A. Naseem, personal communication, November 7, 2013).

Representation

How does a researcher accurately represent the stories recounted by the storyteller? How can distortion be prevented? In writing, *Troubling the Angels*, Lather (1995) describes the struggle she had with representing the women she met with HIV/AIDS. She asks, “How do we explain the lives of others without violating their reality? (p. 74). Olesen (2011) discusses the blending of voices whereby the final product is a representation of both the researcher and the

informants voice. England (1994) argues for a representational “betweenness” which is creating a space for meaning somewhere between the researcher and informants.

To sum up, feminist researchers use multiple paradigms and the research process is praxis-oriented and transformative. New knowledge is produced by analysing social structures, and concepts of freedom and oppression. Knowledge is not waiting to be discovered, rather it is dynamic, changing and resides at the “intersections” of a woman’s life.

As with ethnographers, feminist researchers are reflexive to uncover their biases and binary constructs, open to explore feminist alternatives to objectivity (Abu-Lughod, 1990) and as Geertz (1973) prescribed, draw meaning from the social milieu, write within and against specific traditions, and create a space for the subjects’ voices to be heard. I worked within these two frameworks with the understanding that “we are always part of what we study and we always stand in definite relations to it” (Abu-Lughod, 1990, p. 27).

Ethnography

Ethnography is an interpretive research methodology whereby researchers take an in-depth look at a phenomenon while in the field. Historically, ethnography was practiced by early anthropologists as a form of fieldwork, and a means to subvertly advance colonialism and imperialism (Jordan & Yeomans, 1995; Tuhiwai Smith, 1999). “[Ethnography] was the colonial cataloguing of goods; the anchoring of imperial possessions into discourse (Kabbani, 1986, p. 62). Cultural groups outside the West were represented as inferior, and early ethnographies provided the colonizer with a rationale for domination (Allen, Chapman, Francis, & O’Connor, 2008; Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007). By the 1950s, additional data sources were incorporated into ethnographic processes moving away from simply one participant observer. Ethnographers experimented with different methodologies and became more concerned with reflexivity and the distance in social position between the researcher and informants (Jordan & Yeomans, 1995).

An ethnography reveals cultural knowledge extracted from the “the subjectivities of its inhabitants” (Britzman, 1995, p. 229). The caveat being that ethnography is not about capturing what is real, rather it is a construction of the truth that pushes the reader to form new insights about knowledge. “Ethnography... is the one systematic approach in the social sciences that leads us into those separate realities which others have learned and which they use to make sense of their worlds...” (Spradley, 1980, p. vii).

Ethnography stands apart from other methodologies by its emphasis on the cultural aspects of a society, a group or an organisation within a specific context (Brewer, 2000). It is through the interaction with people, their everyday lives, customs, habits and beliefs that ethnographers can obtain a deep understanding of their informants motivations and behaviours (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). The ethnographer is engaged within the culture being studied while maintaining an observational position to allow for reflection and interpretation. Taking a macro and micro stance to contextualize, the ethnographer looks for patterns and relationships.

A unique social world is created by each ethnographer through their interpretation (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007). Eisner (1993) refers to this as the “doctrine of immaculate perception” (p. 54). It is this interpretation that gives the reader as much insight into the ethnographer as their subjects. It is this construction of phenomenon, not the discovery that makes ethnography unique. Every experience, interaction and observation is used as data in conjunction with more formal research activities such as surveys, interviews and focus groups. “We do not carry out and analyse a survey, for example, separately from our interviews or in isolation from the diaries or field notes that our volunteers or participants write. We try to look at all this knowledge and experience together and in relation to each other” (Tacchi, Slater, & Hearn, 2003, pp. 9–10). The researcher gathers data by participating in daily life; watching, listening, and asking questions through interviews and document collection.

Embedded within conventional ethnography, critical ethnography emerged from Marxist and Feminist Theory. It acknowledges the hegemonic practices that weave through societies and goes beyond culture in order to address oppressive forces that impeded social development (Crotty, 1998). It goes to greater depth to uncover the power relations affecting actors in spaces by using methods which expose the political and social factors at play that prevent the marginalized from achieving social change (Allen, Chapman, Francis, & O'Connor, 2008).

Ethnographic Approach

Spradley (1980) suggests a cyclical approach to ethnography with observation and participation techniques to be intertwined with the analysis of data. Data collection includes:

1. Locating social situations: the places (field sites), actors, and activities
2. Doing Participant Observation
3. Making an Ethnographic Record
4. Making Descriptive Observations

Step 1: Locating social situations. As a first step in the ethnographic process, Spradley (1980) discusses locating a social situation which has three elements: a place, actors and activities. A place is a physical setting where the social situations take place; people in the social situation become actors once their role in that social situation becomes clarified; and activities are the cluster of events that take place in a social situation. The physical setting I chose was Gulu and Pader but I also chose to examine created, claimed, and formal spaces for the social reintegration of formerly abducted young mothers. A more detailed description of each type of informant can be found below in the sections, "Recruitment and Selection of Young Mothers" and "Other Informants".

Apart from the workshops, focus groups and the activity of interviewing informants and contributors in an office, hut, guest house, or restaurant, I was also an observer or participant in

several “ordinary” daily activities and events. For example, I observed students at Youth in Pader (YIP – formal space) during their free time, while in counselling, and in their classrooms. I was invited to dinner and to dance bars by the locals. I went regularly to the market, swimming pool, and restaurants which provided excellent sources of data. I also participated in an entrepreneurial event as well as the International Women’s Day celebration with the young mothers.

Step 2: Doing participant observation. In the role of participant observer, ethnographers come into ordinary situations with the intent to engage in or carefully observe activities and people to further their understanding of cultural rules. Participant observers train to increase their awareness of what is going on around them and raise their level of attention to events and details that most people take for granted and usually block out to avoid an overload of information. Spradley (1980) calls it “using a wide-angle lens” (p. 56). The participant observer is at times an insider or outsider and in my case, many times – both.

What separates the participant observer from other researchers is their degree of involvement which can range from nonparticipation, passive, moderate, active, to complete participation. Spradley (1980) advocates for “complete participation” whenever possible. This requires total immersion in a culture where eventually the researcher is not even noticed and has developed the skill set necessary to integrate into the culture. I question whether this extent of immersion is possible but Susan, my key informant, believed that with time and with proficient language skills that I could have eventually have gone “unnoticed”.

Spradley (1980) also warns, “The more you know about a situation as an ordinary participant, the more difficult it is to study it as an ethnographer” (p. 61). I am reminded of the time I went to Tibet and just outside the Potala Palace I saw 12 monks in saffron robes all squeeze into a Cadillac and drive off laughing excitedly. I made a detailed entry into my journal but one month later, I realized that I was no longer noticing the monks. Depending on the nature

of the activity during my field visits to Gulu and Pader, I fluctuated between an active to a passive participant. “An active participant seeks to do what other people are doing...to more fully learn the cultural rules for behaviour” (p. 60) while a passive participant does not engage but establishes as “observational post” (p. 59).⁴³ I was in Uganda for a total of 51 weeks. I tried to learn the language, dress appropriately and eat local food (as much as I could). I followed cultural norms regarding behaviour (i.e. no swearing, no eating on the streets, modesty etc.). I engaged with locals at restaurants, shops, on the street, schools, NGOs, government offices, public transport, and many other public spaces. I was always aware of my “whiteness” and how I could not blend in. I believe the greatest source of cultural knowledge lies within each person. An active participant is able to tap into that knowledge not only through observation but by developing relationships with the locals which I did at length.

Step 3: Making an ethnographic record. Ethnographic records include audio tapes, transcripts, field notes, pictures, maps, diagrams, and anything else that serves to document the study of the social situation. These records serve to capture the place, actors and activities, and should reflect the use “concrete language” avoiding summarizing, abbreviating and generalizing to describe sensory experience. With the exception of my field notes and the interviews completed in English, the data in the ethnographic records is a translation. When the transcripts were produced, I resisted the urge to “clean up” the grammar or to re-translate the “Ugandan” English into Canadian English as some of the meaning would have been lost. As an example, one of the young mothers in Pader said, “So for all these two children I alone must struggle and pay them in school, feed them and dress them so I am *stacked* [emphasis added] because worse of all I am not doing anything which should give me money” (Aketch, personal communication, June

⁴³ For example, I maintained an “observational post” where I watched Ugandans catch white ants, fry them, create a paste and feast. I did not partake in this cultural experience.

2, 2017). Initially, I assumed that “stacked” was a typo and it should have read “stuck” when in fact, it is a colloquialism used in Uganda to mean “confused”, “unsure”, or “undecided” (Pader transcriber, personal communication, July 25, 2017).

Equally important is recording the language register and keeping the nuances used in the language by informants and avoiding translation of these words and phrases into its equivalent expression in the researcher’s native language. As Spradley (1980) suggested, in my notes I avoided jargon and amalgamated language⁴⁴ as much as possible as it blurs cultural meaning.

Step 4: Making descriptive observation. Spradley (1980) explains levels of observation in terms of “grand tour” and “mini tour”. Though both types of tours deal with the same questions, the grand tour extracts major details while mini tours examine smaller units of experience. “Every grand tour observation is like a large room with numerous doors into smaller rooms; each door to be opened by a mini-tour question-observation” (p. 79). Conducting the evaluation at Youth in Pader (YIP – formal space) was the grand tour and allowed me to make a broad survey of the culture and social situation. In my field notes, each subsequent visit was as if

I was looking through a phoropter, more commonly known as a refractor, which contain multiple lenses and is used during eye examinations as illustrated in Figure 12 below. For each field visit, the lens that emerged was sharper and clearer allowing me to understand more and more nuances of the culture.

⁴⁴ Amalgamated language: A combination of researcher and informant language.



Figure 12. A phoropter is used here as metaphor for the growing clarity that came with each visit to Uganda. Reproduced with permission.⁴⁵

A surface investigation is done during a grand tour and involves studying as many cultural domains as possible which occurred during my first three trips. During the fourth trip, I began a more in-depth investigation and became more focused in my observations which meant neglecting some domains in favour of others. My efforts began to concentrate more on actors, activities, events, time, and goals and how these interact within the three social spaces under study whilst keeping in mind the cultural, political, and social forces that shape these domains. Some of the areas of concentration included: How did the women enter the space? How did they perceive the space? How did they interact with others? What power dynamics were at play? How were they treated inside and outside the space? What did they accomplish within the space? What benefits did it bring them? What was lacking? These questions focused my observations when I was interacting with the groups of women.

Being a pragmatist, I have questioned creating knowledge for the sake of knowledge. That is, developing an ethnography to build theories about marginalization does not feed the poor. This is precisely why I integrated an ethnographic approach with PAR. The hope is that this

⁴⁵ Phoropter image provided graciously with the permission of Topcon Canada. Available from <https://www.topcon.ca/product/vt-10-vision-tester>

ethnography will stimulate dialogue and changes in program design for formerly abducted young mothers.

Ethnographic Action Research

Ethnographic Action Research (EAR) was piloted as a methodology in 2002 in Sri Lanka to address the need for richer knowledge of the socio-cultural processes (Slater, Tacchi, & Lewis, 2002). It is based on the notion that every project has planning and action and “by observing our actions we can generate knowledge and learn from our experiences. By critically reflecting on our actions and experiences we can plan our next actions more effectively” (Tachhi, Slater, & Hearn, 2003, p. 2). In order to develop a research culture, EAR includes a cyclical process of planning, doing, observing and reflecting and incorporates the continuous evaluation of the problem the project is addressing. Participants take on a number of roles which include contributor, informant and researcher (Tacchi, Slater, & Hearn, 2003). The key questions are:

1. What are we trying to do?
2. How are we trying to do it?
3. How well are we doing?
4. How can we do it differently/better?

Initially PAR was used to engage this marginalized group of women in the research process as their voice and participation would give insights into social spaces and how social reintegration programs for young women needed to be designed. Also, using PAR would foster a sense of ownership for the outcomes. The ethnographic addition to PAR instils a continuous, iterative component of reflection on processes and outcomes which are not necessarily the standard in PAR projects. Combining the ethnographic components of reflection, reflexivity and continuous evaluation of project outcomes with PAR processes provided opportunities to be interpreters of practice.

Using EAR, the direction of the program and the training needed was identified by the women and delivered by local resources. Inserted into this created space was the use of: strength-based methodologies such as Appreciative Inquiry which builds on the strength of groups; critical pedagogy to allow the women to explore the nature of their marginalization; and teambuilding activities which aimed to create camaraderie and friendship among the women which would serve to establish a support system. The aim was that the contributors would develop the necessary knowledge, strengthen their “power within”⁴⁶ and begin to perceive their potential to change their own circumstance (Hur, 2006).

To summarize, EAR and specifically “SAS² tools” by Chevalier and Buckles (2013) were used for the vision, planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of this project with the research team and WIM (created space). The women decided on their training, goals, and created an action plan. They created their meeting schedule, code of conduct, constitution, potential livelihood project, and made the decision to become a savings and loan group. Findings were shared with the women and they always had a voice about next steps.

Research Design

“When you write, don’t put a tuxedo on your brain” (Metzger in Maxwell, 2012, p. 21)

Going Fishing

After reading my Dissertation Proposal, one of the reviewers provided an insight that I appreciated deeply. She said, “There is an apparent complexity to your design, which makes it appear, by someone who didn’t know what you did, like a series of fishing expeditions” (personal communication, February 2017). Did I begin this research carefully planning five field trips to Uganda with the intent of comparing three approaches to the reintegration for formerly

⁴⁶ Power within is the “capacity to imagine and have hope; it affirms the common human search for dignity and fulfillment” (VeneKlasen & Miller, 2002, p. 39).

abducted and war-affected young mothers? Well, no. Have I been intent on creating a new model for reintegration for six years? Absolutely! But was it fishing? Perhaps a bit of trolling was involved where I threw out multiple lines initially to try and shape my project but ultimately, I was cognizant of the necessity to limit my power as a researcher (i.e. to set a research agenda, lines of inquiry, direction based on issues that surfaced from the women). Also, with the belief that research questions must emerge in situ, I went in with broad lines of inquiry. Maxwell (2012) recognizes that qualitative research is an iterative process whereby the research design is constructed and then reconstructed. As an example, he describes the approach a group of researchers who conducted one of the classic studies regarding medical students.

In one sense, our study had no design... If we take the idea of design in a larger and looser sense, using it to identify those elements of order, system, and consistency our procedures did exhibit, our study had a design. We can say what this was by describing our original view of the problem, our theoretical and methodological commitments, and the way these affected our research and were affected by it as we proceeded. (Becker, Geer, Hughes & Strauss, in Maxwell, 2012, p. 3).

Maxwell asserts that qualitative research is more akin to “do-it-yourself” as opposed to “off-the-shelf” as the process does not necessarily involve a set sequence of steps rather it entails an understanding of the context and making adjustments to the research process (p. 3). This at times is uncomfortable as the researcher must give up some control and work within a climate of uncertainty. “An acutely uncomfortable period of ambiguity and confusion needs to be a necessary condition for the birth of a new idea” (Nias, 1993, p. 144). Constantly fine tuning the research process reflects the notion of “bricolage” in qualitative research. Put forward initially by Denzin and Lincoln (2011), the French word, “bricoleur” refers to a handyperson who uses the tools available to complete a task. Applied to research design, this term infers an

interdisciplinary approach as the researcher employs “historiographical, philosophical and social theoretical lenses to gain a more complex understanding of the intricacies of research design” (Kincheloe, 2001, p. 679). Bricoleurs move beyond the traditional ways of seeing research and begin to merge methods and blur lines (Kincheloe, McLaren, & Steinberg, 2011). They see the limitations of strictly following one discipline and understand the impact this has on the knowledge produced and how it can lead to reductionism. Since I chose to design part of this research collaboratively with the research team and WIM (created space), I relinquished the power to make decisions and to control the design. I had to “merge methods and blur lines” depending on what surfaced: 1) within the social/political/cultural context (i.e. a national election which restricted movement); 2) as the women’s needs emerged (additional topics covered led to new lines of inquiry); 3) the needs of the research team; and 4) findings from the previous phase needed to be applied to the next. To a quantitative researcher using the scientific method, the emergent design of this project would appear as “an assault on this [scientific] tradition” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011, p. 3). Qualitative researchers tend to look at a phenomena within its context while quantitative researchers look at how one factor affects another. “There is a persistent division in the social sciences between those who prefer to break their material up into variables and those who prefer dealing with whole cases” (Porta & Keating, 2008, p. 3). The nature of the phenomena that I was studying demanded that I work within a natural setting, understand the influences of the context and interpret the meaning the contributors ascribed to the phenomena. A rigid step-by-step approach, counting occurrences, or attributing causation would again produce “the thrill of learning singular things” (Bloch in Geertz, 1973, p. 8) and the richer, nuanced layers of meaning would have been lost.

Recognizing that there is not just one model for research design, Maxwell's (2012) model has five connected components: goals, conceptual framework, research questions, methods, and

validity. As mentioned, the goal of this research is to influence the practices and policies concerning the reintegration of formerly abducted young mothers. The conceptual framework to guide this study is grounded in the theory of marginalization (Hall 1994/1999/2004), and theories regarding social spaces and power dynamics within spaces (Cornwall & Coelho, 2007; Gaventa, 2006; VeneKlasen & Miller, 2002). Studies, such as McKay et al. (2007-2009) PAR Project have also informed this research. At the heart of the design and linked to the goal of the study are the research questions which uncover the barriers to reintegration and the types of initiatives that would enhance the competent functioning, social inclusion and economic stability of war-affected and formerly abducted young mothers.

Distinctions in Participation and Phases of Research

Understanding that in PAR projects everyone is a contributor, however, in this dissertation, to allow readers to make a distinction between levels of participation in this project, I have delineated participants, informants and contributors.⁴⁷ “Participants” is used to refer to the women from the Reintegration Program (RP) Group who were not engaged in PAR activities. “Informants” are community members, local council members, waiters etc., who provided insights about the young mothers and the cultural or socio-political context. “Contributors” are the research team, SIP and the WIM women who participated in the PAR portion of this study. Participants, informants and contributors were part of each of the five phase of this research project.

⁴⁷ To recap: Women in Motion or WIM is the created space; Single Pride (SIP) the claimed space; and Youth in Pader (YIP) and Gulu Youth Advancing (GYA) make up Reintegration Program (RP Group) or the formal space

Table 3

Phases, Dates and Location of Research

| | <u>Date</u> | <u>Location</u> |
|---------|--------------------|-----------------|
| Phase 1 | May – July 2014 | Pader |
| Phase 2 | April – June 2015 | Gulu and Pader |
| Phase 3 | November 2015 | Gulu |
| Phase 4 | July – August 2016 | Gulu and Pader |
| Phase 5 | March – June 2017 | Gulu and Pader |

Recruitment and Selection of Participants for Phase 1 – Youth in Pader (YIP)

I used purposeful sampling, specifically snowball sampling. Former students who resided close to Pader were contacted by YIP and asked to participate in an interview about their experience at YIP. They were then asked to contact some of their classmates. The other informants were selected based on availability. Demographic information is provided below.

Table 4

Participants of Phase 1

| <u>n</u> | <u>Sample</u> | <u>Description</u> |
|----------|------------------------|--|
| 45 | Former students of YIP | Gender: 20 male and 25 female Age: <18 years of age = 6, >18 years of age = 39 Vocational study at YIP: Welding 3 Hairdressing 15 Catering 3 Tailoring 9 Computer 4 Carpentry 9 Motorcycle Maintenance 1 Driving 1 |
| 3 | Teacher(s)/counsellor | Teachers and counsellors were interviewed to identify program areas that need attention. |
| 6 | Local Officials | Town council members and senior officials were interviewed to gather their impressions on the impact of YIP's work in the community. |
| 4 | Community Members | Community members who were familiar with YIP's work were interviewed to determine how well graduates from YIP reintegrated into the community. |
| 58 | Total | |

Recruitment and Selection of Young Mothers

Formal Space: Reintegration Program Group (RP Group).⁴⁸ The following year, I went back to YIP and asked to meet with a group of young mothers. Staff at YIP recruited a group of recent graduates to come and meet me. I used homogenous sampling⁴⁹ to limit the variation in the group and to simplify the analysis (Palinkas et al., 2015). I also wanted a group approximately the same size as WIM to facilitate the weighted comparison of groups. In the end, I surveyed and interviewed 26 young mothers who had just graduated from YIP and then interviewed 10 of those women again in 2017. Also in 2017, nine women were recruited from Gulu Youth Advancing (GYA). All the women from the RP Group (YIP and GYA) were recruited based on the following criteria:

- Completed a formal reintegration program
- Had a child before 18 years of age and were 18 years of age or older
- Willing to complete a survey and participate in interviews

Created Space: Women in Motion (WIM). Vine and UWAP used purposeful sampling to recruit and select 20 young mothers in Gulu. Again the aim was to use homogeneous sampling to limit the variation within the group. Selection criteria included young mothers who were:

- 18 or older and who had a child before the age of 18
- Willing to complete a survey, attend a three-day workshop, share their stories with other women, learn about other successful women and women groups
- Willing to work with this peer support group of women to develop a plan on how to improve their situation and to meet regularly

⁴⁸ The Reintegration Program Group (RP Group) consists of participants from both YIP and GYA.

⁴⁹ Homogeneous sampling reduces variation within groups. It allows for a more in-depth analysis of a group and it simplifies the analysis process (Palinkas et al., 2015). I was not looking for variation amongst the women within their groups; rather I was interested in the differences that surfaced between groups.

In April 2015 (phase 2), twenty young mothers in Gulu were identified and began working with the research team (Vine, UWAP, two research assistants, an elder from the community and I). After the three-day retreat described in Chapter 2 held at CEED, WIM decided to meet twice a month with the NGOs. Subsequent meetings and workshops were held at Vine's office.

In November 2015, two women dropped out from the WIM; one moved away and one chose not to continue. By July 2016, six more women dropped out of WIM: two moved away; and four decided to stop participating. In 2017, one of the original 20 who had left returned to the group. Therefore, the final phase contained 13 women from WIM.

Claimed Space: Single Pride (SIP). In 2017, SIP's leader selected six participants and snowball sampling was used to select 14 other participants. All the women had had a child before 18, were willing to complete a survey and participate in interviews, workshops and focus groups. Table 5 provides demographic data for the three groups. Note that reintegration program programs recruit and accept both formerly abducted and war-affected youth. In comparing the three groups, Gulu Youth Advancing contained the greatest number of former abductees while none of the members of Single Pride had been abducted.

Table 5

Demographic Data

| | | RP Group | WIM | SIP |
|----------------------------|--------------|----------------------|--|---|
| Age when first child was | mean | 17 | 16 | 17 |
| | median | 17 | 15 | 17 |
| Abducted | yes | 77% | 30% | 0 |
| Abducted duration (years) | mean | 7 | 2 | 0 |
| | median | 7 | 0.5 | 0 |
| Husband in life | yes | 44% | 50% | 50% |
| Husband offering support | yes | 11% | 0% | 25% |
| Family offering support | yes | 53% | 22% | 58% |
| Level of education (years) | mean (years) | 6.11 | 5.90 | 6.47 |
| | median | 7.00 | 7.50 | 7.00 |
| | mode | 7.00 | 0.00 | 9.00 |
| Community offering support | always | | | 25% |
| | sometimes | 27% | 22% | 45% |
| | not very | 37% | 6% | 5% |
| | never | 36% | 72% | 25% |
| Vocational training | yes | 83% | 30% | 45% |
| Length/Area | in months | 13 | 12 | 24 |
| | tailoring | 60% | 40% | 22% |
| | catering | 7% | 20% | 0% |
| | hairdressing | 27% | 0% | 11% |
| | other | 6% | 40% | 67% |
| | types | nursing assistant | peer educator, tie dye, secretary | Business, brick making, counselling, returned to public school |

Note: The survey was administered to WIM and YIP in 2015 and the level of husband and community support changed over time.

Other Informants

I used snowball sampling to recruit elders, community members, staff at NGOs and leaders of various savings groups. Table 6 provides a list of interviewees and a description of the

purpose of each interview. Information was also gathered informally from other citizens of Gulu and Pader.

Table 6

Other Informants

| Group | Description | N | Gender |
|--------------------------------|--|----|-------------|
| Research Team Members | Throughout the project, research team members who collaborated in creating the space were interviewed as well as the translator in Pader for their cultural knowledge and views on the project. | 6 | 4 F 2 M |
| Elders | Community elders participated in the workshops in Gulu and were interviewed. These women were both above the age of 50, considered to be well-respected and to have influence in the community. Two of these women participated in the study in November 2015 and continued to attend some of the Saturday meetings and the workshops. | 2 | F |
| IGO/NGO/CBO Staff | Leaders and staff of INGOs, NGOs and CBOs in Gulu and Pader were interviewed. The purpose of these interviews was to to learn about their programs, participatory processes, views on “empowerment” and to share the results of this research. | 8 | 4 M 4 F |
| Saving and Women Group Leaders | Several savings groups were located and interviewed in Gulu and Pader. The purpose of these interviews was to learn about the ingredients of success so that this information could be shared in WIM as they established their own savings group. Two of these groups, “The Fish Monger” and the “Mobile Catering Groups” are considered the most successful women’s groups in Gulu. | 8 | 1 M 7 F |
| Community Members | Community members were interviewed in Gulu and Pader to get insights on how young mothers are perceived and treated within their communities and about the support available. These informants were professors, police, <i>boda boda</i> drivers, bankers, counsellors, youth workers, and Local Council Members. | 15 | 5 M 10 F |

Methods and Instruments

I began this chapter with a description of feminist theory which informed this project and described the methodologies as critical ethnography and ethnographic action research. This was followed by the research design developed to address the research questions and a description of the participants, informants and contributors. This section will describe the methods that were

used to gather data for this project. In order to avoid repetition, in the first section below, I describe the procedures that were consistently used throughout the five phases.

Consistencies

Free and informed consent. At the beginning of each phase of this project, participants were informed of the objectives, risks and benefits of the research. We then obtained and maintained written consent which was translated in Luo and validated by a linguist. At the onset of each phase, in small groups with the young mothers, the consent form was read aloud (as literacy rates were low) by the research assistants in Luo and signed by the women. When interviewing informants with low literacy levels, the consent form was again read aloud in Luo. For the research team, NGO and CBO members, the choice was given whether to complete the form in English or Luo. During workshops and interviews, participants were made aware that they may discontinue their participation at any time without consequence.

Observation and field notes. During all phases of the research, as an ethnographer, I took three types of field notes. First, in the field I recorded a condensed account of the occurrence, jotting down words and phrases to capture the occurrence. When I left the scene I expanded the account with, as mentioned, using “concrete language”. When I created an expanded account, I added all the sensory details. Second, I kept a fieldwork journal. Usually at the end of the day, I made entries into a journal chronicling my experiences, reactions, ideas, cultural faux-pas, challenges, questions etc. These entries not only included what I observed about the place, actors and activities, but it included my actions (what I saw, heard, who I saw, and my perspective of what happened). Third, periodically I would record insights, interpretations, patterns and themes as they were emerging. Examples of field notes include:

1. My observations concerning the young mothers in Gulu during the interviews at their homes with their children; what I learned about their routines, customs, cultural practices, parenting styles etc.
2. Stories relayed to me by the research team about their own personal experiences, social, political, current and cultural events as well as their insights into WIM.
3. Stories relayed to me by various members of the larger community for example, learning about the challenges from a female *boda boda* driver; family challenges from a staff member at CEED; political unrest from a member of the research team.

“Moderately” semi-structured interviews. The amount of control exerted by the interviewer creates a power dynamic during the interview process. For that reason I used a “moderate” semi-structured interview technique which allows for flexibility during the interview in that the sequence of the interview and the questions were not strictly pre-defined (Wengraf, 2001). I prepared an interview guide ahead of time (for WIM, the research team provided input). During the interview, either I or the translator would probe and ask additional questions to get more details or for clarification. Each interview was 60-90 minutes in duration and most were held in the homes of the women which meant travelling up to 20 kilometres to reach them. Their homes ranged from very simple huts with mud floors to houses made of concrete. Some of the women reported that it made them feel “special” that I would make the journey to their homes. However, one woman said that her neighbours believed I was her sponsor. When she later asked to borrow some maize from a neighbour, she was firmly told to go and ask me for the maize. After this, I met with the women outside their homes.

We tried to create a warm, natural atmosphere. At times, we would talk about other topics that were put forward by a young mother, or discard some of the questions as we had reached saturation, or the question lacked relevancy at the time. For phases 1, 2, and 3, each interview

was audio-recorded and transcribed by four Canadian undergraduate students. For phases 4 and 5, a Ugandan student who was majoring in English transcribed the interviews.

Skills-based workshops and focus groups with young mothers. Workshops were skill-based and included training in appreciative inquiry, conflict management, human rights, reproductive health, entrepreneurial skills, business planning etc. Topics were chosen based on the expressed needs of the young mothers and the needs identified by the research team. Focus groups were research oriented and pertained to: goal setting, action planning, providing feedback on findings, sources of marginalization, project evaluation etc. These were conducted in Luo. I received consecutive interpretation and I took notes electronically. Discussion outcomes were noted on flipcharts in either English or Luo. Within a week of each workshop or focus group, the translator (Susan) would produce a short report summarizing her interpretation of events, noting her observations and providing a record of each flipchart. Three meals, tea, and water were provided for each day-long workshop or focus group and each woman was provided with 5,000 UGX for travel (\$2 CAD).

Meetings and focus groups with the research team. These meetings were conducted in English and aimed to obtain the research team's insights on: the well-being and challenges the young mothers were facing; attendance at WIM meetings; project status and improvements; and discussions on next steps. During the meeting I took notes electronically and would confirm decision points with the members via email. The research team was provided with a meal and 5,000 UGX for travel (\$2 CAD).

Demographic survey. This survey was written in English, translated into Luo and validated by a linguist at Gulu University. The survey was administered once at the beginning of the first event with each group (WIM-Phase 2; YIP-Phase 2; GYA-Phase 5; SIP-Phase 5). The quantitative survey contained questions about demographic data as well as abduction, education,

livelihood, sources of support etc.). The results are in Table 5 above. Table 7 below summarizes the methods for each phase of the research.

| Timeframe | Phase 2: April – June 2015 | | Phase 3: Nov. 2015 | | Phase 4: July - August 2016 | | Phase 5 March – June 2017 | |
|--------------------------------------|----------------------------------|------------|--------------------------|------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|--|
| Methods | <u>WIM</u> | <u>YIP</u> | <u>WIM</u> | <u>WIM</u> | <u>YIP</u> | <u>WIM & SIP</u> | <u>GYA</u> | |
| Contributors to PAR | yes | n/a | yes | yes | n/a | WIM | n/a | |
| Attended Workshops and focus groups | yes | n/a | yes | yes | n/a | yes | n/a | |
| Completed Demographic Survey | yes | yes | n/a | n/a | n/a | yes | yes | |
| Interviewed | yes | yes | yes | yes | n/a | yes | yes | |
| Attended peer-support/group meetings | bi-monthly | n/a | bi-monthly | bi-monthly | n/a | WIM: bi-monthly SIP: weekly | n/a | |

Phase 1: Pader (May – July 2014)⁵⁰

I contacted Youth in Pader (YIP) several months before going to Uganda as they offer volunteer opportunities at their reintegration program. Based on my skill set, we agreed that I would evaluate various components of their program. They asked Okello James, who was a previous graduate of YIP to translate for me. He would become my translator and local assistant for the next three years in Pader. As listed in Table 4, 58 students, teachers, community members, and local officials were interviewed.

⁵⁰ See Appendix A for instruments used in phase 1.

The interviews with former graduates, head counsellor and two teachers took place in a private office onsite at YIP. I conducted semi-structured interviews with both male and female former students as I wanted to determine if there were gender differences in how they experienced the program and in how they were treated over the course of the program. Each interview lasted approximately 60 minutes. With the help of Okello, I observed interactions between students and teachers and attended classes and group counselling sessions. I also took time to observe students playing volleyball, mothers interacting with their children, youth practicing dance or hanging around waiting for the electricity to come back on. Later in the study, Okello and I went into town and he pointed out community members who would be familiar with the impact of YIP's program. Those interviews lasted approximately 30 minutes.

Phase 2: Gulu (April – May 2015)⁵¹

Research team meeting and training. Before arriving in Uganda, the research team and I created an agenda for the three-day workshop with the young mothers. When I arrived, we made modifications to the agenda and then I delivered a half-day training to the local research team and facilitator on: 1) ethical research practices and 2) Appreciative Inquiry (Ai).

1) Ethical research practices. The principle of “do no harm”, confidentiality, and privacy were discussed with the research team and later on with the young mothers. Both the research team and later the young mothers, created a code of conduct that they committed to for the duration of the project (see Chapter 5).

2) Appreciative Inquiry (Ai) was developed as a paradigm to build the capacity of groups that stimulates the cooperative search for the best in people, groups, and communities (Cooperrider & Whitney, 2005). The process of Ai is delivered in four phases which focusses on

⁵¹ See Appendix B for the recruitment script, instruments used and focus groups delivered in phase 2.

what worked in the past, leveraging past successes, and designing and planning how to implement the groups' vision for the future. Appreciative Inquiry was used to set the tone of the project, that is, that this project was to be forward-looking and a means to identify and build on the strengths of those involved. The method was very well received by both the research team and the women.

Workshop. A three-day workshop was held at the compound owned by the Concordia's CEED Program. (This was described in detail in Chapter 2). The workshop was facilitated by an experienced social worker and co-facilitated by two members of the research team. By the end of the workshop, the group had made tentative group goals; identified the training and resources they needed; established a code of conduct; committed to meet twice per month and had named themselves, "Women in Motion" (WIM).

Semi-structured interviews. A member of the research team, the translator and I conducted interviews with each of the 20 young mothers in their homes as it was more convenient for the young mothers and it provided insights on how they lived and how they interacted with their children. The purpose of the interviews was to learn about how the women perceived themselves; their post-war experiences as it pertained to their children, parents, husband and community and to get feedback on the workshop. I also conducted interviews with 15 community members to gather their views on the conduct, challenges, and contributions of young mothers in their communities.

Phase 2: Pader (June 2015)

Twenty-six young mothers who were recent graduates of YIP gathered at their compound. Okello explained the project, went through the consent form, demographic survey and we later interviewed the women at a local guest house.

Fabrication of data. The original 26 women from YIP were contacted by Okello and interviewed again in 2016 and 2017. However, it wasn't until 2017 that I discovered that a substantial amount of data from 2017 had been fabricated. In 2016, Okello was to find as many of the original women as possible and interview them on how they were doing (financially, emotionally etc.) In 2016, he found and interviewed 23 of the original women. In 2017, he said that he was able to find all of the 26 original women. This low attrition rate gave me pause. I checked the 2016 data again and it seemed fine. But for 2017, I found that the same data in multiple transcripts. He later admitted that he could only find five of the original women so he "substituted" the original participants for other women who had graduated from YIP. He explained that the duplicate information was a result of the women having the same story. It is impossible to imagine two women being hired to dance during the national election. Both were being beaten by their husbands and both lost their husbands two weeks after the election. Consequently, I could not trust this data and therefore I disposed all data collected by Okello in 2016 and 2017. Susan then called all the YIP participants and was able to set up ten interviews in Pader. To maintain the comparative nature of my research, I had to find more participants who had attended a formal reintegration program. I then met with the Executive Director of an NGO. Using the same recruitment criteria as for the women from YIP, she recruited 9 women.

I had both a professional and personal relationship with Okello. We communicated regularly about his life and his studies. My husband and I provided him with his tuition for university and we both trusted him. Okello demonstrated many times that he genuinely cared for us. I suspect it was the corrupting influence of money that led Okello to make the choices he did.

There is a pattern emerging if I consider the outcomes of the ball given to the young boy after the retreat; the loan given to Single Pride; and the wage/tuition given to Okello, all served to create conflict. A description of the most disturbing conflict in this project however is yet to

come and again at the root of the conflict is a small amount of money I left behind with one of the NGOs for operating expenses.

Phase 3: Gulu (November 2015)⁵²

The women in Gulu had been meeting twice a month for approximately six months when the next phase of the study took place. These bi-monthly meetings focussed on establishing bonds between the women, delivering the training they identified and developing ideas for a group livelihood project. During the two, one-day workshops, I provided a summary of findings to the women which was discussed at length. Then we used multiple tools created by Chevalier and Buckles (2008) such as: 1) Option Domain,⁵³ which resulted in the women establishing four “SMART” goals, and rating those goals in terms of priority, dependency, level of effort etc.; 2) Action, Research, Training (A.R.T.)⁵⁴ was used to critically analyze the barriers to reintegration; and 3) The Tree of Means and Ends⁵⁵ was used to clarify the link between goal acquisition and action. In the end, the women created an action plan based on their analysis.

During the interviews, intragroup conflict surfaced as a serious threat to the group. Six months after the inception of WIM, the women started to feel that their bi-monthly meetings with the two NGOs were not ‘fruitful’. They said that there often wasn't an agenda or too much time was spent talking about the agenda. It appears that the meetings lacked purpose. Some of the women felt that their ideas were shut down by the other women and that the educated were

⁵² See Appendix C for phase 3 documents which include: instruments used, workshop agendas, and a short version of the action plan produced by WIM.

⁵³ “Option Domain” is a means to analyze goals within a group. It is based on the assumption that knowledge and understanding of options stems from the negotiation between group members that occurs while organizing the relationship between alternatives. This tool reveals any tendencies individuals or groups may have towards polarization, vagueness, disagreement, and resistance (Chevalier & Buckles, 2008).

⁵⁴ “Action, Research, Training” (A.R.T.) is an iterative, non-linear approach to balance the actions needed to achieve project goals with the necessary research and training components (Chevalier & Buckles (2008).

⁵⁵ “The Tree of Means and Ends” clarifies the link between goal acquisition and action (Chevalier & Buckles, 2008).

marginalizing the uneducated. Some felt that they didn't have a voice. The group would make decisions and sporadic attendees would come in and challenge the decisions. By this point, the money issue surfaced. Contributors knew that Christine (UWAP) was given 60,000 UGX (\$25CAD) for a facilitator who had cancelled and then was never replaced. They wanted to know where the money for that facilitator went. Therefore, the second workshop in this phase included scenario-based training on conflict management, non-violent communication (Rosenberg, 2012) and compassionate listening (Hanh, 2012).

Due to these accusations, Christine and her assistants from UWAP left the group in April and leadership was resumed by Vine. Under the new leadership, training was not offered and the group was told to simply “Wait until Michelle gets back” before they would resume activities. This led to a further drop in interest and engagement in the Saturday meetings.

Phase 4: Gulu (July-August 2016)⁵⁶

When I arrived to complete phase 4 in July 2016, it was clear that VINE and UWAP could not work together and that it was affecting the level of contribution from the women. We addressed this and the issue of mistrust with two workshops. The first, started with a session led by a counsellor who facilitated an open discussion on the leadership issues. Vine chose not to attend this meeting and at the end of the meeting, the women decided that the leadership should remain with UWAP.

From their inception, WIM decided that they would save together at each meeting but due to a lack of trust, saving was intermittent. In 2015, WIM took photos to respond to the question, “What do you value most?” and provided a narrative of these photos. In Montreal, with a lot of support, a photo exhibition was held and we raised \$950CAD for WIM. In 2016, as a group, we

⁵⁶ See Appendix D for instruments used and workshop agendas for phase 4.

decided that in order for them to fund a group livelihood project, and to deposit the \$950, they needed to register themselves as a “Village Savings and Loan” (VSAL). Establishing themselves as a VSAL would protect their savings and give them the opportunity to borrow from the fund.

The second workshop in this phase started with a summary of the research findings. Then the research team facilitated a discussion to create the structure, leadership and policies to become a registered savings and loan group. At the end of phase 4, the 12 remaining women of WIM re-committed their attendance and to establishing themselves as a savings group. By October 2016 however, saving and attendance at bi-monthly meetings was again very poor.

Phase 4: Pader (August 2016)

Interview data gathered from the women during this phase could not be used. However, interviews were conducted with community members, NGOs and successful savings groups.

