Combat Children and Toy Soldiers

A collaboration of risk factors and the environment

Þórhildur Sif Þórmundsdóttir

Lokaverkefni til BA-prófs

Háskóli Íslands

Menntavísindasvið

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Ritgerð þessi er 14 eininga lokaverkefni til BA-prófs í Uppeldis- og menntunarfræði.

Óheimilt að afrita ritgerðina á nokkurn hátt nema með leyfi höfundar.

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Ágrip

Höfundur útskriast senn úr uppeldis- og menntunarfræði. Vegferðin að takmarkinu hefur verið nokkuð löng og leitt víða, þar sem sömuleiðis var lögð stund á BA nám í lögfræði og rússnesku, allt til austurstrandar Bandaríkjanna. Hugmyndin að verkefninu varð til við skiptinám við Stanfordháskóla í Kaliforníu.. Í Bandaríkjunum voru meðal annars í boði námskeið í Hnattrænum mannréttindum og félagsfræðilegum margbreytileikum mansals. Þar sem áhuginn liggur víða þótti upplagt að samræma námið í uppeldis og menntunarfæðum og námið erlendis við gerð lokaverkefnisins, enda koma þar saman uppeldis- og menntunarfræði, lögfræði, mannréttindi og ýmislegt annað sem vekur sérstakan áhuga. Verkefnið er ritað á ensku. Við undirbúning verkefnissins rak höfundur sig á það að mörg þeirra hugtaka sem gegna svo mikilvægu hlutverki við að útskýra og greina frá því sem felst í hermennsku barna eru enn ekki til í íslensku máli.

Heimildaritgerðin Börn í bardaga, eða Combat children and Toy Soldiers leitast við að útskýra hvar, hvers vegna og með hvaða hætti börn eru hvött til herþjónustu, sérstaklega til umhverfis þeirra samkvæmt vistkerfiskenningu Bronfenbrenner. Sjaldnast er um upplýst samþykki að ræða og börnum er gjarnan rænt til slíkra verka. Því er mikið um mansal í barnahernaði. Ljóst er að auknum ófriði í þróunarlöndunum hefur barnahermennska aukist. Skoðuð eru nokkur svæði í heiminum, litið er á hvað er ólíkt með barnahermessku frá einum stað til annars, og hvað er sameiginlegt á alþjóðlega vísu. Litið er á alþjóðlega löggjöf og hlutverk hjálparstofnanna auk sérstakra vandamála sem skapast af barnahernaði.

Þetta lokaverkefni er samið af mér undirritaði. Ég hef kynnt mér *Siðareglur Háskóla Íslands* (2003, 7. nóvember, http://www.hi.is/is/skolinn/sidareglur) og fylgt þeim samkvæmt bestu vitund. Ég vísa til alls efnis sem ég hef sótt til annarra eða fyrri eigin verka, hvort sem um er að ræða ábendingar, myndir, efni eða

orðalag. Ég þakka öllum sem lagt hafa mér lið með einum eða öðrum hætti en ber sjálf ábyrgð á því sem missagt kann að vera. Þetta staðfesti ég með undirskrift minni.

Reykjavík, 14.01 2014

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Abstract

"Demand fuels the growth of human trafficking" (Shelley, 2010).

In the summer of 2013, I left my husband and three children for a number of weeks to study human rights and human trafficking at Stanford University in California, as a member of Stanford Summer International Honors Program. Living alone for the first time at the tender age of 35, a continent away from my husband and children, turned out to become an extraordinary experience, academically as well as my personal and individual growth, not as a wife, a daughter or a mother. Having become a mother at the very young age of 17, I had not had the chance to become a university student without being a mother first. Being completely on my own, I got the opportunity to sink myself into my studies, to concentrate on my everyday work, for which I am ever so grateful. I wanted to write about my education at Stanford because I hold them particularly close.

In the year 1999, I travelled to Malawi Africa, to visit my father living there at the time. I did not encounter war or any such terror, but I did witness poverty in all its cruelty. Children died from malaria in plain sight. Dead people lay by the side of the road after being hit by moving vehicles. Having gotten the very small taste of the geographical poverty there is no doubt in my mind that I would result to anything in order to protect my family, perhaps even consent to "to good to be true" offers hoping for a miracle. Child soldiering is the subject of this paper and will be explored in several contexts. The reasons for recruitment in child soldiers will be discussed, physical and psychological effects on children having served or serving in combat and what happens or is likely to happen during recruitment and after demobilization.

Preface

This 14 credit BA dissertation is the final project in Education Studies at the Scool of Education at the University of Iceland. I would like to extend special thanks to: my Stanford professors, Helen Stacy and Rachel Gong as well as my tutor throughout the project, Dr. Brynja Elizabeth Halldórsdóttir who has really come through for me, encouraging and inspiring me. I´d like to extend gratitude to my husband for his helping hand and endless support and Last but not least, my mother-in-law, Bergljót Ingvadóttir for revising and advising.

Introduction

It is estimated that the various national and international conflicts of the past 10 years or so, have left over 1 million children separated from their parents, another 6 million disabled, 20 million homeless, and 2 million have been killed (UNICEF, 2006). Child soldiering is considered a form of slavery. Slavery has become illegal in every country in the world. Never the less, there have never been more numbers of slaves and a slave has never been less expensive to purchase (Aronowitz, 2009). It is presently unclear how many children under the age of 18 are associated with state or non-state armed forces (UNICEF, 2010). In 2007, the European Union estimates that they are between 250.000 and 300.000. Currently, 27.000.000 people, children and adults worldwide, are believed to be living in captivity. That is the approximate amount of slaves throughout the 350 year history of Northern America slave trade (Bales, Trodd, & Williamson, 2009). They work in prostitution, sweatshops, in industry and active armed combat.

Throughout history, it has been proven that war and slavery go hand in hand, and child soldiering has, in fact, only officially ended recently in many Western armies. These patterns have reoccurred repeatedly throughout history, appearing as early as in ancient Babylon. In more recent times during the American Civil War (1861-1865), children fought on either side of the conflict (Rosen, 2012). Two centuries later, after the Cold War ended, human trafficking increased in hand with armed conflicts. Partly because several countries suddenly became independent having no idea how to govern themselves (Shelley, 2010). In the 1990's, children were involved with armed combat in Bosnia Herzegovina and the Former Yugoslavian Republics. Today, on-going conflicts are occurring in numerous countries, such as the Central African Republic and the Democratic Republic of Congo (Bales, Trodd, & Williamson, 2009).