Phase 5: Gulu (March – June 2017)⁵⁷

As a result of obtaining funding from the International Development Research Centre, decisions regarding the methods and training for this last phase were planned months in advance with Christine (representing WIM), Susan (SIP) and Okello (YIP). I made adjustments to the plan once I arrived and spoke with the young mothers. The final methods, the purpose, duration and the participants involved are outlined in Table 8 below.

⁵⁷ See Appendix E for instruments used and focus groups delivered in phase 5.

Table 8

*Phase 5 Methods***Focus Groups - One day each**

| <u>Purpose</u> | <u>Participants</u> | <u>N</u> | <u>Data</u> |
|--|---|-----------------|---|
| a) Using SAS ² tools by Chevalier and Buckles (2008), the purpose of the workshop was to discuss with WIM the: Research findings from the previous phase <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Qualities of a strong group • Achievements of the group • Barriers to group success • Obstacles they faced and the support they needed to write a constitution and open a bank account <p>Discussion. The group also engaged in a critical discussion about poverty and the role of saving in relation to poverty.</p> | WIM Research Team Local assistants/ Translator/ Facilitator | 9 3 3 | Record of discussion |
| b) After discussing the research findings, the women discussed why single mothers are marginalized and how this prevents them from achieving their goals. The women were then asked to create a new reintegration program that would address marginalization. At the end, the women discussed what they learned on this project, suggested improvements and planned activities for their group in the future. | WIM Single Pride Research Team | 12 26 3 | Field notes on observations and discussions Record of discussion |
| Skills Training | | | |
| a) The women identified a need for entrepreneurial training. Four full-day workshops were delivered. | WIM Single Pride Facilitator | 13 25 | Record of discussion |
| b) Basic Computer Literacy Training Level 1 consisted of two hours of training for five days while Level 2 provided more advanced training for 10 hours. | WIM Single Pride Facilitator | 3 12 | Record of discussion |

Interviews – 60-90 minutes

| <u>Purpose</u> | <u>Participants</u> | <u>N</u> | <u>Data</u> |
|--|--|------------------------------|---|
| <p>The purpose of the interviews was to develop a relationship with the women and to gather data that could be compared to WIM and the RP Group. Questions included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The level of social inclusion and support they receive within their communities and families • The benefits and challenges of belonging to their space • Their economic stability, amount of work • Different factors pertaining to competent functioning (self-perception, strategies for managing stress etc.) | <p>Single Pride RP Group Translator</p> | <p>20 19</p> | <p>Transcribed audio recordings Field notes on observations</p> |
| <p>The purpose of the interviews was to determine if there had been any improvement since the last meeting. Specifically:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Saturday meetings, group dynamics, challenges and accomplishments of the group • Views on current financial stability and social inclusion • Different factors pertaining to competent functioning (self-perception, strategies for managing stress etc.) | <p>WIM Translator</p> | <p>13</p> | <p>Transcribed audio recordings Field notes on observations</p> |
| <p>The purpose of these interviews was to learn about their successful and less successful projects in order to extract the elements responsible for project failure and success to share my preliminary findings.</p> | <p>CBOs, IGOs NGOs, Savings groups</p> | <p>10</p> | <p>Transcribed audio recordings Field notes</p> |
| <p>Project Evaluation: Focus Groups - Half day each</p> | | | |
| <p>Two focus groups were held, one with the YM and the other with the Research Team. Using SAS² tools, the purpose of these focus groups was to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluate the participatory processes • Evaluate factors that contributed to and impeded success of the project • Record their perceptions on the knowledge/skills contributors acquired as a result of this project. | <p>WIM Single Pride Research team Local assistants/ Translator Facilitator</p> | <p>12 26 3 3</p> | <p>Record of discussion Field notes on observations and discussions</p> |

To sum up, I used ethnographic methods (observation, participation, collating and summarizing field notes) throughout the research process and all participants and contributors participated in semi-structured interviews. In addition, PAR and Appreciative Inquiry were used

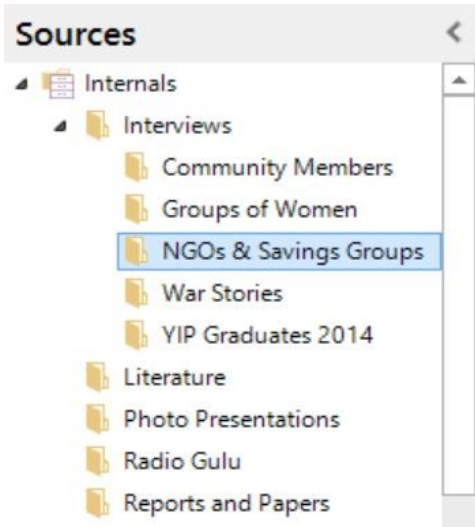
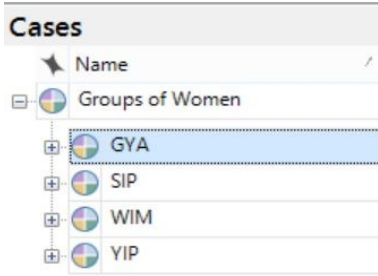
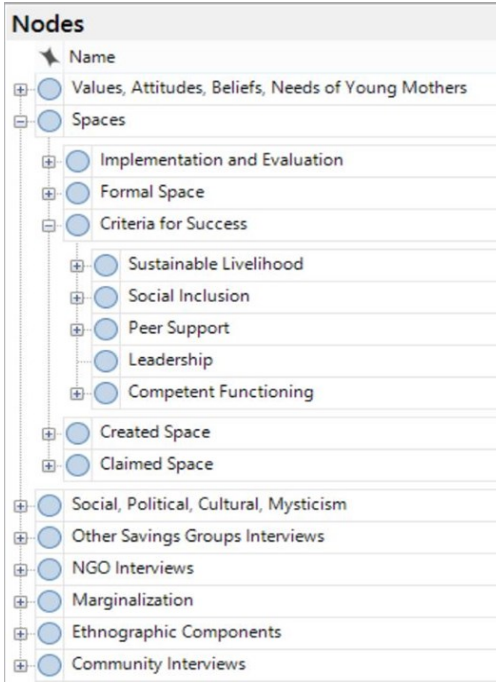
to design a space with WIM and to determine the training and support they needed. We conducted workshops and used SAS² tools during focus groups to create goals, analyze barriers, create an action plan and to evaluate the program.

Data Analysis

The analysis of qualitative data involves organizing data, creating categories, developing codes, and searching for possible patterns (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Using a qualitative data management software can take the analysis of that data much further (Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2011; Tesch, 1990). I chose NVivo 11 to facilitate the data analysis process as my data set was very large. I needed to compare three groups on three factors, and I wanted access to powerful, automated analytical tools. Particularly for large data sets, the capacity and efficiency of a good data management software such as NVivo to record, sort, match, index and link can be done easily while having continuous access to source data and the context of that data. NVivo is also very robust in conducting comparison analysis as well as multiple other types of analyses allowing themes and relationships to emerge (Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2011). NVivo does facilitate the analysis process by offering a number of query and analytic functions however it does not provide a method for the analysis nor does it produce the theory that results from the analysis. For this I required a classic qualitative method that was focused on comparative analysis which I will discuss shortly. Throughout this section, I will be referring to terms used in Nvivo which are defined below in Table 9.

Table 9

Key Terms in NVivo (NVivo, n.d.)

| | | |
|------------|--|--|
| Sources | <p>A collective term for where data is stored. This includes transcripts, literature, field notes, and newspaper articles...anything that can be coded.</p> |  |
| Case | <p>A virtual container for data on each research subject</p> |  |
| Node | <p>A virtual container that allows for the collection of content across sources to group related material together. Also known as “code”, “theme”, or “category”</p> |  |
| Child Node | <p>A sub-code or sub-theme. In this illustration, <i>Spaces</i> has a child node of “Criteria for Success” and baby nodes of “Sustainable Livelihood”, “Social Inclusion”, etc. For a full list of nodes, see Appendix F1)</p> | |

Constant Comparison Analysis

Given that the nature of this project is largely a comparison between three groups, approaches and social spaces, Glaser's (1965) constant comparative method was used as the foundation for the data analysis process. Glaser's method is comprised of four stages:

1) Comparing occurrences relevant to each node. The process begins by coding an excerpt of a data to a node and then comparing that excerpt to other coded excerpts in that category. This leads to seeing patterns or “theoretical properties” within that category as well as potential subdivisions of that node (Glaser, 1965, p. 439). For example, many of the women told me stories about profound challenges that they faced. I established a node entitled “Hardship”. As I coded the stories I found that some stories related to the loss of a loved one, financial hardship, abandonment, etc. I began to create “child nodes” to better categorize these stories. Through this process, I began to notice the types of situations that made the women angry, sad, frustrated, or defeated and these emotions provided insights into their priorities and life philosophy. Situations that evoked sadness were usually concerning the illness or loss of a child or family member and they attributed the circumstances to “God's will” whereas stories concerning the father of these children and their subsequent abandonment usually evoked anger and they attributed the situation to character flaws of the husband (“lazy”, “irresponsible”, “desperate”, “neglectful”). As I had these insights, I created and categorized memos in NVivo about these theoretical properties and revisited and revised each as I proceeded.

NVivo allows for comparison of groups, individual cases, and nodes. I ran comparisons on multiple factors to find both similarities and differences between groups. For example, is there a difference between the groups in their perceptions of “independence”? By selecting the node “independence”, I viewed all the excerpts coded to that node and compared the different individual responses of group members, summarized each group and compared groups.

As mentioned, NVivo has the capacity to associate demographic data to each participant case. This allows for a comparison between individuals and groups based on a certain variable. For example, while in the field I asked the women if they thought their life would be easier if they had a man. I had the sense that older women tended to say that life with a man would be harder while younger women believed it would be easier. When I ran the analysis in NVivo, I found that age was not a determining factor, rather, those with a lower education (less than 7 years) tended to answer that they believed that life would be easier if they had a man.

2) Integrating categories and their attributes. The next stage naturally leads to building on those theoretical properties. For example, as I examined stories of abandonment and I began to notice that not only did the women blame the man's character for his actions but some expressed a vengeful joy when the man had to face the consequences of his actions. A woman who was left by her husband with three children and no food for six months, upon his return said, "I was happy after he returned. I told him I was leaving and I had joy seeing him in pain" (Aber, personal communication, March 2015). Coding now to a new node, "vengeance", I viewed all the coded transcripts in NVivo under that node and noticed that vengeance was not only reserved for their ex-husbands but was expressed when they were angry at their child for "stubborn" behaviour. Blaming and vengeance are both coping strategies which provide insights into competent functioning. As Glaser (1965) posits, this step allows for categories to become integrated and linked to other categories.

3) Creating boundaries for the theory. This step provides boundaries for the delimiting of data. As concepts are added theory and it appears that saturation has been achieved, the researcher needs to decide how to manage non-examples and small details as they surface. Is recoding required or is the researcher satisfied and committed to the theory? If commitment is there, then this leads to eliminating and/or adding other categories which provides more focus for

the research. Without these criteria for delimiting data, it is “unlikely that the analyst will yield an integrated product; and the analyst is more likely to waste time on what might later prove to be irrelevant incidents and categories” (Glaser, 1965, p. 443).

4) Writing the theory. To write the theory, according to Glaser (1965) memos are collated under each category, summarized and then further analyzed. For example, memos containing summaries from each group on economic stability were collated, analyzed and further summarized. I returned periodically to NVivo nodes where the coded text is hyperlinked to each participant’s transcript. I could then go back into individual transcripts to clarify the context of the comment to validate the theory. To describe the process of the refinement of themes, Ori Caroleo aptly uses the metaphor of strainers. “I found the process of writing to be something like pouring the data/themes through a series of strainers, where each strainer has smaller holes. The result of this straining process is a more meaningful, rich-tasting presentation of the data” (Caroleo in Ely et al., 1997, p. 223). The description of the data analysis process below elucidates the sequence and the type of analysis that was done at each stage.

Data Analysis Process

The process began during my first field visit and evaluation at YIP where I reviewed all the transcripts, conducted an analysis of the data and wrote a report for the organization. For each subsequent field visit, I wrote memos noting patterns, links and relationships that I had observed. I started a rudimentary code list and I began manually coding all the transcripts and identified more patterns and areas for more investigation. Once the amount of data became unmanageable for a manual system, I switched to Nvivo. Using my research question and preliminary codes as a guide I looked for patterns and themes to emerge as I continued to develop codes.

Influenced by my theoretical perspective, I used these coding categories to create an initial codebook in NVivo and refined the coding that I suspected would emerge from the three social

spaces and indicators of successful reintegration namely competent functioning, social inclusion and economic stability. Themes, then codes were identified either deductively or inductively. I set up the database so that I could easily compare the three groups on multiple factors. I created “cases” to contain the data from each woman. This was particularly useful for WIM in Gulu and for YIP in Pader; for WIM I could analyze the data of at least 13 individuals over the course of two years and for the YIP I could identify changes that had occurred between 2015 and 2017. For each case, I imported the demographic data which allowed for comparative analysis between abducted and non-abducted women, no education versus high school educated etc.

Guided by Glaser's (1965) constant comparison analysis technique, I took an iterative approach. I coded a part of the data and then did an analysis on that data and wrote memos which led to questions and I ran more queries. I continuously updated the codebook and removed, added or merged codes. I kept track of interrelationships and I also used the conceptual mind mapping function of NVivo and updated it throughout the analysis process. Ely et al., (2011) astutely likens this part of the process to watching a Polaroid develop in that the picture slowly emerges. The sequence and examples of queries are as follows:

- 1) Coded young mother interview transcripts
- 2) Wrote memos summarizing each category of data (i.e. sustainable livelihood, social inclusion, etc.) for individual groups and then compared groups
- 3) Ran a) a word frequency query and b) a content analysis (explained below)
- 4) Coded all field notes and wrote memos for each field visit summarizing key patterns and theoretical properties
- 5) Conducted c) a cultural domain analysis (see below)
- 6) Coded transcripts of other informants
- 7) Ran a word frequency query and a content analysis

is also predominant and appeared 1856 times in the transcripts. This analysis prompted an expansion of my codebook and I added child nodes that reflected their relationship with money.

B/ Classical Content Analysis. In classical content analysis, themes or codes are counted, which can assist in understanding the themes that predominantly emerged (Leech and Onwuegbuzie, 2011). Again, this was a place to start the analysis. After coding all the transcripts from the women, I used the “hierarchy chart” function in NVivo to sort according the frequency of references made to a node. The snapshot provided by NVivo illustrated that more positive comments were made about family relationships than negative (86 vs. 22). However, within the community more women uttered more negative comments about their relationship with the community than positive (67 vs. 50).

C/ Cultural Domain Analysis. The preliminary content analysis led to a “cultural domain analysis” which was put forward by Spradley (1980). Cultural domains are categories of meaning. The semantic relationships define what is included inside the cultural domain. For inclusion, the formula would be: (X is a kind of Y); a cause and effect relationship is (X is a result of Y); attribution (X is a characteristic of Y) and so on. Using a word frequency query on NVivo, Table 10 demonstrates this technique to compare perspectives on young mothers.

Table 10

Example of Cultural Domain Analysis

| Young Mothers (YM) are | | | | |
|--|---|--|---|--|
| ↑ “prostitutes” “agu” (a woman who takes any kind of man) “husband snatchers” “useless” “good mother” “hardworking” “enduring” ↑ Perception of Community Perceptions (YM interview transcripts) | ↑ “frustrated” “prostitutes” “thieves” “irresponsible” “neglectful of their children” “bad listeners” ↑ Perception of YMs in general (YM interview transcripts) | ↑ “ashamed” “not proud” “not confident” “embarrassed” “fearful” “useless” “problem” “caring” “hard working” ↑ Community Perception (community member transcripts) | ↑ “useless” “spoiled” “angry” “optimistic” “independent” “strong” “confident” ↑ Self-Perception (YM interview transcripts) | ↑ resilient strong determined hopeful dedicated mother some waiting to be saved god-fearing survivors/warriors ↑ Researcher’s perception of YM (Field notes) |

Limitations of the Software

NVivo requires a fairly steep learning curve. I took a five-day online workshop, attended three webinars, read their 110 page manual and I believe I achieved an intermediate-level of functionality. It is perhaps unnecessarily complex with a slightly confusing interface and cumbersome to set up new projects. There are many other queries and analyses that can be done in NVivo but with such a large data set, the outputs it produced were at times unintelligible. Finally the software lacked some features that identify the interrelationships within data sets.

Drawing Conclusions and Verifying Data

Validity is central to quantitative research methodology which is “found in data which can be analyzed and studied using statistical tests” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011, p. 111). Qualitative researchers therefore aim instead for credibility. Although some researchers argue that validity

and credibility are similar and somewhat equivalent, Smith and Heshusius (1986) assert that validity pertains to how the researcher's theoretical perspective defines truth. If that is the case, validity in the positivist sense cannot have the same meaning in interpretivist research. "Clearly, if the two perspectives define truth differently, not only must each accept a different conceptualization of validity, each must hold to a different interpretation of the place of procedures in the claim to validity" (p. 8). Validity however is also synonymous with rigorous research. In the interpretivist paradigm, criteria to measure validity is based on both the outcome of the research and trustworthiness of the data (Lincoln et al., 2011). In describing desirable outcomes, Lincoln (2011) and her colleagues state, "Validity is found when research creates action, the capacity for positive social change, ...[and] knowledge becomes transformative" (p. 114). This is similar to the notion of catalytic validity whereby the contributors engagement with the research process leads to an awakening of their reality or what Freire (2005) would describe as "conscientization". To provide an example of catalytic validity, Akot (created space) described herself as initially arrogant and unable to interact very well with her community. At the end of the project she described an internal transformation that occurred as a result of her participation.

First of all, this group has trained us to be very respectful people... The social aspect of me has changed. I have become a better person who knows how to live with my neighbours in the market. I also know how to do business with them, how to live well with my husband and my child as well. I also have learnt how to welcome customers (personal communication, April 17, 2017).

As mentioned, this research was praxis-oriented and in the end, some of the women of WIM were transformed by the knowledge they generated and received in this project; they took

action to become a savings group and the collective knowledge generated on this project produced a new model for reintegration programming.

Threats to trustworthiness can come from methods and interpretation which stem from researcher bias (Lincoln et al., 2011; Padgett, 1998). To answer the question, was this research “interpretively rigorous”? (Lincoln et al., 2011, p. 120), I used the cultural domain analysis to obtain data for this study from multiple sources (see Table 10) and I triangulated the data using four different methods.

Creswell and Miller (2000) categorize validity procedures to one of three paradigms and cross reference this to the type of lens used to create a matrix of nine different validity procedures. As I crossed over three paradigms, and two lenses, I used validation procedures from across the matrix such as collaboration and reflexivity (which I have discussed), also prolonged engagement, triangulation, member checking and negative case analysis.

Prolonged engagement. Also referred to as “persistent observation” allows researchers to deepen their relationship with informants which increases trust and rapport leading to more authentic interactions (Flick, 2014; Lietz, Langer, & Furman, 2006). Prolonged engagement is measured by consecutive months in the field whereby over four months is considered “prolonged”. I did five field visits over the course of three years and spent 51 weeks in total in Uganda. Going back and forth to Uganda provided me with an opportunity to gather data, leave, develop hunches, go back and validate or discard these hunches. As a tool for validity, I believe prolonged engagement should not necessarily be measured in consecutive months but prolonged engagement with the participants and the data should be a consideration.

Triangulation. This is the search for confluence among different sources of data (Creswell & Miller, 2000). Flick (2014) outlines four types of triangulation: 1) Using multiple methods or two methodological approaches. The methods section in this paper outlines the multiple methods

used and the methodology section identifies the use of both ethnography and participatory action research. 2) Using different types of data from different sources. Data sources included interview transcripts, observation data (field notes), newspapers, local reports etc. 3) Using more than one research perspective. In this case, both a feminist and critical lens was used. 4) Involving two or more researchers. Triangulation was conducted throughout the five phases across three social spaces for this project with multiple stakeholders.

Member checking. This is also known as respondent validation which provides an opportunity for research contributors to review, confirm or challenge research findings. The data and interpretations are provided back to the participants who confirmed the credibility of the data and narrative account (Creswell & Miller, 2000). Findings were shared with contributors.

Negative case analysis. This is a means to disconfirm evidence. After preliminary themes are established, the researcher searches through the data for those cases that are not consistent with the themes and conducts further analysis on those cases (Creswell & Miller, 2000). Dozens of negative cases emerged particularly in the analysis of determining how the women perceive their own self-worth which pointed to a lack of homogeneity concerning self-esteem. This prompted me to use the case function in Nvivo, use the demographic information which allowed me to find what these “negative cases” had in common.

Threats to Trustworthiness

Table 11 lists potential threats to trustworthiness and the mitigation strategy.

Table 11

Enhancing Trustworthiness

| <u>Threats</u> | <u>Mitigation Strategy</u> |
|--|--|
| <p>RP Group. Contrived interview responses by the RP Group as a means obtaining financial support</p> <p>WIM. Informants telling me what they thought I wanted to hear (social desirability)</p> | <p>For the RP Group, interviews were conducted by a Ugandan to remove the foreigner from the mix. The interviewer probed further if the participant appeared to be providing contrived responses.</p> <p>Prolonged Engagement. For WIM, the hope was that by establishing trust and rapport that they would be less likely to provide misleading information.</p> <p>Triangulation. In Gulu, the results from the interviews were triangulated with community interviews, observations made during the workshops and while at the homes of the young mothers. For the interviews completed in Pader, data was triangulated with interviews completed with community members.</p> |
| <p>Misinterpretation of: interview transcripts; information gathered on the culture, traditions, politics, social relationships etc.</p> | <p>Member checking. After each interview with WIM, a summary was created for each transcript. At the next interview, the summary from the previous interview was read and the contributor validated that it was correct or I made adjustments. Furthermore, project-related information that was provided in the interviews was validated at the beginning of focus groups and used as a place to start the next phase.</p> |
| <p>WIM. Power dynamics interfering with the co-construction of knowledge</p> | <p>Collaboration. WIM participated in the program design, development and evaluation. Roles and expectations were discussed at the beginning of each phase, in hope that WIM would see the collaborative nature of this project. The research team collaboratively created workshop agendas and provided input into the interview questions.</p> <p>Member checking. Research findings were shared with WIM. A few WIM members offered input and provided clarification</p> <p>Reflexivity. I reflected about the weight of my influence when a decision regarding WIM was concerned. I was keenly aware of the power I could potentially exert in this project and I did what I could to ensure that the project evolved out of the voiced needs of the young mothers.</p> <p>Triangulation. After transcripts were completed for interviews conducted in Gulu, each was validated by the translator. Interviews for Pader were recorded in Luo. In Gulu, Susan checked the accuracy of the transcripts with the recording.</p> <p>Triangulation. Susan submitted a summary of each workshop which I triangulated with my own notes. According to Flick (2014) this “weeds out false or extreme views” (p. 196).</p> <p>Transcripts were not “cleaned up”, summarized or paraphrased, rather ambiguities were clarified by the translator or transcriber.</p> |

| <u>Threats</u> | <u>Mitigation Strategy</u> |
|--|--|
| Researcher bias | <p>Triangulation. Each chapter of this dissertation was reviewed by Susan, who participated in the last four phases of this project and who had “insider knowledge”. She provided suggestions where further analysis was needed and pointed out misinterpretations.</p> <p>Reflexivity. Researcher bias was mitigated through the process of reflexivity and Susan’s input into my findings and conclusions.</p> <p>Negative cases. When discrepancies in the data occurred, I conducted further analysis.</p> |
| Project outcomes are unique only to this project | Although my project was on a much smaller scale, the participatory processes and outcomes were compared and found to align with the McKay et al. (2007-2009) PAR Project. |

Ethical Considerations

This research follows the Canadian Tri-Council Policy Statement on Ethical Conduct of Research Involving Humans. I obtained permission to conduct each phase of this study with a vulnerable population from Concordia’s Research Ethics and Compliance Unit (Certificate #30002783). Ethical practices such as informed consent (see above), fairness, confidentiality, “do no harm”, respect for participant autonomy and privacy was discussed with the research team, translators and young mothers. The procedure followed for each is described below.

Fairness

To develop trust, fairness and transparency, research results were shared with both the research team and the young mothers. Also in the spirit of fairness was managing expectations. By asking participants to consider what they need to improve their lives ran the risk of raising expectations that change will be forthcoming. We continuously discussed our roles and did our best to manage expectations.

Privacy and Confidentiality

- 1) The consent form includes a confidentiality agreement.⁵⁸ Also, the need to respect each woman's privacy was stressed during all workshops and interviews.
- 2) Research team members and elders also signed both a consent form and a confidentiality agreement which underlines the importance of not repeating anything revealed by the young mothers or during the research process.
- 3) The research team knew the "real" identity of participants, but identifying information was not disclosed in any publication or conference presentation. Each participant was allocated a number and their data was stored on a password protected system.

Local Research Ethics Approval

I discussed my research with the Dean at Gulu University to determine whether I needed to obtain local ethics approval. Given that: 1) the research was extremely localized, 2) engaged very few participants; 3) one of the research team members is a lecturer at Gulu University; and 4) ethics approval had been obtained from Concordia University; the Dean was satisfied that the research team would adhere to ethical research practices.

Summary

This chapter outlined methodological considerations and research methods implemented in this study. It began with a description of the feminist, critical lens that frames and informs the design of this project. I then described the data collection methods; and data analysis techniques I used. The chapter concluded with an explanation regarding the verification of data, trustworthiness as well as the ethical considerations.

⁵⁸ A sample of a consent form can be found in Appendix F2.

In the next three chapters I will address the research questions and discuss my findings. In Chapter 4, I examine the barriers to reintegration. In Chapters 5, I compare and contrast the three social spaces, the achievements of the participants and contributors regarding social inclusion, competent functioning and financial stability. In the final chapter, I provide recommendations through a description of a new model for reintegration programming.

Chapter 4: Findings and Discussion - Barriers to Reintegration

Asciro (GYA-formal space) developed a serious disease in her foot while in captivity and could not effectively run when under fire from government forces. The rebels eventually left her behind. At that time, she spent four days hiding and crawling in the bush without food and water. When the rebels found her she said, “I had lost the shape of a human being. I had given up on life! I was waiting for someone to come and kill me.” When she returned to the rebel’s camp, a group of women started encouraging her. “These women told me that I was not the only one who was going through a hard time, which was not starting with me and wouldn't end with me. I had to have the courage and hope that things would get better. That made me calm down. Otherwise, I would have taken away my life.” When Asciro finally escaped, she learned that her parents had died. She moved to Gulu to attend a reintegration program but had no relatives just a few friends that she had spent time with in the bush. When asked how she was treated by her community she said,

The community treats me well. No one knows the story behind my captivity... I always want to act as normal as possible. I have seen friends who have been abused because they were from the bush. They were being called names like ‘Kony’ and something like that. To me, that is not how I wanted to be called. I never wanted to dwell on the past. I wanted to stay as normally as possible, so as not to get abused by the rest of the people (personal communication, June 22, 2017).

After being abducted at 11 years-old, spending 15 years in the bush, forced to be a wife, struggling to survive, contemplating suicide; Asciro returned home to find herself completely alone. It challenges the imagination to even consider how she is able to hide her tortuous

experiences and “act normal” in order to be accepted by the community. Aciro’s experience is not uncommon and illuminates her strength and resilience, as well as the barriers to reintegration.

In Chapter 1, the literature review revealed several barriers to reintegration which include:

- 1) The exclusion of women from Disarmament Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) resulted in limited opportunities for formerly abducted women to advance their education, and achieve a sustainable livelihood.
- 2) Culturally imperialistic views of therapy and healing were imported by Western NGOs which subordinated indigenous therapeutic approaches. Counsellors were not properly trained which proved to be largely inadequate in many cases in helping the women process the trauma they experienced during the war.
- 3) The post-war deterioration of the clan and extended family has left the women with an inadequate support system leaving them to live on their own.
- 4) The shift in gender roles post-war is destabilizing for both the women and the community, causing traditions to be challenged.
- 5) Individually, some of the formerly abducted young mothers report feelings of low self-worth which is common among former abductees and those who have experienced sexual violence.

The women on this project⁵⁹ confirmed the barriers identified in Chapter 1 and identified other social, economic, cultural, and political barriers which serve to silence them; keep them uneducated and living in poverty. In this chapter, I will present their stories which address the first research question: What factors (social, political, historical, cultural, educational) impede

⁵⁹ To recap: Women in Motion or WIM comprise the created space; Single Pride (SIP) is the claimed space; and Youth in Pader (YIP) and Gulu Youth Advancing (GYA) make up Reintegration Program (RP Group) or the formal space.

the successful reintegration of formerly abducted and war-affected young single mothers in Northern Uganda?

The most consistent culprit that maintains their marginalization and impedes their reintegration is patriarchal values. Given a feminist lens, the framework of marginalization, and a social ecological approach, this research question concerning the barriers to reintegration essentially becomes an examination of the women's oppression within different layers of the socio-ecology. It should be noted that lines are blurred between these various forces as they are interconnected and do not operate in isolation.

In this chapter, I will examine the barriers at each layer beginning with the political forces that marginalize. At the source are neoliberal policies, and globalization leading to political alienation and a lack of representation of marginalized groups in the political sphere. Briefly, neoliberal policies create winners and losers and a system based on meritocracy. The "losers" have low levels of education; engage in manual labour, unqualified jobs, or entrepreneurial endeavours. They receive few benefits from changing economic conditions whereby the "winners" tend to be well-educated middle class citizens (Kriesi et al., 2006).

Oskarson (2010) argues that this creates political alienation which is a decrease in political trust and involvement; and includes a feeling of distance and "non-includedness" in the political sphere. This points to the lack of political equality these women experience as political equality is demonstrated through political participation (Oskarson, 2010). In this section, I will focus on the causes and consequences behind the lack of representation of women in Parliament; how the system of meritocracy excludes the women from economic benefits or accessing legal resources, and how the women describe their experience of political alienation. In other words, this chapter focusses on Hall's property of differentiation discussed in Chapter 1 and explains how social, cultural, political or economic factors are used to differentiate the marginalized. At the end of the

first section, I argue that the church is well-positioned to be a political advocate for impoverished women and for social change, however, they continue to be a non-political force.

Political Forces

Representation and Perceptions of Women in Politics

Patriarchal values present a barrier to entering the political arena in Uganda while many other African nations have become more accepting of women in powerful political positions. For example, in 2018, Ethiopian members of parliament elected Sahle-Work Zewde as the country's first female president. Sahle-Work's platform reflects a commitment to gender equality and peace (Atoma, 2018). In the 2013 election in Rwanda, women secured 64% of the seats in Parliament (United Nations: Rwanda, 2013). In Uganda, there is an effort on behalf of government to achieve greater representation of women. In fact, in 1989, Museveni was one of the first leaders in Africa to introduce a quota system for women to obtain seats in Parliament (Clayton, Josefsson, & Wang, 2017) and the Ugandan Constitution was modified to ensure that each district included at least one female representative at the local level (FES Editorial Team, 2018). Nonetheless, in February 2016, a national election was held in Uganda and women secured 34% of seats (Refki, 2017). Political dialogue, concerning gender issues, generally, is instigated by females. For example, a study analyzing 14 years of speech transcripts from 500 unique MPs within the Uganda Parliament, the researchers found that women in either quota or elected seats were more likely than men to bring forward gender equality issues (Clayton et al., 2017) which underlines the necessity to have adequate female representation in government.

Despite efforts from the Ugandan government, women continue to be underrepresented in Parliament, Districts and Municipalities. A survey conducted by Afro Barometer measured the scope of resistance. Based on a sample of 2400 citizens in Kampala, the researchers found that

34.8% of male respondents strongly agree (26.4%) or agree (6.4%) with the statement “Men make better political leaders than women and should be elected rather than women”, compared to 16.9% of the female respondents who agreed with the statement (Datzberger & Le Mat, 2018). As described in Chapter 1, Glick and Fiske (2011) assert that “benevolent sexism” rewards women if they demonstrate conventional roles such as nurturers and remain dependent on men financially or for protection. “Hostile sexism” frames women negatively if they try to appropriate power from men. Since half the population surveyed does not see women in political positions, this supports benevolent sexism and rewards women for maintaining their roles which is outside the political arena. Later in the chapter I will provide an example of hostile sexism where female activists are framed negatively for venturing outside of their roles.

To summarize, the marginal number of females in Parliament are largely silent and overall there is a lack of representation of women which leads to further oppression (Millet, 2016) as there is not a strong voice countering patriarchal values. As an example, the “Anti-Pornography Act” serves to sexualize and politicize women’s bodies. The men in Parliament tend to be older, (66% are over 50), Catholic (over 50%) and hold traditional views (Kulifu, 2018). The “Anti-Pornography Act” was signed in 2014 and prohibited “any representation of the sexual parts of a person for primarily sexual excitement” (Fallon, 2018, para 3). Simon Lokodo, Uganda's Ethics and Integrity Minister and a former Catholic priest, advocated that women wearing clothing that stopped above the knee should be arrested which was not the intent of the Act. In several parts of Uganda, many women at that time were publically stripped of their mini-skirts and left naked on the streets (Mwesigwa, 2015). In 2017, the Public Service Ministry put forward a national bill which prohibited women in the public service from wearing mini-skirts, tight-pants, sheer blouses or from having long fingernails (Atuhaire, 2017). There was a large protest by women who targeted the Ministry. When asked to comment on the bill and the protest, one official from

the Ministry said that, “Wearing a mini-skirts to work is tantamount to sexually harassing male colleagues” (Atuhaire, 2017, para 22). What underlies this statement is *hostile sexism* which Millet (2016) calls the act of the “castrating female” or the “castrating bitch” who dares to choose what she wants to wear and thereby threatens the social and political prerogatives of dominant males (p. 3). Also at the heart of this issue is a tension between adopting western “freedoms” and maintaining the tradition of dressing modestly. Some of the young mothers commented on (what was renamed) “the mini skirt law”. Although none mentioned that it was an outrage that Parliament would enter a woman’s closet; they did not agree that their choices should be taken away.

There was a law in Parliament that was almost passed on miniskirts and decency. Women shouldn't wear miniskirts and if it had to be short, it had to be below the knee. I thought that was not a very good decision. I think you should have the right to put on a short or a long skirt (Agutu, personal communication, May 13, 2015).

When WIM (created space) and SIP (claimed space) were merged for entrepreneurial training, at first they were all very respectful to each other but by the third meeting, tensions arose. Lamaro describes a situation where it was clear that the women gave credence to the patriarchal discourse regarding proper wear for women.⁶⁰ “It wasn’t a good idea to join SIP and WIM together because it might have caused us a fight. There were two of WIM girls who were wearing short skirts and we had some of the Single Pride women comment that we are prostitutes (personal communication, April 17, 2017).

⁶⁰ To recap: Women in Motion or WIM comprise the created space; Single Pride (SIP) is the claimed space; and Youth in Pader (YIP) and Gulu Youth Advancing (GYA) make up Reintegration Program (RP Group) or the formal space

bell hooks (1984) argues that women are oppressed by dominating institutions and socialized to maintain the status quo. “Male supremacists’ ideology encourages women to believe we are valueless and obtain value only by relating to or bonding with men. We are taught that our relationships with one another diminish rather than enrich our experience” (p. 43). Instead of rejecting the male notion of decency and creating bonds as women, the group bonded with the male notion of decency and “othered” those who disregarded the social construct.

To return to the original point, the Anti-Pornography Act robbed women of their choices which further distanced them— enforcing political alienation. Economic marginalization as a result of globalization, as mentioned at the beginning of this section, also leads to political alienation. At the heart of modernization is a meritocratic system which leaves marginalized groups behind through differentiation which is “the establishment and maintenance distinct identities through boundary maintenance” (Hall et al., 1994, p. 26).

Meritocracy. A predominant narrative by the Ugandan government includes presenting modernization and globalization as a utopian solution to poverty; urging Northerners to “move on”, “be productive” and to “leave the past behind” (Personal communication, May 2014). I am going to digress here for a moment. Debby Irving (2018), author of *Waking up White* discusses white supremacy which is the hierarchy of beings conceived during the creation of the world order with the White man at the top and plant life at the bottom and every race in between (Irving, 2018). Part of White supremacy is the creation of the “other” which is done through a system of meritocracy. Those who work hard make it. Those who don’t make it didn’t work hard enough.

As a child, Irving was surrounded by people who told their grandparents’ immigration stories of those who arrived to America with nothing and made it through hard work and by “pulling up their boot straps” and acquiring the American Dream. That myth has been imported

to Uganda. Museveni is using meritocracy to create the Northern “other” and to relieve the government of their economic and social responsibility to the region. Hence the reason the North is poor, is because they are lazy and need to “pull up their boot straps”.

In a recent newspaper article entitled, “Laziness Killing Development”, Museveni scolds the country for the growing poverty in the country. He says, “I have come to tell you about laziness. If you are not generating income when everything revolves around money, how do you think you will survive? Production by all must be emphasized if true prosperity is to be realized” (Rumanazi, 2017). This represents a very early view of development theory whereby the poor are responsible for being in poverty (Ferguson, 1990). “In the ‘development’ version of things, ‘less developed’ means historically retarded, and poverty appears as a result of not yet having been introduced to the modern world” (Ferguson, 1990, p. 56). These narratives have gained currency and trickled down to influence the design decisions and approaches adopted by reintegration programs. I will elaborate on this notion in the next chapter. But for now, given the research on the detrimental effects of globalization on social structures, it is important to ponder who benefits most from globalization (Wing, 2017). Though the women of WIM and SIP did not identify economic policies as a force of marginalization, they are very much aware of how patriarchal values play out and limit their political engagement.

Political Barriers: WIM and Single Pride. The purpose of the half-day focus group which was conducted with both WIM and SIP was to have a critical discussion about marginalization, how it prevents single mothers from achieving their goals, and to brainstorm for some strategies that the women could use to make steps towards challenging the patriarchy. As mentioned in Chapter 1, Burman and McKay (2007) found that the young women they interviewed in Sierra Leone did not reflect rather they wanted to forget about the past. Based on

the depth of their answers, I did find that the women in SIP and WIM demonstrated Hall's (1994) principle of reflectiveness when in discussion concerning their marginalization.



Figure 14. Focus group with SIP and WIM. (2017, May 27). UWAP: Gulu, Uganda.

When asked about political barriers, the women said that during elections, women are “used as tool to clap hands and to cheer (see

Figure 15). They don't consider us to be decision-makers but just as fun”. “Single women are discouraged from campaigning for elected positions.” “If a single woman goes for a Local Councillor (LC) position, she will be asked for the name of her husband. If she is single, she will be called a ‘prostitute’ and she will shy away.” “Men are discouraging and say things like, ‘A mere woman cannot win the election or govern us.’ With such kind of threats, the women tend to get discouraged” (Focus Group, personal communication, May 27, 2017). The damaging impact of patriarchal values goes much deeper than discouraging women from running for office; it puts them in a position where they largely cannot see themselves as having power, being decision-makers or working towards social change (Millet, 2016). There are exceptions such as Stella Nyanzi whose activism I will discuss shortly. Also, one of the young mothers, Akot, on this

project had the courage to campaign for the position of LC1 in charge of finances. She is the oldest member of SIP which could have influenced her popularity and acceptance. Although she wasn't successful, during the campaign she gleaned a lot of support.



Figure 15. Hired female dancers during the national election campaign. Layibi, Uganda. August 2016

Protest in Apaa. Other women have stood up but only to have been silenced. As an example, in May 2015, a number of elderly Acholi women staged a nude protest in Apaa, a town on the border of two districts. According to the BBC, the government decided to take the ancestral land of the people for a game reserve (Byaruhanga, 2015). The dispute is based on the demarcation of the land which is “guided by a colonial map” with the neighbouring district, Adjumani (Spear News, 2017, para. 12).