The dissertation begins with a discussion of the terminology of child soldiering, including relevant laws and international statutes, organizations battling child soldiering and sociological terms. The first main chapter is on risk factors involving child soldiering in accordance to Bronfenbrenner´s (1986) ecological theory. According to Bronfenbrenner's theory, the environment of each individual child can be divided into

four categories placing a child and it´s qualities, age, gender and health in the center. The four categories then circle one another, from the child's most immediate environment to the most distant one. The subsequent chapters involve trafficking in soldiers, legal and sociological definitions, gender roles in child soldiering and child soldiering more generally, organizations and authorities that have used or do use child soldiers, why child soldiers are recruited, sexual violence in armed forces and methods of reintegration. Finally, the paper is concluded by closing arguments.

Chapter 1. Explaining terms and definitions

Terminology is important in order to explain the phenomena of child soldiering. This first chapter explains protective factors and risk factors. Protective factors relative to child soldiering include international law, treaties and declarations, to name a few. Likewise, NGOs, such as the Human Rights Watch, and international agencies, like for instance the U.N. Risk factors entail concepts such as human trafficking. Furthermore, combinations of risk and protective factors will be discussed such as courts and tribunals. The risk factors involve the prosecution of child soldiers, while the protective factors involve legal actions against war lords.

Human Trafficking

The international definition of the trafficking of child soldiers involves force, or where genuine consent is lacking, exploitation and movement, either within a country or across borders. Removing a child from its home and placing it, for example, in military camps domestically also constitutes human trafficking. In most cases, children who join armed forces are moved to special training camps, if not directly to battlefields. They rarely live at home while serving in the military, nor do they keep in contact to their families (Maguire, 2011). It is estimated that trafficking occurs in 85% of armed combat all over the world (Aronowitz, 2009).

Human Rights

This term was founded after the Second World War during the Nuremberg trials and was based on Natural Law. Natural law entails that which is believed to be universally true as intended by nature, the offspring of the philosophy of John Locke, Thomas Hobbes and other great thinkers of the Age of Enlightenment (Strauss, 1968). The atrocities of World War II are today globally known. It was obvious that the war criminals would have to stand trial, and a war tribunal was founded, especially to try World War II crimes. The defendant's cases were built only on the local legality of their actions as they claimed only to have been following valid German law. Internationally, however, it was decided that such heinous acts could not go unpunished. A law was created, based on Natural law, or

what was believed to be a person's moral responsibility. Genocide in any form could not be tolerated, including systematic *"murder, extermination, torture, persecution or rape"* targeting specific racial or ethnical groups (U.N., 1989)*.* All measures should be taken to prevent such atrocious events re-occurring (Stacy, 2009). Several foundations and organizations were established shortly thereafter, such as UNICEF in 1946 (UNICEF, 2013) in order to enforce humanitarian law wherever human rights were being violated and to aid those in need.

Sociological theories on child soldiering

There are two main perspectives in determining the concept of child soldiering. On the one hand, those who maintain the viewpoint that all children under the age of 18 associated with armed combat be regarded as child soldiers. This includes messengers, sex slaves, cooks and spies. On the other are those that make a clear distinction between children physically bearing arms and those who do not. According to this view only active, armed combatants qualify as child soldiers (Dottridge, 2011).

Some blame child soldiering on the simple lack of manpower in conflict; others blame it on the environment and society as later described in Bronfenbrenner's theory. Yet another explanation could be that children basically make good soldiers for various reasons (Honwana, 2006). Children are used to take orders from those who are older and are easily intimidated and loyal. Children make good spies, as they can go around inconspicuously. They also can become good recruiters, as they have peer-contact with possible child-recruits. All children feel the need to belong and to be accepted by their communities. They feel familial responsibilities to their caretakers. Children usually have fewer obligations than adults and therefore have less incentive to resist recruitment (Maguire, 2011).

Dr. Honwana (2006) believes child soldiering follows a universal pattern, seen for example, in Uganda as well as an ocean away, in Cambodia. This anthropological view on child soldiering involves a highly strategized combat plan that has nothing to do with manpower, but more with convenience (Honwana, 2006). Due to the lack of life experience, children who are unfamiliar with violence and danger tend to be unaware of

the dangers they face if abducted. They are therefore easily broken. If they witness a fellow child severely punished or killed for trying to run away, they are highly unlikely to try to escape. They need to be rescued or set free. (Maguire, 2011).

Resilient children can find ways around the hardships of armed conflict. They can find sources of strength within, which enable them to maintain mental stability. Resiliency in this context is not a unique quality within each child, but rather the product of their ecosystem. An armed group can give the child a sense of family and provide the social structure that is lacking in their lives. There in may lie one of the problems of child soldiering (Betancourt & Khan, 2008).

The United States law the "Child Soldiers Prevention Act" (CSPA)

According to on the definition of this 2011 legislation, the term "*child soldier*" makes distinction between governmental and non-governmental conflict. Those who are younger than 18 years of age qualify as child soldiers if partaking in conflict on the behalf of non-state armed forces, but those who fight for their country can be as young as 15. The CSPA lists Burma, Chad, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Somalia, Sudan and Yemen as governments currently utilizing child soldiers (U.S Department of State, 2011). Most of the children involved in armed conflict are from the poorest of families, orphans or runaways.

Some join voluntarily to escape abuse, poverty or respond to government propaganda although genuine voluntary recruitment is rare. Most of these children do not know exactly to what they are consenting. This clause of the CSPA clearly does not value children's rights in the armed forces as U.S. Military services lower the age limit to 17 with parental-consent (United States Military Services, 2013).Due to these laws, governments such as the one of Charles Taylor in Liberia, who recruited children for the state armed forces were thus accordingly in their full rights to enlist children 15 years old or older. Despite this legislation, humanitarians are still working to eliminate child soldiering by categorizing any person under the age of 18 as a child (Rosen, 2012).

The Geneva Conventions

The Geneva Conventions established the standards of international law for the humanitarian treatment of war. This was the first international legal initiative *"to specifically counteract"* child soldiering soon after the World War II (ICRC, 1949). Although warfare has dramatically changed since 1949, they are still regarded the basis of contemporary international humanitarian law. According to the Geneva Convention child soldiers must not be punished for doing as commanded except if it involves unlawful combat or for critical war crimes such as genocide (Rosen, 2012).

The Rome Statute, Crimes against Humanity and Genocide

The Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court was founded in 1998. It was one of the most important stepping-stones in the battle against child soldiering. It combines a collection of national and international law in one criminal legislation (Rosen, 2012). *The Rome Statute Explanatory Memorandum´s* definitions of Crimes against humanity is:

> "…particularly odious offenses that constitute serious attacks on human dignity, grave humiliation or degradation of human beings. They are not isolated events, but are part either of a government policy or of a wide practice of atrocities tolerated or condoned by a government or a de facto authority" (U.N., 1989).

In 1948, after the Second World War and the subsequent Nuremberg trials, the United Nations General Assembly (General Assembly Resolution 260) adopted *The Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide.* Article 2, further describing the act of Genocide as:

> "acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, such as killing members of the group, causing serious bodily or mental harm to members … deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part, imposing measures intended to

prevent births … or forcibly transferring children of the group to another group" (UCHNHR, 1948).

Children in combat can be actively used to commit genocide by killing, maiming and raping for example and especially if fighting for a non-state organization children can be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law (Rosen, 2012).

War Tribunals and the International Criminal Court

The sole purpose of war tribunals is to try warlords for single acts of war crimes. Such crimes occur in a specific timeframe and are usually committed locally. Tribunals are temporary institutions, usually dissolved after verdict is rendered or when court is otherwise adjourned. The war tribunals in the former Yugoslavia Republic, Sierra Leone and Rwanda make excellent examples. It's considered court-equivalent in a civilian jurisdiction.

On the other hand, *the International Criminal Court* (ICC) on the other hand, is an institution with permanent residence in the Haag and tries crimes against humanity, (genocide etc.). It has its own jurisdiction and is aimed against individuals (Stacy, 2009).

United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)

United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), was established in 1946. UNOCEF is a United Nations (UN) Program providing long-term humanitarian and developmental assistance to children and families in developing countries. UNICEF promotes education, distributes immunization and upholds the *Convention on the Rights of the Child.* UNICEF is constantly watching for human rights violation, such as child soldiering and reports those detected (UNICEF, 2013).

Human rights Non-Government Organizations and Philanthropic Organizations

NGOs are usually early-stage, high-impact and willing to adapt to specific needs of society. They are independent and help-orientated, often focusing on one charity and are non-profit. NGOs have been in partnership with the U.N. since 1947. POs don't have to be non-

profit. Their funds are often for many charities, often those who are most in need at each time or non-aid-related charities (Stacy, 2009).

Human Rights Watch

Human Rights Watch is one of the leading NGOs whose sole purpose is to protect human rights and raise public awareness when violated. Yearly, Human Rights Watch publishes a report announcing which countries are currently in violation of human rights, and have additionally published several reports solely about child soldiers (Human Rights Watch, 2013a).

International Labor Organization´s Convention (ILO)

Becoming the first U.N. specialized agency in 1946, the International Labor Organization´s (ILO) was founded after the First World War in 1919. Its main goal was, and always has been, to protect employees worldwide, regulating their rights according to ILOs numerous conventions, some of whom focus on specific groups, such as children (ILO, 2009). Before the establishment of ILO, children worldwide were severely abused as a workforce involving physically challenging manual labor (ILO, 2009).

Article 3 of *The Convention Concerning the Prohibition and Immediate Action for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labor,* includes Soldiering as a form of slavery: "*all forms of slavery or practices similar to slavery, such as the sale and trafficking of children, including forced or compulsory recruitment of children for use in armed conflict"* (ILO, 1999). The International Labor Organization (ILO) prohibits children taking part in armed conflict of any kind, limiting the age to 18 years. (ILO, 1999).

The Declaration of the Rights of the Child (DRC)

The Declaration of the Rights of the Child is merely a testament of intent, involving the protection of children's human rights. Therefore, it is not internationally binding. It. In 1959 it established ground rules for the wellbeing of every child, paving the way for future children's rights legislation (Tiefenbaum, 2007). Mainly, the Declaration states that "*every*

child should be given the opportunity to develop mentally, physically, and socially and their freedom and dignity should be preserved" (U.N., 1959)*.*

United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)

Historically, the CRC is the most universally accepted instrument for children's rights. The CRC took effect on September 2nd, 1990 and specifically protects against child trafficking and child military recruitment. By its own definition, children need special care due to their immaturity (U.N., 1990). Countries who ratify the CRC do agree to protect children's rights by all measures necessary, and the CRC has been signed and ratified by nearly every country in the world (U.N., 1990), even Rwanda, Uganda and Liberia. Only the newly established South Sudan, Somalia and the United States of America have as yet not ratified the CRC (Tiefenbaum, 2007).

The Palermo Protocols

The removal of a child from its home, permanent or temporary, falls under human trafficking and therefore organized crime. The Palermo Protocol (2000) includes three sets of protocols to further the United Nations 'Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (the Palermo Convention) defining three critical components to human trafficking: „*the act, the means and the purpose*"**.** An act includes actions such as *"recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring or receipt of persons"* (U.N., 2000). The means include *"threat or use of force, coercion, abduction, fraud, deception, abuse of power or vulnerability, or giving payments or benefits"* (U.N., 2000)*.*

The purpose can include one or more of the following; *"Prostitution of others, sexual exploitation, forced labor, slavery or similar practices, removal of organs or other types of exploitation"* (U.N., 2000). In this particular context, the act of removing a child by threat or any other means in order to serve in combat is a breach of the Palermo Protocols.

The Cape Town Principles

The Cape Town Principles define the child soldier as:

"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 those accompanying such groups, other than purely as family members. It includes girls recruited for sexual purposes and forced marriage. It does not, therefore, only refer to a child who is carrying or has carried arms (UNICEF, 1997, Alfredson, e.d.).

Despite international consensus on the illegality of child soldiering the fact is that children continue to be recruited. Humanitarians working to eliminate child soldiering are adamant in categorizing any soldier or any person accompanying an armed force under the age of 18 as a child (Rosen, 2012).

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PDST)

PDST is an anxious disorder, first made aware to the public by war veterans, caused by threat to either the patient him/herself or witnessed by the patient. Even after the threat subsides the trauma of the event remains. Very young children may wet their bed, lose their speech or reenact the event after the fact. Older children and teenagers' symptoms are rather like those of adults, including flashbacks, nightmares, antisocial behavior, guilt and/or the need to revenge (National Institution of Mental Health, n.d.).

Concluding Chapter 1

In chapter 1, terms involving risk factors, protective factors and child soldiering have been discussed. In chapter 2, some of those will be examined according to Bronfenbrenner's ecosystem. The ecosystem describes risk factors and protective factors in relation to children's environments. According to Bronfenbrenner's theory (1986), environment plays a key role in children's development and the likelihood of them becoming child soldiers.