The women of Apaa have all lost family members during the war and have been abused by the security forces for years. For many, their livestock had been killed and the land was all that they had left (Byaruhanga, 2015). When two members of Parliament went to Apaa, the

community was so angry, that these officials almost got lynched (Kafeero, 2015). To protest this loss of land, the women in Apaa took off their clothes as pointing the breasts towards someone is considered a grave curse.⁶¹ Aronda Nyakairima, a top army commander, went to negotiate with the community. He died a few months after the Apaa protest. People believe that he lost his life as a result of curse placed by the women of Apaa (Ajok Susan, personal communication, May 15, 2015). To date, the dispute has not been resolved and has escalated into violence where 7,000 people living in Apaa have been displaced (Spear News, 2017, para. 12).

This protest caught the attention of several of the young mothers in WIM. Most thought the protest was a good thing, some felt uncomfortable with the nudity but most commented that they perceived these women as brave. “I saw in the newspaper where women were protesting about their land in Apaa. The women undressed naked. I think these women did the right thing. They have the right to keep their land (Laker, personal communication, May 18, 2015). Revealing their breasts as “a weapon of last resort” is drastic but it also demonstrates agency in defying gender norms.

Views on political engagement and political alienation. Whether they agreed with the need to protest or disagreed with the methods, only two young mothers from WIM have ever engaged in civil action. The first petitioned against a bill that would prohibit the corporal punishment of children. “I don’t agree with children’s rights. Children nowadays are so stubborn. So the issue of children’s rights is making children more big-headed. I think children should be talked to very politely but it shouldn’t be a law that children should have rights” (Ocwee, personal communication, May 19, 2015).

⁶¹ In Africa, women have used their bodies as a weapon of last resort when they find themselves pushed to the edge. It is very powerful and always effective in that it draws attention to the issue under dispute. The act of public stripping is even more potent if the women are married and/or mothers (Tamale, 2016, p. 7).

I think this comment is particularly interesting if it is considered in relation to the comment made by an elder (male) quoted in Chapter 1, “Women have been so spoiled because of women’s rights” (Adam Branch, 2008, p. 12). This elder is found to resist women’s rights while this woman resists children’s rights. Perhaps the resistance is related to sharing power or control.

The second young mother who engaged in civil action went to the police to get child support from her husband. When she went to the station, she was told, “No, we can’t do it. If you want us to help you then you’ll have to give us some money” (Amondi, personal communication, May 18, 2015). It is no surprise that when the women were asked why they do not engage in civic action, the WIM women said that they felt that they were powerless to effect change. Given the cost of corruption, these women do not have the funds to obtain the justice they need. Other women mentioned that they were not educated enough to understand policies or politics.

With the exception of two of the WIM women, all the women believed that women had the right to get involved in politics and to protest. “It’s everyone’s right to protest or to be in politics. It’s not a man’s domain because in the Human Rights, everyone has the right to do, *even* women (Laker, personal communication, May 18, 2015). Although many felt it was their right to have a place in the political arena, they qualified their comment and said that “even” women or “even” children should have this right which indicates a perception of a subordinate position in society. Notwithstanding, to stand up and protest has social consequences. “The community views them [protestors] in two ways, the community sees them as women who are very brave and other women see them as being useless and senseless” (Ayaa, personal communication, May 14, 2015). These polarized views provide another indication of gender norms in flux and it demonstrates that women who do not appear as passive, powerless or as victims are abnormal in some way (hooks, 1984).

Those who did not agree that women should have a voice politically, held very traditional views about the role of men and women. “I think women are not as active as men. I think if men are more involved they will support the women where they are going astray. The women tend to concentrate less and the men put more effort in politics” (Apiyo, personal communication, May 14, 2015). This comment appears to reflect a view that women are not as capable as men due to their limited capacity of concentration. “I think it should have been mostly a man’s work. It’s shameful for a woman to be inside a job like politics and protesting. As mothers, we are made to cool down harsh situations...” (Ayot, personal communication, May 17, 2015). These two comments reflect a belief that the traits of inactivity or passivity, lack of ability to concentrate, and mediation are a natural part of a woman’s nature. Dr. Stella Nyanzi refutes this gender-biased view of the nature of women through her political activism which “naturally” leads to tension and debate throughout the country as she challenges gender norms.

Dr. Stella Nyanzi. In 2016, Stella Nyanzi, a professor at Makerere University staged a protest concerning her unfair treatment by her tyrannical boss at the university. She stripped naked and yelled profanities while reporters video-taped the incident. Even though there are no written laws concerning public nudity, Nyanzi was arrested, spent a month in jail and lost her job (Tamale, 2016). On Facebook, Nyanzi wrote,

The fact that Makerere University preferred to defend my oppressive boss over me was revealing. The university's commitment to protect Mamdani in his misogyny and abuse of office was cemented by the extension of his directorship this year although the man is past retirement age (July 24, 2016).

In 2017, Nyanzi made the news again. She protested Museveni’s broken campaign promise to supply sanitary pads to all primary school girls. Nyanzi was infuriated when Janet *Museveni*, the Minister of Education and Sport, announced that the funds were not available. In an

interview Nyanzi stated, “What malice plays in the heart of a woman who sleeps with a man who finds money for millions of bullets, billions of bribes, and uncountable ballots to stuff into boxes but she cannot ask him to prioritize sanitary pads for poor schoolgirls?” (Peralta, 2018, para 31).

Nyanzi then launched a crowd-funding page to raise money to buy and distribute sanitary pads herself. She fought back and on Facebook, criticized the government and called President Museveni “a pair of buttocks” and Mrs. Museveni “empty headed” (Slawson, 2017). Nyanzi posted, “That is what buttocks do. They shake, jiggle, shit and fart. Museveni is just another pair of buttocks... Ugandans should be shocked that we allowed these buttocks to continue leading our country” (Slawson, 2017, p. para 8). She was again arrested (in the middle of night by plain-clothed police) and charged with cyber harassment.

To delegitimize her, and as another example of *hostile sexism*, prosecutors put pressure on the court to have her undergo a psychiatric evaluation. (She must be mad if she is not passive and a victim). Her lawyers fought against it and she avoided the evaluation but the media continued to post unflattering photos of her which showed her to be dishevelled, wild-eyed and collapsing to reinforce the narrative of madness (e.g. Kato & Wandera, 2017; Ngugi, 2017).

Laws that sexualize women’s bodies; the barriers to entering politics; the lack of female representation in all levels of government; and the portrayal of female activists as mad and senseless, all provide a powerful pejorative narrative about the combination of women, power and politics and reinforce the notion that these things don’t mix. As mentioned, relatively few women in post-war Uganda received DDR benefits; they were excluded from obtaining vocational training and accelerated education and from obtaining psychosocial counselling. Not only is the voice of women and their needs and concerns silent in government, but the current discourse discourages women from standing up and making their concerns known which is a significant barrier to reintegration. “Normative advances notwithstanding, glaring gaps exist in

the protection of girls and women in Uganda due to lack of political will, institutional failures, lack of resources and oversight capacities by the state and international actors (Murungi, 2011). To this list of the culpable, Murungi should have included the church which could potentially exert its influence to improve the plight of women and girls. This leads to attempting to unravel the role of this powerful religious institution and what position it takes in civil society.

The Church as a Political Non-Force

The Ugandan Catholic church has been seen to support democracy, clean government, human and women's rights. The church (with its significant coffers) has engaged in many successful development projects and encouraged their parishioners to participate in elections and in the local council system (Kassimir, 1998). However, there is a striking concordance with their political discourse and that of the National Resistance Movement (NRM). For example, first, they did not pressure the government to engage in peaceful negotiations concerning the civil war with the LRA until 1996 (Kassimir, 1998). Second, they have kept silent regarding critical issues such as land reform, the arrest of journalists, and treatment of opposing party leaders. Third, and most importantly, the church has not spoken out regarding Uganda's most contentious political issue, that is, the need to abolish the one-party system (Kassimir, 1998).

In the past, the Catholic church openly supported the Democratic Party through sermons and publications and their aim for a multi-party system but three years after Museveni came into power, their position was that "[Whatever] form of government Uganda should adopt, we must state clearly that the church does not advocate any one form" (Kassimir, 1998, p. 61). This about-face and support of the NRM has continued which is unfortunate. There are instances of grass-root opposition by local priests. For example, at Holy Rosary, a Catholic church in Gulu, Father Eric Uma has fearlessly preached about changing the government to a more democratic

one. On Sundays, he has been known to advocate for change and also has pointed out some of the injustices in this government (Ajok Susan, personal communication, July 3, 2018). However, challenging the government goes against the official position of the church. John Waliggo, a scholar on Uganda's Catholic Church stated that “Given the immense influence that the Christian churches have over the majority of the population in Uganda, it is evident that they have not done enough to mobilise women, youth, workers, children and farmers to stand up to defend their rights” (Waliggo in Kassimir, 1998, p. 68). The Ugandan Catholic church is well positioned in civil society to mobilize civilians to work towards social change and to challenge social inequities but they largely remain silent which is in sharp contrast to liberation theology practiced in many Latin American countries.

Liberation theology, a term coined by Gustavo Gutierrez, a Peruvian Roman Catholic priest, is a Latin American school of thought that advocates for the church to concentrate its efforts on relieving poverty and oppression. Grounded in Marxism, Christian faith, and praxis; liberation theology is critical of religions supporting capitalist, oppressive social structures and believe it is the role of church to promote mass participation in class struggles, obtain justice for the poor and enhance human dignity (Berryman, 1987).

In Brazil in the 1950s, the church supported a mass peasant literacy campaign based on Freirean teaching methods in an attempt to raise critical consciousness about oppression. Throughout the 1960s the Brazilian church continued to expand their efforts for social change and in 1964 with peasant groups and radical student organizations, the church was part of a massive protest calling for “God, country and family” (Sigmund, 1992, p. 24). Meanwhile in the 1960s, the Ugandan church remained silent while hundreds of activists were detained without trial (Okuku, 2003). It could be argued that the Latin American roots of liberation theology are not replicable in an African context. However, in Kenya the church has played a significant role

in encouraging public discourse on democracy, contributed to establishing pluralism, and openly criticized the government for excessive use of power (Okuku, 2003). Kenyan Rev. B. Njoroge Kariuki declared that “The church has a duty beyond the rescue of victims of oppression. It must try to destroy the cause of oppression. The church will have to enter the political arena to do this” (Okuku, 2003, p. 86). Conversely the Ugandan church has mediated state power. Okuku (2003) attributes this to the acrimonious relationship between the Anglican and Catholic churches in Uganda who are unable to present a united front to further democracy.

The Ugandan churches have been presented as a political non-force and as largely advocates of the NRM who pose a significant barrier to reintegration as this political party continues to marginalize the North. The other political barriers I described include neoliberal policies that have led to the economic marginalization of the uneducated; a lack of representation of women in government; and patriarchal values have led to political alienation whereby women are deterred from entering the political sphere and do not feel included. Moving now to the next layer, I will discuss two social/cultural forces that act as a barrier to reintegration, namely the deterioration of the extended family and clan and changing gender roles.

Social/Cultural Forces

Deterioration of the Extended Family and Clan

The young mothers often reminisced about how good things were in the past. They said that in the past, extended families took in single mothers and others who needed extra care. Men were responsible and took care of their families. Now single mothers need to rely on their nuclear family, in-laws or themselves for support. Yet one of the standard offerings of reintegration programs is family reunification (Annan et. al, 2009). Reintegration programs need to consider that post-program, women will not necessarily move back with their families. In a

study by Akello (2006) and her colleagues, the 300 youth who had attended a reintegration program between 2004-2005 were not living with their families or in their communities three months after they left the program. In another study with 57 formerly abducted women who had been back from the war 6-10 years, 70% had not reintegrated in that they continued to experience social exclusion, they were not living in their communities of origin, and did not have a sustainable livelihood (Kiconco, 2015). The concept of reintegration, Kiconco argues, is misleading as it is not a feasible option for most formerly abducted women as they have no communities to return to, they are stigmatized and they have lost too many relatives.

Ocolo (claimed space) was not abducted but lost both parents during the war and most of her family members but she managed to complete most of high school. She married Akella, an engineer and stayed in her in-law's home and took care of the household. The husband's family decided that she was not educated enough to be married to Akella so they literally pushed her out the door with her three children. She then went to live on her own.

We used to live in a community where everyone is treated the same way and we had extended families where people would eat together and also work as a team. It has however changed and not many people within the community can accept to take care of orphans and other disadvantaged people. Most of the families nowadays are nuclear and any additional members to the family are seen as a burden. The community fears responsibility and they always think that if they are nice to the single mothers then they will ask for help. The community is more selfish than it was because of the high cost of living... In most cases, if you don't have your real parents, it's very hard for the outside relatives to support you. They don't see you as their problem. All I have got is my uncle who offers me small help by giving me advice, or at times little financial support if I need so (Ocolo, personal communication, March 29, 2017).

The fragmentation of the family is a barrier to reintegration as it begs the question:

Reintegrate into what? “The non-traditional living situations of girl mothers in war-affected countries are thus altering household patterns and kinship arrangements” (Mckay, et al., 2006, p. 2). I would argue that it is the deterioration of kinship arrangements that is leading to the non-traditional living situation of girl mothers. This trend became evident post-war for a number of reasons. First, new economic policies created winners and losers as mentioned, and plunged many Northern families into poverty. Families no longer have the means to take care of extended family members. Second, as Aciro described at the beginning of this chapter, some of the women chose not to go back to their villages and chose to move to larger cities to obtain some anonymity and distance from their role in war.

Pre-war, it was the elders who were largely responsible for social regulation, namely punishment for violating social norms. In Chapter 1, I described the changing role of elders and chiefs and how they have been replaced by Local Councillors and consequently have lost their leadership role, and the political power they held (Branch, 2008). The Resident District Commissioner (RDC) of Pader explained that defilement and domestic violence has risen in the district, as the traditional mechanisms in place to intervene no longer exist. In the past, when a man beat his wife, the family would be brought in and elders such as the woman’s grandfather or grandmother would provide restitution. Today this is broken because of the war (RDC, Pader District, March 30, 2017). Now that their role is redundant, it puts into question whether men now feel freer to choose whether or not they stay with their wives and children while women and children are left with a loss of stability and security.

Changing Gender Roles

It wasn't like that before the war. Men were very responsible and used to take very good care of their families. When people came to live in the IDP camps, the younger [men] grew up with a negative attitude towards work. During displacement, there was no land to farm so many of the men who grew up at that time did not like to dig [to farm]. After the war, they went back home and they still do not want to take up the responsibility of feeding their families by digging (Abuya, personal communication, March 30, 2017).

I would say that the war has done a lot of bad things to people... [Women] need men to live a good life with their family. But men think they are doing the right thing by just having fun. But with women it brings a dispute in the marriage life, which brings break-ups in marriage. So all of this came about because people gathered from the villages and came to [IDP] camp life where there was no digging and nothing to do (Aluoch, personal communication, March 29, 2017).

A lot of women spoke about the post-war trend of men shirking their responsibilities by pointing to the idleness in the camps during the war and for the taste many men developed for alcohol while in camps. Between the three groups on this project, 19 women shared stories about abandonment. Most had been abandoned by their husbands; others by their fathers and one by her mother. The most common reason was polygamy. Other reasons included that the husband's family did not approve of her but for many, the reason was unknown—the man simply left.

The men still continue to insult us and talk to us arrogantly. These men want to use the girls and get away with it. They continue to pretend and lie to you that they will be the man, the good man that you would need in your life, but in the end they impregnate you. They go tell their friends how they sexually abused you and how useless you are and no action is taken against them (Adongo, personal communication, December 1, 2015).

During a focus group with SIP, the women were put in four groups and asked to draw a picture in response to the question, “How does it feel to be a single mother?” With one exception, the groups described how they currently struggle with abandonment. Figure 16 below illustrates the difficulty single mothers have in explaining to their children their financial struggles and why the father is no longer part of the family.



Figure 16. Group 2 Drawing - Focus group with Single Pride. UWAP: Gulu, Uganda Theocharides, A. (Photographer). (2017, March 25). Reprinted with permission.

The reason we have come up with this picture is that we want to show what Single Pride is going through. This is the mother of two children. The husband has left the mother and children. The child is asking the mom, ‘Will we go to school?’ The mother is saying, ‘I don’t have money for food and school fees.’ Here is the house that the woman lives in. You can see it looks nice but really it is broken (Group 2, personal communication, March 25, 2017).

Before the civil war, gender roles for both women and men were clear. Women took care of the home and children and the man provided for his family. “Women didn’t yearn for school

or money. Women would say, ‘Someone’s son is going to school for me.’ A woman’s life was completely in the hands of a man” (Ajok Susan, personal communication, March 14, 2018). Now many men are no longer providing and in fact are contributing to changing gender roles as women have no choice but to live independently. As I was reading these sad tales of abandonment, I started to notice that although stress and struggle was part of the process of rebuilding their lives, many of the women reacted with determination and fortitude.

About myself, as a mother, I will say that I have tried, and I will continue to try and this is what I have been telling my children that they came out of me and that although my husband abandoned us, I will not abandon them and that I am going to continue to struggle. I tell them that at least they eat and go to school and that we should always try and see how life will carry us on (Aluoch, personal communication, March 29, 2017).

My grandmother was very sick and I had to go and take care of her. I stayed for one week in the village and when I came back, I found my husband had brought another woman in my bed. I could not do anything. I could not even cry. I was just there. After that, the best thing the man did was to kick me out with the children. It was so painful for me. I tried my level best to let it go. If I talk about it even now, it’s still so painful. I tried so much to be there in this relationship but later on I gave up. When my grandmother got better, she picked me, she took me to the village, and I started a new life. When I came back to live in town, I started hustling like any other woman in a broken relationship should do. I am still stressed but believe I will manage (Atieno, personal communication, April 2, 2017).

Atieno does what she needs to do to survive but interestingly she does not begrudge her life and it appears that she recognizes that she would have stayed in a bad relationship had her

husband not “kicked her out”. As well as “I will manage”, other women said, “I have tried”, “I have tried my level best” and, “I will endure” which again speaks to their fortitude.

Again in response to “How does it feel to be a single mother?” one group did not describe the struggles of abandonment rather their drawing was a sharp contrast to the other groups as it illustrated a deeply optimistic view of the future as illustrated by Figure 17 below.



Figure 17. Group 4 Drawing - Focus group with Single Pride. UWAP: Gulu, Uganda. Theocharides, A. (Photographer). (2017, March 25). Reprinted with permission.

In our picture here, it is showing, the woman owns the home. The woman in the picture has planted maize and is living a happy life. She looks very happy and well kept. In the picture she has a friend and you can see how she is shining with joy (Group 4, personal communication, March 25, 2017).

Reintegration programs need to recognize that so many of the women have fortitude, a strong survival instinct, optimism and a desire for independence. They need to tap into and build on those qualities. For example, Adongo (quoted above), was born in the bush and suffered the loss of her husband and mother. When we met her, she was living in a very small basic hut with

a packed dirt floor. She kept apologizing for her simple dwelling. She was struggling financially as she had to take care of her grandmother and could not afford to send her son to school. Two years later she had saved her money, acquired assets, was paying for her son to study at a good school and was living in a more spacious house. Adongo benefitted from attending a faith-based reintegration program and was part of WIM which resulted in a strong peer-support system for her. Although women are still bound by strict gender roles, changing gender norms have provided women with new benefits and have led women to engage with patriarchal systems in a different way. For example, women now have access to loans, have started their own businesses and have organized themselves into savings and support groups.

However, some reintegration programs, 10-years post-war, continue to offer the same program without: 1) incorporating the research on the benefits of establishing participatory processes or peer support systems; 2) building on the resilience, strength and fortitude of the women; or 3) using this period where gender roles are in flux to advance the equity of women.

The next section describes the barriers created by the community which includes an analysis of multiple perspectives about young mothers and those tensions between perspectives. I also bring forward the themes that emerged from the transcripts that determine social inclusion which include: “productivity and acceptance”, and “proper behaviour”.

Community

I gathered information from the groups of young mothers using interviews, focus groups and ethnographic methods. Community members were also interviewed. To interpret the multiple perspectives that were gathered, I conducted a cultural domain analysis (see Chapter 3) which is duplicated below in Table 12. Although this is not an exhaustive list of descriptors, the words used are some of the most frequently found in the transcripts. This domain analysis

demonstrates that the young mothers believe that the community views them quite negatively whereas based on the community members I interviewed; they tend to have mixed feelings about young mothers depending on her behaviour.

Table 12

Cultural Domain Analysis

| Young Mothers (YM) | | | | |
|--|--|---|---|---|
| are | | | | |
| ↑ | ↑ | ↑ | ↑ | ↑ |
| “prostitutes” “agu” (a woman who takes any kind of man) “husband snatchers” “useless” “good mother” “hardworking” “enduring” | “frustrated” “prostitutes” “thieves” “irresponsible” “neglectful of their children” “bad listeners” | “ashamed” “not proud” “not confident” “embarrassed” “fearful” “useless” “problem” “caring” “hard working” | “useless” “spoiled” “angry” “optimistic” “independent” “strong” “confident” | resilient strong determined hopeful dedicated mother some waiting to be saved god-fearing survivors/warriors |
| ↑ | ↑ | ↑ | ↑ | ↑ |
| Perception of Community Perceptions (YM interview transcripts) | Perception of YMs in general (YM interview transcripts) | Community Perception (community member transcripts) | Self-Perception (YM interview transcripts) | Researcher’s perception of YM (Field notes) |

In his exploration of marginalization, Vasas (2005) discusses the “blindness” of those who reinforce positions of dominance and subordination in order to maintain the margins and when the demands of the marginalized are brought to the centre they often seem incomprehensible (p. 196). I found evidence of this “blindness” repeatedly as there appears to be a substantial divide between how the community sees the young mothers, how they believe the young mothers see themselves and how the young mothers actually see themselves.

Through the Community's Eyes

They [the community] take young mothers as big jokes. I would say that even the HIV positive people are classified into two types. There are those who think their lives are wasted and that they should give the disease to everyone. There are others who protect their lives despite having the disease. That is how the community is divided on taking care of those young mothers; there are those who protect these young mothers and others who don't really care (Community Member (CM) 25, personal communication, May 22, 2015).

For reintegration to be successful, the community needs to create an environment conducive to social inclusion. That means accepting, supporting and advising young mothers. At best, as is evident with the comments made by CM 25, a wide range of mixed feelings exist about young mothers in Northern Uganda. On one hand, this informant used words such as “jokes”, “diseased” and “wasted lives”. On the other, the informant alludes to the protection young mothers receive. A similar pattern is found with CM 21 comments below.

Some feel like they [young mothers] are useless and that they are nobodies. But there are others who sit them down, talk to them, tell them that this is not the end of the world; you can still live a better life. There are other people who treat the young mothers badly, or demean them... They simply don't realize the trouble these girls were in when they gave birth at a young age (CM 21, personal communication, May 17, 2015).

Recognizing that communities are largely obtuse to the plight of young mothers came up repeatedly. These community members were more likely to refer to the women as “useless” and as “nobodies” as they (either intentionally or unwittingly) do not recognize the dire situation of these women and choose to scrutinize their behaviours based on strict gender norms.

Proper behaviour. Community members elaborated on what I described in Chapter 1 as the “proper behaviour” for an Acholi woman.

People marginalize young mothers... Those who gave birth to other children, who move from one man to another are nicknamed, *agu* [people that collect any type of rubbish] but the responsible ones do not have those names... The reason they nicknamed them *agu* is because the young mothers don't go with one man, they move from one man to the next. The *agu* name is a comparison to street children who move from one place to another and they are never settled. (CM 22, personal communication, May 26, 2015).

Proper behaviour is defined by strict gender norms and the women are marginalized when they behave contrary to these norms. "The community views them as weird-mannered people. No one understands them and they see them as spoilt children and children who don't listen. They don't take advice. I am wondering which type of girls we give birth to (CM 23, personal communication, May 27, 2015). This is consistent with the view that young mothers lacked a proper education from their parents which led to their plight. "The community thinks these are young girls who have not been taught well by their parents. In some of the villages I have gone to, the community is making a decision to have elders train parents on how to raise their children" (CM 14, personal communication, May 29, 2015). This comment reflects a common view that it is a young woman's fault if she has a child at a young age out of wedlock. Other causes such as war, rape, abuse, abandonment, poverty, the need to escape, or living in oppressive conditions because of her gender, were never articulated as possible explanations. One informant said, "The young mother used to participate very actively in the community clean up. And I was very disappointed when she got pregnant. She was a very good child. I thought that wouldn't happen to her" (CM 23, personal communication, May 27, 2015). It is interesting that pregnancy just "happened" to her. Where is the male who saw fit to impregnate her at a young age? Men are not discussed because the patriarchy does not portray them as sexual beings. They are humanity (Millet, 2016). These girls simply got pregnant somehow. This early

pregnancy comes with judgment as this community member insinuates that this happens to bad girls, not good girls. Despite some judgmental responses, community members did speak highly of those young mothers who demonstrate proper behaviour.

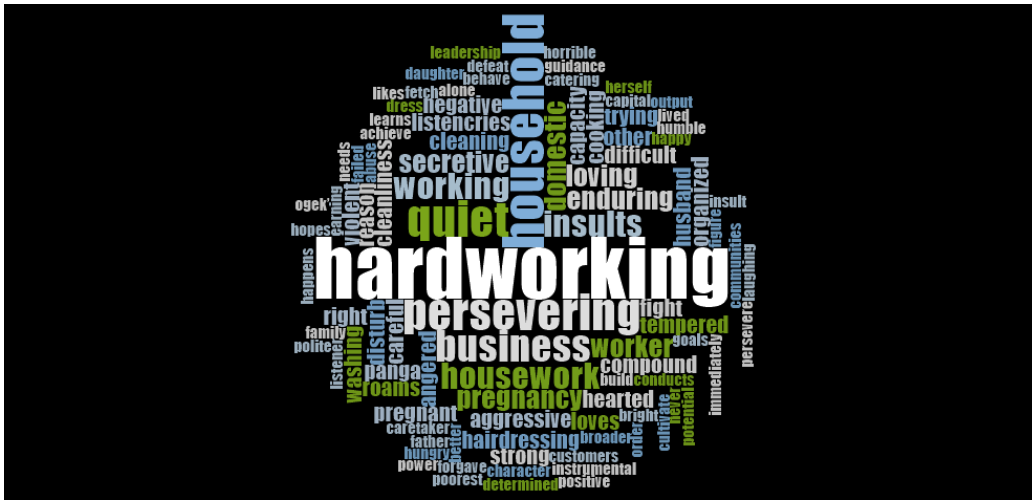


Figure 18. Word Frequency: Perception of young mother’s strengths

Strengths. When the community members were asked to describe the strengths of the young mother they knew, as seen in the Figure 18 Word Frequency diagram above, some of the most frequent descriptors include: “hardworking”, “quiet” and “loving”. Many of the strengths community members described were in relation to her duties as a young woman. “She does all her household chores very well that includes washing her mother’s and son’s clothes, cleaning the house, cooking food, and fetching water" (CM 21, personal communication, May 17, 2015). “She is very good at housework. She is very neat that if anyone wanted a domestic worker, she would do it very well” (CM 23, personal communication, May 27, 2015). Many mentioned that the woman were very neat, good at farming or good at their jobs. Therefore the young woman’s perceived strengths are based on their functions or roles as opposed to their personal qualities.

After describing how well the young mother did chores, they attributed qualities or strengths that are for a collective benefits such as “she socializes well”, “she is respectful”,

“always laughing”, “a good listener” and “optimistic”. Apart from “hardworking”, the most common word community members used to describe the young mothers, “persevering” and “enduring” came up often. “This girl is very enduring. Even if the boys throw insults at her, she keeps quiet and looks at them. There are times when she puts on short skirts, the *boda boda* men look at her and throw insults at her but she always keeps quiet and does not answer” (CM 22, personal communication, May 25, 2015). This question provides insights on community expectations of young mothers. Ideally, they work hard, do their gender-specific chores well, they are pleasant, preserving, enduring and they deal with abuse with silence.



Figure 19. Word Frequency: How do you think the young mother sees herself?

Insights into self-perception of young mothers. When community members were asked, how they thought the young mother felt about herself, as Figure 19 illustrates, the most frequently used word was “ashamed”. This shame was explained in reference to getting pregnant at a young age and in many cases, losing the opportunity to go to school. “Proud” is ranked as the second most frequent descriptor but it was consistently used in the negative. “She is not so proud of herself. She feels ashamed of what happened because she feels she should have gone higher in her education since somebody was supporting her in that. So she is not proud at all”

(CM 15, personal communication, May 29, 2015). Another informant talked about how the young mother he knew “has lost her pride” (CM27, personal communication, May 30, 2017). “Confident” was the third most frequent word used, but it was used in the negative to describe that the young woman is “not confident”. “She has no confidence... She told me that had her parents been there, she wouldn’t have been in such a problem” (CM 29, personal communication, May 30, 2015).

The themes that surfaced during this analysis include acting unwittingly, regret, and moving forward. Although many young mothers apparently got pregnant to avoid a painful home situation (according to community members), one informant focused on how the young girl acted unwittingly. “I realized later that she did not know that she would be creating such a problem for herself. Now that she has a child, she knows better how life is as a mother” (CM 21, personal communication, May 17, 2015).

A number of informants described the regret the young women felt about having gotten pregnant at a young age. According to the community members, although some wallow in regret, some of the other young women developed confidence and have been able to move on. “According to me, she has forgotten what happened in the past. She’s now focusing on a few children to take care” (CM 21, personal communication, May 17, 2015).

When the young mothers were asked to describe themselves they too used the words “hardworking” and “enduring” with high frequency. Some of the young mothers voiced some regret about choices they made as parents and regarding child-care, however, none of the women described having regret or feeling ashamed about having children at a young age. It appears that the community may be projecting shame and regret on the women as this is how they would expect them to feel. It also demonstrates Vasas’ (2005) notion of “blindness” as they do not comprehend them or see them as they are.

Rationale. At the beginning of the section, I alluded to the mixed, contradictory information I received through community informants. To explain community perceptions, CM 21 suggested that it is only those community members that have a young mother in their home that can understand the daily struggle these women face. The informant described their invisibility and how the community as a whole does not acknowledge their needs. Both comments show compassion and empathy for the young mothers and seem to reject those who “don’t care” and those who lack awareness of the struggles young mothers face. Community Member 25 later suggested that the community takes its cues from the parents. If the parent treats the girl badly, the community will follow suit. In fact, there are some communities in Gulu that have decided to prohibit single mothers from moving into their neighbourhoods. As mentioned, this is based on the notion that single mothers are prostitutes. Aligned with marginalization theory, this is the process of “othering” or demonizing the women and it is used to reinforce positions of dominance and subordination (Vasas, 2005).

When community members were asked if other community members were aware of the plight of young mothers, most said that the community was indeed aware. They went on to explain the reasons other community members don't help which included that they don't have the funds to support them, they “are too mean to help” or they simply don't care. “The community knows the challenges they face but they disregard them and they don’t consider them as people who need help. Secondly our community is a community that does not give when you’re suffering” (CM 19, personal communication, May 22, 2015). Essentializing young mothers as worker bees or prostitutes perhaps makes it easier to ignore their struggles in a climate where most are struggling themselves. Lorde (1990) attributes this lack of compassion to neoliberal ideals. “In a society where the good is defined in terms of profit rather than in terms of human need, there must always be some people who, through systematized oppression, can be made to

feel surplus, to occupy the space of the dehumanized inferior” (p. 281). Although some community members demonstrate compassion for your mothers, it appears that largely, productivity and proper behaviour creates “blindness” to the needs and situation of young mothers and exteriorizes them as inferior. Similar patterns were found at the level of the family but with stronger themes associated with patriarchal values such as “Women as Insignificant Entities”, and “Controlled Sexuality” which I will discuss shortly.

The Community through the Young Mother’s Eyes

When I asked the women how they thought the community saw them, there were 17 incidences where the women said that the community sees them as “useless”. Oyella, a member of Women in Motion (WIM - created space), discussed how she is treated by her neighbours.

I am very confident around people. Other members of the community think I’m a prostitute. Because in our culture, if you are a young girl and you are renting on your own, they will think all types of things on you. They even say it to me ‘what’s up with you?’ ‘What’s wrong with you?’ ‘Are you a stranded girl?’ ‘Why can’t you live at home with your parents?’ My response is ‘that’s my problem not your problem. I know why I am here’ (Oyella, personal communication, May 17, 2015).

Oyella is not a prostitute and living on her own with her children was not her choice. She had a husband but since she could only produce girls, the husband got himself a second wife. He then began to beat Oyella and their children.

He used to tell me that he has gotten all that he wanted from me. ... There is nothing good about me that he wants... he assured me that girls are useless and he is not going to waste his time paying school fees and that they shouldn’t pressure him (Oyella, personal communication, May 17, 2015).

Her in-laws treated her badly; and the beatings were relentless so she left to live on her own. Her experience with her neighbours is not uncommon and demonstrates that she still faces the barriers to social inclusion due to patriarchal values which labels women on their own as prostitutes. However, Oyella exercises the horizontal power described in Chapter 1 with the comment, “I know why I’m here.” As power flows from the centre to the periphery, horizontal power flows back and is exerted as a form of resistance to the hegemonic centre (Hall et al., 1994). This resistance was evident in many other comments concerning the community.

The community always demeans women who do not have husbands and they always throw comments like, ‘You women who do not have men are useless.’ A man told me that I was useless one time and I told him that he was equally useless” (Argo, personal communication, March 31, 2017).

This comment also demonstrates Hall’s property of ‘Voice’ discussed in Chapter 1 and the silencing of the marginalized and the subsequent resistance as Argo’s comments, “I told him that he was equally useless.” Given that productivity is highly valued, to be “useless” is considered a grave insult. At times, the women were not directly called “useless” but it was implied by the actions of the community.

No one has told me directly, that I’m useless because I’m not educated. But if opportunities come for participation, they always put me aside and there are comments like ‘this person cannot manage doing this because she did not go to school’ (Ayot, personal communication, May 15, 2015).

Productivity and Acceptance

According to the accounts from the young mothers and as mentioned in Chapter 1, once a young mother is working and perceived as productive, how she is treated by the community

changes drastically. “Before she got this job, people used to treat her like a prostitute but now she is busy and she comes back in the evening. People see that she’s more responsible now” (CM 22, personal communication, May 25, 2015). “Some are treated nicely and others are treated badly. The ones who are treated badly are those who don't have a job. They are treated as useless people” (Awino, personal communication, April 4, 2017). When the young mothers were asked how the community sees them and when community members were asked how they see young mothers, the views surrounding productivity were aligned. If a woman isn’t working, and if she has “bad behaviour” she is often labelled a prostitute and stigmatized.

Some of the young mothers do not resist and live their lives in such a way that demonstrates the winning formula for social inclusion which consists of: contributing to the community’s wealth, working hard, parenting responsibly, maintaining a good relationship with her family; and being selective about the men she dates. Okiyo is a good example.

People here are very positive. They love me. When I came here I started coming up with business ideas and one of the business ideas was bead making with my neighbors. They take me positively. They take me as a very good person. I am not the type of woman who will start bringing different men into the house. I take good care of my children and I discipline my children well (Okiyo, personal communication, March 27, 2017)

Both WIM and SIP provided specific examples of restrictions on women; most of which were indications of what they could not do as women, wives, and mothers as opposed to what gender norms would allow them to do. For example, women are not supposed to look directly in a man’s eyes; women should lower their head in deference, especially when interacting with elders. Those who meet a man’s gaze are considered *lakwele* which is a prostitute or someone with excessive sexual desire (Workshop, May 27, 2017).

During the focus group discussion on marginalization with WIM and SIP, the women said, “In the community women are not allowed to talk. In a home whenever there is a meeting and everyone explains what their problem is, women are not allowed to talk. They will tell, ‘You don’t talk’” As discussed in Chapter 1, this is indicative of Hall’s (1994) principles of power and voice. Power and knowledge move from the societal centre to the periphery. Without an understanding that a great deal of knowledge exists at the periphery; the voices of the marginalized are silenced. These statements by the women also indicate the changing nature of gender norms. Traditionally, women were not heard but yet these women now want a voice in issues that concern them and demonstrate resistance. However, since they are invisible, they are not heard or understood.

At the heart of social exclusion are three issues. First, the adoption of capitalistic ideals such as modernization and productivity has led to individual rather than collective survival and hence the expectation that women will be productive and contribute to their communities (or at least will not burden the community with another mouth to feed). Second, women need to demonstrate “proper behaviour”. If they are seen violating codes of proper conduct (such as dressing provocatively, going to discos, or not taking care of their children adequately), they are less likely to be accepted by their communities. The third issue or theme that surfaced was the changing nature of gender norms post-war. I found evidence that the way the community perceives the women and the way they want them to behave is very different from the way the women see themselves and the role they would like to have in the community.

For the young mothers, there appears to be a strong relationship between social inclusion and financial stability and later I will argue that competent functioning or well-being are also interconnected as illustrated in Figure 20 below.



Figure 20. Interconnectedness of factors for reintegration

I chose to use gears here as these three factors work together like cogs in a wheel. When examining the relationship between these three success indicators for reintegration, keeping in mind the context of ten years post-war, it appears that social inclusion is less likely for these women if financial stability is not achieved. However, for those women who are not financially stable but who contribute to the community and are perceived as “well-behaved” they can also experience social inclusion. Also there appears to be a reciprocal relationship between competent functioning and social inclusion in that the presence of competent functioning feeds social inclusion and vice versa. The benefits of social inclusion also interact with financial stability perhaps due to a wider network. If the lasting, debilitating impact of trauma and its influence on competent functioning are considered, could it be argued that the focus of reintegration programs then should be counselling? I would argue, as Stark et al. (2009) and Akello, Richters, and Reis, (2006) that there is a strong link between competent functioning and financial stability. Without a sustainable livelihood, competent functioning and well-being is largely unattainable. Acan’s story below demonstrates the impact of financial stress on well-being particularly when the

woman has little or no support. Acan's husband left her and their two children for another woman and she has no support from her family. In the story below, she discusses the stress she experiences as a result of financial insecurity and how she feels pressure to remain silent about her struggles in order to be accepted by the community.

The most painful thing is living as a single mother. It's not easy at all. I am living in town. I don't have a piece of land for myself, I am renting. I just have to count thirty days and the landlady will need her money, which I may not have. The children have to go to school and I don't have the money. I have to get money for feeding and taking them to the hospital when they are sick. I have to make sure that they also look like other children around in the community because I don't want to be so left behind. Of course during day time when you are with friends you feel okay. You laugh with people and try to show them you are not that bad off. But when you get back to your room at night, believe me...you will just keep counting the ceiling boards, wondering if your children will eat the next day... I wonder how I will manage life, but then, at the end of the day, I find something to cook (Acan, personal communication, April 26, 2017)

As mentioned, without financial security; well-being and social inclusion are difficult to obtain. I will elaborate on this relationship in Chapter 5.

Family

Women as Insignificant Entities

Munene, Schwartz and Kibanja (2005) found that women remain poor and underprivileged in Uganda as they are exchanged for goats and cattle, largely considered for their reproductive roles, not allowed to own assets and have no inheritance rights. They have lower literacy rates and education levels than men and are subjected to the social division of labour which is

controlled by men. Confirming this, in one of the focus group one woman said, “Girls are less likely to get an education than boys. In the home, the girls don’t go to school, they go to the garden. When the boy comes home, he needs to find food.” As another example, Amarorwot, one of the contributors of Women in Motion (WIM - created space), lost her grandparents and parents, left a physically abusive marriage and went to live on her maternal land but she immediately starting having problems with her stepmother’s family.

My stepmoms’ family told me to go back to my husband’s home and that we weren’t entitled to that land. I told them, my grandmother is dead and all her children are dead but two grandchildren remain. We are directly entitled to use that land. So I told them that they should slaughter us and sell us like meat sold per kilogram. What profit would they gain from hate? But I was chased off my land and was forced to move into town and rent a place (Amarorwot, personal communication, May 12, 2015).

Amarorwot understands the commodification of women with the comment that she should be “slaughtered and sold like meat per kilogram.” The poor cannot afford the cost of justice and therefore she was forced to move out and make ends meet on her own.

Men control the finances, land, family resources, and tend to make the decisions for the family. Many of the women I interviewed had lost their inheritance rights to their land during the war. A male family member simply took ownership of the land and ignored their protests as it is tradition that men secure enough land for their families.