Chapter 2. Bronfenbrenner's Ecosystem theory

Chapter 2 describes each system within the ecosystem In order to identify the numerous factors associated with child soldiering. Bronfenbrenner's (1986) theory is based on five levels; The *Microsystem*, the *Exosystem*, the *Mesosystem*, the *Macrosystem* and the *Chronosystem*. According to this theory, the first system and the most relevant to the child is the *Microsystem*. *It* involves the child's immediate environment: its caretakers, family, school, social opportunities and peers (Bronfenbrenner, 1986). This category is one of the most important in this particular context concerning child trafficking.

The second level of the ecosystem is the *Mesosystem*. It does not directly impact the child. It revolves around the home and its contact with the child's institutions. The *Mesosystem* describes the relationship between a child's home to its institutions, such as school, activities, (including religious and leisure activities) and friends. The parents or caregivers control the child's nearest surroundings though the *Mesosystem.*

The *Exosystem* is the third category. Much the same as the *Mesosystem,* the *Exosystem* has not a direct impact on the child. The Exosystem is parent oriented, it reflects on the home and the running of the household. It also involves the parents' or caretakers closest environment such as the workplace, their peers, and their community. The community could be under the influence of poverty, patriarchy, conflict or religious beliefs that affect the child through the *Meso-* and *Macrosystem* (Bronfenbrenner, 1986).

Category four, the *Macrosystem* describes the relationship between the social context of each of the before mentioned categories, the child's closest environment as well as the more distant, yet important. This could include the child's and its parents/caregivers culture and surroundings and their effects. The *Macrosystem* controls the availability of social opportunities such as schooling and daycare while the secondly mentioned system, the *Mesosystem* with parents or caregivers in charge, have these options at their disposal. War and conflict are usually a product of the *Macrosystem.*

Finally, the *Chronosystem,* the fifth and last category, involves sociological changes through a period of time (Bronfenbrenner, 1994; 1986). It puts social adjustments and

contexts into an historical perspective. For example, systems change internally as children get older. The *Microsytem* of a teenager is far more likely to have increasing peer effects, whilst the parents or caregivers decrease through the *Mesosystem.* A 3 year old is far less likely to join armed forced than a child at the age of 9 or 10.
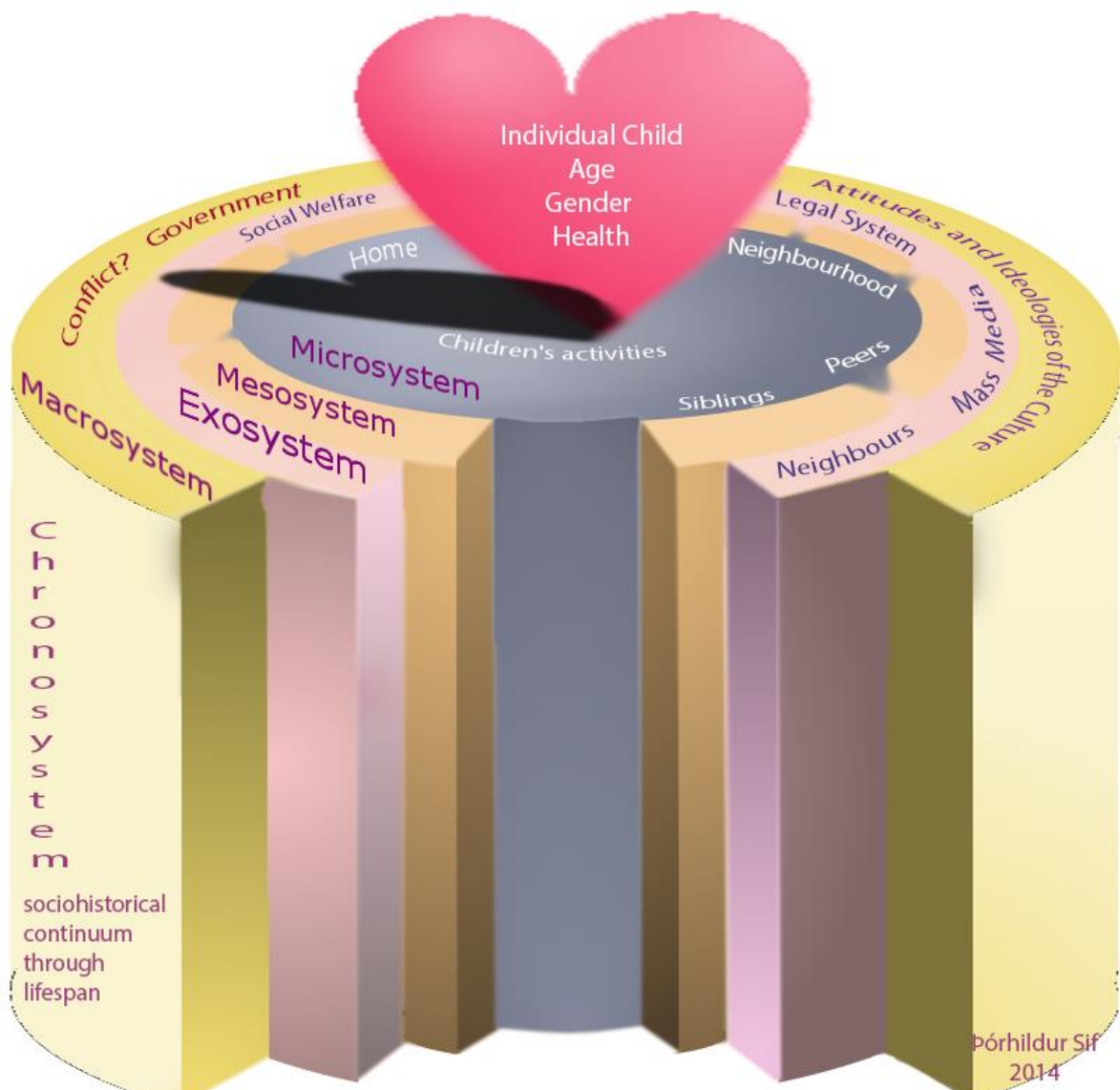
Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory (1986; 1994)

Concluding Chapter 2.

It is important to inspect the relationship between the environment and its inhabitants. Bronfenbrenner´s ecological systems theory is one way to examine these factors and their characteristics in context with one another (Rafferty, 2008). His theory enables the consideration of the child's "role or status" in its ecosystem to evaluate opportunities, limitations and changes through time (Betancourt & Khan, 2008). The next chapter is about the connections of the Ecosystem and risk factors existing within them.