Single Pride and WIM had to a lot to say about financial inequalities within families. They mentioned that it was unacceptable for women to make unilateral decisions concerning the finances of a household regardless of who earned the money. They mentioned that if a woman is in business with her husband, for example farming, a woman must get permission from her

husband to sell the crops. Finally, “women cannot be co-owners to the husband’s family’s land.” All of these examples point to the intersection of gender, class and social practices, and the compounding effect of marginalization. The women spoke about these inequalities in a matter-of-fact way indicating that the power of males is so omnipresent that it is invisible and appears natural (Millet in CWLU, 2016, para 3). Nonetheless, the women do recognize how gender inequality manifests in day-to-day life in Acholi society.

Many of the women stated that their parents were dead, and/or many of their brothers and sisters had died in the war and therefore they had no family who could support them. Those who do have family members tend to have a good relationship with them but few family members are able to offer the young mothers financial support. Those few who do get help, it comes in the form of advice, food during desperate times, help with weeding the garden or sometimes a family member will pay for school fees for their children.⁶²

Families play a very important role in supporting young women in achieving their goals (Lovell, 2010) and I found their goals and their goals for their children to be ambitious such as owning land, building a house or having the funds to put their child through medical school. Most of the women in this study had some family support but that support hinged on the young mother behaving properly.

Controlled Sexuality

For radical feminists, oppression is intrinsically tied to the control men exert over women’s sexuality. This control takes place within families, it is political and effected through male domination and female subordination (Millet, 2016). My key informant in Gulu, Susan, relayed a story about a woman she knew who had had three relationships with different men and could not

⁶² A word frequency analysis was not conducted as I did not interview the family members of the contributors and participants of this study.

produce a child. While married to the third man, again unable to produce, the family demanded that they separate and wanted the bride price back. The woman was thrown out of her home. Susan described the shame the woman felt which drove her, according to Susan, to have relationships with many men. At 39-years-old, this woman got pregnant but did not know who the father was. Her family disowned her for her indiscretions. She then left her village and began a new life in Gulu town where no one would know her and where she would live in isolation with her child apart from her family (Field Notes, May 22, 2017).

During the focus group, the women explained how they felt about polygamy and how it raises the status of men but lowers the status of women. Not only are there less resources available for food and to send the children of both families to school, it creates acrimonious relationships between women which serves the patriarchy (hooks, 1986). The women also mentioned that if a husband dies, the wife is forced to accept the brother-in-law as their husband, even if he has five wives. They objected to the practice of marrying the girls in the household at a young age. “When you get married at 13, by 15, you are tired of the marriage.” Families prioritize marriage for girls and in poorer families early marriage is the norm as it represents a source of income for the parents (Lovell, 2010).

The most powerful stories I collected involved a family member... the death of the woman’s mother or grandmother, the torture of a brother, the abuse at the hand of a step-father or alcoholic brother and so on. These stories left deep scars but as mentioned, most of the women have at least one family member that they can count on in desperate times. Soon after the war, the family played a significant barrier to reintegration in that many rejected the returnees. Now, the family as an impediment to reintegration is not so evident except in the many cases where the young mother is required to provide assistance to a family member while she is barely making ends meet herself.

The last section provides an analysis of the barriers created at the level of the individual and these barriers include: periodic self-doubt and for some, a belief that they will be saved by some outside force. The section begins with Figure 21 and a word frequency analysis which puts “money” at the heart of the descriptors the young mothers used to describe themselves.

Individual

“I feel like I was worthless, useless, but later on, I internalized it” (Acen, personal communication, May 16, 2015).

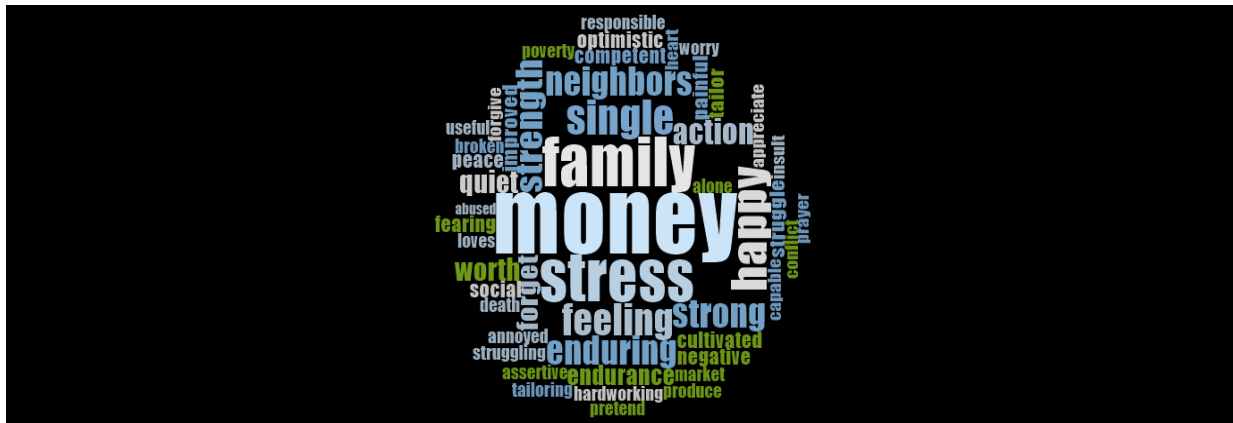


Figure 21. Word Frequency: How do you feel about yourself?

When describing how they feel about themselves, as evident by Figure 21, elements of competent functioning are evident as they frequently used words such as “enduring”, “strong”, “social”, “happy” and “optimistic”. “Money” or lack of thereof was central, and is often linked to their self-perception. “I don't have the same opportunities as men. But I have the strength to look for money and buy what I want” (Ouko, personal communication, June 23, 2017). However, a higher frequency of words used reflect an inner struggle such as “stressed”, “fearing”, “angry”, “broken” and “worry”. Moving to the transcripts, it was evident that many of women have internalized their marginalization or as Kincheloe (2008) puts forward, “the oppressed eventually

come to see the world through the oppressor's eyes" (p. 71) which impacts their feelings of self-worth and creates a barrier to reintegration.

Shirley Cheechoo (2018), a Canadian Residential School "warrior"⁶³, described how the oppressive experience of these schools left her feeling "dirty, worthless, and with no self-esteem or self-worth" (n. p.). Later she chartered a path for her own self-destruction and attempted suicide. The young mothers of Northern Uganda were also deeply affected by the war, abduction, forced marriage and rape and similar to Shirley Cheechoo; all of this was imposed. Given the breadth of their marginalization and oppression, it is likely that these young mothers have come to expect hardship and rejection which is deeply understood by Fanon (2008) in his exploration of the colonized mind. "The language of the abandonment-neurotic. To be The Other is to feel that one is always in a shaky position, to be always on guard, ready to be rejected and... unconsciously doing everything needed to bring about exactly this catastrophe" (p. 56). Two important insights surface from Fanon's analysis that I also observed among the women. First, some of the women made questionable choices which led to more hardship. As an example, quite a few women moved in with a man after a very short courtship only to find that these men were oppressively controlling, abusive, or had other wives.

Actually my life is not easy at all because during the time I had a child, ...the father of that child would help me but unfortunately he died and left me with his child. After that I got another man who got me pregnant and dumped me so I am having his child also. And lastly this man I am staying with is also not helping me even. So for all these two children I alone must struggle and pay them in school, feed them and dress them so I am stacked

⁶³At the "White Privilege Conference Global" in Toronto, May 9-12, 2018, Shirley Cheechoo expressed her rage over the term Residential School *survivor*. "We have not *survived*. We are haunted by this every day. We should be called residential school *warriors*."

[stuck with few options] because worse of all I am not doing anything which should give me money (Okoth, personal communication, June 2, 2017).

The collapse of each relationship could confirm to Okoth that she deserved to be “rejected”. Second, if the women do indeed feel undeserving of opportunities, acceptance and love due to low self-worth, and given the mixed messages from the community, I would argue that this would affect the level of social risk the young mothers would be willing to take to form relationships with community members for fear of being rejected. Kiconco (2015) describes the challenge that non-abductees and abductees face in terms of trusting each other.

Due to their suspicion that a non-abductee will always see them as ‘evil’, ‘disgraceful’ and ‘inferior’, they often seem to look out for evidence that will confirm this mistrust. In some cases, because of fear of being hated and stigmatized, formerly abducted people find themselves building walls that separate them from other people (Kiconco, 2015, p. 154).

Some of the women did indeed express feelings of inferiority to those who are educated and successful. They did not feel comfortable in their company. As an example, one of the action items the women of WIM articulated was that two representatives would speak with the Executive Director of CEED to learn about entrepreneurial opportunities. We did some role plays, I introduced the women to the Executive Director (ED), he indicated that he would like to support them, yet they never pursued the potential \$5000 CAD in seed money available at CEED for groups such as WIM. They had convinced themselves that they would be rejected, that their status was too low to speak to the ED. I also observed many other incidences of mistrust which drove their behaviour. Christine, the leader of UWAP prepared for these meetings and volunteered hundreds of hours, yet half the women of WIM were intent on banishing her from the group. In fact, two of the women brought their accusations about the misappropriation of

funds to the police and Christine was brought into the station, questioned and soon after released with charges dismissed.

The women see themselves as enduring, persevering, strong, confident and largely independent. I see their strength, fortitude, and resilience but it appears that they are periodically plagued by a little voice that rears its ugly head every now and then that says, “you are not good enough, educated enough, clever enough, woman enough.” I believe inherent darkness is part of who we are as human beings and the strength of that voice will depend on how much airtime we allow it to consume. However, for the women, this darkness translates to mistrust and perhaps leads to lost opportunities and taking the steps needed to improve their own lives. It also, in some cases, leads to a belief that in order to achieve their goals, (since some believe they can’t achieve them on their own) the universe (God or an NGO) will provide.

Waiting to be Saved: God

I asked the young mothers if they thought that they would soon be able to afford to send their children to school, get proper medical care or establish their businesses. The response hinged on whether God would decide to provide or not as they believed that their lives were guided by “God’s will”. They made statements such as, “It is only through God that you can make a way and it’s Him who can give you wisdom” (Atim, personal communication, April 7, 2017). “I don’t feel good. I want God to give me big money so that I can fulfil my dreams like buying a land and doing the rest of the big plans that I have” (Acen, personal communication, May 16, 2015).

With little knowledge about the Christian faith, I scanned the bible for a scripture that would support what I thought was a biblical quote, “God helps those who help themselves.” Not only is this quote not from the bible, it was originally uttered by Benjamin Franklin! In the bible

I found only references advocating surrender and putting one's life in the hands of the Lord. However, according to a group of Ministries, this interpretation of the bible, advocating inaction and subordination to God, is a misinterpretation (Got Questions Ministries, n. d.). If this is a valid, condoned interpretation regarding the relationship between faith and action, then either the women are misinterpreting the teachings or this relationship is not being taught in the church. I had a debate about this particular point with Susan who argues that the women understand that action is needed to achieve anything but when the goal is achieved, it is then customary to attribute it to God's will. She said they are not waiting to be saved by God but they recognize that they can't achieve anything without God. I am not suggesting that having faith in God is disabling. In fact, many of the women were able to put forward that they had overcome their trauma as result of being "saved" or "born again". However, the lack of action the church engages in for social change described earlier appears to also exclude encouraging believers to take action to improve their own welfare or mobilizing them to challenge structures that keep them in poverty.

Waiting to be Saved: NGO

In Chapter 1, I discussed the culture of dependency which is a problematic social issue. It manifests when citizens are seen to be waiting for the government or NGOs to lift them out of poverty. The culture of dependency has its roots in colonization and was acerbated during the civil war when 500 humanitarian aid organizations flooded Northern Uganda (Pommier, 2014). I found evidence of this "waiting" phenomenon within each group of women whereby some took little action to improve their lives as they were waiting to be saved by an NGO. It appeared that these NGOs created a binary where the White is in the position as a saviour and the Black is the

victim to be saved. In an interview concerning the impact of Youth in Pader's program (YIP – formal space), a Local Council member said:

When the youth first returned, they were stigmatized. Now, it's much less than before.

They still need psycho-social help. Youth continue to be traumatized. Trauma comes from the war, idleness and the belief that 'if I just stay here, an NGO will come and help me'.

Some are waiting to be saved and they are still waiting (Local Council Member 3, personal communication, June 2, 2014).

Where did Ugandan youth get this notion that if they wait long enough, someone will come and save them? Some of these youth were just babies during the war which points to the intergenerational effects of colonialism and the dependency it creates.

Cronin-Furman (2017) and her colleagues, put forward that "empowerment" for women was introduced in international development by feminists as a means to combat oppression. They argue that it has now devolved and use the example of African women making bikinis for Americans in income-generating projects. They also argue these empowerment projects aim to improve women's lives but since the organizations do not engage in the country's politics, these organizations actually marginalize women further. The recipients of empowerment then come to believe that the foreigner will empower them or rather give them power or give out money. In other words, "empowerment is reduced in practice to its economic dimension" (Cronin-Furman et al., 2017, p. 11). I found this to be the case with some of the women who attended reintegration programs. For example, Okeyo attended a reintegration program which aimed to "empower" where she learned tie dying. Okeyo interpreted her empowerment as unsuccessful as she did not achieve economic stability. "Economically, I don't feel empowered, there are so many people who have so much, but I don't."



Figure 22. International Women’s Day. March 17, 2017. Gulu, Uganda

I went to International Women’s Day in Gulu. Eight NGOs organized the event and were represented. The theme of the event was “International Women’s Day 2017: Women’s Empowerment in the Changing World of Work”. What struck me was the prevalence of NGO-speak everywhere largely in English — on banners, t-shirts and flags. Examples include:

“Community Transformation”

“Sponsor a mother”

“Empowering children for a brighter future”

“Say no to child marriage”

“Empowerment of women and girls is progress for all”

“Three decades of gains of Ugandan Women and Girls.”

“Access to reproductive health is my right”

“Poverty is not a disease”

In his study on therapeutic interventions for war-affected girls, Park (2009) asserts that “sloganeering” about gender equality has become a prevalent part of NGO output but it does little to promote actual positive change and in fact serves to promote victimization of the ‘Third World Other’. “Under the banner of ‘equality,’ victimized girls become sites, symbols, metonyms for backwardness, oppression, even barbarity, while empowered/rescued girls represent progress toward a successful liberal democratic society” (Park, 2009, p. 171). Northern Ugandans have been affected by the messaging of NGOs so much so that NGO-speak is part of their language now and how they express themselves. For example, the women used words such as “empowerment”, “vulnerable”, “stigmatization”, “sensitized” and phrases such as “Money talks, “Everything we do will give a bright future for our children”, “We need to save for a better tomorrow” and “When you educate a girl, you educate the whole world.”

Getting back to the International Women’s Day event, the atmosphere was festive. There was singing and dancing despite reminders of child brides, gender-based violence, and poverty. It appeared to me that we were all there to celebrate the oppression of women when in fact; we were actually there to celebrate and showcase the fine work of these NGOs. I would argue as Cronin-Furman (2017) and her colleagues that these empowerment projects nurture the extremely damaging myth that NGOs will lift their project recipients out of poverty. So many women embrace this and wait. As an example, Agot is waiting for a “willing person or an NGO” to bestow onto her “a better life” by giving her a sewing machine, some money to start a business, or to pay school fees for her children (personal communication, June 2, 2017). The solution is not for Agot to pull up her bootstraps, rather it is time for NGOs to change the narrative whereby donors begin to recognize that by buying a goat for a “poor African” is symptomatic of white saviour and only reinforces to those “poor Africans” that they do not have the capacity to buy

their own goat. As an example, in the passage below, Amarorwot from WIM describes why the action plan was not fulfilled and why some of the women left WIM.

The reason as to why the action plan was not fulfilled was because of different interests within the group. Some people thought Michelle was there to give money and they would use this opportunity to make money. Other people thought Michelle was going to take care of them and their children. They never thought that they will have to work for themselves to earn money (personal communication, April 18, 2017).

Let me be clear, these women are extremely determined and hard-working. They are marginalized which results in deprivation and powerlessness (Hall et al., 1994) but foreign NGOs has largely transformed the white face into a symbol of an easier life maintaining the power relationship of saviour-dependent.

Conclusion

What can be done to move towards this ideal of reintegration and the equity of women? It is unlikely that current government will remove any of the barriers described in the literature and in this chapter. The government will not likely enforce their gender equity policies, provide funding for programs that have a real impact in the North, or provide a social safety net for single mothers. Nonetheless, tackling the patriarchy I believe is possible. As mentioned in Chapter 1, before colonization, women had important economic and social roles in the societies that made up Uganda (Datzberger & Le Mat, 2018). The view of women was changed during colonial rule as British Victorian gender norms and Christianity were imported. During the civil war the notion of women's rights was introduced. There are now tensions between western notions of women's rights and what was known as traditional roles. At this time, with gender norms in flux, and with rebuilding structures and systems post-war, presents an ideal opportunity

to challenge the patriarchy but it needs to be grounded in indigenous knowledge and processes. If the barriers to reintegration were removed, there is a greater likelihood that women would be well-represented in Parliament and in municipal government.⁶⁴ Women would feel free and confident to have their voices heard while taking civic action. Structures at the outer layer of the social ecology would create and enforce policies that: prevent gender-based violence; protect a woman's inheritance rights; legislate the education of girls; and provide a social safety net for women on their own. The government would also provide funding and support for free accelerated education for each woman that did not reach high school.

Donors would invest in technology and resources that ensure that every dollar donated reaches its intended recipients and would put strict measures of accountability in place. NGOs would educate men about power and control, the damaging effects of a patriarchy, respect for women, and encourage positive views on femininities and masculinities. NGOs would stop training women in gendered fields and use their resources to create new markets. They would stop talking about empowering women, perceiving them as victims and themselves as saviours and would listen to what the women need. Because they have a deeper understanding of the context and culture, NGOs would provide more choices, real choices to women as to what they would like to study and support them in a career path. They would stop de-politicizing their interventions and realize that they need to actively address systems and structures that oppress women at all levels of the socio-ecology.

By providing the community with more resources, and through critical discussions, the community would support these young mothers because they would understand how they

⁶⁴The Local Government Act in 1997 provided for affirmative action for women's representation at the level of local government aiming for one-third representation (Datzberger & Le Mat, 2018). Since women are discouraged from running for office, this policy has not achieved its aims.

contribute to the hardships of young mothers and would begin to see how much the women could offer. Communities would no longer see polygamy as a status symbol and would collectively exert pressure on men who abandon, beat, or compel their wives to produce children. Women would get the education they need and would feel equal, and deserving of respect and all actors would understand that working towards a positive peace benefits all.⁶⁵ If only...

Before I provide recommendations to move reintegration programs closer to this ideal, the next chapter compares the three approaches to reintegration and describes the extent that each social space achieved financial stability, social inclusion and competent functioning.

⁶⁵ Positive peace: The absence of structural, repressive or alienating forms of violence (Galtung, 2008).

Chapter 5: Comparison of Spaces - Social Inclusion, Competent Functioning, and Financial Stability

Ayange spent seven years in captivity and during that time had one child. When she returned, her mother was very welcoming but was bed-ridden as she is HIV positive. Ayange's other family members live far away. Soon after she re-married, her husband and his family rejected her and her child and she was forced to live on her own. She received training in tailoring from Gulu Youth Advancing, but could not make enough money to support her son consequently she sent him away to live with other family members.

My child whom I gave birth to in the bush has not come to stay with me. I would have wished so much that I have my child near me. But I am not financially able to support my child in paying his education and renting my house. My child was rejected by my husband's family because, one day, when he was playing with another child, they had a hoe and he accidentally cut the other child on the head. My mother-in-law beat him so much and threw statements like, 'From today, I don't want to see your Kony child!' Even when I went away to work, he would stay hungry. No one would give him food. I decided to look for his father's family. I took him to his grandmother... When I went to see him in December, he was not looking good at all. Where he lives, his grandmother is a drunkard. There are times when he doesn't eat food. My child has a disease in the stomach that causes him pain always. He is taking big responsibilities like cutting down trees to make charcoal, and making bricks; yet he is still young. I am really disappointed with myself because I can't support him much (Ayange, personal communication, June 28, 2017).

Ayange said that the counselling at GYA really helped to calm her and she experienced more acceptance from the community as a result of attending GYA. However, she said that since

the tailoring market is so competitive, she can barely make enough for rent and to feed herself, so her young son remains with the grandmother and works hard to earn his keep. The main barrier Ayange faces to reintegration is financial. Had Ayange been trained in a trade with more financial potential, she could potentially be reunited with her child, and feeling a sense of pride for putting him through school.

In Chapter 4, I discussed the barriers the women experience to reintegration at each level of the socio-ecology. I described how the marginalization of these women interacts with reintegration. A successful program or space addressing reintegration would therefore not only enhance social inclusion, competent functioning and financial stability but would also address or work towards the removal of the barriers to reintegration. To summarize, the barriers discussed thus far are illustrated in Figure 23 below:

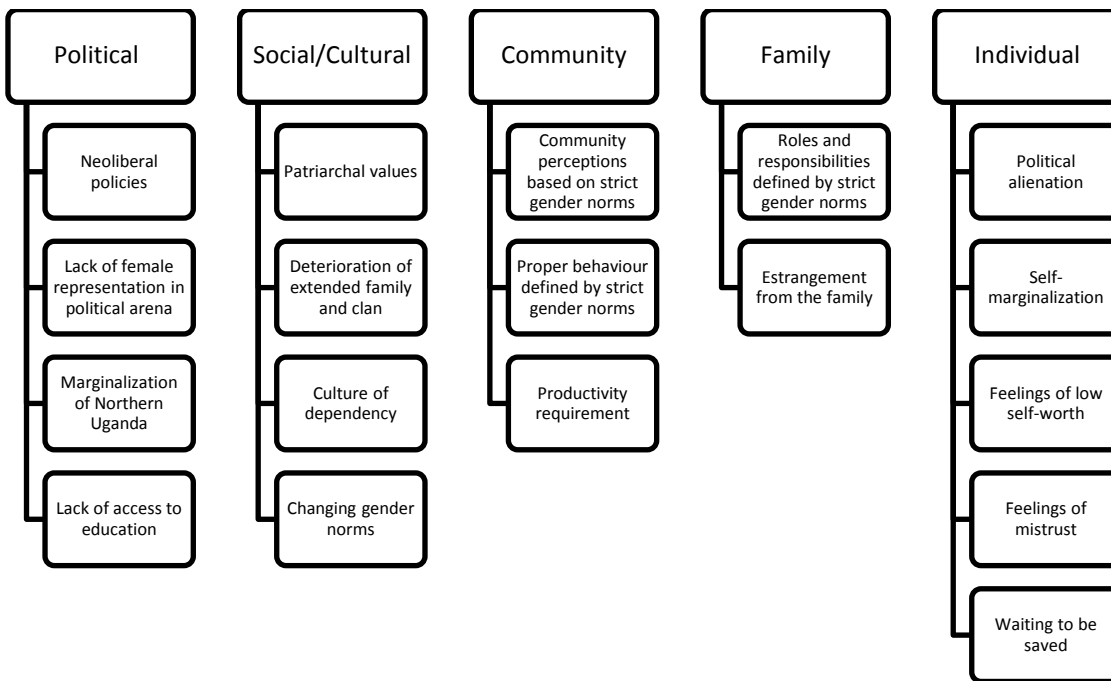


Figure 23. Socio-ecological illustration of the barriers to reintegration

The three approaches to reintegration (formal, created and claimed) in this project do indeed attempt to address some of these barriers presented at the community, family and individual level and are successful to greater and lesser extents. Some of the approaches though, contribute to the barriers such as formal reintegration programs encouraging young mothers to follow gender norms and “behave properly.” However, it is important to note that these three approaches are not largely addressing the political and social/cultural forces which keep women oppressed and in poverty (with the exception of WIM) who engaged in critical discussions about their marginalization. Throughout this chapter, I will discuss the barriers that each approach addresses as well as the analysis pertaining to the second research question which is:

What variations can be found in social inclusion, competent functioning, and financial stability when comparing the reintegration experience of young mothers who participated in different spaces, namely, formal, created or claimed spaces?

This chapter is organized into three sections. The first focusses on social inclusion and compares the levels of social acceptance and support reported by the women in the formal, created and claimed spaces. The second section examines how well each space contributed to competent functioning which includes satisfaction with friendships, optimism, ability to cope during stressful situations, positive perception of the self and so on (Iacoviello & Charney, 2014). The third section compares the three groups on financial stability defined by the women as having enough funds for food, health care, emergencies, and school fees.

Social Inclusion

Overview

Figure 24 below summarizes the relationships, interactions and intersections of social inclusion. In Chapter 4, I argued that those women who do not appear to be adhering to gender

norms, are not working or are not perceived as productive and/or those who have liberal as opposed to traditional views face marginalization. At the top of Figure 24 are the forces on the outer layer of the socio-ecology that influence the social inclusion or exclusion of young mothers. These factors are the socio-political, historical, economic and cultural contexts, the deterioration of extended family and clan, gender norms and patriarchal values. Intersecting with this layer are current narratives rooted in neoliberalism, globalization and meritocracy.

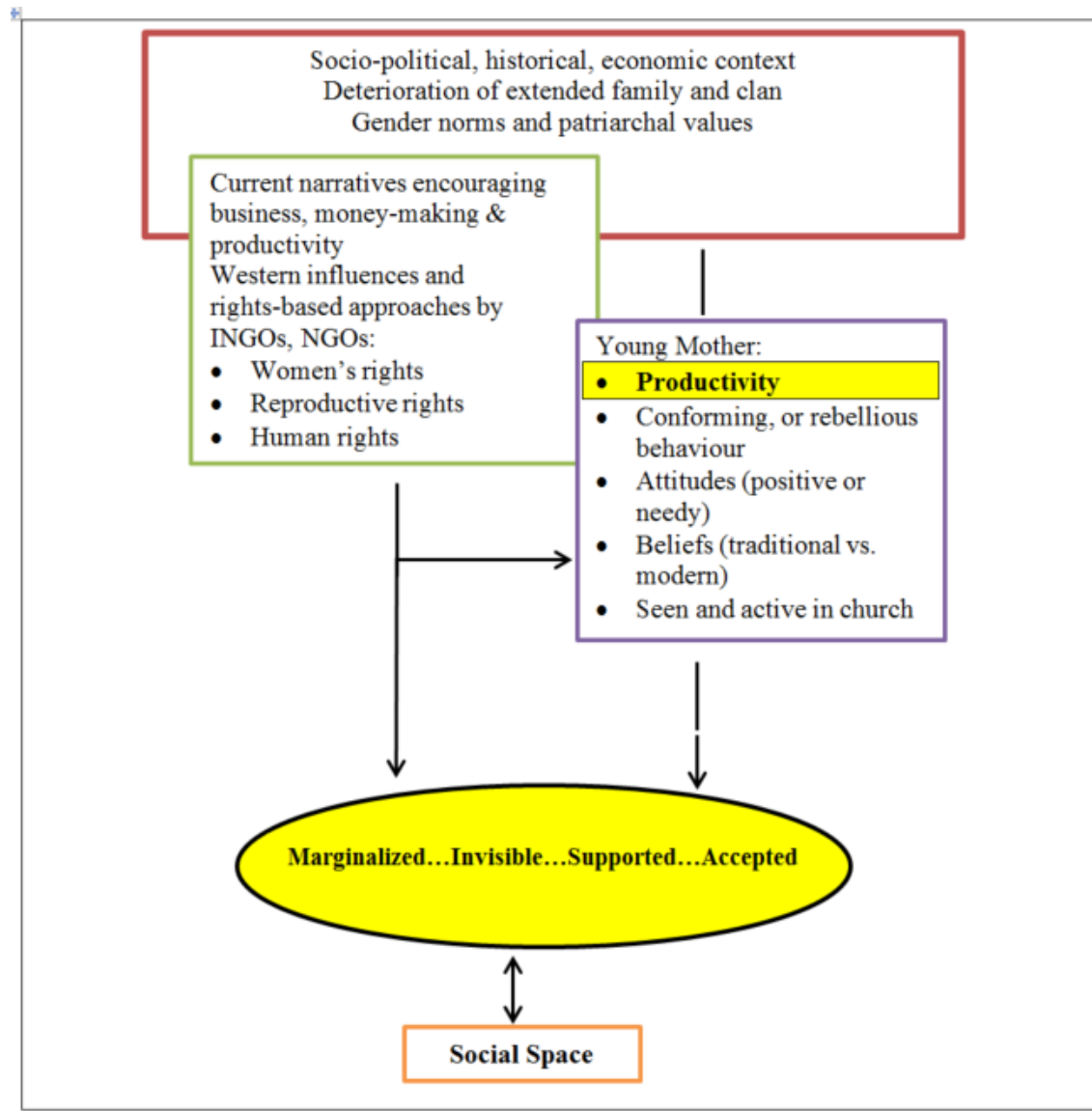


Figure 24. Influences of different layers of the socio-ecology which serve to socially include or exclude young mothers.

The young mothers' behaviours, attitudes and beliefs lead to perceptions of young mothers. These factors determine the level of social inclusion the young mother will experience (on a continuum from marginalized to accepted). At the bottom of the diagram, a bi-directional relationship between social spaces and social inclusion is indicated. Before I explain this relationship, I will identify which group experienced more social support and acceptance.

Social support, as perceived by the young mothers, appears to be in one of two categories. Primary support is financial assistance which serves to alleviate their financial burden (e.g. financial assistance for school fees for their children or food stuffs, clothing and household goods). Secondary or non-financial support comes in the form of a neighbour taking care of their children, or caring enough to offer advice. The women describe the experience of “acceptance” when the community: asks for their opinion or advice on a community-related matter; demonstrates respect towards them by listening; and ceases to insult, gossip, or call them derogatory names. Data gathered about support and acceptance from the community was gathered using the demographic survey and is presented in the two tables below.⁶⁶

Table 13

How often do you feel supported by the community?

| <u>Space</u> | - | <u>Never</u> | <u>Not Often</u> | <u>Sometimes</u> | <u>Always</u> |
|--------------|------------|--------------|------------------|------------------|---------------|
| Claimed | WIM (2015) | 72% | 6% | 22% | 0% |
| | YIP (2015) | 30% | 50% | 20% | 0% |
| Formal | GYA (2017) | 44% | 22% | 34% | 0% |
| | SIP (2017) | 25% | 5% | 45% | 25% |
| Created | Overall | 43% | 21% | 30% | 6% |

⁶⁶ Bolded figures represent the extreme scores.

Table 14

How often do you feel accepted by the community?

| <u>Space</u> | - | <u>Never</u> | <u>Not Often</u> | <u>Sometimes</u> | <u>Always</u> |
|--------------|------------|--------------|------------------|------------------|---------------|
| Claimed | WIM (2015) | 22% | 17% | 17% | 44% |
| | YIP (2015) | 14% | 28% | 57% | 0% |
| Formal | GYA (2017) | 44% | 22% | 34% | 0% |
| | SIP (2017) | 0% | 5% | 55% | 40% |
| Created | Overall | 20% | 17% | 41% | 22% |

It is important to note that a survey was administered once to each group the first time I met them. For WIM and YIP the survey was completed in 2015 while SIP and GYA’s survey data was gathered when I met them in 2017. Therefore, the data indicates how WIM and YIP experienced acceptance and support from the community in 2015 while the numbers for SIP and GYA indicate how they are currently experiencing acceptance and support from their communities. It is with subsequent interviews with WIM and YIP in 2017 that I was able to gather longitudinal data on any changes to their level of social inclusion.

The women of SIP (claimed space) experience the most community support and acceptance. Youth in Pader (formal space) and WIM (created space) reported the least amount of support in 2015 while graduates from formal space in Gulu (GYA) experience the least acceptance.⁶⁷ This finding was largely confirmed by the interviews. Most of the women of SIP report a good relationship with their communities. They attribute the reciprocal nature of this

⁶⁷ To recap: Women in Motion or WIM comprise the created space; Single Pride (SIP) is the claimed space; and Youth in Pader (YIP) and Gulu Youth Advancing (GYA) make up Reintegration Program (RP Group) or the formal space.

relationship to the fact that they are social, respectful and that they follow social norms. The women of YIP continue to struggle with social inclusion and in 2017 did not report much improvement in community acceptance or support. The GYA group are recent returnees from the bush. They too experience high levels of marginalization and I have provided several stories throughout this dissertation about how women in both GYA and YIP are insulted, ignored and alienated. This is particularly the case for GYA, as all members were abducted and some have recently returned to their villages after decades in the bush. These women, according to Susan, do not know how to behave “properly” in their communities and they feel judged. “There is no finger-pointing in the bush” (Ajok Susan, personal communication, May 7, 2018). A few of the women expressed that they long to return to the bush to feel a sense of belongingness again. Nonetheless, many of the women in YIP and GYA reported that they experienced more social acceptance after they graduated from their respective reintegration programs. Women in Motion also reported a positive shift in their relationship with the community. To reiterate, all groups have experienced more social inclusion as a result of the skills they learned within their social space. The RP Group (formal space) experiences the least amount of social inclusion, Single Pride (claimed space) experiences the most while WIM (created space) reports a substantial improvement in social inclusion since 2015.

Enhanced Social Skills

In the section below I will argue more social inclusion is a result of enhanced social skills which is explained through associational membership, and being part of peer support system.

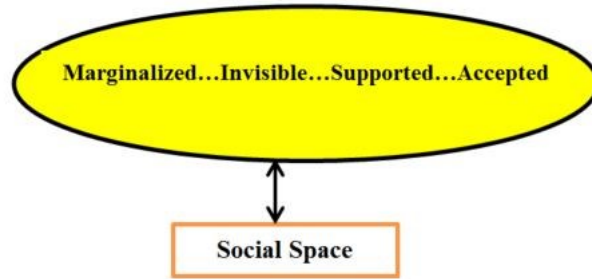


Figure 25. An illustration of the relationship between social inclusion and social space

Associational membership. As mentioned at the beginning of the chapter, Figure 25 illustrates the continuum of marginalization and its bi-directional relationship to the social space. That is, depending on where they fall on the continuum within their communities will influence their disposition in their social space and the knowledge and skills they get from the space will influence how they are treated in their communities.

Single Pride (Claimed Space). In the context of the relationship between the social space and social inclusion (Figure 25), Single Pride experiences the most social inclusion both inside their claimed space and outside in their community. It is possible that the SIP women have learned more social skills inside this tight-knit space and that the unity and security SIP experiences inside their space is reflected outward in the form of refined social skills and cooperation which the community responds to favourably. The social inclusion they experience in the community is then reflected back into the group hence the reciprocal relationship. This reciprocal connection between a group and its environment was also found in a study conducted by Stolle and Rochon (1998). Based on a review of extant data from 43 different organizations, the researchers examined the interaction between membership to an association and social capital.⁶⁸ They found that associational membership led to a larger variety of social interactions,

⁶⁸ Social capital. Features of social organizations, such as: interpersonal trust, norms related to reciprocity, and breadth of social networks that facilitate cooperation for mutual benefit (Kawachi, Kennedy, & Glass, 1999).

and to generalized trust and cooperation. It would follow that since the Reintegration Program Group did not benefit from “associational membership” or from developing their social capital to a large extent within their program, that the social skills that would enhance their inclusion were perhaps less developed than those acquired through membership with Single Pride.

In terms of space, it is the horizontal alliances that are inherent in a claimed space that create power and social change (Gaventa, 2006). Single Pride shaped their own space. They shared decision-making power and developed their “power within” whereas for the RP Group and other closed spaces, decisions are made by those holding the power (Arshad-Ayaz & Naseem, 2017).

Reintegration Program Group (Formal Space). Most of the YIP graduates in Pader mentioned that before they attended their reintegration program they felt isolated, ignored by the community, and they had few friends. They said that they had “nothing to give to the community” (Abira, personal communication, June 2, 2017). After graduating from the program, just under a third of GYA and about half of YIP students experienced more community acceptance as a result of their enhanced status brought about by the training they received. Though some community members were jealous that they themselves did not have the opportunity to study a trade, it is easier to be the recipient of jealousy than scorn.

Before [YIP, the community] treated me as someone who was useless because I did not have anything to give to them. After returning back from [YIP], there were some other people who felt jealous because of what I could do and also how my life had changed. But there are some other people who started liking me and right now they are my friends. Nowadays they started realizing that I am not as useless as they thought, instead I am resourceful and helpful in the community (Abira, personal communication, June 2, 2017).

As mentioned, one of the main purposes of reintegration programming is to assist youth in (re)settling into their communities. On their website, YIP explains that their mandate includes peacebuilding, reconciliation and reintegration of youth back into their communities. Gulu Youth Advancing also has a specific mandate to facilitate “forgiveness and reconciliation” with the war-affected community in Gulu. Yet, SIP (the claimed space) has been more successful in fostering social inclusion for the women than the formal reintegration programs. A key difference between the groups is peer support. This raises a foundational question for the composition of social spaces, namely: Who is included and who is excluded and who decides? As mentioned in Chapter 2, it was the members of Single Pride who populated their group and all came in with an intact relationship with several of the members. Formal reintegration programs are initially an invited space with members who do not have knowledge of each other. It is this difference that points to the need for reintegration programs to intentionally create opportunities for peer support to develop. Since peer support was also found to be beneficial in enhancing competent functioning, I have elaborated on its benefits later in this chapter.

Women in Motion (Created Space). These women completed the demographic survey in 2015, before the first workshop of this project. During that phase, they described in detail how they were caned, ignored, and perceived as “useless”, “prostitutes”, and “irresponsible” by their communities. At the end of the project, the women were asked again to what extent they felt supported and accepted by their communities and if there had been a change in their relationships with the community since 2015. Almost all of the women reported that their relationship with the community had improved and that they were experiencing more trust and support and less stigmatization. They believed this change to community perceptions was due to the fact that they were: hard-working and successful in their businesses; demonstrating good

parenting skills, and were putting their children through school; and able to afford better housing and lived in better neighbourhoods. Some attributed the change to the passage of time and felt that the community had healed from the war. Susan continues to see the women regularly as she is part of their savings and loan group. She reported that most of the women are “dressing better, doing their hair, and putting on weight. Adongo even has a fancy phone and is all over social media” (personal communication, July 4, 2018).

During the last workshop and the summative evaluation of the project in 2017, I asked the women about the benefits they received as a result of being part of the group. Most of the benefits are related to associational membership and the subsequent enhancement of social skills. The women said,

“In the group, I achieved how to relate with others.”

“I used to do things alone. I wouldn’t even feed a neighbour’s kid even if I had food. I would throw it out. Being in this group has made me relate well with the community and boost my thinking ability.”

“It has boosted my confidence. When I came to this group and someone would ask me to speak, I would shake. Now I am happy to talk.”

“I used to be an arrogant person, to be rude to people. But now, I am better, I know how to relate well.”

“I learned how to socialize. I used to get mad very quickly. I might not talk much but I might answer back very badly or very impolitely but now I learnt how to answer back appropriately” (Workshop, May 27, 2017).

WIM’s enhanced social skills appear to have spilled into the community which in turn has influenced their level of social inclusion. As Guijt (2005) argues, power gained in one space,

through new skills, capacity and experiences can be used to enter and affect other spaces. The women of WIM asserted themselves within the group, took leadership positions and became more confident which is an indication of the reciprocal relationship between social inclusion and competent functioning.

Role of rules. The rules that were established to govern the members' behaviour likely contributed to enhancing the interpersonal skills needed for social inclusion. Single Pride started their group by developing a very precise code of conduct that all members had to abide by which included "treating each other like sisters" (Ajok Susan, personal communication, March 14, 2018). They had rules about gossip, absenteeism, arriving late at meetings and about the process to return loans borrowed from the group. All their rules had punitive measures for breaking the rules. The women perceived the rules as fair and I observed some women paying fines willingly. The formal reintegration programs also had rules about respecting other students, about tardiness and missing classes. The fines were not financial but multiple infractions could lead to expulsion. The difference between the RP Group (formal) and SIP (claimed) is that the rules were imposed by those holding the power. Single Pride and WIM (created) developed their own rules. In fact, it is the evolution of the rule system developed by WIM that indicates that membership to the group enhanced their understanding of interpersonal relationships and the power dynamics within the group.

When the research team and I were planning the first workshop for WIM, the team felt strongly that we needed to start the workshop with ground rules and then establish a code of conduct for their regular meetings. This is an important consideration for the creation of space. Members entering this undefined space appear to need to tie it to familiar social constructs such

as rules to guide their engagement. Table 15 below prioritizes the behaviours WIM deemed desirable in 2015.

Table 15

WIM's Code of Conduct (2015)

| <u>Primary</u> | <u>Secondary</u> |
|--------------------------------|----------------------|
| Time management at meetings | Record Keeping |
| Hard Work | Active participation |
| Abide by rules and regulations | Team work |
| Respect for group members | Unity |
| Follow up with members | |
| Confidentiality | |

Adherence to the rules such as respecting members, participation and team work could indeed lead to enhanced social capital and generalized cooperative skills as Stolle and Rochon (1998) found in their associational membership study. It is interesting to note what is missing here. All of the savings and women's groups that I interviewed had rules about respecting members but also specific rules about gossip and attendance which are missing in WIM's list. Also interesting is the evolution of WIM's rules. In 2017, WIM needed to submit a Constitution in order to register as a Village Savings and Loan (VSAL) group in their district which would allow them to open a bank account. In that Constitution, they again had to specify rules which are as follows:

- A member found to be coming late for any group activity and meeting shall pay a fine of 1,000 shillings (.35 CAD). If the member refuses to pay the fine, she can pay later or it will be taken from her savings.

- Missing a group meeting without informing any member, the member shall pay a fine of 5,000 shillings (\$1.80 CAD). If the member refuses to pay the fine, she can pay later or it will be taken from her savings.
- A member found to be gossiping shall be given one warning. The second time, she must pay a fine of 5,000 shillings (\$1.80 CAD), the third time, 10,000 (\$3.50 CAD), fourth time 15,000 (\$5.35 CAD) and so on.
- A member found to be breaking the group's confidentiality shall be given one warning. The second time she must pay a fine of 20,000 shillings (\$7 CAD).
- The fine money will be used for pens, books, meeting venue, buying mats, and sodas for celebration.

This type of punitive approach to group management is not uncommon for savings groups. What is noteworthy is that in this new rule book, the need for respect and participation are gone and the focus is on punitive measures regarding on attendance, time management and gossiping. I asked Susan why the fines were so exorbitant. She said, "If you don't create fear, people will do what they want" (personal communication, March 14, 2018). It could also be that since gossip nearly destroyed the group that they wanted to create a strong deterrent. In fact, the fines for gossiping and breaking confidentiality could potentially be more than the average amount these women would earn through an entire day's work. It also shows that collectively the created space is learning – about each other, balancing power relationships and navigating relationships within the group.

Peer support. The third factor that served to enhance interpersonal skills is peer support. As mentioned in Chapter 2, it was so obvious when I went to a Single Pride meeting that these members sincerely cared about each other which resulted in a type of "united power" and a deep

sense of belongingness. Unfortunately, reintegration programs do not appear to include peer support within their program design. Although some of the RP Group members mentioned that they developed friendships at the school, they did not describe a sense of belongingness which is emotionally beneficial and facilitates healing from trauma (Morley & Kohrt, 2013).

It was the research on peer support discussed in Chapter 1 and the cultural value of embeddedness that prompted me to suggest the adoption of a peer support component within WIM. This included sharing stories, working in groups, participating in team-building exercises and working through issues that surfaced as a group (and there were a lot of them!). Having to get along in a group, create group goals, achieve group objectives increased their confidence in their interpersonal skills, and their ability to manage disputes. After the three-day workshops in 2015, one of the participants said, “The workshop helped me meet new friends. I used to live alone but now I have lots of friends. I never thought I would see a place like that. This group made me learn how to live with people and I thank God (Okeyo, personal communication, May 13, 2015).

In this section I have proposed that associational membership, group development of a code of conduct as well as establishing peer support in created and claimed spaces such as those occupied by WIM and SIP, all contribute to an enhancement of interpersonal skills which contributes to social inclusion. This theory is based on recognizing that these three elements are largely absent from the RP Group who experienced the least amount of social inclusion while these elements are a strong part of SIP’s culture. As mentioned, in the last two years, WIM began to feel more social inclusion. Another explanation for this inclusion I believe, is based on their goal to become “independent inspirational women”.

Dependence/Independence

In 2015, during the first meeting with WIM, an inspirational speaker came to the workshop and shared her story about her struggles during the war and how she was able to achieve “independence”. At a later meeting, WIM created the personal goal that they wanted to be “independent inspirational women.” I became curious about the notion of “independence” and I asked them to further define the notion during my next field visit. Most of the women agreed that “independence” included the ability to provide for the family as a single entity and the freedom that comes from not depending on anyone else.

It's standing alone on your own — you don't lean on anyone else (Ayot, personal communication, July 21, 2016).

Being emotionally strong (Akot, personal communication, July 24, 2016)

I don't have to depend on my husband for anything — that is being independent (Acen, personal communication, July 22, 2017).

To be independent to me means you can be a single woman or you can be a married woman but at the end of the day you don't depend on anyone for help. You singlehandedly support your family, providing them food, shelter, and health care without the help of anyone (Aber, personal communication, July 22, 2016).

The reason why the young mothers are treated like that is because we are looked at as dependent people. They think if they are to associate with us, we shall all the time ask for help. Some of the people don't want to help. That is the reason why they answer you very badly, for you to hold back and not come to them (Ocolo, personal communication, March 29, 2017).

From the beginning, I noticed that some members of WIM (created space) were not terribly bothered by their lack of social inclusion especially those who had a family member or a husband who supported them. Very few women ever put forward that they would like to experience more acceptance, but they did complain a lot about the lack of support from the community. What set WIM apart from the other groups is that they focussed on becoming independent rather than integrating. With the exception of three women from SIP who talked about the desire to teach their children to be independent, none of the women outside of WIM expressed a desire for independence. It was as if this collective goal of individual independence bonded the women to this created space. These discussions on independence and later marginalization, sexism and patriarchal values indicate that the women felt safe in the space and used the space to have their voices heard. Their choice of using independence as the road to social inclusion also indicates resistance to traditional gender norms.

As an example, Ayot indicated that she is “always” accepted by her community and “sometimes” gets support. She said that the community sees her as a very humble, decent person. She doesn’t fight or quarrel with community members. She said that she is a devout Christian, who takes good care of her children and has a job making stuffed animals for Watato church. It is possible that she experiences social inclusion as a result of her employment, her social and/or parenting skills. However, her desire to achieve independence could also play a role in her social inclusion.

Yes, I am an independent woman. I have a man but there are certain things that I do that even if I did not to have a man. Right now, as I speak, I have my goats. I have my pigs and my house... Nowadays marriage is like a contract. It is not an everlasting thing. And if you always rely on that, if you separate with your husband he will leave you with the kids. And

you will get defeated, and stranded. You will not know what to do with the kids. But if you are independent you can stand firm (Ayot, personal communication, July 21, 2017).

It was this goal of independence that led many of the WIM members to social inclusion through the back door. To explain, in the McKay et al. (2007-2009) PAR Project⁶⁹ the women achieved greater social inclusion by participating in community activities (e.g. funerals, cleaning up wells) and by creating events for the community. It would follow that this would be a logical path to social inclusion. WIM achieved more social inclusion by becoming less dependent on the community. On the surface, the implication here is that reintegration programs should consider encouraging the women to become independent of their communities but it begs the question: Where did WIM's desire for independence from husbands, clans, and communities come from? The seed was definitely planted by the inspirational speaker and perhaps precipitated by the fact that most of the women did not have a choice but to live on their own which is a new phenomenon since the war. Other influencing factors may be explained by neoliberalism and the neoliberal values I may have imposed on the group.

Davies and Bansel (2007) conducted a study on the constitutive effects of neoliberalism and how it manifests in the manner subjects talk about themselves. The researchers draw on Foucault's notion of "heightened individualism" whereby the individual finds it difficult to imagine their choices as being influenced by anything other than their own aspirations. This includes a desire by the individual to be morally worthy, responsible, and able to provide for their families, independent from the state (Davies & Bansel, 2007). This shift, from social

⁶⁹ As mentioned in the Introduction Chapter, the McKay et al. (2007-2009) PAR Project was a large-scale research project engaging four principle investigators, 16 co-investigators, 2 NGOs and 658 young mothers in Liberia, Sierra Leone and Uganda.

welfare to a market driven economy, is managed through narratives that instil fear and put forward that lesser beings are dependent on the state but modern citizens fulfil their obligation to the nation/state by pursuing economic well-being for themselves and their family. Related to the discussion in Chapter 4, the disapproval of Museveni and his demarcation of lesser beings is obvious in a recent statement that “There should not be poverty. The only problem is lack of knowledge and laziness” (Kampala Post, 2018, para. 1). Here, he scolds citizens for not meeting their obligations to modernization and the state which is indicative, according to Davies and Bansel (2007), of the neoliberal transformation of citizens.

Freedom is rearticulated as freedom from want, and is to be gained through self-improvement obtained through individual entrepreneurial activity. Within the neoliberal form of government, the concept of the citizen is thus transformed. The so-called ‘passive’ citizen of the welfare state becomes the autonomous ‘active’ citizen with rights, duties, obligations and expectations – the citizen as active entrepreneur of the self; the citizen as morally superior (p. 252).

Davies and Bansel (2007) go on to argue that the values of self-reliance, autonomy and independence then become linked with self-esteem which results in alienating those who do not conform, largely, the vulnerable and marginalized. In later interviews with WIM, it became evident that as their independence increased so did their feelings of self-worth and self-esteem. If WIM was affected by neoliberal values why would these values not also affect the RP Group and SIP? I see two explanations. One is my influence in the group, the other concerns a continuum concerning independence.

The first theory, the two other groups did not spend two years with a foreign researcher who insisted that “You can do it, we can help.” Intentionally or not, I too entered this created

space with my values, dispositions and the power that comes with being White. My participation influenced WIM (as theirs influenced mine) and potentially nurtured that desire for independence. There is nothing inherently wrong with having the desire for independence, no doubt the women had this notion long before they met me but I am questioning my footprint and then multiply that footprint, paved with good intentions, left behind by the thousands of western researchers and aid workers that have been to Uganda. However, the traditions such as support from the extended family and clan are deteriorating, communities are struggling post-war, and a neoliberal agenda all point to the imperative of independence as the collective value orientation of embeddedness is crumbling.

The second theory is that Single Pride women are older, have been single longer, and many have already achieved independence. They seemed to be more interested in personal development whereas most of GYA and YIP women (the formal space), were struggling to acquire the basics of survival and independence did not appear to be one of their aspirations.

Not unlike Maslow's controversial hierarchy of needs,⁷⁰ but perhaps within the process of reintegration there exists a continuum whereby a woman needs to achieve financial stability (categorized by Maslow under "psychological needs") before she can work towards independence (categorized by Maslow under "esteem needs") which is the case for the formal group. The next step is reaching for independence. Single Pride is working on personal development and enhancing their well-being but have an eye on social change. If this is indeed the case, it has implications for development projects as it would be largely ineffective to attempt

⁷⁰ Maslow (1943) created a theory to describe the hierarchy of human motivation. The theory posits that basic needs (termed psychological needs) need to be fulfilled before safety and security needs are considered. Love and belongingness, self-esteem, and the need for self-actualization follow.

to foster political and social efficacy if the women have not achieved the other three milestones as illustrated in Figure 26. below. However, more research is needed in this area.

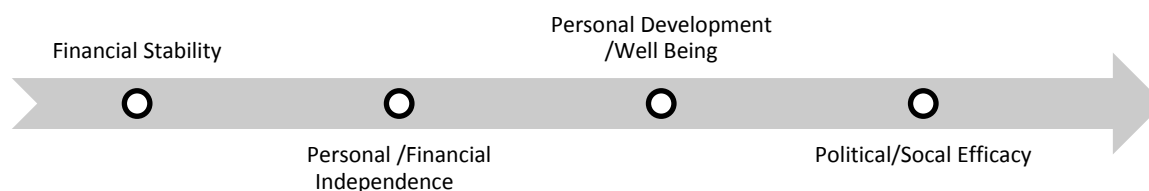


Figure 26. Milestones to political efficacy

To summarize, each space addressed social inclusion either directly or indirectly. The formal space engaged in community and family outreach to address stigmatization but perpetuated gender norms and the need to be productive as the road to social inclusion. Although women from the claimed space experienced social inclusion as a result of following gender norms, there is some evidence of resistance as they were the most likely to allocate gender-neutral chores to their children and more likely to suggest that their daughters were capable of acquiring a career in a traditionally male dominated field. The created space did not address social exclusion by attempting to insert themselves, rather they chose to strive for independence. Also within this created space, we had critical discussions on marginalization and patriarchal values whereby the women then determined to make changes in their lives including teaching children about human rights (Workshop, personal communication, May 20, 2017). Their confidence in their ability to make changes in their lives is an indication of growing competent functioning which is described in the next section.

Competent Functioning

In a systematic review of 95 articles on war-affected youths, Barber and Schluterman (2008) found that studies which examined some form of negative functioning (such as

problematic behaviours, stress, depression, anxiety, low self-esteem, and so on) only 27% of the studies included some measures of competent functioning such as positive perception of the self, optimism, and ability to cope during stressful situations (e.g. Iacoviello & Charney, 2014). There is a growing body of literature that has found that exposure to political conflict does not necessarily lead to maladjustment. Although the traumatic after-effects of war on youth vary, Barber (2008) argued that more research is needed on the role of competent functioning for youths exposed to political violence.

This section discusses the variation found between the three social spaces concerning competent functioning specifically for optimism, ability to cope during stressful situations, and positive self-perception. I will begin discussing general trends I found on factors that indicate competent functioning and the effectiveness I found within each group. I will then assess the effectiveness of the methods that the three social spaces used to enhance competent functioning.

Optimism across Groups

Optimism contributes to overall life satisfaction and has been found to work as a buffer for stress and as a protective factor for depression (Ames, Rawana, Gentile, & Morgan, 2015). It follows that optimism contributes significantly to competent functioning. Overall there was very little difference between groups regarding optimism and almost all the women envisioned a future with a higher standard of living where they owned land and had all their basic needs met. “I think that after five more years to come starting from now, I would be okay because I might have done something good in my life. My vision is that in five more years to come, I would be having my personal land” (Abela, personal communication, June 1, 2017). Almost all the women hope to have land, build a house on that land, and rid themselves of the burden of renting. They envision themselves with their children, being independent and having financial security by

owning a “big business” or being able to buy and rear animals. “In five-years, I want to be independent. I don't want to see myself begging from my brothers. I want to be able to afford everything that I want; that includes school fees. I want to be able to help my family members too” (Awuor, personal communication, June 24, 2017). A lot of hope about the future was expressed as all of these women believed that their new skills and “hard work” would allow them more access to a livelihood and financial security. The reality is that serious economic, political and cultural barriers exist that prevent women from achieving their dreams.

Indicative of their more recent return from the bush, women in GYA and YIP were unique in that they envisioned a life “free of abuse”, yearned for change and wanted a different life than they have now. Whereas WIM and SIP talked about building on what they already have. Women from GYA and YIP were also the only women who expressed conditional optimism; they believed they would have a better future if a donor provided the start-up capital they need to excel in business.

I think that if YIP could help me with something like materials then it would make my future better. The good thing is they have made me to study but I am only begging them to support me with materials because if they do not support me, then I can even decline to the previous levels (Onoka, personal communication, June 2, 2017)

Conversely, SIP members did not put external conditions on their vision of their future; that is, their future did not depend on anything outside themselves such as getting help from an organization or a finding a husband, rather they believed in a promising future as a result of their membership to the group and their capacity to save.

Before, I thought that was the end of life. I thought that my husband was everything. But when I joined this group, it taught me how to look at life positively as a single mother and

do something in order to earn and save every Sunday. So I think I will save more often and get a loan, develop my business (Adoch, personal communication, April 7, 2017).

As with all groups, the women of WIM envisioned their future in a positive way. As with SIP, it did not depend on external forces and the future contained positive, lasting relationships with members of their group.

Ability to Cope during Stressful Situations

Roth and Cohen (1986) analyzed the approach-avoidance model⁷¹ to understand how coping strategies are used in threatening situations. The researchers assert that the effectiveness of using either technique in a stressful situation is situation-dependent and there are costs and benefits to using either technique. Research indicates that avoidance is more effective if the situation is uncontrollable, whereas approach is better if control of a situation is feasible (Roth & Cohen, 1986). Roth and Cohen use the example of coping with a traumatic event; denial is useful in the short term as it manages anxiety whereby in the long term it is less useful as it prevents the assimilation and resolution of the trauma. This notion will be discussed further in the section on counselling. Ultimately, those that cope well with stress are able to use the appropriate strategy.

All three groups on this project had similar strategies to cope with stressful situations which could be categorized under “approach”. These included, praying, seeking advice, having a good cry, and consoling oneself. The most common strategy the women used was prayer.

“Mostly I put in prayer and leave everything to God because for my case, I left a total drunkard and again got taken by a total drunkard again” (Fwaya, personal communication, June 1, 2017).

⁷¹ Approach-avoidance theory has its roots in Freudian psychoanalytic theory and concerns the cognitive and emotional activity that moves an individual towards a threat (i.e. paying attention to threatening stimuli, demonstrating vigilance) or away from the threat (selective inattention, denying threat) (Roth & Cohen, 1986)

Also seeking advice of friends or family members is common. “Mainly I can go to someone I trust and I know that can attend to me, then I share with him or her my problems and out of the words I will be advised. I would choose the one I feel are fit for me and then throw out the rest.” (Agot, personal communication, June 2, 2017) Two of the women spoke about isolating themselves as a means to handle stress.

Mainly I will just isolate myself away from people simply because when I am too annoyed I must release my annoyance through crying and when I am to cry when people are there, they will ask me and that will increase my annoyance. Instead I will isolate myself somewhere then cry over and forget about that thing then when I am feeling okay, I can come back to people and life goes on (Onoka, personal communication, June 2, 2017)

Though there was not a lot of difference between the groups, none of the women discussed having self-destructive strategies such as turning to alcohol, drugs or sex. Also, they did not discuss using avoidance strategies such as procrastination, denial, ignoring warning signals, seeking distractions and the like.

Self-Perception across Groups

Part of competent functioning is a positive self-perception which is associated with self-esteem and confidence which drive expectancies of success (Eccles & Wigfield, 2002). Self-esteem also serves as a protective function (Ames et al., 2015) . I did find differences between groups regarding their self-perception.

The young mothers most commonly described themselves “hard working” and “enduring”. As mentioned, the community members also believed that the young mothers largely embodied these qualities. “My strength is in hard work and making good decisions on what I want to do... The reason I am strong is that I put all my efforts in work” (Angweng, personal communication,

March 30, 2017). All groups saw working hard as a strength as this allowed them to fulfil their responsibilities such as putting food on the table and paying for school fees for their children. Therefore, their self-perception is tied to their notion of how well they fulfil their responsibilities.

They described themselves as “forgiving”, “loving”, “respectful”, and often, “optimistic”. “God-fearing” also came up numerous times. They identified their faith, tolerance, ability to care for their children, and the ability to make good decisions also as strengths. However, as mentioned in Chapter 4, a high frequency of words were used that reflect of an inner struggle such as “stressed”, “fearing”, “angry”, “broken” and “worry”.

Overall, across the groups, as illustrated by Table 16, the level of confidence the women expressed about themselves ranged from high, (largely SIP and WIM and some members of GYA) situational or contextual, (few members of WIM and some members of GYA and YIP), to very little confidence (most members of YIP).

Table 16

Level of Confidence

| | High Confidence | Situational or Contextual Confidence | Little Confidence |
|---------------------|-----------------|--------------------------------------|-------------------|
| SIP (claimed space) | | | |
| WIM (created space) | | | |
| GYA (formal space) | | | |
| YIP (formal space) | | | |

Some had confidence in their parenting or business skills or the growth they experienced as a result of the hardships that they survived. For example, Oyella (WIM) endured years of domestic violence, her husband took a second wife, left her with no money and stole her land. However, those hardships resulted in enhanced confidence. “Yes, the problem that I went through sharpened me up; it sharpened me to the level of a man. Now, I feel equal and I want to work hard that I should even be more than a man, superior to a man” (personal communication, May 17, 2015). Another WIM woman described her confidence as a result of her struggles and success as a single mother. “I’m very confident. Confident because I’m a woman who stands up on my own” (Akot, personal communication, May 15, 2015). Other WIM women expressed “situational confidence” whereby they only felt confident around people of similar stature, language and education. “I felt comfortable and confident during the workshop because I was with people who are the same as me, I do not feel confident with a certain class of people, I mean educated people because they are of a different standard” (Agutu, personal communication, May 13, 2015). This again raises the question of the composition of created spaces. Who is included and who is excluded and who decides? Should participants all be like-minded and generally homogenous in education, age, social status etc. or should the creation of space be used to expand the participants’ acceptance of diversity? The heterogeneity of the created space caused conflict but it was that conflict that led to personal growth. (This is discussed further in the section below on Modelling.)

During the conflict within the created space, the women attributed the cause to an external source. It was Christine’s fault for not being transparent. The conflict was the fault of Vine members as they gossiped maliciously about Christine. The consequence of an external locus of control is explained well by attribution theory which is also tied to competent functioning.

Attribution theory. According to attribution theory, accrediting personal success to one's own actions develops one's self-esteem, but attributing that success to an external source instead enhances one's gratitude. Conversely, attributing a failure to one's actions is linked to shame or guilt, but attributing it to external causes is likely to result in anger (Eccles & Wigfield, 2002). The women very rarely expressed pride in their accomplishments though it is possible that humility is part of their religious or cultural beliefs. Alternatively, this lack of self-attribution could be due to an external locus of control or a combination thereof. As an example, often when I asked the women how they were doing, they would say that "God has provided" or that "God will provide". As mentioned, this attribution would more likely lead to gratitude or deepening of faith rather than building the self-esteem they need for self-efficacy.

Aligned with attribution theory, some of the women, who experienced a lot of hardship and attributed the negative outcomes to an external source (often a husband or in-laws), harboured a lot of anger. Anindo (SIP) lost many family members during the war, spent years in an IDP camp, got pregnant very young, and continues to be treated very poorly by her community. She was abandoned by her husband and had to raise three children on her own from a young age. When asked how she felt as a parent, she said:

I was always angry with my kids. Not because they misbehaved but because I was angry at the dad. That anger was always turned on them. I would shout if they did something wrong and I would get a stick to beat them even if they did nothing wrong. My kids were not bad kids. But because I am not in my right state of mind most of the time, I shout at them. One day I sent my son to go and buy flour and that was the only money that I had in the house. He went playing and lost the money. I got very angry and beat him up and left him to sleep hungry (Anindo, personal communication, March 30, 2017).

Therefore for those women who lack confidence, do not believe that they have control over their lives, or believe that their successes and suffering are due to an outside source are perhaps less likely to take risks or put themselves in a position where they can challenge their own self-perceptions. Within this context it is vitally important to consider that by simply creating participatory spaces does not foster change in those that feel powerless (Gaventa, 2006).

Single Pride (claimed space) and positive self-perception. When comparing comments regarding self-perception, the comments made by Single Pride indicate higher levels of competent functioning. “I am independent in a way that whatever I wish to do I will do it. When I plan to do something, unless it needs a lot of money, I do it. And when I want to go somewhere, I don’t have to ask anyone for permission” (Abuya, personal communication, March 30, 2017). Single Pride women also did not refer to themselves as “spoiled” or “useless” which was commonly found among the women of the other two groups. It is possible that SIP women were less likely to have negative self-perceptions as none of women had been abducted during the war. However, I believe the most plausible explanation is that the belongingness, love and validation they received from group members enhanced their self-esteem.

Personal growth of Women in Motion (created space). Competent functioning includes effective strategies for dealing with conflict, managing stress, positive self-perception, hope, a sense of control, agency and a degree of comfort in social situations. Each woman has made strides in at least two or three of these areas. The support they received when they faced conflict within WIM gave them a new perspective on how to keep their eye on the prize and to perceive conflict as part of the group cohesion process. They learned how to better manage their stress through the workshops and through inspirational speakers which perhaps gave them more confidence in handling conflict in the future. The women talked about advances they made in

interpersonal skills and how they felt more comfortable within a group. Some of the women felt that they were more independent and felt less in need of a man. The strides in competent functioning made by WIM are discussed in more detail under the section of “Peer Support”.

Reintegration Program Group (formal space) and negative self-perception. Those women who had been abducted, particularly those who had returned in the last three years, expressed a deep negative self-perception particularly upon their return from the bush.

When I returned, I had lost hope. I found it very useless to have returned home. I still wanted to go back and live among the abducted people. I never felt good about myself. I had hoped for so much in life. All my hopes had been broken up into pieces. It was always very hard for me (Achiyo, June 22, 2017).

A few of the women from Youth in Pader talked about a marginal improvement in their lives and subsequent self-perception as a result of attending the program. From the Gulu Youth Advancing group I sensed some jealousy and regret when they described themselves. “I would like to live like any other person within the community” (Aere, personal communication, June 24, 2017). It is as if time stood still for these women. As the rest of the community gathered assets and built their lives, they were struggling to find food in the bush. Opio (also with GYA) made a similar comment to Aere’s but underlying that comment is fierce determination.

When I came back from the bush, people are so well off; they are driving cars and married! They are very wealthy but for me, I have nothing. That doesn’t worry me though because I know that I can work within the remaining years and get what I want (personal communication, June 24, 2017).

All but two participants of GYA described themselves as a “good person”. Adhaiambo however described her social awkwardness and situational confidence. “I am not a very social

person. I don't relate very easily with people. I don't talk much but I can relate well with the people that I know, people that am used to” (personal communication, June 22, 2017). Akiya described herself as both rude and forgiving. “I am a very rude person. I don't like threats. I don't like someone to hurt me. But on the other side, I am very merciful and forgiving. However much you annoy me, I put that in the past and I move on with life. I talk to you normally as if nothing happened before” (June 22, 2017).

Soon after her arrival back in Gulu, Achiyo, was able to gain entry to GYA. She received counselling which she found encouraging and helpful. She said that she now feels, “the courage to move on with life.” However, not all women at GYA or YIP found the counselling beneficial.

Assessment of Methods to Enhance Competent Functioning

There are several methods that the three spaces used to deal with trauma and enhance competent functioning. The methods are listed in Table 17 and described below.

Table 17

Overview of Methods to Enhance Competent Functioning

| <u>Method</u> | <u>WIM</u> | <u>SIP</u> | <u>RP Group</u> |
|-------------------------------|------------|------------|-----------------|
| Individual Counselling | | ✓ | ✓ |
| Group Counselling | | | ✓ |
| Peer Support | ✓ | ✓ | |
| Training in Counselling | | | ✓ |
| Soft Skills Training | ✓ | | ✓ |
| Entrepreneurial training | ✓ + | ✓ | |
| Modelling | ✓ | | |
| Team-building | ✓ | | |
| Participatory decision-making | ✓ | ✓ | |
| Critical pedagogy | ✓ | | |

Counselling. There is a lot of research that demonstrates that one of the prime components of counselling at reintegration programs encourages forgetting about the past (eg. Akello, Richters, & Reis, 2006; Ellison, 2012; Martin, 2009; and Mazurana, 2005). In a review of psychosocial interventions for formerly abducted youth in Northern Uganda, Veale and Stavrou (2003) found that reintegration programs often encouraged youth to forget the past. The authors concluded that, “Although some youth said they dealt with the past by ‘forgetting’ and not talking about it, the ongoing insecurity continues to make psychological recovery difficult” (p. 48). Based on interviews with 40 formerly abducted women, Ellison (2012) states, “The quality of counselling I found conducted by NGO staff was often a brief, lackadaisical affair of two to three meetings. Rather than confront their past, counsellors encouraged them to simply forget their bush traumas” (n. p.).

Susan thought that current quick fix or talk therapy counselling techniques were “worthless” and said that in the past, elders would counsel suffering clan members by narrating different stories about how others overcame the same hardships. They would spend a lot of time with these clan members. It was a slow process with a focus on forgiveness. NGOs, Susan explains, “get paid by outcomes and want to awaken the problem by getting those who suffered to tell their story again and again” (personal communication, March 14, 2018). Several studies have found that Ugandans believe that healing is based on forgiveness and forgetting about the past (e.g. Refugee Law Project, 2015; Stewart, 2015). More specifically, the belief is that the act of forgiveness allows both the perpetrator and the victim to forget. The Refugee Law Project held several focus groups with Northern Ugandans to understand the therapeutic value Ugandans place on forgiving and forgetting. One elder said that,

Without [forgiveness] there can be no development for the community,” he said, adding, “forgiveness rebuilds; it builds unity; it brings togetherness; then it can actually allow you to open your heart and to teach others so that they forgive and love.” He concluded, “The most important message is let’s forgive, let’s forget the past now, let’s now concentrate on how to sustain the peace we’ve got” (p. 36)

Therefore the benefits of forgiving and forgetting to Ugandans is not only personally therapeutic, it contributes to peacebuilding.

Quality of Counselling

It is challenging to unravel how counselling is actually delivered at reintegration programs as reports vary widely. It appears shortly after the war, community members were trained to be counsellors using largely western techniques. A lot of this training was inadequate. Ten years post-war, it appears that counselling has evolved (devolved?) to an ineffective mix of western and indigenous approaches. Talk therapy is used which the Ugandans do not find effective. The duration of counselling is short which goes counter to indigenous approaches and the focus appears to be on forgetting the past but without traditional component of forgiveness.

Youth in Pader (formal space). The women who attended YIP (formal space) reported that individual counselling was generally effective but group counselling was not as the subject areas did not target their particular needs. A community member and one of the staff members at YIP confirmed that counsellors indeed needed more training.

To improve the counselling component there needs to be additional manpower. More counsellors are needed. As a staff, we need to get more insight on mentoring and areas of specialization. Some refresher training is needed. Funding for trauma specialists would lead to an improvement in services (YIP Staff, personal communication, May 26, 2014).

However, YIP did tailor their counselling methods depending on the needs. “Part of the counselling is spiritual if needed. Although YIP is not a Christian organization, if the condition is spiritual (for example if the student is practicing witchcraft) then spiritual guidance is given” (YIP Staff, personal communication, June 2, 2014). Some of the students reported that YIP had provided them with a workshop on counselling. The students found these workshops extremely beneficial and used the techniques to counsel themselves or advise community members.

Most of the women in YIP said that they were helped by the counselling. They reported being able to calm and console themselves, described the benefits of not focusing on the past, and found solace in understanding that struggles are inevitable (Fwaya, Ouma, Onoka, personal communication, June 2017). “Actually it has strengthened my heart not to keep thinking of the past instead to focus forward. Because initially I used to think of how the bush has affected my future. But now, I do not anymore” (Raila, personal communication, June 1, 2017). They describe the benefits of counselling as calming, strengthening and as a means to feel hope. If the aim of counselling is also to enhance competent functioning then it would be expected that YIP would report higher rates of positive self-perception yet this group struggles the most with self-esteem. This suggests that peer support (which YIP did not formally institute) could play a significant role in enhancing self-esteem.

Gulu Youth Advancing (formal space). The women had very mixed feelings about the counselling. Some of the women said that there was no counselling available at GYA and that they offer “no encouraging words” (Achanda, Were, personal communication, June 2017) and when asked about the benefits of counselling, they talked about the benefits of learning a trade. Those that found counselling beneficial said that they were told:

“Not to focus on the past but concentrate on the future” (Ayange, personal communication, June 28, 2017).

“To concentrate on what we were doing and to work hard to develop a career” (Awuor, personal communication, June 24, 2017).

“To not get worried or think so much because that would stress me and then evil forces would come and descend on me when am thinking a lot” (Achanda, personal communication, June 24, 2017).

One of the women however, found the counselling ineffective largely due to the power the counsellor was attempting to exert.

To be very honest, the counselling sessions at [GYA] never helped me. The person who was doing the counselling was using that opportunity to abuse us and insult us. Every time we would go for a counselling session, she would throw abusive words at us. She would tell you, ‘we want to mend your traumatized brains. We want to mend your useless brains! But you people don’t want to give us a chance to mend that brain.’ To me, I considered that useless. If I already had a traumatized and useless brain, what was the point of going there so that she insults me more? (Adede, personal communication, June 23, 2017).

The recipient of this comment was in captivity for twenty years. She suffered hunger, illness, rape, crossfire and had two children while in the bush. She talked about being with the rebels and how they came under attack by government forces. At one point, she had to run with luggage on her head, a baby on her back while she held the hand of her child who was too young to run.

When I crossed the road, I realized I did not have my second child. I started crying and running back to find her. I found her all by herself. She was alone, crying on the road. I cried so much that day that I threw away the entire luggage that I had and took care of my children. I went back to where the rest of the people were. Without the luggage, I had no bed sheets to cover with. That very night, I slept in the cold with my children (personal communication, June 27, 2017)

This is the woman the counsellor referred to as having “a traumatized and useless brain”! The counsellor’s approach is disturbing on multiple levels (i.e. lack of compassion, inappropriate exertion of power, psychologically damaging) and could serve to deter Adede from seeking help to process her experiences.

Single Pride (claimed space). One of the members of SIP is a certified counsellor and another member got experience counselling during the war. Based on interviews, SIP members found that the counsellors provided an empathetic ear, related well to the women, and provided advice. Counselling and advice is a very strong component of this claimed space and members repeatedly expressed appreciation for the counselling they received within the group. “When I went to Single Pride, I was very weak at heart. But being in Single Pride, there are people who are good at counselling. They counsel you and give you their own examples. So it is always easy for us to open up” (Angweng, March 30, 2017). As an additional benefit, the two counsellors are regular attendees which allow the members continuous access to a counsellor as opposed to a fixed period offered by formal reintegration programs. Single Pride members demonstrated the highest levels of competent functioning. It is difficult however to untangle whether it is the quality of counselling or the peer support that contributed most to their positive self-perceptions. Also arguably, most members of YIP and GYA experienced abduction whereas SIP members did

not but SIP members did lose loved ones and were exposed to atrocities during the war. Instead of a counsellor, the women WIM used peer support and opened up to each other. They also shared their struggles with Christine and Susan who would provide advice.

The Role of Peer Support

In several studies on war-affected children, peer support predicted increased hope, decreased functional impairment and decreased PTSD symptoms (e.g. Cortes & Buchanan, 2007; Morley & Kohrt, 2013; Wainryb & Kerig, 2013; Werner, 2012). In the Cortes and Buchanan (2007) study, war-affected participants pointed out that one of the main factors that helped them to overcome their trauma was sharing their experiences with peers. This connection allowed them to feel “accepted and validated... It also provided them with a normalizing experience that prevented them from feeling victimized” (p. 47). Tedeschi and Calhoun (2004) found that positive peer support can facilitate posttraumatic growth as peers can provide alternative narratives which can encourage integration of more positive schemas.

The advancement of WIM (created space). A few of the women in WIM mentioned that the greatest benefit of belonging to the created space were the deep emotional attachments that they developed as a result of being part of the group.

Being a part of WIM has benefited me so much. I see when we are in a group, there is a lot of rumour mongering, so it has taught me how to handle issues. When you have conflict with someone, you will have to sit down, you talk then you forgive one and other and you can become friends again. Secondly, being in a group has given me confidence that when you are alone, you cannot really handle your entire problem but when you are in a group, you can share your problem with the rest of the group members and it becomes easier (Ayaa, personal communication, April 18, 2017).

With one exception, all WIM members expressed that they made new friends, and that they felt love for the group. “The reason I continue to attend meetings is because I love Michelle, I love the group and I love everything that is discussed in the group, so I don’t want to throw away the treasure of being in the group” (Akot, personal communication, April 17, 2017). This feeling of support and love indicates that by 2017 this created space had morphed into a claimed space. It was through this transformation that WIM started looking more like SIP in that they supported each other and were single-minded about their group goals. As mentioned, a claimed space emerges out of common struggles and concerns and join like-minded people to work together to reach mutually agreed-upon objectives (Cornwall, 2002; Gaventa, 2006) and are safe spaces for sharing information and establishing solidarity (Guijt, 2005). I did not see indications of the united power I observed within SIP (claimed space) within WIM, but I did see indications that they are striving to achieve similar goals to SIP as they identified group goals as: “love and trust among group members”; “group business development through loans”; and to “increase our capacity as a group” (Focus group, May 27, 2017).

The women of WIM continued to have arguments when it came to decision-making but they always worked out their disagreements. Recently, an NGO expressed interest in working with SIP and WIM. If the NGO is able to get funding, these groups will merge. The groups are already thinking of their new name. One WIM member suggested that they consult me about their new name. Another WIM member asserted, “This is our group, not Michelle’s” (Ajok Susan, personal communication, June 15, 2018). This is a small indication that they have moved from beneficiaries of a space to claiming and designing their own.

In Chapter 2, Cornwall and Coelho (2007) asserted that creating a space in order to give a voice to the marginalized assumes that those citizens had no capacity to do so before the

development actors took control, which assumes that development is an attempt to shift mind sets from passive recipients to active participants who will take ownership of outcomes. The researchers also asserted that invited members of a created space may not have the language or the skills to communicate their needs; they may not fully understand how to participate or the rules of engagement. The development actors may not understand how locals organize themselves, or cultural norms that need to be considered when bringing people together. The researchers are correct as this learning curve is real, steep, and needs to be considered in the creation of space. WIM had to learn how to engage in this space and I worked with the research team to learn how to help create this space within this cultural context. In Chapter 2, I asked: Given the complexity of power, social relationships, the expectations and dispositions of those who enter a space, fundamentally how does it impact the participation? Considering the heterogeneity in this created space, and that most of these women did not share a personal relationship beforehand, it was almost inevitable that they would experience conflict. The process of the group's development was completely aligned with Tuckman's (1965) four stage cycle of team development as illustrated in Figure 27 below.

In the *forming* stage, the group focuses on the leader (the person who brought the group together) and looks to that authority for answers regarding expectations, boundaries, conduct etc. Group members are polite but perhaps distant (Wilson, 2010). WIM was forming during the workshop and until November 2015. They saw me as the leader and were not entirely clear about what was expected of them or the type of participation required.

| Stage of Group Development | Group Behaviors |
|----------------------------|---|
| Forming ↓ | Testing – determining what behaviors are accepted within the group Dependence – looking to leader, powerful group member, or existing norms for guidance Tentative interactions and polite conversation Concerned with being accepted into the group |
| Storming ↓ | Group members recognize and confront differences Conflict – uneven interactions, infighting, lack of unity, ideas being criticized, and individuals being interrupted when talking |
| Norming ↓ | Development of group cohesion – establishment of norms of behavior, harmony, avoidance of conflict, increased supportiveness, development of a ‘we-feeling’, openness to other group members |
| Performing | Working together as a group Group members take on flexible and functional roles within the group, Increase in cooperation and problem solving between group members |

Figure 27. Tuckman’s Model of Team Development. Adapted from “The impact of participation in an inclusive adventure education trip on group dynamics” by S. Sutherland and S. Stroot, 2010, *Journal of Leisure Research*, 42(1), p. 156. Copyright Routledge 2010. Reprinted with permission.

In the *storming* stage, team members focus on the personal impressions they are making on the team as opposed to the project. Factions may form and conflict will arise (C. Wilson, 2010). This started during my second visit where divisions broke out within the group (i.e. educated vs. not educated). They started to see Christine as the leader and the mistrust issue began with the operating expenses I left behind. Women started leaving the group as there was conflict and “no money”. What is interesting was the range of perceptions about conflict. Some felt it would tear the group apart. Others felt it was a source of growth and fortunately quite a few believed that the group would recover. “To me, this conflict was good. It helped bring the group together. When there is a conflict, members think and they come to trust each other. They come to a consensus. So I think this kind of division and conflict in WIM helped to bring these women in line” (Ayot, personal communication April 27, 2017).

If a team makes it to the *norming* stage, decisions are implemented, ideas move forward and relationships are solidified (Wilson, 2010). At this stage in 2016, 13 women remained in the

group. Friendships had formed, and group goals had been established. In 2017, new leaders emerged and self-appointed themselves and the group established concrete rules of conduct. Immediately afterward, the group began to move forward.