Chapter 3. Risk factors within the Ecosystem, and how they relate to human trafficking and child soldiers

The ecosystem is a mixture of factors protecting the child or risking its welfare. Privileges made accessible to parents on behalf of the child are constructed within the M*acrosystem,* whilst the *Microsystem* revolves around a child's everyday life. Authorities can offer affordable daycare and education, or they neglect to do so. If the *Macrosystem* fails to offer adequate and affordable choices for children's daycare and schooling, for example, when fees and tuition become too costly or inaccessible for the poorest of families or rural families, the *Microsystem* inevitably suffers. The *Macrosystem* is thus responsible for the availability or unavailability of recourses. The responsibility of how these resources are utilized lie with the parents or caregivers in the *Microsystem.*

When these systems are inadequate or nonexistent, that is when *Micro-* and *Macrosystems* fail; the promise of a better life to any child must be all but irresistible. If, at any given time the *Micro- and Macrosystems* fail in providing the child with basic needs, the dangers of entrapment are magnified. This includes the quality of home, social services and child protection agencies. If a child is homeless, a runaway and/or orphaned for instance, it may not have other options than to roam the streets. These children are more likely to fall victim to false promises of better lives in other countries that might, and often do, result in their becoming domestic slaves, prostitutes, sweat-shop workers or child soldiers. This is common all through Africa. Children from Kenya and Ethiopia are trafficked mainly to the Middle- East, while children from Rwanda and Sudan, mostly boys, become child soldiers in the Democratic Republic of Congo and Chad (Aronowitz, 2009).

Individual qualities, age, gender and health

The age and gender of a person can be a risk factor, for example, in patriarchal societies where boys are held higher esteem. Traditional attitudes originating in societies' customs and religion alone can lead to human trafficking where girls, even very young girls, are sold or given away into marriages in their country, or culture of origin. These things occur within every class and are not limited to the poorest of families. Girls have been known

to enlist in armed militia in hope of escaping domestic violence, forced marriage or domestic slavery. As it turns out, joining armed forces subjects them to even greater risk of becoming sex-slaves, suffering from HIV/AIDS and unwanted pregnancies outside of marriage. Becoming unwed mothers often excludes them from becoming a part of their home community as girls in this situation bring disgrace and dishonor to their families (Maguire, 2011). Where there's armed conflict or war, gender discrimination that may or may not originate in religion, corruption within a government and other authorities, the risk of human trafficking multiplies (Aronowitz, 2009).

Another problem can involve proof of birth. If birth registration is inadequate or nonexistent, this can lead to a person's non-citizenship status. According to the *Trafficking in Persons Report* (US. Gov., 2009), it is estimated that around 12 million people from all over the world, are considered stateless. This group of people is considered highly vulnerable (Shelley, 2010). In Nepal, 66% percent of births go unregistered. The Central African Republics National Registry was destroyed in raids in 2002 and 2003, causing birth certificates needed to verify age and nationality to become inaccessible (Maguire, 2011).

When children reach the age of 7, the risk of recruitment increases is high conflict areas. Due to lack of experience children are fearless and not aware of the dangers they face in combat or association with combat. It is cheaper to feed children, and they are easily manipulated. Their youth also makes them more expendable (Maguire, 2011).

Gender roles and child soldiers

Gender roles emerge from all categories of Bronfenbrenner's ecosystem regardless of their global situation. From within the *Microsystem*, children learn to respond to their parents gestures involving the child's gender and research has shown that babies develop according to how they are handled. Parents tend to handle their baby girls and boys differently, girls are considered more delicate, and boys are believed to be tougher and stronger, and for these reasons have different expectations regarding their child's gender (Paechter, 2007). Children, more often boys than girls, as young as 7 years old are being

exploited in wars as armed combatant's, porters, messengers, cooks, spies and so on. In El Salvador, Uganda, Sierra Leone and Angola girls are approximately one-third of all child combatants, most often in anti-government armed forces (UNICEF, 2008). Girls serve as well in armed combat although this occurs less and more commonly employed as cooks and sex servants (Bales, Trodd, & Williamson, 2009). These girls tend not to be associated with armed groups as international law and agencies have found it problematic to clarify children's status when their association with armed militia is non-combatant (Maguire, 2011). Girls therefore have less means to defend themselves if attacked (Honwana, 2006).

Imminent danger; Violence and abuse

Child sexual exploitation is defined as a situation in which an individual takes *"Unfair advantage of some imbalance of power between themselves and another person under the age of 18 in order to sexually use them"* (UNICEF, 2001). Systematic sexual violence against girls has always been linked with war. The Japanese Empirical guard offered sex-slaves on demand, referred to as "comfort women," the youngest assumed to have been around twelve years old. The Nazis had a similar system for their forces, the women and girls usually recruited from the general populous in concentration camps. In the last few years, girls from Liberia, Bosnia Herzegovina, Sierra Leone and the Democratic Republic of Congo have been abducted from their homes after having been gang raped by soldiers in front of the girls own families (Maguire, 2011).

Where sexual abuse of child soldiers seems to occur most extensively and is most frequently reported are those in regions including long term- and high conflict. Sexual abuse is far more likely to occur in non-state militia (Alfredson, e.d.). Young girls who were kept as sex slaves by the Serbs in Bosnia Herzegovina claimed that they had stopped caring about their own fate when interviewed by the International Criminal Tribunal, during the trial of the former Yugoslavian warlords. Their spirits had been completely broken, as they were raped, even gang raped by different men during their captivity in war times. On the other hand, the armed forces of Maoists in Nepal and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) were not known to practice sexual violence (Maguire, 2011). Fighting in combat can cause disability or even death. In Child soldiering as well as any

kind of slavery, forced manual labor is most often 3-D: dirty, dangerous and demanding, working conditions are horrendous and the hours are long (Aronowitz, 2009).

Micro Factors

Note that family risk factors in child trafficking and enslavement are a global problem. Such problems exist everywhere in the world, even in the more prosperous countries in the West. In every major city exists a "ghetto" that consists of marginalized ethnic groups, poor single parents, drug- and alcohol usage, including the existence of ultimately fatal illnesses such as HIV and AIDS. There are power relations within patriarchal households with male member preference where violence, abuse and neglect against family members are considered the norm.

Sometimes recruitment entails the destruction of children's *Microsystem*. There are known cases of young children being forced to commit acts of violence against their own families or other members of their immediate community, in order to make them undesirable in their home environment. They become fugitives on the run and thus excellent trafficking victims. It is common that villages are raided by militia recruiters who kill children´s families making them orphans with no one to care for them except their captors, who provide them with food, shelter and safety from local law enforcement (Aronowitz, 2009).