At the *performing* stage the team is high-functioning though “plenty of healthy conflict, of the type that does not damage the fabric of the relationships, [which] is interspersed with fun and humour” (Wilson, 2010, p. 2-3). The created space now sees that the group belongs to them and what they can achieve is up to them. In the case of WIM, they are taking the actions necessary to achieve their goals as a savings and loan group but continue to have “healthy conflict”.

SIP (claimed space): Encouragement and support. Beyond saving their money and improving their businesses through loans from the group, the largest benefit SIP women received from the group was the encouragement and support they received from members.

When I went to Single Pride, I had just separated from my husband. I was so stressed... At Single Pride, you share your problems and even if you went there a very unhappy person, your friend might advise you and you might listen to other stories that are worse than your own. So you will get the comfort that you are not alone (Agina, personal communication April 2, 2017).

As a result, the women of Single Pride in the end demonstrated more aspects of competent functioning more frequently than the RP Group. This includes expressions of hope, satisfaction with friendships, and positive self-perceptions. As an example, Aluoch is a SIP member, single mother of two and supports her children as well as her aging parents. Her ex-husband is a university lecturer and earns a good income. He threw Aluoch out when he took on a second wife and now Aluoch must chase her ex-husband constantly for school fees. She had a wonderful relationship with her sister but the sister died a few years back. Her two brothers are abusive and

resent her for having had children at a young age and blame her for being unmarried. She depends on one of her brothers for accommodation but his abuse was so relentless that she considered suicide at one point. These are only a few of her hardships, yet when I asked her to envision her future she said,

I see that my future after Single Pride is going to be a journey of struggle of which it will result into a brighter future. When we struggle on and then lift ourselves up, we shall have a brighter future. This is how I see it – in five years’ time. We will be able to stand and pay for our children’s school fees, make them eat, and we shall stand as strong women in the community! (Aluoch, personal communication, March 29, 2017).

It appears that it is her membership with Single Pride and her capacity to save that has given Aluoch so much hope and determination for the future.

Organic peer support: YIP/GYA (formal space). The reintegration programs in this study did not envision or implement a formal peer support system but it emerged organically. In the interviews, one of the themes that surfaced was a shift from loneliness to hope as a result of the friendships that students had established at the reintegration program. During the interviews in phase 1, former students were given seven items to rank in terms of importance to their recovery. From most to least important, they are: talking with the counsellor alone; talking with friends; group counselling; music; sports; drama; and games. It is worth noting that “talking with friends” was rated as more beneficial than group counselling. “Before I came to [YIP], I was alone. No one could give me advice. I felt isolated, I had no friends. At [YIP] I made friends” (Interview, May 11, 2014). Some students suggested that there should be peer activities to build bonds of trust before attending group counselling. Given the research on the benefits of peer support and that Sub-Saharan cultures are high in the value of “embeddedness” where

individuals are viewed as inseparable from the collective (Schwartz, 2006); it is perplexing that these reintegration programs would not incorporate peer support as a standard practice.

Training, Modelling, Participatory Processes

Training. As for training to enhance competent functioning, although the formal spaces of YIP and GYA offered “life skills” training they did not specifically target competent functioning which left a gap on how to manage conflict, and stress. With the exception of WIM, the other spaces did not use critical pedagogy and scrutinize the structures responsible for the marginalization of the women. As discussed in Chapter 4, these critical discussions enhanced their feeling of self-worth and their confidence to make changes in their daily lives.

The women of WIM provided positive feedback after each workshop — that is until 2017. In 2016, as mentioned, with a team, I raised \$950 through an exhibition in Montreal of WIM’s photos. To manage this money, the women needed to register as a group with the Local Council, open a bank account and save 25 cents per meeting. A year later, it still was not done and they had only saved \$15 collectively. I began to poll my informants to find out what could be behind their resistance to open a bank account or agree to save 50 cents a month. Some attributed it to their low education and immediate needs and that they could not think far enough ahead into the future. Others suggested that the women have severe trust issues within the group and with the leaders. Mistrust manifests in so many aspects of life here.

One of the agenda items for the first workshop in 2017 was to discuss how the group could proceed to get this registration process completed. One of the participants said, “Opening the bank account was delayed because of arguments. We were supposed to go to the bank to pick the papers but when the group returned, there were lots of arguments and everything flopped” (Okeyo, personal communication, 2017). This first workshop with WIM was scheduled to begin

at 8:00 am with breakfast and a 9:00 am start. The women arrived between 8:30 to 10:30 with the last woman coming in at 12:30 pm. At first, they seemed to be in a good spirits but when we started talking about money, saving and the bank account, they began to get annoyed. They were frank. They did not want any more training; they just wanted me to divide the \$950 between the 13 women. Anything else would be waste of their time. The research team explained how quickly that money would disappear on day-to-day expenses and reminded the women that a hand-out was never the original intent of the fundraiser. A month later, we offered 10 hours of computer literacy training and, in what appeared as an act of defiance, only four WIM women attended. The rest of the seats were filled with SIP. In the end, it was actually SIP that got WIM to register and open a bank account. The events that led to this are described below under “Modelling”.

Modelling. We presented three types of modelling to the WIM women. Two were intentional while the third happened by chance. First, at the forming stage as Tuckman (1965) suggested in his theory on the developmental sequence for small groups, the research team modelled the behaviours we were hoping to see within WIM (collaboration, participation, time management, honesty, openness, commitment, friendship and the like). During the final focus group with the research team, the members said that we did indeed demonstrate these qualities as a team and eventually (with the exception of time management) the research team began to see these qualities in WIM. With the modelling was consistent messaging. As cliché as it may sound, our message mirrored Home Depot’s, “You can do it, we can help.” You tell us what you need in terms of training, support, contacts and resources and we will provide, but the rest is up to you. There was great push-back as many of the women did not see themselves as capable of achieving their goals without substantial help.

The second type of modelling was presented through inspirational stories told by two strong women who spoke at the first workshop. As mentioned, these stories had a profound impact and inspired WIM to work to become independent women.

The introduction of SIP to WIM was the most powerful unintended modelling tool we used. We did not know at the time that merging these two groups would set the project on another trajectory. The third workshop in 2017 engaged both Single Pride and WIM. Single Pride was introduced to WIM as “Michelle’s new group”. (I am not sure why the research team would introduce me this way. I suspect they wanted to stir things up with WIM). It did not take long for WIM to see that SIP is a harmonious group of caring members who support and trust each other. WIM’s first impression of SIP was that they were very respectful. As two separate entities, WIM and SIP decided to become a savings and loan group around the same time (November 2016). The difference was that a year later, WIM had done little towards this goal while SIP accrued 42 members and hundreds of dollars in savings. Three days after their introduction to SIP, WIM registered themselves as a group and opened a bank account and the \$950 was deposited. Many of the WIM women later said that they benefitted greatly from access to loans to expand their businesses.

When I asked the research team why the introduction of SIP motivated WIM, one of the members said, “WIM was worried that you would now be giving Single Pride your love.” Based on bits of dialogue I heard during the workshop, I believe they were also concerned that I might give the fundraiser money to Single Pride (Apiyo, personal communication, April 18, 2017). It is interesting to note here that the perceptions the development actors have about the participants will interact with the perception of the participants have about the development actors. All of this influences the dynamics of the space.

The cordiality between SIP and WIM did not take long to dissipate. Soon after the second workshop together, they moved from the forming to storming as described in Chapter 2 and 4. Gaventa (2006) argued that it is power which shapes the boundaries of space and “what is possible within them, and who may enter, with which identities, discourses and interests” (p. 26). Merging the two groups, (as merging the two NGOs for this project resulted in a power struggle) led SIP to assert their power through gossip and WIM responded with threats and aggression. This led WIM to protect their “territory” by registering themselves and opening a bank account which would equalize WIM to SIP as a registered savings group.

Participatory processes. The benefits of using participatory processes with marginalized groups are well documented and discussed in depth in Chapter 3. However, in Chapter 1, while exploring Hall’s (1994) principle of power, I questioned the existence of an equalizing force between horizontal and vertical power. One such force is the use of effective participatory processes. Providing a safe space where this marginalized group of women (WIM) could have a voice in issues that concern them; really listening to their needs, concerns, and stories and developing solutions to address their challenges together, served to enhance their confidence and feelings of self-worth. In the McKay et al. (2007-2009) PAR Project, Worthen (2010) and her colleagues came to the conclusion that participatory processes, and the respect and support that the research team demonstrated, led the women to begin seeing themselves as “rights-bearers” and “deserving of respect from others” (p. 157). This same phenomenon occurred within WIM. Although SIP may demonstrate more aspects of competent functioning, WIM significantly advanced during the two years of this project and expanded their leadership, decision-making, interpersonal and negotiation skills that they gleaned through the PAR process. For the most part, no one had ever asked these women before, “What do you need to improve your own welfare?”

“Because we care about you, we want to know about your dreams, hopes, and challenges.”

“Because we believe in you, and in your potential, can you help us build a program that will support you and other young mothers achieve their goals?” Underlying these questions is a message that because we respect you, trust you and believe in you we have confidence that you and the group can achieve great things. This is the affective component of the project which proved to be messy and the outcomes difficult to assess. However, I will explore it in more detail in Chapter 6.

The barriers to competent functioning include self-marginalization, feelings of low self-worth, mistrust and waiting to be saved. The formal space did not appear to address these barriers effectively. Both the created and claimed spaces addressed these factors of competent functioning directly through peer-support which facilitated personal growth. For the final factor, financial stability, initially when creating WIM the prospect of the group attracted some women who were waiting to be saved. As time went on, those women left and the ones who remained focused on becoming independent. For all the women on this project, their competent functioning is closely tied with their financial stability which is described below.

Financial Stability

Overview

Financial stability, for the purposes of this project, is defined as having enough funds for food, health care, emergencies, and school fees; and acquiring land is seen as possible. Several of women in the formal and claimed space indicated on the survey that they were not working. During the interview we probed further and learned that they were engaged in petty trade or working in the market. Table 18 provides a summary indicating how close each of the groups was to financial stability.

Table 18

Overview of Financial Stability

| | Enough work, making ends meet | | Working periodically | | Not Working | | Sending their children to school ⁷² |
|----------------------|-------------------------------------|-----|-------------------------|-----|-------------|----|--|
| | n | % | n | % | n | % | |
| WIM (created) | 11 | 86% | 1 | 7% | 1 | 7% | 100% |
| SIP (claimed) | 14 | 70% | 5 | 25% | 1 | 5% | 79% |
| RP Group (formal) | 5 | 27% | 14 | 73% | 0 | 0% | 52% |

In this section, I will provide some explanations as to why WIM and Single Pride were able to achieve financial stability while the RP Group continues to struggle.

For almost two decades NGOs have been providing vocational training and attempting to create an entrepreneurial culture in Northern Uganda (United Nations, 2006). In fact the *Uganda's Vision 2040* (Republic of Uganda, 2010), advocates for entrepreneurial endeavours to build markets and develop sectors. However, there appears to be little consideration paid to the viability of small entrepreneurial businesses within the fragile economy of the North. Also this push for entrepreneurialism ignores structural inequalities that accompany the steady advance of neoliberalism including “the retreat of the state, privatization, and marketization of society” (Park, 2009, p. 171). Despite this push for entrepreneurialism from the government, in March 2017, Gulu municipality put big red cross-marks on all the temporary structures in Gulu and

⁷²The figures indicate the total percentage of the young mother’s children who are in school. Some of the young mothers are getting help to put their children through school. For example, for WIM, two of the young mothers get some assistance from the fathers of their children and one from an uncle. Two of the women in SIP are getting help from grandparents and one of the women is only putting one of her two children in school. Half of the women in the RP Group get assistance to send their children to school. Overall, many of the women struggle to keep their children in school and often a child is sent home due to a late payment of school fees.

slated them for demolition. Most of these buildings are used by women to sell produce, used clothing, housewares and the like as they cannot afford the rent demanded by landlords who lease permanent structures.⁷³ The municipality gave the residents and vendors two weeks to relocate as these tin shacks are not “modern” (Oluka, 2017). Gulu residents fought back but, despite orders for a stay from the National Physical Planning Board (NPPB) and Gulu High Court, the demolition began on July 5, 2018 (PM Daily, 2018).



Figure 28. Buildings of small businesses slated for demolition. Gulu, Uganda. Nokrach, K. (Photographer). (2019, January 1). Reprinted with permission

Once again, the voices of the poor and marginalized were not heard in order to make way for new roads and to advance neoliberalism. Given their education and language skills and the strict patriarchal code they are expected to follow, there are very few actual job opportunities available for these women. Therefore, it was no surprise that both WIM and Single Pride requested entrepreneurial training.

⁷³ Anena owned a restaurant and named it *Never Give Up*. It sat about 12 people and she had a steady business. Her building was slated for demolition. She took out a large loan and moved her business to a permanent structure. She had to work all the time to pay her loan and consequently was unable to participate in WIM. She ended up losing her business as well as all her assets to pay back the loan.

The formally abducted should be encouraged to be job creators, not job seekers. You can create your own job, for example doing something that you can sell that can earn you money every time. I think that's the way to go with livelihood and to help to reduce the amount of stress because they are busy (Adhiambo, personal communication, June 22, 2017).

Other researchers have argued that graduates of reintegration programs are not adequately prepared to be entrepreneurs which requires increasingly complex skills and capital. "Rather than giving youth minimal training in a vocation, they would benefit more from more advanced skills training, start-up capital and equipment" (Blattman & Annan, 2008, p. 20). Upon registration, at YIP, students were promised the equipment and tools to start their businesses but after graduation, YIP seldom followed through.

YIP/GYA (Formal Space): Grateful for the Crumbs and Struggling to Make ends Meet

In YIP, five of the women studied tailoring, four studied hairdressing and one catering. During the interviews, however, half of the women are working in their fields while the others are farming, engaged in petty trade or not working. Most of the women in the RP Group said that their trade did not bring in enough money. Others explained that they received the training but did not have the capital to buy the tools to practice their trade. One of the tailors said, "I am not doing that because after when I have finished my course, I was not given that tailoring machine and I personally did not have enough money to buy one on my own. So right now I am doing something else" (Abira, personal communication, June 2, 2017). One of the hairdressers said, "Yes, I am working in the salon but there are few customers. [The money] is not enough but I am continuing just because there are no other options" (Abela, personal communication, June 1,

2017). All the hairdressers are working in their fields as they have the option of being “mobile” and travelling to their customers to cut, braid, or plait hair.

At YIP, some students were encouraged to form groups within their trade, write a business plan and if they were successful, YIP would provide a small amount to launch their business. However, at the time they did not give training in how to write a business plan or entrepreneurial skills. Most of the members within these groups did not have the business skills to write a business plan or launch a business.

I visited four of these groups in 2016 that had graduated from YIP, and had launched a business. I noted that two of businesses were operating well (keeping records, getting along, operating with a profit) while two were not. Although the students had sufficient skills in their trade, the groups lacked basic business skills such as customer service, customer retention, advertising, marketing, and record keeping. I also found that one of these groups was fraught with conflict (Field notes, May 2016). Although one woman said that her life did not change at all after graduating from YIP, all the other women said that they started with “nothing” — no money or earning potential and now they have a skill to earn some money.

I was in a very hard life because I conceived when I was in S2 and gave birth to my first born. But my father brought me back with him and took me to study hair dressing which it has helped me so much that nowadays at least I can work for my money. And that has changed my life a little better because in a day I can work and get around two thousand shillings or more of which it means that in a week I can get either ten thousand shillings or even more (Onoka, personal communication, June 2, 2017).

As with the other graduates, they had a difficult life before YIP and are now are so grateful to have a means to earn money. However, Onoka is making the equivalent of .75 cents a day or

\$4 a week which is simply not enough to pay rent, school fees and food. “The money I get out of dressing hairs, I always use for paying school fees though I cannot make complete payment of school fees because there are many people who also deal in that same business but at least it is better than before (Abela, personal communication, June 1, 2017). One participant talked about working as a tailor and getting no compensation except her meals paid (Okoth, personal communication, June 2, 2017).

Eight of the nine women of the GYA group were trained in tailoring and were provided with a sewing machine. The other graduate studied hairdressing. Five are working in their fields as tailors, two of which are actually working at GYA making stuffed animals which are sold overseas. On the survey, the other four indicated that they were “not working” yet when we probed during the interviews, they are in fact working but not in their fields as they could not make ends meet with their trade consequently they are farming and one works in a restaurant. Ouma walks to the rural areas and looks for charcoal. She hauls it back to Gulu and sells it in the market at great personal risk as cutting down trees, burning them and possession of charcoal is against the law.⁷⁴ Yet, she indicated that she is “not working”.

Single Pride (claimed) and WIM (created): Engaging in Small Businesses

As with the other women, six SIP women reported that they were not working when in fact, they are all working with only one exception, as this one woman is overcoming an illness. Two of the women were trained as tailors at some point and one as a hairdresser. These three women are working in their fields. The rest have established small businesses where they sell produce and crafts at the market. A few have taught themselves sewing and mend clothes. Two

⁷⁴ One of the women of WIM had her entire inventory of charcoal confiscated by the forest authority. She was then asked to pay a bribe of 500,000 (\$200 CAD) to get it back.

women have created a very successful brewing business and have regular clients. These women are continuously expanding their business. The others have small businesses with the exception of two women: one works in a hospital while the other as an office assistant. When I met Single Pride they had already had a few workshops on two different income generating activities (IGA) and I was informed that they applied some of what they learned in the entrepreneurial training that we offered to their businesses.

As a group, SIP shares business ideas and at times work for each other's businesses. They have claimed a culture of prosperity, innovation and hard work which was fostered as result of the nature of this claimed space. Conversely, in formal reintegration programs (with some exceptions) when students graduate they are on their own.

With two exceptions, the women of WIM all have small businesses which are viable and growing as they use the funds from the savings and loan group to expand their businesses. One of the women is only working periodically and one is too ill to work at this time. As with SIP, they are working on growing their businesses. The majority of SIP and all of WIM have achieved financial stability while the RP Group continues to struggle.

Examining the list of barriers to reintegration, from neoliberal policies to self-marginalization—every single barrier impacts financial stability. The formal space provided gendered vocational training in saturated markets. All the women are working; four in their fields while the others work to feed themselves and their families. Most of women in the claimed space are getting by. The created space focused on entrepreneurial training and enhancing competent functioning which led the women to open small businesses and with one exception have a sustainable livelihood.

Conclusion

In Chapter 4, I introduced Figure 29 and argued there was a relationship between these three success factors. I maintained that competent functioning and social inclusion were largely unachievable without financial stability. In comparing the three social spaces on financial stability, the RP Group lags behind in all three success factors. One explanation is that the social skills learned within the created and claimed space contribute to competent functioning which in turn contributes to their businesses and interactions with their customers thus enhancing their financial stability. Interpersonal skills, self-reliance, resiliency and discipline are all crucial qualities and skills that are necessary for an entrepreneur (Steele, 2018). As a further indication of the interconnectivity of these three factors, considerable research has indicated that socioeconomic status (SES) has a powerful influence on health (Adler & Ostrove, 1999; Marmot, et al., 1997). Gallo (2006) and her colleagues found “psychological costs” such as constant arousal and anxiety caused by having a lower status and living in poor neighbourhoods with the threat of physical harm. Therefore, financial stability also influences competent functioning and well-being. Having said that, there is no escaping the shades of grey. Susan argued that if a community member has significant wealth, but treats people poorly, community members will often feign affection to stay on good terms but gossip behind the person’s back. As an example, she relayed a story about a rich man who refused to pay a poor man the 20,000 shillings (\$16 CAD) he owed him for a good day’s work. The poor man cut off the rich man’s hand and “no one sympathized” (personal communication, March 14, 2018).



Figure 29. Interconnectedness of factors for reintegration

The theories put forward by VeneKlasen & Miller (2002) and Hall (1994/1999/2004) contribute implicitly to understanding how power can intersect with social spaces. The formal, created and claimed spaces I delineated in this chapter provide evidence of the veracity of these theories as it is evident that visible power exists throughout the formal space whereby the reintegration programs make the rules, design the program and minimize student engagement. Although the claimed space was also bound by a set of rules and hierarchical in structure, the rules were created by the women and this approach amplified their voices and led to collaborative decision-making. The claimed space demonstrated a collective or united power and drew strength from communal goals. In the created space there was evidence of hidden power between the women where they decided who was an insider and outsider based on their education level and affiliations. As their confidence grew, they began to demonstrate a power within where they voiced their needs and opinions.

With WIM, we provided training in stress management, conflict management, deep listening, goal-setting and action planning. After each workshop, the women were asked for their

feedback. They all appreciated the training but when asked about the most beneficial aspect of this project, peer support and entrepreneurial training came out first. It is evident that SIP enjoys the most social inclusion, competent functioning and many of the women have financial stability while the RP Group is lagging behind. Although SIP may be “ahead”, WIM, all in all made the most advances. Was it the training, participatory processes, peer support, modelling or simply the love they felt as a result of belonging to the group? A cause and effect relationship cannot be made here. As a pilot, this model led to some personal growth for everyone involved. Further refinements need to be made and lessons learned need to be incorporated which I will discuss in the next chapter.

Chapter 6: Recommendations and Conclusion

Near the end of this project, the research team handed out certificates to WIM and SIP members for the successful completion of the entrepreneurial training. The women wore their fancy, colourful dresses as it turned out to be a formal affair with speeches from Christine (UWAP) and representatives from WIM and SIP. I recorded the event in my field notes to capture the mood, sentiments and to underline the impact of unity when it occurs within social spaces.

Christine talked about all the hardships and challenges both groups had overcome to create unity and congratulated the women for coming together. The Single Pride representative expressed appreciation for the training, and for having met WIM. She then turned to me and asked gently, “Please don’t forget us”. It was then WIM’s turn. People turned to Adongo who declined and then the women urged Apiyo to speak. Formerly abducted, with a grade three education, Apiyo had everyone in tears. She talked about her time in the bush, the loneliness and isolation. She talked about being separated from her two children and how she was reunited with them years later. It was at this point that she started to cry. The counsellor for Single Pride, came up, put her arm around her and began wiping Apiyo’s tears with her hand. Well that did it for me. As I began wiping my tears with my dress, Susan came over and held my hand. Apiyo continued and talked about how being part of WIM and then merging with Single Pride made her feel less alone, more social, and as if she wasn’t facing all of life’s hardships on her own. She then began to apologize for everything negative she had ever said about WIM and Single Pride. She talked about the unity created by the workshops and how they must remain together because “We are stronger together” (Field notes, May 20, 2017).

There is a profound emotional toll that comes with being marginalized which includes, as Apiyo described above, feelings of loneliness and isolation. I discussed the impact of marginalization in Chapter 1. I proposed Hall's (1994) theory as a means to explain the process, and experience of marginalization for the young mothers. I provided examples of each property of marginalization and argued that reintegration programs need to be aware of the specific needs of formerly abducted and war-affected young mothers.

In the next chapter, I outlined Cornwall and Coelho (2007), and Gaventa's (2006) theories pertaining to social spaces and power. I critiqued the concepts of "participation" and "empowerment" in development projects and I situated the women in one of three social spaces. I described how the women entered these spaces, and how their expectations, dispositions and skill sets influenced the level and quality of their participation. After detailing the methodological considerations, research methods and the feminist, critical lens that framed this project in Chapter 3, I used Glick and Fiske's (2001/2011) theory of hostile and benevolent sexism to provide further evidence of the power relationships between men and women in Uganda that keep women oppressed. I outlined the barriers to reintegration in Chapter 4 and argued that reintegration programs need to use participatory processes, engage community members and foster peer support in order to achieve their aims. In Chapter 5, I outlined the variations I found between the three social spaces in terms of competent functioning, social inclusion and financial stability. In this chapter I will build on the recommendations I have put forward thus far, propose a model for reintegration, while considering the theoretical framework of marginalization and social spaces. Table 19 below outlines a structure for a new model for reintegration which includes foundational principles, inputs and potential outcomes.

Table 19

Reintegration Program Model

| Foundational Principles | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|--|
| Address marginalization, patriarchal values at all layers of the socio ecology | Consider creation of space, power dynamics, and developing power within | Engage women and community in PAR (program design, decision-making, evaluation) | Incorporate peacebuilding and indigenous forms of collective healing | Incorporate spiritual beliefs, indigenous knowledge & strength-based approaches | Conduct evaluation Share findings Aim for continuous improvement |
| Inputs | | | | | |
| Preparation | Methods | Social Inclusion Competent Functioning | Financial Stability | Best Practices | |
| Identify & engage key stakeholders/ champions, community members & women in a conflict analysis and create Program Team | Based on the women's needs, create measurable objectives | Liaise with local government bodies that advocate for women | Offer vocational training in non-traditional, lucrative trades that are in demand | Instil transparent processes for programming and management of funds | |
| | Invite inspirational speakers Set up mentoring system | Provide literacy training/ accelerated education | Conduct market analysis Obtain donor dollars to open up markets | | |
| Identify & draw on community and resources Learn about successful projects | Set up mentoring system | Integrate western counselling model into indigenous Embed counsellor as contributor | Engage the women in research regarding viability of new businesses | Address conflict as it arises | |
| Recruit successful intact groups | Create peer support structures | Create events for the community, coordinated by contributors | Develop group businesses & monitor | Publish achievements & learnings, mindful of representations | |
| Manage expectations Create rules of engagement | Integrate storytelling, music and dancing | Engage the women in critical discussions, foster critical consciousness Engage men in critical discussions Develop leadership potential | Incorporate savings scheme & obtain contributor investment | Build relationship with contributors Consider affective component | |
| Social Change: Outcomes | | | | | |
| Women as change agents Project/group sustainable Reduction in reports of marginalization/gender-based violence Greater community acceptance and support Local Councilor support and advocacy New markets/successful businesses for women Policy change | | | | | |

Donor dollars would be put to better use if allocated to creating more markets in Northern Uganda educating men on the impact of patriarchal values and providing more equitable access to education, health care and social services. Simply “empowering” through vocational training is not enough as it does not address the structural barriers or social norms that keep women in poverty. Reintegration programs need to work with active women’s groups, government and communities to address patriarchal values, increase opportunities for women and create a climate that supports their growth and equality. It is with these factors in mind that I propose the new model outlined in Table 19 above. It should be noted that the model was developed over a decade after the civil war and is grounded within the current Northern Ugandan socio-cultural context. The model is also based on the findings from this research as well as a review of the academic and practitioner literature in this field. At the heart of the model, as Tuhiwai Smith (1999) suggests, is decolonization of the mind where the self-determination of the program participants is at the centre of the model. In other words, the program avoids replicating the discursive fallacies of development discourses such as exemplified in the Lesotho project discussed in Chapter 2, and provides what locals need—not what NGOs have or want to give (Ferguson, 1990). This model is intended for foreign NGOs. Though local Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) may find aspects of this model useful, the cultural components will likely appear as “obvious”. Before I begin the discussion about the foundational principles of this model and put forward the subsequent recommendations, I would like to address a contentious issue and that is regarding funding.

A Word about Funding

Critical to the success of any reintegration program is the transparent management of funds. There is ample evidence that many reintegration projects collapsed due to corruption (e.g.

Hitchen, 2017) or the mismanagement of funds (e.g. Bergo, 2015). Briefly, providing funding to national or even local governments has been known to cause corruption and so often the funds do not reach those in need of the aid. Funding NGOs has led to the misappropriation of funds (e.g. BBC News, 2018) and in some organizations, four times the salary for foreign aid workers than locally engaged staff (Kuo, 2016). Although developing a sustainable funding model is critical, it is beyond the scope of this dissertation. Nonetheless, Global Affairs in Canada is venturing into both a new and old approach which is worthy of mention.

Though there is no data yet to determine if Global Affairs is in fact reducing poverty with this new model, for the last three years, they have provided tens of millions in dollars in direct cash transfers to citizens in poverty-stricken and war-torn countries. They argue it is more efficient as it is the recipients, not an NGO, who decide the recipients' most pressing needs. The model also reduces the risk of corruption as the money is not chipped away as it slowly reaches the recipients, rather it is sent directly to those in need (Arsenault, 2018). There is enough evidence that both foreign aid and hand-outs of money does not incite development or reduce poverty (e.g. Adjibolosoo, 2000; Bovard, 1986; Ferguson, 1990). However, for the purposes of my model, if direct cash transfers for living expenses were provided while the women were in an accelerated education program and/or at a reintegration program, this would be an efficient and beneficial use of foreign aid that would actually reach the women and their children while they move towards financial self-reliance.

In the next section I provide recommendations pertaining to each phase of the model. The model rests upon the foundational principles which support the rest of the model. The inputs provide a roadmap for the methods and design of the program with the aim to achieve the potential outcomes that I have put forward. Each section of Table 19 is replicated below.

Foundational Principles

Table 19a

Foundational Principles

| | | | | | |
|--|---|---|--|---|--|
| Address marginalization, patriarchal values at all layers of the socio-ecology | Consider creation of space, power dynamics, and developing power within | Engage women and community in PAR (program design, decision-making, evaluation) | Incorporate peacebuilding and indigenous forms of collective healing | Incorporate spiritual beliefs, indigenous knowledge & strength-based approaches | Conduct evaluation Share findings Aim for continuous improvement |
|--|---|---|--|---|--|

Address Marginalization, Patriarchal Values at all Layers of the Socio-Ecology

A socio-ecological lens can inform both an understanding of the impact of war on formerly abducted young women and offer a holistic perspective on their reintegration. Based on this position, existing systemic risk factors and barriers such as neoliberalism and patriarchal values leading to social and economic inequity as well as political alienation need to be addressed.

In a review of nine interventions aimed at gender equity and livelihood security in Africa, Gibbs (2012) and his colleagues found that current interventions are not “upstream” enough and did not challenge the broader issues underlying economic inequality. In other words, more attention needs to be paid to deconstructing patriarchal values, identifying and addressing sources of marginalization before the women will feel “empowered” to take on social change. The women need advocates and need to advocate for themselves.

Consider Creation of Space, Power Dynamics, and Developing Power Within

This project offers numerous insights into international development organizations that create spaces for marginalized groups and “give a voice to the poor”. It is vital that these

organizations acknowledge that the spaces they are creating are brimming with politics, economic inequities, legacies of and wounds from colonization and war and cultural norms that may not be aligned with the development actors' values, expectations and agendas. Development actors need to consider the intention behind the creation of this space. Is it donor driven? Are there shades of 'white saviour' at the heart of the intervention; or are the development actors sincerely seeking to share the struggle of the marginalized? Ultimately, the dynamics of the created space and the intent of the organization will either come together and perhaps even achieve united power, or clash due to hidden power.

Created spaces, where participation and cohesion are part of the intervention, are tumultuous places. Development actors should expect conflict and tensions as a matter of course. That conflict must be dealt with immediately with compassion and understanding with the goal of reaching the other side of the conflict as a stronger entity.

The context of these spaces needs to be considered, for example, part of this context is the cultural orientation of hierarchy and the fact that most NGOs in Northern Uganda are all competing for the same, limited donor dollars. I presumed wrongly that merging two NGOs (UWAP and Vine) on this PAR project would lead to collaboration. It did not. It led to a power struggle that nearly collapsed the project.

Selecting contributors (community members, organizations and young women) to work with means some will be included while others excluded, which will have an impact.⁷⁵ For example, this dissertation project could only support 20 participants from Single Pride⁷⁶ (SIP –

⁷⁵ I am suggesting that this model incorporate components of Participatory Action Research, therefore I will refer to the women, organizations, community members and the like who are engaged in the program design and development as "contributors".

⁷⁶ To recap: Women in Motion or WIM comprise the created space; Single Pride (SIP) is the claimed space; and Youth in Pader (YIP) and Gulu Youth Advancing (GYA) make up Reintegration Program (RP Group) or the formal space.

created space). Due to lack of communication, 15 other SIP members showed up to the training and were upset that they had been excluded. The first six members of SIP were selected because the leader felt they “deserved” the training based on their impeccable attendance to SIP meetings and chose not to select the two pregnant members in the group as in the leader’s eyes; these two pregnant women were “lower members” since the purpose of SIP was to support single mothers.

All of the women who enter the space of reintegration come with varying degrees of mistrust, which means group cohesion will be more difficult to build. They also bring their experiences, skills and expectations but will they have the skills needed to participate in the space and do they know the expected rules of engagement? How do locals organize themselves in spaces and maintain cultural hierarchies? What kind of intervention will shift the thinking from beneficiary to active participant? All of these questions need to be thought through and a strategy to promote a collective approach to obtaining project goals needs to be considered as well as how the host organization’s interventions can open up new spaces.

Engage Women and Community in PAR...

As discussed in Chapter 2, rather than empowering women on development project in a context that doesn’t provide women choices, development actors should reconsider their definition of “empowerment” and their view of program recipients as “poor”, “vulnerable” and as “victims” (Angucia et al., 2010; Savard & Michaelsen, 2018; Savard & Naseem, 2015).

Programs need to work with active women’s groups, government, and communities to address patriarchal values, increase opportunities for women, and create a climate that supports their growth and equity. Program developers should question: How can this local story impact the broader context and human condition and how can we make a contribution to equity, freedom and social justice? (Madison, 2011).

Rather than assuming the needs of a marginalized group, Participatory Action Research (PAR) begins by asking the group about their struggles, concerns and needs and engaging them in program development, decision-making and evaluation. Participatory Action Research requires a group to collaboratively identify key issues, find solutions to the challenges they collectively face and take action to improve their social condition (Van de Sande & Schwartz, 2011). The group designs, owns, and benefits from the process, as they and the organization, engage in collective knowledge construction. Participatory Action Research potentially removes the power dynamic inherent in research, allows local populations to serve their and their communities' interests and moves towards social justice (Goldberg, 2012; Van de Sande & Schwartz, 2011). As Orlando Fals-Borda (1996) so eloquently states, "The study of society is not worth the trouble if it does not help its members to grasp the meaning of their lives and to move to action for progress, peace and prosperity for all" (p. 161). I found it took a lot of time for WIM (created space) to take ownership of their program but on the day that they were to have their first meeting as a registered savings group, I observed the power of PAR. At this meeting, the women of WIM needed to organize themselves as a group and make some financial decisions collaboratively. Although I was close by, they never came to me for guidance or permission (which they had often done in the past). They approached me after their meeting and thanked me for the funds that I had raised from their photos⁷⁷ and "for not giving up on them".

⁷⁷ As mentioned in Chapter 3, in 2015, WIM took photos to respond to the question, "What do you value most?" and provided a narrative of these photos. In Montreal Canada with a lot of support, a photo exhibition was held and we raised \$950CAD for WIM. As a group, WIM and the research team decided that in order for them to fund a group livelihood project in the future, and to be able to deposit the \$950 in a bank, they needed to register themselves as a "Village Savings and Loan" (VSAL).

Incorporate Peacebuilding and Indigenous Forms of Collective Healing

Throughout this dissertation, I have discussed the social impact of the war and how it has led to mistrust, deterioration of the extended family and clan, increased gender-based violence, social exclusion of formerly abducted youth and other social ills. Reintegration of formerly abducted women does not operate in isolation, that is, they reintegrate into their communities which means a holistic approach to reintegration needs to be considered which includes collective healing. For rebuilding social trust, restoring broken relationships and to heal from war, the Acholi traditionally practiced restorative justice through forgiveness and reconciliation (Murithi, 2002). The process of *Mato oput* aims for consensus among disputing community members and through a public process, members are heard; offenders take responsibility; victims forgive; offenders then compensate the victims (often symbolically); and consume a drink of bitter herbs which symbolizes the desire to transcend the bitterness between parties and replace it with harmony (Murithi, 2002). Ugandans in diaspora as well religious and civil society groups in Uganda have advocated for the revitalization of the *Mato Oput* process (Murithi, 2002). Central to the recommendation here is that organizations need to consider indigenous methods for peacebuilding and the collective healing of communities. I articulate a more detailed approach to peace building in the preparation phase described in the next section.

Incorporate Spiritual Beliefs, Indigenous Knowledge and Strength-Based Approaches

Central to western thought is that science is all-encompassing and through science, understanding of the world is achieved (Tuhiwai Smith, 1999). Doing research or creating a program as a foreigner in Uganda means leaving native realism behind (a belief that people define the world and objects in the same way) (Spradley, 2016). The women on this project believed in God, prayer, love, curses, the power of witch-doctors, and so on. This is jarring for a

western scientific mind but this is their truth and reality, and programming needs to align with their worldview for it to be meaningful.

I started my interactions with WIM (created space) as a search for their needs and reality. For example, Ayot is one of the most educated members of WIM. She has a strong personality and spoke out when she started feeling that WIM's meetings were not productive. However, she underlined that our program needed to start with love.

To make the project work better, we should have first started by making it peaceful and creating unity and love... But when it comes to interpersonal relationships, there are a lot of fights in WIM... But in WIM, I am seeing change this few days. Love is gradually coming in to the group... We belong to WIM because we love the group (personal communication, April 27, 2017).

As well as love for members, it was also important for WIM to weave their love for God within meetings. At the beginning of each workshop, one of women would lead the group in prayer. At times they read scripture that was meaningful to them before we engaged in discussions. I noticed that some of the women did not whole-heartedly participate in prayer and that there was some diversity of religious and spiritual beliefs within the group. I noted in my field notes that I must be careful not to put all the women under one umbrella and universalize their spiritual needs. I then began asking if they belonged to a church and how active they were in their religious communities (which are acceptable questions in Uganda). Incorporating spiritual beliefs in this context, aligns well with the culture, as generally Ugandans do not separate their faith from daily life. Furthermore, incorporating other strength-based approaches such as Appreciative Inquiry (Cooperrider & Whitney, 2005), and SAS² tools such as "Ideal

Scenario” (Chevalier & Buckles, 2008) heightens awareness of the potential of each individual and focusses on possibilities, and capabilities rather than on problems and deficits.

Conduct Evaluation, Share Findings, and aim for Continuous Improvement

Reintegration programs have been criticized for rarely conducting program evaluations (e.g. Akello, Richters, & Reis, 2006; Betancourt et al., 2013; Wessells, 2011). Consequently, there is a significant gap in the research regarding methods and models for reintegration. While interviewing NGOs and CBOs that delivered reintegration programming, I found very little innovation in programming options and little evidence of follow-up with participants to determine if their programming had been effective. One NGO informant spoke to me about follow-ups with graduates. He said, “Most of our students are successful. They are at least doing something” (Pader NGO2, personal communication, May 2, 2017). The bar needs to be higher.

The International Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE, 2013a) consists of 16 INGOs and encourages inclusive community participation “in the analysis, planning, design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of education responses” (p. 22). As a minimum, evaluations need to focus on examining whether the conditions for the success of the program are in place and then the actions taken by program contributors need to be measured as well as gains made in knowledge, skills, and attitudes (Savard, 2018). I propose that these success indicators include: a broad, inclusive, participatory planning and implementation strategy; methodical use of Instructional Systems Design; effective teacher/facilitator training, broad engagement of community members and stakeholders (Savard, 2018) and concrete, upstream actions that address the marginalization and oppression of formerly abducted and war-affected young mothers.

Formative evaluations are not only critical to obtain/maintain donor support, but to feed into the continuous improvement of the program. Project contributors should be active in the evaluation process and offer feedback on various aspects of the project. To ensure that contributors feel heard, these suggestions need to be incorporated into the project. Results then need to be shared widely which includes interventions that worked well and reached their objectives as well as those that did not work which would contribute to the continuous learning of the NGO/CBO community.

Inputs

| Table 19b | | | |
|---|---|----------------------------------|---|
| <i>Inputs: Preparation</i> | | | |
| Identify & engage key stakeholders/ champions, community members & women in a conflict analysis and create Program Team | Identify & draw on community and resources Learn about successful projects | Recruit successful intact groups | Manage expectations Create rules of engagement |

Preparation

Identify and engage key stakeholders... and create a Program Team. As mentioned in the Introduction, the political objective of formal reintegration is to prevent former combatants from participating in crime, violence or contributing to the obstruction of peace (Babatunde, 2013). Rather than focussing on the prevention of violence, programs could consider the promotion of peace. One of the programs I visited uncommonly implemented peace education as part of their curricula but did not evaluate the program's success. The practitioner literature offers some insights on "how-to" implement successful peace education that incorporates a broader socio-ecological approach and typically involves youth, community members, public

officials, elders, religious leaders, stakeholders and the like (e.g. Equitas & UNOHCHR, 2011; INEE, 2013b).

The Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE) created a handbook to help government and humanitarian workers build “conflict sensitive education” that embeds education into a local context, and includes developing students’ skills in critical thinking, human rights, non-violence, conflict prevention, and resolution (Sigsgaard, in INEE, 2013, p. 26). Conflict sensitive curricular reform requires a process that is gradual, participatory, and informed by a thorough analysis of the conflict. The focus of INEE’s program is on the planning stage and obtaining extensive community engagement (Savard, 2018).

The process begins with a conflict analysis which is a systematic study of the background, history, root causes, and dynamics of the conflict. Throughout the conflict analysis process, INEE (2013) underline the need for transparency, sharing information, for mobilizing local resources, ensuring local ownership, and collaborating with communities. During the design phase, INEE emphasize that programs should be socially and linguistically relevant, learner-centred, promote participation and include formal and informal education. Teachers and facilitators should be recruited through a transparent process, trained, and supported. The planning and implementation of educational activities should be integrated with other national strategies, such as: emergency response, poverty reduction, and peacebuilding, in order to create an integrated systems approach. Community participation and mobilization, which are essential to the process, include the involvement of family members, government officials, as well as those representing different power structures, ethnic, religious, or social groups (INEE, 2013).

To identify stakeholders and resources that could support the program, I formed a local research team which provided a wealth of information about the needs of the women, effective

methods, culture and context. Creating a core team of contributors (which includes some of the target population, as well as stakeholders, community members, religious leaders etc.) as advisors for the design, implementation and evaluation is simply a best practice, and creates accountability and commitment – an essential component of participatory projects.

Identify and draw on community...learn about successful projects. One of the first steps in this process is to acquire an in-depth understanding of the context. This means developing relationships with staff from other projects, community members, local council members and project contributors to find out the resources available, and which programs are working and not working. For example, as a result of evaluating the program, Youth in Pader (YIP – formal space), it made me realize that community engagement, storytelling, and peer support needed to be part of the created space.

One of the important factors that contributed to the success of the McKay et al. (2007-2009) PAR Project was that each of the approximately 20 groups of young mothers was deeply embedded in a community with supportive community members facilitating the reintegration process. The researchers found that community members were “critical in helping participants identify challenges in their communities, mobilizing resources to support their social actions, and motivating other community members to include the young mothers and their children within the life of the community” (Mckay, Veale, Worthen, & Wessells, 2010, p. ix). Reintegration programs need to be open spaces where healing is available not only to formerly abducted women but to community members as their war and post-war struggles are interconnected. To facilitate that healing, using peace education and encouraging community discussions from the perspective of the “other” creates understanding and compassion (Harris 2008). For example, the NGO, *Association Modeste et Innocent*, works in Rwanda counselling Hutus and Tutsis to foster

dialogue and reconciliation. Both perpetrators and victims receive counselling together based on the principles of peace education culminating in the perpetrator's formal request for forgiveness. Some of the stories were reported by the *New York Times Magazine* and included a story by Munganyinka who was a survivor but who had lost her husband at the hands of Dominique.

After I was chased from my village and Dominique and others looted it, I became homeless and insane. Later, when he asked my pardon, I said: 'I have nothing to feed my children. Are you going to help raise my children? Are you going to build a house for them?' The next week, Dominique came with some survivors and former prisoners who perpetrated the genocide. There were more than 50 of them, and they built my family a house. Ever since then, I have started to feel better. I was like a dry stick; now I feel peaceful in my heart, and I share this peace with my neighbors (Dominus, 2014, para 19).

Reintegration programs can create a space for community members and for formerly abducted youth to share their stories, to expand each other's understanding of the war and the suffering they collectively endured with the aim of reconciliation and peace.

Recruit successful intact groups. As described at length, WIM, the created space, was a very tumultuous space that cycled through every step of Tuckman's (1965) model for team development which is described in Chapter 5. It took just under two years for WIM to move through the cycle of team development and to form, storm, norm, and perform.⁷⁸ Part of the issue was that they originated from two camps (two NGOs) which by nature in Uganda are competitive. They came from different neighbourhoods and had preconceived notions about those neighbourhoods. Also, with the exception of a few women, most were barely acquainted

⁷⁸ The four stage cycle of team development includes forming (looking to an authority for decision-making); storming (conflict and divisions emerge); norming (ideas move forward); performing (high-functioning teams) (Tuckman, 1965).

with each other before the onset of the project which made conflict more likely, albeit, the process of navigating the conflicts served to build interpersonal and life skills for members of WIM. Single Pride on the other hand, the claimed space, was a harmonious group and were all connected through mutual friendships. I recommend working with cohesive groups as it shortens the amount of time to create a peer support system as relationships are already established.

I suggest that development actors start with successful registered women's groups or savings groups. If a group is registered, they have thought through and submitted a Group Constitution to local officials which includes a code of conduct. Criteria for group selection should be established and groups should be nominated by locals from the Program Team. However, caution should be exercised as locals may put forward groups that do not meet the selection criteria, or who are not necessarily the most cohesive in order to give friends or family the opportunity to participate on the project.

Manage expectations and create rules of engagement. In Chapter 2, I discussed how expectations interact with the creation of space. Participants will enter the space with hopes and pre-set notions of what they will receive from the space. If these expectations are not congruent with those who created the space and the organization and women begin to operate at cross-purposes, it is unlikely that the project objectives will be achieved.

The women of WIM arrived at the CEED compound imagining that this project would result in financial support. In fact, a few members said that they continue with WIM as they feel hopeful they will get money out of their efforts. While the research team was very clear and consistent that this project was about supporting them with the knowledge and skills they need to improve their own welfare, they continued to hope but at times lost motivation because their most fundamental need was financial stability which was not being met by the project. Other

similar projects also found that the priority for formerly abducted youth was an opportunity to earn money (e.g. Annan, Blattman, & Horton, 2006; Stark, Ager, Wessells, & Boothby, 2009; Murungi, 2011). Therefore, this dissertation project did not meet the fundamental needs or expectations of WIM though in the end, with one exception, they all achieved financial stability to varying degrees and had access to low-interest loans for future needs. Therefore reintegration programs not only need to manage expectations but meet the financial needs of the contributors. Primarily this can be achieved by providing accelerated education and training in lucrative fields and markets.

Finally, rules of engagement need to be created collaboratively and revisited periodically as the group becomes more cohesive. This exercise will also provide the organization with insights into the women’s values and priorities and will also serve to manage expectations. The rules need to come from the women and they need to be specific. All the savings groups I met with had very specific rules about conduct and penalties if rules were broken.

Methods

| Table 19c | | | |
|--|--|--------------------------------|---|
| <i>Inputs: Methods</i> | | | |
| Based on the women’s needs, create measurable objectives | Invite inspirational speakers Set up mentoring system | Create peer support structures | Integrate storytelling, music and dancing |

Based on the women’s needs, create measurable program objectives. There is an African proverb, “It is the wearer of the shoe who knows where it pinches”. In other words, it is the women who know what they need to improve their own welfare. Therefore, they must be actively engaged in shaping the program and defining the objectives for the program. Asciro,

who attended a reintegration program for over six months said, “I know very little because most of my life was in the bush. I would beg that if any programme is to be designed, the programme should be designed in such a way that all of us, the abductees, are involved (personal communication, June 22, 2017).

In order to conduct any program evaluation, the program needs to have measurable program objectives. For example, we collectively decided that successful reintegration would include improved social inclusion, well-being and economic stability. To measure economic stability, one of our objectives included that by the end of the program the women would be able to pay for their children’s school fees. When I asked YIP (formal space) about the aim of their program and their notion of successful reintegration, they were not able to articulate their objectives. Overall, definitions regarding successful reintegration in the literature are inconsistent. When I asked reintegration program staff from other programs about their objectives, either they did not have objectives or the objectives were vague and unmeasurable such as “Our goal is to empower vulnerable young mothers” (Gulu NGO3, April 13, 2017) “We are here to build capacities” (Pader NGO2, May 2, 2017); “[Our goal is] making them know who God is and to depend on Jesus Christ” (Gulu NGO4, April 26, 2017). Overarching program goals, objectives and the anticipated impact of a program optimally should be created with program contributors.

Invite inspirational speakers and set up a mentoring system. The women in WIM responded very favourably to the stories that were shared by inspirational community members and they eventually used these inspirational stories to create goals for themselves. For example, after listening to Rosalba, WIM decided that their individual goal would be to “become independent, inspirational women.” To take it one step further, a program could set up a

mentoring system whereby these speakers and members of their network who have also overcome hardship, achieved financial independence, and who are respected in the community could mentor the women.

Ralph and Walker (2010) created the *Adaptive Mentorship Model* which focuses on establishing the mentor-mentee relationship. The model guides mentors on the adjustments they need to make based on each task, situation, and context, as well as the mentee's level of confidence and skill. The model posits that a mentor should vary their level of support and direction depending on the task, the confidence (self-assurance) and competence (ability to perform the task) of the mentee. Based on these factors and the needs identified by the women, mentors embedded within a reintegration program, could help the women navigate social situations and work on enhancing their self-esteem; provide guidance on establishing and maintaining successful businesses establishing long-term goals, and the like.

Create peer support structures. In Chapter 5, I noted that formal reintegration programs do not tend to establish peer support systems within their programs. I also discussed that although graduates from YIP and GYA experienced more social inclusion post-program, they did not achieve the same levels as the created and claimed spaces. The peer support system that permeated Single Pride was created organically, in that, the group created the rules, a code of conduct and group projects collaboratively. To foster a peer support system in WIM (created space), we used: participatory processes, delivered several team building exercises, encouraged the women to share their stories and created group goals and projects. Peer support was also found to enhance competent functioning. The women of WIM began to express a sense of

belonging and love for their group. In fact, over one year post-project, the women of WIM continue to meet and support each other during difficult times.⁷⁹

Integrate storytelling, music and dancing. Storytelling is an integral part of Ugandan culture, and within reintegration programs, has been found to facilitate healing and relationship development (Veale, et al., 2013; Vindevogel, et al., 2014). It serves five functions, namely:

1) synthesising personal experiences and connects loose parts of the experience; 2) allows narrators to distance themselves from the story and trauma; 3) connects the storyteller to the audience; 4) helps storytellers evaluate past events and potentially create alternative interpretations; and finally 5) it joins what is real and what is possible (Ladegaard, 2012).

Through storytelling, the members of WIM discovered that they were not alone in their struggles and that the other members had faced the same or even more arduous challenges. The goal is not to transform the potentially horrific events through storytelling, rather to encourage storytelling in a way that will liberate the storyteller from the grip of the event and encourage them to assess their actions while charting a new path forward (Wainryb, 2011). For example, the Acholi *wango* ceremony uses storytelling for encouragement and to learn from elders. To encourage struggling clan members, during *wango*, elders share stories of clan members who overcame hardships (Kiconco, 2015). *Wango* tends to take place in villages but the spirit of *wango* can be integrated into reintegration programming.

Music and dance are also important traditions and are part of Acholi celebrations and where messages are conveyed. The act of dancing has been found to help make meaning out of suffering (Amone-P'Olak, 2005; Bragin, 2010). Dance is part of the curriculum at Youth in

⁷⁹ As an example, Susan shared that a WIM member's husband was recently hospitalized for mental illness. All of the WIM members came to her home, visited her in the hospital, and brought food to support her through the ordeal (Ajok Susan, personal communication, December 4, 2018).

Pader (YIP - formal space). While at YIP, I observed a group of dancers prepare for a competition. During the practice they joked, laughed and all seemed to be filled with confidence while mastering the intricacies of a traditional dance (Field notes, May 25, 2014).

Social Inclusion and Competent Functioning

| Table 19d | | | | | | |
|---|--|---|--|---|------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| <i>Inputs: Social Inclusion and Competent Functioning</i> | | | | | | |
| Liaise with local government bodies that advocate for women | Provide literacy training/ accelerated education | Integrate western counselling model into indigenous | Create events for the community, coordinated by contributors | Engage the women in critical discussions, foster critical consciousness | Engage men in critical discussions | Develop leadership potential |

In order to contribute to the women’s social inclusion and competent functioning, the reintegration program needs to work with contributors to clearly define the parameters of these goals. What does each include and exclude? Are the women striving for a leadership position within the community or to get support from neighbours when they need it? The organization then needs to determine the skills that are lacking. In conjunction with the goals of the contributors and the gaps found in skills, the organization needs to create a training plan collaboratively with contributors. I found that using interactive methods such as scenario-based training, role playing, and problem-based learning tended to be highly effective whereas the technical trainers tended to use lecture, question and answer, and hands-on training.

As a team, we identified the training needs as: peacebuilding skills, conflict management, leadership training, parenting training, women’s/human rights training, legal rights, reproductive health, entrepreneurial training, marketing, record keeping, basic computer skills and the like. As

mentioned in Chapter 5, some members of WIM and SIP determined to teach their children about human and women's rights. Engaging children in peacebuilding activities with their mothers could mitigate violence in the future. However, more research is needed in this area.⁸⁰

Liaise with local government bodies that advocate for women. Social inclusion and competent functioning are merged as a category since the interventions I suggest here will serve to enhance both. For example, one of the staff members I interviewed from CEED spoke about the benefits of engaging with local government bodies such as the Child Protection Unit and Local Councillors (LCs) of districts to advocate for women (CEED, personal communication, April 17, 2017). The informant said that NGOs and CBOs that build relationships with their LCs are well-positioned to benefit from the funding when it trickles down to the local level.

Organizational networking enhances social inclusion as it casts the net wider connecting the women to a broader network and gives the women an opportunity to advocate for themselves.

Provide literacy training/accelerated education. The women on this project who had less than six years of education, struggled with feelings of low self-worth. They created barriers between themselves and community members that were "above" their station. The female informants I met who had risen out of poverty all had found a way to higher education. If an organization can only provide one intervention for young mothers, let it be literacy training and accelerated education. Apart from contributing to gender equity, this would likely have the most impact on both the competent functioning and social inclusion of young mothers.⁸¹

⁸⁰ Many of the abducted women had children while they were in the bush. When they returned, very little psychological support was given to these children. They too were exposed to starvation, cruelty, and poverty as well as indoctrinated into LRA ideology (Martin, 2009). More research and programs are needed for these children.

⁸¹ We provided course completion certificates to the women of WIM and SIP. Some of the women proudly showed their certificates to their neighbours and family and stuck the certificates on the wall in their homes. Some said that this was the first certificate they had ever received. Figure 30 illustrates the typical reaction of women when they received their certificates.



Figure 30. Certificate Ceremony for Entrepreneurial Training. UWAP: Gulu, Uganda. Olyel, C. (Photographer) (2017, May 20). Reprinted with permission.

Integrate western counselling model into indigenous. In Chapter 2, I described the western approach to psychotherapy and suggested that therapeutic measures should be integrated within indigenous practices. In the cultural practice of *wango*, mentioned above, when counselling a struggling clan member, elders share stories of members who overcame the same hardships. Reintegration programs could integrate this practice of storytelling and learning from survivors using peer support. This model is not unlike the very successful testimonial and 12-step model used by Alcoholics Anonymous (AA), which has been endorsed by the American Psychological Association. The AA model is based on peers helping peers who are at different stages of their sobriety (Alcoholics Anonymous, n.d.)

Narratives could include the struggles survivors had such as: reintegrating back into the community; going back to school; trying to find a job; re-building their self-esteem; shedding their soldier identity; or dealing with flashbacks, nightmares or anxiety. Each story could contain

an underlying theme such as “there is hope on the other side”, “you have the strength to overcome anything” or “you cannot do this alone”.

In several studies on war-affected children, peer support predicted increased hope, decreased functional impairment and decreased PTSD symptoms (Morley & Kohrt, 2013; Wainryb & Kerig, 2013). “Supportive others can aid in posttraumatic growth by providing a way to craft narratives about the changes that have occurred and by offering perspectives that can be integrated into schema change” (Tedeschi & Calhoun, 2004, p. 8). It is this schema change that is associated with positive mental health outcomes.

Embed counsellor as contributor. Part of Single Pride’s (SIP – claimed space) success can be attributed to the two compassionate counsellors that were active members of the group. Western psychotherapy educates therapists to have a professional distance from their clients whereas at least the informal model of counselling in Uganda appears to encourage a close bond between the counsellor and the person seeking counselling. It is that connectedness that facilitates healing and removes feelings of alienation. Reintegration programs offer counselling but it ends with the student’s departure from the program. The SIP counsellors were always available when a member was struggling, and this support did not end after six months. Consequently, SIP members demonstrated many facets of competent functioning (such as hope, ability to form and maintain social relationships, self-reliance) and this confidence flowed into the community. Therefore, to provide continuous access to counselling which is sustained after graduation, counsellors should be recruited as contributors or contributors who are interested in this role could be trained as counsellors.

Create events for the community, coordinated by contributors. In the McKay et al. (2007-2009) PAR Project, the women enhanced their social inclusion by coordinating

community events where they used drama and dance to engage the community with their war-time stories and to address their need for better access to education, social inclusion and financial stability (Angela Veale et al., 2013). As described above, storytelling is a means for formerly abducted young women to make their stories known. Moreover, the act of coordinating events will build the leadership capacity and confidence of the women.

Engage the women in critical discussions, foster critical consciousness. Critical consciousness is achieved when the oppressed, through dialogue, work their way to a critical understanding of reality, which leads to social action (Freire, 2005). The research team engaged WIM in critical discussions regarding the nature of their marginalization. This led the women to reflect on the sources of their oppression and the subsequent action they would take that would make a cause towards gender equity. The discussions should start with issues that concern the women, uncovering the root causes and then discussing what action the women can take.

Engage men in critical discussions. In his viral TedTalk, Jackson Katz (2012) does not ask why women experience so much abuse but questions the socialization of men. He argues that young boys are also profoundly affected when their fathers abuse their wives and sisters and asserts that both men and women are victims of male-violence. Katz advocates interrupting sexist enactments and suggests that this will not become commonplace through sensitivity training rather through the leadership training of men.

Not only does *The National Association of Women's Organisations in Uganda (NAWOU)* train both men and women on gender-based violence, they develop male leaders to talk to other men who abuse women and they actively recruit male champions to advocate for zero-tolerance for gender-based violence (NAWOU, 2018). This organization has been active in Kampala since 1993 and more recently started working in Northern Uganda.

In Kampala, there are men who are demonstrated leaders and have protested the abuse of women. For example, policeman Francis Ogweng (second on the left in Figure 31 below) marched along the highway in the busy town of Entebbe with over 50 other policemen and dozens of protesters toward Kampala with a heavy pot on his head and a baby on his back to protest violence against women and the government's complacency over the unsolved murders of 20-23 young women (Lewton, 2018). The protest had shock value and one onlooker said, "When I saw the UPF [Ugandan Police Force] especially the officers carrying babies and [I thought] they are doing it for the cameras, and for show. But at least the message presented is good, very excellent message" (Thomas Reuters Foundation [YouTube], 2018, 8:05-8:17). Ogweng is also one of the founders of Wang-oo Forum which aims to end gender-based violence, and promote positive masculinity by engaging men and boys as advocates for the achievement of gender equality and women's rights (Wang-oo Forum, n.d.)

Likewise, an NGO in Kenya decided that in addition to training girls on how to avoid sexual abuse and rape, they created the *No Means No* program which educates young boys about how to respect girls (Molloy, 2015). This program is growing and research has shown that in comparison to girls who received life skills training, those who participated in *No Means No* had 40% fewer reports of rape than the control group.



Figure 31. Members of Ugandan police march against gender based violence. Reprinted from Wang-oo Forum, 2018. Retrieved from <https://wangofo.wordpress.com/2018/03/06/wagoo-forum>. Copyright Wang-oo Forum 2018. Reprinted with permission.

To interrupt sexism and violence against women, reintegration programs need to engage men in critical conversations about the socialization of young boys, the damaging impact of patriarchal values on women, and how everyone in a society benefits from gender equity. In effect Katz (2012), NAWOU (2018), Policeman Francis Ogweng, and the *No Means No* program are all advocating for an end to gender-based violence through the leadership training of men.

Develop leadership potential. As mentioned, men need to become leaders in the conversation about sexism and gender-based violence but also reintegration programs need to develop the leadership capacity of young women. Leadership opportunities develop the confidence to speak up, agency, interpersonal skills, self-esteem and other aspects of competent functioning which again contribute to well-being and social inclusion. Though there is very little in the literature regarding the leadership, strengths, and skills youth developed during the war (Martin, 2009), there is evidence that during the civil war in Uganda, some of the women rose

high in the ranks. Others developed leadership skills while in captivity and were given responsibilities beyond the support functions. For example, some women were charged with protecting groups of women and children when battalions went to battle (Baines, 2008); or trained to be medics to apply traditional healing practices (Brett, 2002).

In WIM, decision-making and leadership was in the hands of the women. Some leaders emerged naturally and initially took leadership positions as the chairperson, secretary or treasurer while the Research Team developed the leadership capacity of the other women. We did this through action planning whereby every woman was responsible, with a support person, to implement an activity. For example, to address their goal of “To become a role model for my children and to educate them about God”, all the women brought their children to a Saturday meeting while one had arranged for a pastor to talk to the children. Engaging the WIM women to conduct research, coordinate an activity, or speak to a potential donor was met with resistance. Perhaps with a mentor by their side, these tasks would have been less daunting.

Financial Stability

| Table 19e | | | |
|---|--|------------------------------------|--|
| <i>Inputs: Financial Stability</i> | | | |
| Offer vocational training in non-traditional, lucrative trades that are in demand | | | |
| Conduct market analysis | Engage the women in research regarding viability of new businesses | Develop group businesses & monitor | Incorporate savings scheme & obtain contributor investment |

Depending on funding available, the reintegration program can either provide vocational training (as is currently in place) in non-traditional, lucrative trades or focus on developing entrepreneurial skills. Supporting the women post-program in establishing their businesses in

these trades is essential to success. If less funding is available, the program could focus on establishing the women in innovative businesses. Both options could potentially open up new markets in Northern Uganda. Not only would this stimulate the economy, the women would be at the forefront of innovation. For either option, there would likely be resistance as the women would have to be willing to reconsider the nature of acceptable work for women.

Offer vocational training in non-traditional, lucrative trades that are in demand. As mentioned, in Gulu and Pader, many women have been trained in hairdressing and tailoring and then establish their own businesses. Training women in these fields leads to a limited income (though tailors connected to the foreign community do very well). The trades that are making money are dominated by men such as motorcycle or car repair, computer services, electricians, carpenters to an extent, and *boda boda* drivers (there are less than 10 females in Gulu who drive a *boda boda* (Ajok Susan, personal communication, December 4, 2018).

If the organization decides to offer vocational training, before the program begins, a market analysis is needed to determine which trades are in demand, lucrative, sustainable, and emerging. This analysis needs to include uncovering which trades women are willing to work in. Only one woman out of the 75 women involved in this dissertation project supported herself and her children by working in a male-dominated field. She worked in the construction trade and also made bricks. The men she worked with would challenge her and make work difficult for her but once she proved how capable she was, she was asked to return for additional contracts (Acen, personal communication, July 4, 2016).

The young mothers generally had mixed feelings about engaging in non-traditional trades though one was interested in computer repair while two other women would have appreciated training in carpentry. Offering non-traditional trades to women will be met with some resistance

which is why it is important to survey the community to determine if women would be willing to do those trades. Under no circumstances should women to be trained only in tailoring and hairdressing (as is the case) as there are still dozens of organizations in Northern Uganda that continue to graduate women in these fields. After the vocational training, women should also receive business and entrepreneurial skills to launch their own businesses and should receive ongoing support and monitoring.

Conduct market analysis. Obtain donor dollars to open up markets. In Gulu and Pader, many women have established their own businesses but these are largely limited to brewing alcohol; or selling vegetables, fish, charcoal or used clothing in the market or engaging in other petty trade. Some make and sell shoes, liquid soap, paper beads or other handcrafts. With the exception of the brewing business, income generated from this type of trade is limited.

To begin supporting the women in establishing a business, first and foremost, as mentioned the women need to get access to accelerated education to the level of high school completion. Not only will this eliminate feelings of inferiority for not knowing English or not feeling equal to others due to a lack of education, but the women will have a better knowledge base in order to develop a sustainable livelihood.

The women should then get training in business/entrepreneurial skills. Since this is a participatory project and research is an important component, once the women feel confident about their business skills, they should be encouraged to go out and conduct a market analysis to learn about potential markets. By speaking to their relatives, shop owners, local council members, religious groups, women's groups, and people in trades, they may learn about a product or service they could make or sell, the price, the skills they need etc. and bring that information back to the group. Based on the businesses they want to establish individually or in

small groups, they may need training in specific income generating activities to learn how to make the product or deliver the service that they have found that is in demand.

For this dissertation project, as a group, WIM decided that they would like to create a day care for children ages one to three. The women talked to their neighbours, family and friends and determined that there is indeed a market in Gulu and the few day cares currently in operation are doing very well. As added value, WIM thought they would also invest in a washing machine so that the parents could drop off both their laundry and children and pick them both up at the end of the day. They also wanted to purchase books as they saw the day care as an opportunity to not only teach the children basic reading skills at an early age but to also teach the non-literate members of WIM how to read.⁸²

Engage the women in research regarding viability of new businesses. Once the women have a solid business idea, they should again conduct a market analysis to ensure that there is a need for their product/service in the market. This will serve to expand their professional network and also quash ideas that are not viable. They should then be given the opportunity to work through a business plan with guidance.

Develop group businesses and monitor. Once they launch their businesses, they will need ongoing training, regular monitoring and support. Providing business/entrepreneurial skills is not a novel idea but ongoing monitoring is not common. The need for regular monitoring and support cannot be stressed enough. I know of several NGOs that launched businesses for youth and could have prevented the collapse of these new businesses had they been there to offer

⁸² I approached an NGO that does substantial work with marginalized children and women in Sudan, with WIM's idea of a day care. The Executive Director went to Sudan in 2018 and incorporated Gulu as a side-trip. He met with both WIM and SIP for an afternoon and then interviewed the women. This NGO is in the process of raising the funds for a six month pilot project with WIM and SIP to launch this day care (Foundation 64, 2018).

support and advice at critical moments. The women will also need capital to start their businesses to buy the tools, equipment and perhaps space to launch their businesses.

Incorporate savings scheme and obtain contributor investment. Munene, Schwartz, and Kibanja (2005) examined the behaviour associated with remaining in poverty in Uganda. Using a gendered lens, the researchers found that women are disproportionately poor in Uganda; very little is written about the individual poor and why they remain in poverty. Munene (2005) and his colleagues found that engaging in crop farming, selling one's labour for a low price, lack of family planning, and being uneducated or illiterate—all exacerbated poverty. (In fact, the highest rate of illiteracy in the country was found by female-headed households in the North (Munene et al., 2005).

The researchers suggest that social capital, defined as, “An individual's capacity to access resources for growth and social support particularly in a crisis” (Munene et al. p. 11), can be used to move out of poverty. The researchers propose that social capital is greater in communities whereby members trust each other, perform acts of reciprocity, volunteer and share information. As well as developing social capital, the researchers underline the importance for women to be encouraged to save consistently and avoid spending all their wealth on immediate needs. It is for these reasons that I suggest that the program include a savings scheme where the women save and borrow from their group. This practice is very common in Northern Uganda and as long as the money is not lost to thievery, all members stand to gain. Munene (2005) and his colleagues also advocate for development projects to engage in cost sharing. I suggest that contributors also provide some of their savings to the start-up of their individual or groups' businesses. A monetary investment on the part of contributors is lacking in these entrepreneurial projects in Northern Uganda and this may be contributing to their collapse. On one hand, contributing their

savings would increase their personal risk but on the other, it may lead to greater sense of ownership and serve to balance out the power dynamic with the funding organization.

I had a conversation with one of the local community coordinators who managed a few groups of locals on a \$17M World Bank project. This money was to be used to create farming projects in 13 communities and for the purchase of oxen, equipment, seeds etc. The coordinator’s role was to meet with community groups, and launch and monitor their agricultural projects. During one community meeting, a citizen voiced the concern that if he was to do so much farming, the World Bank would have to buy him boots. The Coordinator took exception to this request and asked him, “If you eat food, should the World Bank chew it for you too?” Some of the men openly called her “stubborn” and threatened to complain to her supervisor about her attitude, however other community members quashed the complaint and agreed that they too have to invest in the project (Field notes, personal communication, May 30, 2017). This notion of investing alongside the aid organization is not common practice but even a nominal sum or a small percentage of contributor savings will likely increase commitment.

Best Practices

| | | | |
|--|-------------------------------|--|--|
| Table 19f | | | |
| <i>Inputs: Best Practices</i> | | | |
| Instil transparent processes for programming and management of funds | Address conflict as it arises | Publish achievements & learnings, mindful of representations | Build relationship with contributors Consider affective component |

Instil transparent processes...Address conflict as it arises. I left approximately \$150CAD for operating expenses with UWAP, one of the NGOs on this project. Part of these funds was allocated to pay for speakers. When one of the speakers cancelled, the women wanted

to know how that money would be spent. The representative from the NGO did not feel a need to be transparent, but the issue would not go away and it turned into a conflict which bred mistrust that lasted for months.

There have been millions of misappropriated funds for projects in Northern Uganda. Savings groups also often lose their funds as someone with signing authority decides to take the funds and run. The women are aware that this is commonplace and want to protect their savings and project. To build trust with the women, there needs to be good communication and transparency about the funding. It is also vital that conflict is openly addressed, otherwise factions develop and the project will lose focus.

Publish achievements and learnings, mindful of representations. Since so few program evaluations are conducted or published, and researchers do not tend to disclose facets of projects that were not successful, it is difficult to learn what works and does not work in this field and to build on that knowledge. For example, as mentioned in Chapter 2, with the exception of some community members wanting more control of the project and some of the young mothers wanting decisions made for them, almost nothing went awry on the McKay et al. (2007-2009) PAR Project. I am not questioning the achievements of this project; rather I suspect that there must have been challenges and taxing situations that do not appear in their extensive publications. This leads to programmers repeating interventions that simply do not work.

Within these publications, the tone, the language and the conceptualization of formerly abducted young mothers reflects how these young women are understood and influences program design decisions. As mentioned in Chapter 1, based on an overview of 98 academic, practitioner, and mainstream articles, we found representations of formerly abducted young women as problematic (Savard & Michaelsen, 2018). Although the literature on the civil war and

post-war experiences provides deep insights into the oppression, struggles, and resilience of these women, the review of the literature revealed that formerly abducted girls and women in Northern Uganda are chronically referred to the women as “poor”, “victims”, “vulnerable” or as “sex slaves”. This essentializes formerly abducted young mothers and overshadows their fortitude, strength, skills and resilience. A more nuanced, balanced, reflective portrayal of these women is needed which acknowledges their experience but avoids stigmatizing the women further and subsequently negatively influencing reintegration programming (Savard & Michaelsen, 2018).

Build relationship with contributors and consider affective component. A few weeks before the end of my last field visit, in my field notes I wrote:

I wonder how I am going to turn all this data from the heart into a document for largely an academic audience. I ask my informants, “What do you think about...?” and I get what they “feel” and “believe”. It’s so interesting that with an absence of formal knowledge acquired from formal education institutions, it appears that knowledge for these women is a culmination of their experiences, advice they have received from others, spiritual beliefs and all of it is highly intuitive. So much of what they know has been processed through their emotions. For example, “Why do you think Single Pride is so successful?” Response: “Because we love each other.” So I’m left with finding a bridge between the heart and the mind to make sense of all of this (May 21, 2017).

In the Foundational Principles section above, Ayot suggests that to make the project work better, we should have started by creating unity and love. A few of the women mentioned that the greatest benefit of participating in WIM were the deep emotional attachments that they had developed as a result of being part of the group. They expressed that they made new friends, they

felt love for the research team or that they simply loved the group. “The reason I continue to attend meetings is because I love Michelle, I love the group and I love everything that is discussed in the group, so I don’t want to throw away the treasure of being in the group (Ayot, personal communication, April 17, 2017).

What struck me when I first met Single Pride (SIP – claimed space) in 2016 was the level of trust within the group. I asked the members how this trust was established. To explain this, some of the women pointed to their regulations that forbid gossip and insist on confidentiality. However, the most common explanation was that they love each other and see their sister’s problems as their own. Other SIP women reported that trust was a necessary condition for a savings group, “I see that the level of trust in Single Pride is high. If we never trusted each other, we wouldn't have the savings. It’s because of the high level of trust that we save every Sunday. We love each other. If we didn’t love each other, we wouldn't trust” (Ocolo, personal communication, March 29, 2017). “They encouraged us to have love and togetherness within the group. With that, I think I see my future differently now (Angweng, personal communication, March 30, 2017). The Gulu Fish Monger Group, which is the most powerful, and successful savings group in Gulu, also attributed their success to loving each other.

Particularly in this context where love and belonging are so important to women, the affective component of the project should not be minimized rather strong bonds between the organization and the women and between the women themselves should be developed. The latter will serve to maintain a support structure long after the organization moves on.

Social Change: Outcomes

Table 19g

Social Change: Outcomes

Women as change agents
 Project/group sustainable
 Reduction in reports of marginalization/gender-based violence
 Greater community acceptance and support
 Local Councilor support and advocacy
 New markets/successful businesses for women
 Policy change

Outcomes

The outcomes listed here in Table 19g are suggestions for possible outcomes. It is through collaboration between the organization and the contributors that outcomes should be determined. I make these suggestions based on that, change must happen at all levels of the socio-ecology, beginning at the level of the individual where the women need to see themselves as entitled to more equity and become change agents. The women of WIM coming into this project did not see themselves as “movers and shakers”, as they were focused on fulfilling basic survival needs. Before a woman can become a change agent, she must first achieve other milestones as illustrated in Figure 32 and replicated from Chapter 5.

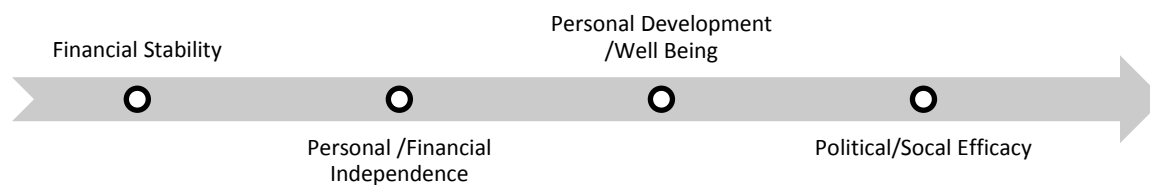


Figure 32. Milestones to political efficacy

Although more research is needed in this area, it may be interesting for programs to begin by: 1) assessing where their program contributors fall on this continuum; 2) provide the support and training they need to progress through the continuum; 3) introduce critical pedagogy and

discussions on their marginalization once the women have been able to address their basic material and personal needs; and then 4) measure their capacity as agents of change.

The next outcome listed in Table 19f concerns the sustainability of the group and project. Ideally, a strong support system has been put in place and the women have broadened their social network which allows them to continue to be supported after the project finishes. They also have additional resources they can draw on as a result of the project. They continue to meet as a group and perhaps invite community members to provide expertise on income generating activities, spiritual matters, business advice etc.

To achieve greater acceptance and support from both the community and LCs, the organization has done outreach and has engaged stakeholders in dialogues about the challenges single mothers face. They have opened up the discussion with both men and women about patriarchal values and the power shift that needs to take place. The hope is that this will result in local policy change and advocacy on the part of LCs and other government institutions.

Opiyo (2015) advocates for affirmative action policies at the national and district levels, for war-affected women and their children. These policies should give this population more access to government programmes, resources and services and guide sub-county officials in their selection process of program candidates. Furthermore, these officials, well connected with stakeholders, donors and national government representatives, should advocate for war-affected women and children. In the words of one official, “If we are fighting for integration and then we isolate these people, what are we talking about? We need to reinforce reintegration.” (Opiyo, 2015, p. 41).

A Final Word

When I began to research reintegration programs for women and learned of the critical elements that were missing and consequently sabotaging their success, it became very clear to me that a new model for reintegration was needed. I imagined that this new program would: engage the active participation of women in the development of the program; consult the women and create the interventions that addressed their dreams, needs and goals, where they could meet regularly and save a little each week; create a peer-support system where they could share their stories; and create a space that they would in time claim and where the women would feel that they were heard, respected and loved. Also, by engaging the women in critical discussions the hope was that they would continue the conversation after the project and consider making a step towards social change. This would naturally result in an increase in self-esteem, confidence, leadership skills, enhanced options for a livelihood, more social inclusion and increase the likelihood that their children would go to primary and secondary school and on to university. NGOs and INGOs would read the results of my research and have an “aha” moment where they finally would learn how reintegration should be done. This was the fantasy. In reality, colonization, neoliberalism, INGOs and western NGOs and their “development” efforts have heavily influenced the economy, culture and identity of Ugandans. I initially felt that putting forward yet another model that operates at the macro level would simply be contributing to the problem which is to ignore the larger socio-political forces at play. However, the model I am proposing does indeed recognize that without addressing these structural barriers, reintegration programs, even those with theoretically sound and innovative approaches, will not likely result in changing the structures that continue to keep the women in poverty. The micro, meso, and macro need to be integrated into one system. That is, those who are advocating for the women, working

on policy change, and creating open spaces for dialogue concerning the women, need to stay close to women as to not lose sight of their needs, dreams and struggles.

I now return to my field notes for one last time. One of the first entries contained a conversation I had with the host at a guest house in Kampala. She asked me what I was doing here. I explained that I was going to Pader to speak with formerly abducted youth to learn about their experiences as I wanted to work on a new model for reintegration. She explained that she was a psychologist and that she had spent three months in Lira during the war counselling youth. “They are suffering up there,” she said. “People here don’t care and yet you come from so far away. God bless you” (Field notes, May 6, 2014). More people need to care about the abduction of youth into armed groups and embrace the spirit of *Ubuntu* which is an African philosophy that asserts that there exists a common bond between us all. It is through this bond, that we come to discover our own human qualities. Archbishop Desmond Tutu describes *Ubuntu*:

It is the essence of being human. It speaks of the fact that my humanity is caught up and is inextricably bound up in yours... A person with Ubuntu knows that they are diminished when others are humiliated, diminished when others are oppressed, diminished when others are treated as if they were less than who they are. The quality of Ubuntu gives people resilience, enabling them to survive and emerge still human despite all efforts to dehumanize them (Panse, 2018, para. 4).

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LIST OF APPENDICES

| | Appendix A Phase 1 2014 | Appendix B Phase 2 2015 | Appendix C Phase 3 2015 | Appendix D Phase 4 2016 | Appendix E Phase 5 2017 | Appendix F Multi- Phase Documents |
|---|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|---|
| Recruitment Script | | B1 | | | | |
| Questionnaire and Sample Interview Questions for students of YIP | A1 | | | | | |
| Sample Interview Questions for Young Mothers | | B2 | C1 | D1 | E1 E2 | |
| Sample Interview Questions for Community Members | | | C2 | | | |
| Sample Interview Questions for NGO/CBO Staff | | | | D2 | | |
| Workshop Agendas | | B3 | C3 | D3 | E3 | |
| Short Action plan | | | C4 | | | |
| Hierarchy of Nodes | | | | | | F1 |
| Consent Form | | | | | | F2 |
| Demographic Survey for Young Mothers | | | | | | F3 |

Appendix A: Phase 1 - 2014

Appendix A1: Questionnaire and Sample Interview Questions for students at YIP

YIP would like improve the mental health part of their program. So we would like to know what you think about it. Could you please answer the questions below by putting an X in the box that best describes your feelings? Please give this paper back to _____. Please don't put your name and we promise that no one will know what you said. Thank you for your help.