Having no place to call home, they are more likely to follow a recruiter offering questionable promises. The following is a young Liberian boy's story;

> "Kik ran into the forest. And the kids stayed in the forest all the time they could hear the gunfire from the village. Kik stayed in the forest. It was only the next morning when there was no more noise that the children dared to go back to their family huts. Kik went back to his family hut and found his father's throat cut, his brother's throat cut, his mother and his sister raped and their heads bashed in. All of his relatives, close and distant, dead. And when you've got no one left on earth, no father, no mother, no

brother, no sister, and you're really young, just a little kid, living in some fucked-up barbaric country where everyone is cutting everyone's throat, what do you do? You become a child-soldier of course, a small-soldier, a child soldier so you can have lots to eat and cut some throats yourself, that's all your only option" (Tiefenbaum, 2007).

This story describes the reality of a child soldier. Having his *Microsystem* invaded by members of governmental armed forces from within the *Macrosystem* has left him homeless, completely without loved ones and full of anger. He can channel his emotions by becoming a child soldier himself and at the same time acquire a home of sorts, bonding with his comrades.

„They took away my younger brother the other day. He was coming home from the market and he was taken away. I went and begged them, saying, "I gave you years of my life and I gave you my health. Please let me have my brother back—he is the only one I have who takes care of me, helps me to go to the toilet, helps me get into bed." They didn't release him, and they threatened to shoot if I reported his abduction to any NGOs. They also told me at the same time that I had to re-join. Is this how they thank me for all the time I gave them? Why are they doing this to me"?

-Anonymous girl who was recruited by the LTTE at age 16 and severely disabled while serving.

Voluntary and in-voluntary enlistment

Military groups and armed forces often target certain groups of children, of religions or ethnicities they claim to represent (Bales, Trodd, & Williamson, 2009). Reasons for voluntary enlistment are often the result of risk factors exceeding protective factors in children's ecosystems as described in Bronfenbrenner's theory (Tiefenbaum, 2007).

Genuine informed consent is, however rare; there are cases in Liberia where children were sold by their parents for food. The children consented to leave with their captors to help their families (Tiefenbaum, 2007). In Sierra Leone, parents were made to choose either to surrender their daughters to the attacking group or else be amputated (Maguire, 2011).

Some children choose to join particular forces to avenge violations committed against them and their families or even to offer protection to themselves and their loved ones (Human Rights Watch, 2004). Children are often offered payment for services rendered in American Dollars and the chance to loot where ever they fight, in fact, child soldier survivors claim to have profited considerably from looting, especially in Liberia. Cash payment can turn out to be less stable than promised in advance. They are also offered drugs, a career and/or food and shelter. Human Rights Watch conducted several interviews with ex-child combatants, published in their 5th report, in 2005. Most of the interviewees claimed they barely earned enough to sustain themselves (Human Rights Watch, 2005).

An anonymous ex-combatant whose origin is kept secret told his story to the Human Rights Watch:

> „I benefited from the LURD war – while there I looted a vehicle
> and later sold it at the Sierra Leone/Liberia border for US $600.
> Then two televisions, and lots of money from a safe I'd shot open
> in Monrovia. After returning to Sierra Leone, I helped out my
> family" (Human Rights Watch, 2005).

The Human Rights Watch's interviews from 2005 gave some interesting results. For one, the ex-child soldiers were not more likely to harm foreign citizens while fighting abroad than their fellow countrymen when fighting domestically (Human Rights Watch, 2005).

In some Western countries, children do choose to enlist to escape poor environments. It is important to remember that poverty exists everywhere in the world. In the United Kingdom and the United States, in areas where unemployment is high and the

opportunities to receive education is low, joining armed forces where payment and benefits are secure, and chances to train in a craft or enjoy college education seems to be the only way out (Maguire, 2011). Some western countries like Norway, Finland and France still have compulsory military service for young adults (The Finnish Defence Forces, 2014; Norske Forsvaret, 2013).

It can be concluded that this is, in fact, the *Macrosystem* breaking down. If children are, in addition, suffering from violence or abuse at home or for example have drug-addicted parents, their *Microsystem* is failing as well. If they have inadequate living situations at home (failing *Microsystems*) as well as insufficient support from their community (failing *Macrosystems*) their global location matters less. These children, however, can count on more security in the U.S. or U.K. armed forces than children enlisting in non-state armed groups, for instance, in Liberia or Sri Lanka, payment or benefit wise. Some of the third world children are signing up for much the same reasons, hoping to benefit their lives, for example escaping patriarchal communities, unemployment and such circumstances (Maguire, 2011).

These children, regardless of race or nationality are just as dead if they are ambushed by rival soldier's intent to kill. Reasons for enlisting can be cultural as well. One girl claimed to have joined the Maoists, a Nepalese resistance movement fighting for the freedom of Nepal from China, because she was a dancer, and the resistance movement claimed to support the arts (Maguire, 2011).

Peer pressure

 When a child feels it doesn´t belong in its own community and sees its peers gain status of some kind by joining militia, the idea of joining as well can be enticing. Where low self-esteem within groups is common and where negative peer-pressure, innocence and lack of awareness exist, as well as abuse and violence, the dream of a better life can often be captivating, literally speaking. The destination of trafficked victims is often tolerant of child soldiering, prostitution, begging and sweatshops. Labor laws and representation of workers are also often lacking or ill enforced as is government supervision of hiring workers (Aronowitz, 2009). Based on Bronfenbrenner's theory, ethnic and political

violence can have an effect on the child directly or indirectly because violence in the ecosystem infects from one system to another, in this case, from the outside in (Dubow, 2012). The lack of equality, and what the majority of western people consider basic human rights, such as clean water, shelter, sustenance and safety both inside and outside the home become motivating factors in human behavior (Annan & Blattman, 2006).

Macro Factors

Where human enslavement is involved and perhaps as a universal rule, push and pull factors complement one another. Push factors include and lack of education, conflict, political instability and unemployment. Pull factors consist of the necessity for workers in other areas, the possibility of higher living standards and more ample opportunities elsewhere (Shelley, 2010).

Governmental, sociological and economic factors

Push and pull factors are common denominators in human trafficking. Pull factors can consist of the demand for workers in other areas. This could mean the possibility of higher living standards and more ample opportunities elsewhere. Many are tempted when offered employment, for example in armed combat, far away, promising better wages and added stability. Unfortunately, these offers often result in enslavement (Aronowitz, 2009).

Push factors encourage people to search elsewhere for opportunities. Many Western African nations, such as Sierra Leone, Liberia, Guinea and the Ivory Coast have for decades suffered due to corrupted governments causing economic decline, political upheaval, prejudice and violence caused by conflict. An unhealthy economy can also result in human trafficking of any kind (Human Rights Watch, 2005). The risk of "underground" economical systems increases, especially if an underprivileged part of a country shares borders with a more prosperous one and the discretion of border patrol officers is available for payment (Aronowitz, 2009).

Warfare is increasing, particularly in Africa. Armed forces involve state and non-state rebel or terrorist groups abducting children. Kidnapping children in such a way ultimately results in the discontinuance of healthy development (Betancourt & Khan, 2008)

Concluding Chapter 3.

With the malfunction of children's ecosystem in areas affected by conflict, the risk of all kinds of human trafficking increases. Individual qualities of children such as age and gender are relevant in societies of male dominance. *Microfactors* like peer pressure add to the risk. Involuntary abductions by an armed militia cause a *Microsystem* failure often resulting in sexual violence, disability, death or destruction of the Microsystem, leaving children homeless and without care. Push factors like high unemployment rate, scarcity of secondary level education or other kinds of training, and high dropout rates add to the risk. Pull factors do as well, such as promises of a better life elsewhere. In addition, if police and border patrols are lacking in training, numbers or due to corruption on the one hand and where immigration laws are very strict and carefully enforced on the other the risk of human trafficking is magnified (Aronowitz, 2009).

Chapter 4. Child trafficking and Child Soldiering

Recruiting and enlisting child soldiers constitute child trafficking (Maguire, 2011). *„Trafficking in children for their use on the battlefield is a human rights violation that rises to the level of slavery"* (Tiefenbaum, 2007).

Denying children contact with their home strengthens the grip the abductors have over them. The further they are away from home, the greater their reliance on their captors becomes (Aronowitz, 2009). The acts required of them interfere with children's fundamental human right to development, education and health, besides being life threatening (Tiefenbaum, 2007).

Indicators of Child Trafficking

There are several indicators of children being trafficked. To name a few, a child can appear to be travelling without documentation, appear drugged or emotionally upset, or does not seem to know where it is going. Furthermore, a child all by itself with no guardian in sight, unprepared or uninformed and without money and/or travelling at night. These children often have illegal status, and are unable to recognize that they are in fact exploited. They are often forced to become addicted to drugs and alcohol so they become more dependent on their captors.

When a trafficked child arrives at a destination

On arrival at their destination, children become isolated as they have no social network. They often experience language barriers and are un-familiar with the system in which they now live and work (Aronowitz, 2009). Many of those who were recruited and trafficked to engage in armed conflicts in another country, were unaware of the political objectives of the organization they fought for. Some didn't even know the names of said

organizations. Sudanese children for example are often trafficked into Chad to fight in armed combat (Human Rights Watch, 2005).

Concluding Chapter 4.

Chapter 4 includes evidence of human trafficking and describes which indicators to watch out for in relation to child trafficking. It also contains possible responses of a child after it reaches its destination, the difficulties it must overcome to settle in. Also, some of the immediate risks involved.as it arrives at what is to become their new home. Chapter 5 describes two examples of Macrosystem failure resulting in war.

Chapter 5. Macro examples of child soldiering

Child soldiering is currently taking place all over the world. There are several examples of this phenomena existing within governments and politics involving the Macrosystem. In this context, one state-armed forces involving child soldiers, and one none-governmental militia fighting for a free state, also employing children.

This chapter begins with Charles Taylor's child recruitment, which originated in a non-state army but became governmental after Taylor seized power in Liberia. The chapter continues with Sri Lankans Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), an armed resistance movement hoping to gain domination over a piece of land in Northern-Sri Lanka.

Charles´ Taylor child recruitment

Charles Taylor started the recruitment of child soldiers in 1988, whilst preparing a coup against the sitting president Samuel Doe. In 1989, situated at the Ivory Coast at the time, Taylor launched an attack on Does presidency involving child soldiers. He even had unique troops he called "The small boys unit", enlisting as young as second and third graders both before and after he was elected. (Human Rights Watch, 2004). Charles Taylor was the president of Liberia from 1997-2003 and during his regime he continued child soldiering (Stacy, 2009).

It is crucial to take into consideration the fact that during his presidency, Taylor was the sole conductor of the Liberian ecosystem. Using the power of his office, he recruited children as young as 8 years old. During forcible recruitments occurring regularly over the years in Liberia, many parents fled to the Sierra Leone's borders in order to save their children from capture but were often caught on the run. Those who had the means to buy their children´s freedom sometimes could, others had to see the backs of their children as they were herded off to the frontiers, more often than not for the last time (Stacy, 2009).

Such forcible seizures occurred despite the fact that Liberia had ratified a number of covenants and treaties, including the Convention of the Rights of the Child (CRC). This appears to have been a rhetorical and meaningless gesture on Taylors part (Stacy, 2009).

Taylor was even as bold as to file false reports claiming to abide by the CRC (The Republic of Liberia, 2002). While in Libya, studying guerilla tactics from Muammar Qaddafi, Taylor met Fodey Saybana Sankoh, the leader of the Revolutionary United Front of Sierra Leone (RUF), a rebel army. Taylor would supply the RUF with weapons, soldiers and resources, thus in fact, facilitating cross border human trafficking in child soldiers. In 2007, Taylor was convicted before the Special Court of Sierra Leone, the most successful specific war tribunal up to date, for crimes against humanity and war crimes and having recruited children younger than 15 years old (Stacy, 2009).

Taylor's recruiters did not only enlist children they considered to be on their side of the war, but would also enlist those who had fought for the opposite side, which is unusual in child soldiering. Taylor was not above abducting children from refugee camps and recruiting child refugees (Human Rights Watch, 2005). This could suggest that to Taylor, the end justified his means. It is now known to the world how he treated his recruits, with cruelty and coercion. (Stacy, 2009).

Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE)

The Tamil people are an ancient tribe, known for their culture, commerce, art and literature as early in time as 3rd century BC. The earliest archeological sources of the Tamils go even further back. Ancient remains of Tamil burial grounds are believed to be from 1500 BC (Codrington, 1930). The two largest populations of Sri Lanka, the Tamils and the Sinhalese, appear to have lived in harmony until the end of the British Colonial reign. Working together in establishing a new independent country became troublesome for these two ethnicities and decisions were usually in the Sinhalese favor (Encyclopedia of Diasporas, 2005). Following Sri Lankans independence from Great Britain in 1948, the majority rule of Sinhalese passed a legislation making over 700.000 Tamils stateless (Encyclopedia of Diasporas, 2005). The English language was replaced by that of the Sinhalese, making it challenging for the Tamils, who used their own native tongue to get employment and education (Sri Lanka Consolidated Acts, 1956).