Male Female

Between the ages of 15-17 Over 18

How many months have you been at YIP? 6-12 13-24 Over 2 years

1. Are the group sessions helping you?

A lot Sometimes Not at all

2. Are the topics covered in the group sessions useful to you?

A lot Sometimes Not at all

3. What helps you the most during the group sessions?

When the counsellor talks When I talk When others share stories All of it

4. Do you think that you have an equal chance to participate in the group sessions?

Yes No

5. When you talk alone with the counsellor, does that help you?

A lot Sometimes Not at all

6. Which activity helps you the most? Rank the activities from 1 to 6. For example, put #1 beside the activity that helps you the most, #6 beside the activity that helps you the least. Also tell us what you think about the amount of time spent in these activities.

7.

| Rank from 1-6 | Time | | |
|---------------------------|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--|
| ___ Games | <input type="checkbox"/> Not enough | <input type="checkbox"/> Just right | <input type="checkbox"/> Too much time |
| ___ Drama | <input type="checkbox"/> Not enough | <input type="checkbox"/> Just right | <input type="checkbox"/> Too much time |
| ___ Sports | <input type="checkbox"/> Not enough | <input type="checkbox"/> Just right | <input type="checkbox"/> Too much time |
| ___ Music | <input type="checkbox"/> Not enough | <input type="checkbox"/> Just right | <input type="checkbox"/> Too much time |
| ___ Group counselling | <input type="checkbox"/> Not enough | <input type="checkbox"/> Just right | <input type="checkbox"/> Too much time |
| ___ Alone with counsellor | <input type="checkbox"/> Not enough t | <input type="checkbox"/> Just right | <input type="checkbox"/> Too much time |

8. How did you feel since you came to YIP? Why do you think that is? What would help you feel better (if applicable)?
9. What other topics do you think could be covered in the group sessions?
10. In what ways have YIPs counselling activities helped you?
11. Here you said that you didn't have an equal chance to talk in the group sessions? Can you tell me why? (if applicable)
12. What other types of activities do you think would help you?
13. You mentioned in question 6 that YIP does ??? Very well. What do you like about this activity?
14. What has been your best experience at YIP so far?
15. What else do you like about the program?
16. What can YIP improve?

Appendix B: Phase 2 - 2015

Appendix B1: Recruitment Script

Have you survived one or more traumatic events in your life that you believe resulted in personal growth? Have you sought help in the past to help with your trauma? If so, we offer you a unique opportunity. A research group from Vine Community Initiative in Gulu, Uganda Women's Action Program and Michelle Savard from Concordia University in Montreal Canada are interested in learning more about the needs of young mothers. We are looking for young mothers who are trauma survivors who feel that they are marginalized but who are determined to change their current situation. We would like to work with you to find a solution to address some of your hardships.

What's in it for you?

1. You will have the satisfaction of knowing that your participation will be used by Vine Community Initiative to improve support systems provided to other trauma survivors just like you.
2. For three days you will be in a very trusting, non-judgmental environment. You will have the chance to share your story with other young women. You'll become part of a peer network and you'll work with these young mothers to find solutions to address some of the struggles you face.
3. Your experience and the accomplishments of the peer network will become part of a book (Michelle's doctoral dissertation) which Michelle hopes to publish though your name and your identity will be kept confidential.

What are the risks?

1. It's not easy to tell and hear stories about trauma. At times during the workshop, you may feel upset. However, there will be a social worker and two counsellors there to support you.
2. Other women will know your story. Participants will need to sign a consent form to participate which includes a promise not to talk about what they heard during the workshop.
3. You may hope that Michelle or a donor will provide funds to help you and the peer network to start a livelihood project for example. Sadly, funds are not available from outside sources.

Ideal participants for this study will be:

- Young mothers who had a child before the age of 18 but who are now 18-years-old or older.
- Willing to complete a survey on their background. This will take about 15 minutes.
- Willing to attend a three-day workshop (May 8-10) which will be an opportunity to share your stories with other women, learn about other women and women groups who have been successful in overcoming marginalization, hardship and trauma.
- Willing to work with a peer network to develop a plan on how to improve their situations and willing to meet with the peer network 1-2 times a month to implement the plan.
- Willing to be interviewed in their home. This will take about 90 minutes.

During the workshop, if you like, you and your children may stay at the compound at the Concordia Volunteer Abroad Program. The compound is safe and guarded by security personnel 24 hours a day. If you would like transportation to and from the compound, please let us know. Childcare and meals will be provided during the three day workshop in May. The workshop schedule is attached

Appendix B2: Sample Interview Questions

1. What did you think of the workshop?
2. How could it have been improved?
3. How do you see your membership with the group?
4. What are your expectations?
5. What role do religious organizations play in your life?
6. What do other members of your family think about the way you live your life, your beliefs (such as, regarding gender roles, etc.)
7. How do you handle change, both at an individual level and the changes taking place for everyone in your community?
8. What is it like for you when people around you succeed?
9. Do you have a life philosophy and if you feel comfortable sharing it, can you tell me what it is?
10. Can you describe (or show me) day to day activities that are part of your culture and the way things are done in this community?
11. How would you describe people who thrive here despite the many problems they face? What word(s) would you use?"
12. How do you contribute to your community?
13. How do you think society views young mothers like you?
14. Think of a decision made by the government that you disagree with. What do you think you could do to change that decision?
15. Do you think getting involved in politics or protesting something is a man's domain?
16. Since you've been a mother, have you ever disagreed and protested a government decision or policy?
17. If not, why not?
18. If yes, what did you do? How did it turn out? Why did you do this?
19. Have you ever known a woman who disagreed and protested a government decision or policy? If yes, how did the community judge her actions (brave? A nuisance)
20. Do you think you have the same opportunities as men? If not, why not?

What does it mean to you, to your family, and to your community, when bad things happen?

1. Can you tell me what some of these bad things are?
2. What do people do to cope?
3. What do they say about these things when they happen?
4. Who talks about them most? Least? And who is most likely to come up with the solution to problems when they occur?
5. What do other people think of these solutions?
6. Can you give me examples?

What kinds of things are most challenging for you?

1. Are there opportunities for work?
2. Are you or people you know exposed to violence? How do you avoid this in your family, community, and when with peers?
3. How tolerant is your community of problem behaviors among women your age?

4. What are some of these behaviors?
5. Do you feel safe and secure here? How do others protect you?
6. Do you feel equal to others? Are there others you do not feel equal to? How do these others make you feel? What do they do that makes you feel this way?
7. Do you have access to school and education? Who provides it to you?

What do you do when you face difficulties in your life?

1. Could you describe the way your family and friends support you?
2. How does your family express themselves and what they think of you?
3. Do you feel confident when around other people? How well do you do socially? Are you thought of well by others, popular, liked?
4. Do you have someone you consider a mentor or role model? Can you describe them?
5. Do you have other meaningful relationships with people at school, home, or in your community?

What do you do, and others you know do, to keep healthy, mentally, physically, emotionally, spiritually?

1. Are you assertive? How do you show this?
2. Can you describe your ability to problem-solve? Are you better or worse than others? How do you know this?
3. Do you have a sense of control over your world? How does this affect your life?
4. How much uncertainty are you able to live with?
5. Do you value self-awareness, insight? How does this affect your life and what you do day to day?
6. Would you describe yourself as optimistic or pessimistic about life?
7. Do you have personal goals and aspirations? What are these?
8. How much can you be independent and how much do you have to rely on others in your life for your survival?
9. What role does humor play in your life?
10. Can you share with me a story about another woman who did well in this community despite facing many challenges?"
11. Can you share a story about how you have managed to overcome challenges you face personally, in your family, or outside your home in your community?

Appendix B3: Agenda

| Friday May 8, 2015 | |
|-----------------------------|--|
| 3:30 - 5:00 pm | Participants arrive Consent for participation is explained (purpose, benefits and risks). All those who choose to participate will need to complete a consent form. Complete questionnaire |
| 5:00 – 6:00 | Introductions and prayer Purpose of the workshop: Difference between traditional vs. PAR Ice Breaker |
| 6:00 – 7:00 | Supper Story of strength |
| 7:00 – 9:00 | Code of Conduct Sharing stories |
| 9:00 – 11:00 | Music making and art |
| Saturday May 9, 2015 | |
| 8:00 – 9:00 am | Breakfast Prayer |
| 9:00 – 10:45 | What is positive competence, posttraumatic growth Story of strength Discussion: Personal areas of growth |
| 10:45 – 11:00 | Break |
| 11:00 – 12:30 | Dream Exercise Story of a successful women’s group |
| 12:30 – 1:30 | Lunch |
| 1:30 – 3:15 | Discover Exercise |
| 3:15 – 3:30 | Break |
| 3:30 – 5:00 | Design Exercise Story of a successful women’s group |
| 5:00 – 6:30 | Supper |
| 6:30 – 9:00 | Continue Design Exercise |
| 9:00 – 11:00 | Dancing |
| Sunday May 10, 2015 | |
| 8:00 – 9:00 | Breakfast Prayer |
| 9:00 – 10:00 | Story of strength Wrap-up Debrief of process |
| 10:00 – 10:15 | Break |
| 10:15 - 11:45 | Personal determinations |
| 11:45 – 12:00 | Next Steps |
| 12:00 – 1:00 | Lunch |

Appendix C: Phase 3 - 2015

Appendix C1: Sample Interview Questions for Young Mothers

Workshop

1. What were your impressions of the workshop?
2. What did you find beneficial?
3. What should we do differently next time?

Bi-monthly meetings

4. How are the meetings going?
5. How confident do you feel that the group will meet their goals?
6. How actively do you participate in the meetings?
7. Have you made any new friends?
8. How do you support each other?
9. Do you think the group has brought many positive things to your life? If so, what do you think that is? Negative?
10. Who do you think is responsible for making the meetings vibrant? Who is responsible for achieving the goals set forth by the young mothers?

Wellness

11. Can you tell me if you've got more or less support in your life now?
12. How do you think your family/neighbours/community sees you now? Has there been any change?
13. How do you feel about yourself lately?

Appendix C2: Sample Interview Questions for Community Members

The purpose of the research is to first, examine the nature and impact of the marginalization that young mothers experience and to explore the strengths of the individual women. The second purpose is to provide an opportunity for young mothers to form a peer network and to design their own support systems.

We would like to ask you a few questions to learn more about the needs of young mothers in Gulu/Pader. We will keep all your answers confidential.

1. Can you tell me a bit about the young mother(s) you know? Please don't give her name, just tell me about her.
2. How old is she?
3. How old was she when she had her first child?
4. How many children does she have?
 1 2 3 4 5+
5. How old was she when she got pregnant?
 13 14 15 16 17
6. Was her pregnancy a result of rape?
 Yes No
7. What was her experience during the war?
8. Is the husband around? Supportive?
9. What is her relationship like with her child?
10. What is her level of education?
11. Did she get vocational training?
12. How does she earn money?
13. Does she go to church regularly?
14. How do you think she sees herself? Is she proud, confident, ashamed...
15. How does the community treat her?
16. Why do you think they treat her like that?
17. What is her relationship like with her family?
18. What do you think she would need to make her life better?
19. In what areas does that person still need support?
20. What do you think she can do to make her life better?
21. How would you describe her strengths?
22. What does she do very well?
23. Have you ever known her to stand up for any kind of injustice or for her rights?
24. What did she do?
25. How did she do it?
26. Why do you think she took this action?
27. What do you think the community could do to better support young mothers?

Appendix C3: Agendas

| Saturday November 28, 2015 | |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| 8:00 – 9:00 | Participants arrive Breakfast Consent Complete questionnaire |
| 9:00 – 10:00 | Introductions Prayer Purpose of the workshop Ice Breaker Story of strength #1 |
| 10:00 – 10:30 | Summary of the workshop held in May 2015 Recap on group meetings |
| 10:30 – 10:45 | Break |
| 10:45 – 12:00 | Review of action plan Brainstorming for activities, research, skill gaps Examining stakeholders and resources available Developing goals |
| 12:00-1:00 | Lunch Story of strength #2 |
| 1:00-2:30 | Integrating goals into Saturday meetings How can the meetings be used to increase confidence, build skills, move the action plan forward |
| 2:30 – 2:45 | Break |
| 2:45 – 4:30 | Describe photo-voice activity Provide tips on taking good photos |
| 4:30 – 5:00 | Team building activity |
| Saturday December 5, 2015 | |
| 8:00 – 9:00 | Breakfast Prayer |
| 9:00 – 9:30 | Teambuilding exercise |
| 9:30 – 10:30 | Photo presentation |
| 10:30 – 10:45 | Break |
| 10:45 – 12:00 | Discussion: Barriers to Reintegration |
| 12:00 – 1:00 | Lunch |
| 1:00 – 3:00 | Skills training: Conflict Management |
| 3:00 – 3:15 | Break |
| 3:15 – 4:30 | Skills training: Deep Listening |
| 4:30 – 5:00 | Next steps |

Appendix C4: Short Action Plan

| Meeting | Topic | Goal | Lead | Support |
|---------------------------------------|--|------------|--------------------|-----------------------|
| Dec. meeting | Christmas Party/Religious Speaker | Family | YM 1 ⁸³ | YM2 |
| First meeting in January | Training on Communication Skills | Individual | YM 1 | YM2 |
| First meeting in January (continued) | Report on Group Registration and bank account | Work | YM 1 | YM2 |
| Second meeting in January | Pad Project | Work | Treasurer | All |
| First meeting in February | Lobby for funding – CVAP | Work | YM 1 | YM2 |
| First meeting in February (cont'd) | Lobby for funding – Save the Children and VSO | Work | YM 1 | YM2 |
| Second meeting in February | Report on how you've achieved gender balance | Individual | All | Research Team |
| Second meeting in February | Interview a woman who is both successful and has a good relationship | Individual | YM 1 | YM2 |
| First meeting in March | Do one thing that scares you and report back | Individual | All | Research Team |
| Second meeting in March | Gender Equity | Individual | YM 1 | YM2 |
| First meeting in April | Prepare for meeting with young women | Community | YM1 YM2 | All |
| Second meeting in April | Meeting with young women | Community | YM1 YM2 | All/ Research Team |
| First meeting in May | Life Skills Training | Individual | YM1 | YM2 |
| Second meeting in May | Stress Management | All | YM1 | YM2 |
| First meeting in June | Business Skills | Work | YM1 | YM2 |
| Moral/spiritual education of children | Family | All | | All |

⁸³ Names of the young mothers have been removed

Appendix D: Phase 4 - 2016

Appendix D1: Sample Interview Questions

Family Goal: *Today, I want to talk about some experiences you've had with your children. First, I'd like you to tell me about a specific time that you think really shows what your child is like, or the kind of person who they are. Try to choose a time that is important to you and that you remember well. Can you think of a time like that? ... Ok, so now I want you to tell me everything you can remember about that time. Once mom has finished narration: Is there anything else you can tell me about that time?*

1. Tell me a story...
 - That really shows what each child/children is/are like.
 - About a high point you've had as a parent.
 - About a time you were particularly proud of your child or one of your children.
 - About a time your child was really happy or angry with you. What happened during that time?
 - About a time you had a conflict with your child and you were happy about the way you handled the conflict.
2. Can you give me an example about how you nurture your child or help them develop as a good person?
3. How do you feel about yourself as a parent? What do you think you need to be a better parent?
4. Describe your relationship with your parents?
5. What support (financial, emotional) do you get as a parent?
6. The group's goal for family is to "educate children through religion to become good moral citizens. Can you tell me what that means to you?"
7. What do you think would help you in terms of being a better parent?

Individual Goal: *Next I'd like to talk about the group's individual goal, "To be an independent, inspirational woman."*

8. Can you tell me what "independent" means to you?
9. Can you tell me about a woman you know or know of that achieved independence?

Group Dynamics and Planning: *Next I'd like to talk about what has been going on in the group.*

10. Can you tell me why the women began mistrusting Christine?
11. How can we prevent this from happening in the future?
12. Can you tell me about the Saturday meetings? Have you been attending? What is preventing you from attending?
13. Do you feel the group is a support to you? How do they support you or how would you like to be supported by them?
14. For the action plan you committed to X? Were you able to fulfill your commitment? What do you need to fulfill your commitment?

Appendix D2: Sample Interview Questions for NGO/CBO Staff

Program:

1. Can you please describe the program/group?
2. What is the goal of the program/group?
3. How long has it been in existence?
4. *How much has the group saved?*
5. What aspects of the program/group would you say are highly successful?
6. What aspects have had limited success? Why did these aspects not work?
7. How is your organization/group addressing these issues?
8. How would you describe the bonds formed between the members? \
9. How would you describe the level of trust between members?
10. How does the program/group deal with conflict? How often does this arise? What kinds of issues create conflict?
11. Have you found challenges concerning the steady commitment of the members?
12. How would you explain this?
13. How does the group/organization deal with commitment issues?
14. (For NGOs) Have you evaluated the program in the past? What did you find?
15. Do you have any funding from a foreign source or are there foreigners involved in your group/organization?
16. If you were to select three factors that have contributed to your success, what would they be?

Clients

17. Can you tell me a bit about your client group?
18. How are members/clients recruited?
19. What do you think the members hope to get from your program or by being in your group?
20. How do you think the members benefit from your program/group (psychologically, socially, and financially)?
21. Do the members participate in improving the program?
22. (For NGOs) What resources are available to them while attending and after they graduate?
23. What do you think would improve your program/group?

Community

24. What does the community say about your program/group?
25. How do you engage the community with your program?

Wrap Up

After I describe our project, the women, their goals and the challenges we've had, I'll share their action plan

26. Can you provide any suggestions on how we could improve our program?
27. Are there any resources that you could offer (i.e. speakers, funding)?

Appendix D3: Agendas

| Saturday July 30, 2016 | |
|------------------------|---|
| 8:00 – 9:00 | Participants arrive Breakfast Complete questionnaire as a group |
| 9:00 – 9:30 | Prayer Purpose of the workshop Icebreaker |
| 9:30 – 11:30 | Review of key points from WIM's constitution and Code of Conduct Group Goals Group Trust and Finding Peace: Leonard Lamwodo– Facilitator / Counsellor |
| 9:30 – 10:15 | Break |
| 10:15 – 11:30 | Leonard Lamwood (cont'd) |
| 11:30 – 12:45 | Lunch |
| 12:45 – 2:45 | Why do so many women struggle with poverty? Village Savings and Loan – Nokrach Kenneth Kaunda - Will this work for WIM? |
| 2:45 – 3:00 | Break |
| 3:00 – 4:45 | Reporting on research from Young Mothers on livelihood options Reaching consensus on livelihood options |
| 4:45 – 5:00 | Reporting Report from treasurer Report about the pads Report on the action plan |

| Saturday August 13, 2016 | |
|--------------------------|--|
| 8:00 – 9:00 | Participants arrive Breakfast |
| 9:00 – 9:30 | Prayer Purpose of the workshop Icebreaker Research findings |
| 9:30 – 10:15 | Review Action Plan Go through each item to determine if the women can commit to fulfilling their commitments. Set new dates. |
| 10:15 – 10:30 | Break |
| 10:30 – 12:00 | Discussion: Human rights, women’s rights and daily life |
| 12:00 – 1:00 | Lunch |
| 10:15 – 4:00 | Village Savings and Loan <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Structuring the group • Roles and responsibilities • Groupings and leadership selection • Policy development • Goal-setting • Entrepreneurial skills |
| 4:00 – 4:30 | Review commitments and rules Decide dates: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Constitution done • Bank account open • VSLA policies done • 90,000 saved • 10 members per meeting • Michelle will transfer funds |
| 4:30 – 5:00 | Topics for meetings Closing prayer |

Appendix E: Phase 5 - 2017

Appendix E1: Sample Interview Questions - Gulu About the young mother

1. How are you doing? How are things with your family, neighbours?
2. Has there been any improvement in these relationships?
3. How are your stress levels? Are you coping well?
4. How is your business going? What are your plans for the future concerning your business?

About the program

5. We've been a group since July 15. Overall what has your experience been with the group?
6. Can you tell me what you think you gained from the program?
7. Can you remember any of the group goals? Do you think you'll continue trying to achieve these goals? How relevant was the action plan for your goals.
8. Who have you formed a friendship with? Can you tell me about a conversation or a time you spent with these friends? How do you support each other? Tell me a story.
9. Did you feel supported by the group? Can you give me an example?
10. What should have we done differently to make your experience better?
11. What other types of training would you like to have received?
12. What have you learned as a result of belonging to this group?
13. What life skills have you learned?
14. What other resources would have benefitted you?
15. Did you have any conflicts with group members? What were they about? Were these resolved? If so, how?
16. Have you had experience with other women's groups? How is this experience different? Is it better or worse? How so?
17. One of the goals of this program was to empower you which is to help you build the confidence and the skills you need to take action to improve your own life. How successful do you think the program was in accomplishing this goal?

Saturday Meetings

18. Can you give me some examples of activities or training that you got during the Saturday meetings?
19. How was this beneficial to you?
20. What did you find challenging about the meetings?
21. How often did you attend the Saturday meetings?

Depending on whether the young mother is still attending meetings

22. Can you tell me why you have been continuing with the group or why you haven't been continuing with the group?
23. If we were to do this again, what should we change? What would you do differently?
24. Do you feel attending bi-monthly meetings was too demanding? What schedule would have worked better?
25. Would you be working if you weren't at meetings?

26. Did you feel listened to? Did you feel comfortable participating in the group and voicing your opinion?

About savings

27. Do you belong to a savings group or women's group?

28. If not, Have you ever belonged to a women's group or savings group?

If yes,

29. How long have you been with (name of group)?

30. What made you decide to join (name of group)?

31. Can you tell me what you think you gained from being a member of this group?

32. Have you formed any friendships with any of the group members?

33. How do you support each other? Tell me a story.

34. What do you find challenging about your meetings?

35. How do you feel about the other group members?

36. Can you tell me why you have been continuing with the group?

37. Do you think your participation in this group has impacted how you see your future? What will you do differently?

38. Is there anything else you want to tell me about your experience with (name of group)?Plans for the future

39. Did your participation in this group impact how you see your future? What will you do differently?

Plans for the future

40. Did your participation in this group impact how you see your future? What will you do differently?

41. What are your plans/goals for you and your children?

42. How will you achieve this?

43. Is there anything else you want to tell me about your experience with the group?

Appendix E2: Sample Interview Questions – Formal

1. Can you describe your life since you left YIP?
2. Tell me about aspects of your life that are better since you graduated from YIP and aspects that have stayed the same?
3. How did YIP help you create a better life?
4. What kind of life would you like for yourself and your children? What do you need (beside money) to fulfill your dream?
5. What kind of work were you trained in at YIP? Are you working in that field? Is it bringing in enough for you and your children?

About the Community

6. Describe how you are treated by your community? Can you give me an example of an interaction with the community?
7. Do you feel safe and secure here? How do others protect you?
8. Do you feel equal to others?
9. Do you feel confident when around other people?
10. What are your friends like?

About the Family

11. Tell me about your mother and your relationship with her.
12. Could you describe the way your family and friends support you? Is the father of your child/children in your life?
13. Tell me a story about a high point you've had as a parent.
14. Can you give me an example about how you nurture your child or help him/her develop as a good person?
15. How do you feel about yourself as a parent? What do you think you need to be a better parent?
16. What support (financial, emotional) do you get as a parent?

About You (Positive Competence)

17. What do you do to keep healthy, mentally, physically, emotionally, spiritually?
18. Can you give me an example of a stressful situation that you had to deal with?
19. How did you initially react to the situation?
20. How did you cope when you were in stressful situations?
21. What do you think your strengths are?
22. Do you have a sense of control over your world? How does this affect your life?
23. How do you generally react to change?
24. How do you see your life five years YIPm now? Where are you living? Who is around you? What are you doing?

Appendix E3: Agendas

| Saturday March 18, 2017 – Workshop #1 | |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| Participants | WIM |
| 8:00 – 9:00 | Arrival and breakfast |
| 9:00 – 9:30 | Prayer and Introductions Icebreaker: Whisper Game Purpose of the workshop |
| 9:30 – 10:30 | Small group discussion about groups, the purpose of WIM and what kind of group WIM wants to be. |
| 10:30 – 11:00 | Break |
| 11:00 – 12:30 | Activity to determine the barriers the women perceive to having the group they want and a discussion on how to overcome these barriers. |
| 12:30 – 1:30 | Lunch |
| 1:30 – 1:45 | Discussion on women and poverty. Why do so many women struggle with poverty? |
| 1:45-2:45 | Discussion on WIM’s idea of a VSAL Discuss the WIM Policy/Constitution (What is included/excluded) Calculations |
| 2:45 – 3:15 | Break |
| 3:15 – 4:30 | Business Innovation Skills |
| Next Steps | <p>Schedule of Workshops – All Saturdays</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Entrepreneurial Skills: April 1, April 8, April 15, May 6 (8:00 am – 4:30 pm) • Computer Literacy, April 17-21 (5:00 pm – 6:30) – Group 1 • Computer Literacy, April 14-28 (5:00 pm – 6:30) – Group 2 • April 23 – 27 Interviews (to be scheduled) • May 27 – Final Workshop with Michelle (8:00 – 4:30) |

| Saturday March 25, 2017 | |
|-------------------------|---|
| Participants | Single Pride |
| 8:00 – 9:00 | Participants arrive Breakfast Questionnaire |
| 9:00 – 9:15 | Prayer, Introductions The purpose of this training is to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learn more about the strengths of the group • Establish potential goals and action plan for the group • Role play and think about issues the group faces |
| 9:15 – 10:00 | Drawing Exercise |
| 10:00 – 10:15 | Break |
| 10:15– 11:30 | Group Qualities Brainstorming for benefits they receive from the group (i.e. support, training, savings) and then rank them from most to least beneficial Brainstorming: What are the strengths of the group? |
| 11:30 – 12:30 | Goal Setting |
| 12:30-1:30 | Lunch |
| 1:30 – 2:30 | Action Planning |
| 2:30-2:45 | Break |
| 2:45 – 4:45 | Role Playing |
| 4:45 – 5:00 | Next steps and upcoming training <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • March 26 – April 5 - Interviews • Entrepreneurial Skills: April 1, April 8, April 15, May 6 (8:00 am – 4:30 pm) – UWAP Training Centre • Computer Literacy, April 17-21 (5:00 pm – 6:30) – Group 1 – CEED (Senior Quarters) • Computer Literacy, April 14-28 (5:00 pm – 6:30) – Group 2 – CEED (Senior Quarters) |

| Saturday May 27, 2017 | |
|------------------------------|---|
| Participants | Single Pride and WIM |
| Duration | Activities |
| 9:00 – 9:15 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prayer • Introduction • Workshop purpose and objective: The purpose of the workshop is to tell you what Michelle found in all her interviews, to talk about how women are marginalized, how it prevents, (specifically single mothers), from achieving what they want and we'll talk about what you can do about it. We'll also design a program that will contribute to single mothers' independence. • At the end of this training, participants will understand those forces that marginalize them and what they can do about it. |
| 9:15 – 9:35 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How I see myself and how others see me. • Discussion: Why do you think there is such a difference between how you see yourself, how your friends see you and how the community sees you? |
| 9:35 - 9:40 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion: The marginalization of single mothers. |
| 9:40 – 10:15 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brainstorming: What factors (for example, social, political, historical, cultural, educational, individual) contribute to the marginalization of single mothers? |
| 10:15 – 10:30 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion: Patriarchal values |
| 10:30 – 10:50 | Breakfast Break |
| 10:50 – 11:10 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion: Patriarchal values • Brainstorming: What small steps can you take to change things so that you can be respected, independent, strong, successful women? |
| 11:10 – 12:15 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brainstorming: Creating a program for single mothers. • Put women into three groups • Ask them to decide <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ What is the goal of the program ○ What are the objectives ○ Recruitment ○ How will it be run • What kind of training is needed |
| 12:15 – 12:30 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appreciation • WIM, Single Pride, Christine, Michelle • Group Photo |

Evaluation Focus Group – Research Team – Agenda for May 27 (1:00 – 5:00)

| Duration | Activities |
|-------------------------|--|
| 1:00 – 1:15 Beatrice | Introduction <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction and Purpose of the Workshop |
| 1:15 – 1:30 Beatrice | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What have we delivered to date? |
| 1:30 – 2:00 Michelle | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brainstorm: What have we done to that could have contributed to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Competent functioning ○ Social inclusion ○ Sustainable Livelihood |
| 2:00 – 2:30 Michelle | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What should we do the same and differently next time? |
| 2:30 – 3:00 | Lunch |
| 3:00 – 3:30 Beatrice | Ask: What factors (for example, social, political, historical, cultural, educational, individual) contribute to the marginalization of single mothers? |
| 3:30 – 4:00 Michelle | System Dynamics Purpose: To determine the cause and effect relationships between the factors that contributed to the women not completing the action plan/not taking action <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What factors (social, personal) prevented the women from fulfilling the action plan? |
| 4:00 – 4:30 Beatrice | Purpose: To determine the knowledge and skills Research Team members gained by being part of this project |
| 4:30 – 4:45 Beatrice | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Final Words |

Appendix F: Multi-Phase Documents

Appendix F1: Hierarchy of Nodes

| Legend |
|--------------|
| First level |
| Second level |
| Third level |
| Fourth level |

| Name | Description |
|----------------------------|---|
| Marginalization/Hardships | Examples of marginalization and stories about hardships categorized into: abandonment, deception due to polygamy, early pregnancy, starvation, loss of family member, struggle for education, health issues, housing issues, engaging in prostitution, rape, separation from child, suicide, threats, violence, war, self-marginalization |
| Socio-Ecology | Education, economics, humour, land, law, mysticism, politics |
| Political | Perceptions of government. Role of Local Councillors: as corrupt; as disciplinarians; fair; unfair |
| Social Norms | Burgeoning numbers of single mothers, social/cultural changes post war, behaviour contrary to social norms, corruption, gossip, mob justice |
| Mysticism | Curses, witchdoctors, attribution, stories with family members |
| Patriarchal Norms | Conditional equality, equality, proper behaviour, reproductive role. Women as a tool for pleasure, women as a source of misfortune, women as property/disposable, women as the weaker sex |
| Spaces | Claimed (SIP), Formal (GYA and YIP), Created (WIM), |
| Claimed Space (SIP) | Recruitment, camaraderie, love and respect, challenges, benefits, power, unique group qualities, impact of training: changes in well-being, livelihood, social inclusion. Outlook on group future, suggestions for project improvement |
| Formal Space (YIP and GYA) | Recruitment, attitudes about students, NGO background, quality of program, quality of counselling, peer support, power, suggestions for program improvement |

| | |
|----------------------------|--|
| Before and After Program | Upon return. Competent functioning, livelihood, social inclusion: negative change, no change, positive change. Skills acquired, perceived benefits |
| Evaluation of YIP 2014 | Attitudes: about counselling, vocational training, life skills training. Perception of program: teachers, students, community members, local councillors - positive, negative, neutral |
| Created Space | Expectations of project, attitudes about meetings, feedback on workshops, outlook on group's future. Power, challenges, reasons for departures, reasons for continuing. Skills acquired, perceived group benefits, group mistrust issue |
| Before and After Program | Competent functioning, livelihood, social inclusion: negative change, no change, positive change. Skills acquired, perceived benefits |
| Evaluation of Project 2017 | Impact of project, suggestions for project improvement |
| 2015 Workshops | Appreciative Inquiry: Dream, Discover, Design, Deliver. Code of conduct, group goals, future aspirations, action plan, benefits of participation, , Saturday meetings, group dynamics, perceived barriers to reintegration |
| 2016 Workshops | Resistance to fulfilling action plan, relationships between WIM members, attitudes about saving, group livelihood project, revisions to code of conduct, rights and assertion of rights |
| 2017 Workshop | Sources of marginalization, impact of patriarchal values, determinations |
| Criteria for Success | Competent functioning, livelihood, social inclusion |
| Competent Functioning | Agency, interpersonal relationships, socializing, temperament, confidence, external locus of control, internal locus of control, optimism, self-reliance, strategies for coping with trauma, strategies for managing stress, conflict management |
| Peer Support | Acceptance, friendship, growth, happiness, learning , love, models for the community, pride, shared experiences, strength from group, trust, unity, relationships between group members, relationships within groups |
| Social Inclusion | Community, family, friends |

| | |
|--|--|
| Community | Categories of advice: as education, compassionate, paternalistic, religious. Community perceptions: negative, positive, neutral. Acts of kindness, YM perception of community perceptions, perception of children of young mothers |
| Family | Relationship with family: positive, negative, neutral |
| Friends | Relationship with friends: positive, negative, neutral |
| Sustainable Livelihood | Financial stability, saving, type of work, working in field, goals |
| Values, Attitudes, Beliefs, Needs of Young Mothers | Self, other young mothers, qualities/traits, values, parenting |
| Self perceptions | Positive, negative, neutral |
| Perception of other young mothers | Positive, negative, neutral |
| Qualities/Traits | Waiting to be saved, leadership, aspirations, attitudes about sex, standing up, attitudes about political involvement, fears |
| Values | Attitudes about money, discipline, productivity, endurance, gratitude, love, patience, peace, perseverance, respect, helping others, strengths, independence |
| Attitude about Parenting | Discipline: corporal punishment, humiliation, listening, school of hard knocks, using strong words. Leaving child: for work, rejection, abandonment. Role of religion, education as solidifying a future |
| Perceptions of Parenting | Behaviour as parent, children as a burden, protection, relationship with child, perceived responsibilities |
| Teaching Gender Norms | Gendered: career aspirations, chores, behaviour. Attitude: progressive, traditional. Privileging |
| Perception of child | Perceptions about children's behaviours, child as parent, perceptions about infractions, valued qualities of the child, blaming child or bitter, children as a source of strength, children as investment, productivity |
| View of Husbands | Lack of control, blaming, damaging influence, easier or harder if had a man, irresponsible, loss of trust, supportive, vengeance, weak |
| Attitudes about men | Balanced, men as saviours, men as superior, men as trouble, men as needing education-sensitization, shirking responsibility |

| | |
|-------------------------|--|
| View of God | As protector, as provider, as saviour. Attitudes about: faith, God-fearing, God's plan |
| Ethnographic Components | Feelings about the researcher, the research process and outcomes. reflexivity, cultural observations, stories related to belief systems and traditions |
| NGOs | Program outline, perceptions of program recipients, aim of program, evaluations, religious ideology, perceived impact |
| Perception of NGOs | Experience with NGOs, slogans, NGO-speak, breaking of cultural norms |
| Other Savings Groups | Benefits and challenges as a result of membership, dynamics, future plans, peer support, reason for joining, stolen funds |

Appendix F2: Consent Form⁸⁴

Harnessing the Resilience of War-Affected Young Mothers in Northern Uganda

I understand that I have been asked to participate in a research project being conducted by The Ugandan Women's Action Program, (UWAP) and Michelle Savard (PhD candidate) of the Department of Education at Concordia University (1610 St. Catherine St. W., Montreal Quebec) under the supervision of Dr. Ayaz Naseem of the Department of Education at Concordia University.

A. PURPOSE

I have been informed that the purpose of the research is to: first, examine the nature and impact of the marginalization that young mothers experience and to explore the strengths of the individual women; and second, to provide an opportunity for young mothers to form a peer network and to design their own support systems.

B. PROCEDURES

I understand that I will be asked participate in a one-day focus group; and participate in an interview. I understand that my name will not be used during the interview to protect my identity. I will be allocated a number which will be used on the transcript of the interview. I will be asked to:

1. Participate in a one-day focus group about the strengths and weaknesses of this group project. The agenda for the focus group is below.
2. Participate in an interview which will be conducted by Michelle, a translator and social worker or counsellor. The interview will take place at my home or at another convenient location and will last about 60 minutes. If I need assistance during the interview, the social worker or counsellor will be there to help me.

C. RISKS AND BENEFITS

I understand that the report of this research and what is collected during this study may be looked at by outside audiences if it gets published. However, my real name will NOT be revealed and any comments made will not be linked to me. I understand that my participation in this research will be beneficial to Michelle who will use the data for her dissertation; beneficial to Uganda Women's Action Program who will use the information to develop programs and for myself as it will give me an opportunity to be part of a peer network.

Data

I understand that the interview will be recorded. After the interview, the audio recording will be written out. The notes from the interview and the audio from the interview will be destroyed. All paper data (notes, questionnaires) will be shredded after six months. Michelle will keep the electronic information for seven years. Four research assistants from Concordia will transcribe the interviews but they will not know my name.

D. CONDITIONS OF PARTICIPATION

I understand that my participation in this research is voluntary. I understand that I am free to withdraw my consent and discontinue my participation at any time without negative consequences. At any time that I want to change my mind and stop participating in the research, I am free to do so.

⁸⁴ Consent forms were completed by the young mothers of WIM and YIP and by the Research team for each phase they participated in the project. Consent forms were also completed once by YIP youth, teachers and community members in 2014; and by GYA, CBO/NGO staff and by those who were interviewed and belong to savings groups. The consent form in this appendix was used as the standard and modified slightly for each phase and customized according to the type of informant and the contribution we were seeking.

Any information that I have given Michelle up to that point will not be used in any way. I can ask Michelle not to use my information up until September 30, 2017.

- I understand that my participation in this study is CONFIDENTIAL. The researchers will know my name, but will not disclose my identity or link my name to any comments I make.
- I understand that I agree to not discuss the comments and stories shared by the members of the peer network and to keep that information confidential.
- I understand that the data from this study may be published.

By putting an X in the “agree” box(es), you are consenting to participate in that activity for this research.

1. Focus Group

Do you agree or disagree to attend the focus group?

- I agree
 I disagree

2. Interview. Do you agree or disagree to be interviewed?

- I agree
 I disagree

I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions, and have had these answered satisfactorily.

I HAVE CAREFULLY STUDIED THE ABOVE AND UNDERSTAND THIS AGREEMENT. I FREELY CONSENT AND VOLUNTARILY AGREE TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY FOR THOSE ACTIVITIES WHERE I HAVE INDICATED “I AGREE”. I ALSO AGREE TO KEEP THE COMMENTS OF THE MEMBERS OF THE PEER NETWORK CONFIDENTIAL.

NAME _____

SIGNATURE _____

If at any time you have questions about the proposed research, please contact the researcher, Michelle Savard or her supervisor, Dr. Ayaz Naseem, The Ugandan Women’s Action Program and they will send your questions to Michelle.

If you have concerns about ethical issues in this research, please contact the Manager, Research Ethics, Concordia University, 514.848.2424 ex. 7481 or oor.ethics@concordia.ca.

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Appendix F3: Demographic Survey for Young Mothers⁸⁵

Number:

The purpose of the research is to look at the marginalization of young mothers and to explore reintegration. We would like to ask you a few questions to learn more about you and the needs of young mothers in Gulu/Pader. We will keep all your answers confidential. Thank you for your participation.

| | 15-16 | 17-18 | 19-20 | Over 21 |
|--|--------------------------|-------------------|-----------------------|--------------|
| How old are you? | | | | |
| | Pregnant | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| How many children do you have? | | | | |
| | <15 | 16 | 17 | 18 |
| How old were you when you gave birth to your eldest, second eldest? | | | | |
| | Yes | | No | |
| Were you abducted during the war | | | | |
| (If yes), for how long? | | | | |
| | Yes | | No | |
| Is the father of your child/children in your life? | | | | |
| (If yes,) Is he helping you? | | | | |
| (If yes,) How? | | | | |
| | Yes | | No | |
| Does your family help you? | | | | |
| | Always | Sometimes | Not very often | Never |
| How often does your family help you? | | | | |
| What is the highest level of education you have achieved? | | | | |
| | Yes | | No | |
| Did you receive any schooling or training after the war? | | | | |
| (If no), what prevented you from continuing your education? | | | | |
| | Government (name) | NGO (name) | Private (name) | |
| (If yes,) which organization provided the schooling? | | | | |
| How long did you study? | | | | |
| What did you study? | | | | |
| | Yes | | No | |
| Do you have work? | | | | |
| (If yes), what do you do? | | | | |
| (If yes), who takes care of your children while you're at work? | | | | |
| | Always | Sometimes | Not very often | Never |
| Do you feel the community supports you? | | | | |
| Do you feel the community accepts you? | | | | |
| What three things would make your life better for you and your children? | | | | |

⁸⁵ This survey was administered to all groups of young mothers on this project.