This caused great friction between the two nations, increasing over the next 30 years and evolving into a civil war in 1983. (Encyclopedia of Diasporas, 2005). The Sri

Lankan long lasting conflict started in what is known as „Black July" in 1983. That summer, the LTTE combatants ambushed Sri Lankan's governments armed forces, marking the beginning of a three decade civil war. During this time, the LTTE made numerous attacks, including suicide bombings involving children. The LTTE appears to have only recruited Tamil individuals, the group it claimed to be representing. The hopes of the LTTE in establishing a free, independent state for the Tamil people eventually came to an end. The Sri Lankan Government declared victory against the rebel army of the Tamil in 2009 (Human Rights Watch, 2013b).

Around 300.000 internally displaced people were rounded up in prison camps, of those at least 50.000 children were suspected of being involved in the LTTE (UNICEF, 2011). By 2004, at least 4.200 children had been confirmed as recruited, a high percent of those being girls. Most likely there were considerably more of them. The LTTE were known to abduct children to use in combat as young as 11 years old (U.N. General Assembly Security Council, 2004)

Concluding Chapter 5.

In chapter 5, two Macro examples of child soldiering have been described, involving one state and one non-state armed force. A couple of clear distinction have been made, one being how they recruited civilian children. Taylor's regime seems to have recruited any child, regardless of their origins or nationality. The LTTE however recruited only Tamil children.

The other involves the ideology of these two conflicts. The LTTE fought in hopes of establishing an independent Tamil state, where the Tamil people could have their own language, their own government and citizenship, where they would not be discriminated against by the majority of another ethnicity.

The presidency of Charles Taylor would involve him reigning in an already established country, not representing one ethnicity over another, and his quest to remain in power by any means necessary. The common denominator of these two Macrosystems above all else, lies in the forcible recruitment of children.

Chapter 6. Solutions: Prevention, Intervention and Reintegration

The three major factors in the elimination of child soldiering are prevention, intervention and reintegration. In order to be efficient these three components must work together. UNICEF conducted a symposium in Cape Town, South Africa in 1997. Some of the world's most esteemed experts on the subject, were gathered in order to establish prevention, intervention and reintegrating measures combating child soldiering. This led to the establishing of the Cape Town principles. They promote adequate birth registration, not solely to reduce risk factors but also so to prove prospective soldiers' age. They also advocate that refugee camps should be located as far away from borders as possible and the demobilization of child soldiers as well as their reintegration (UNICEF, 1997).

Prevention

 According to Susan Tiefenbaum (2007), the key element in the quest to eliminate child soldiering and trafficking, is prevention. She believes this can be accomplished by raising public awareness, by education and the effective use of the media for example. Strong NGOs, like Human Rights Watch, supported by the state are necessary in discovering, intervening in and reporting child slavery (Tiefenbaum, 2007). Governments must make information on child soldiering public in order to educate their residents at large. Last, but not least, education for the most vulnerable, such as refugees and the homeless must be widely available in order to reduce the risk of recruitment (Tiefenbaum, 2007).

The United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) focuses on the protection of refugees (Human Rights Watch, 2004). To accomplish this, the enforcement of valid international treaties and contracts must be honored. Foundations implemented. Likewise, foundations of regional UN programs, such as the United Nations Office for West Africa (UNOWA) must be strengthened. Emphasizing the prosecution of warlords and their officers rather than the soldiers is also important. Finally, financial support to countries where child soldiering is practiced must be reduced (Human Rights Watch, 2005).

Intervention and Reintegration

Awareness of children's rights and the dangers of child soldiering need to be raised, and new, coordinated international recruitment guidelines, new anti-trafficking and anti-child soldiering legislation must be implemented and more importantly, enforced. Peace negotiations could also prove effective in dissolving armies including children altogether (Tiefenbaum, 2007).

There are several organizations currently aiming towards rehabilitating and reintegrating former child soldiers. The Paris principles and guidelines, „*Children Associated with Armed Forces or Armed Groups*" are the result of a united effort between UNICEF, the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary -General for Children and Armed Conflict, and France (UNICEF, 2012). Reintegration into civilian life, inclusive reintegration programs and children´s education is the main priority (UNICEF, 2012). The Cape Town principles emphasize the importance of reuniting children with their families, the establishment of reintegration programs as well as trauma counseling. Institutionalizing former child soldiers should be the last resort (UNICEF, 1997).

Problems with re-integration

There are many children who are unable to reintegrate for a variety reasons. If the family is very poor or if a child has been sold by its parents, the child may not be welcome. Those who have been away for a long time may have lost the ability to speak the mother tongue and some face charges and prosecution in their home country, even the death penalty (Maguire, 2011). Child soldiers are sometimes punished for war crime and those involved in governmental armed status could become defendants in a war crime trial if they are older than 15, as they no longer have the status of a child soldier. In Rwanda and Columbia for example, children are incarcerated, and they have no particular status or rights as child soldiers. This is particularly the case when charged for genocide or other serious felonies. The Ugandan army even executed five teenage boys in 1999 (Tiefenbaum, 2007). In the Democratic Republic of Congo, convicted children await execution (Maguire, 2011).

Reintegrating into a society that has, for example, traditions that appear strange to ex-child soldiers, such as teenage boy circumcision rituals practiced widely in Africa. Many

of these boys have developed into young adults or adolescents while away, making them subject to such mutilation (Honwana, 2006). Survivors of child soldiering are highly likely to suffer permanent physical and psychological damage as a result of the violence endured during captivity;

> "One day, my friends and I were forced by our commanders to kill a family…I decided I had to flee and I ran away to the forest…but some soldiers found me and brought me back to a military camp. They imprisoned me and beat me every day…Today I am afraid. I don't know how to read, I don't know where my family is. I have no future…My life is lost…At night I can no longer sleep, I keep thinking of those horrible things I have seen and done as a soldier".
>
> -Kalami, a 15-year-old boy from the Democratic Republic of Congo, who fought with various armed forces from the age of 9 (U.N., 2003).

Living with an experience such as Kalami's must be hard enough on its own (U.N., 2003). Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) is common in former child soldiers. PTSD is an anxiety disorder, develops in young people rather than those who are older after repeated traumatic experiences (Bales, Trodd, & Williamson, 2009). Betancourt and Khan (2006) claim that children´s mental health is a dynamic process rather than a personal trait. They build their hypothesis on ecosystems on Bronfenbrenner's (1984) theory. War is a life-altering event and in order to cope and carry on demobilized child soldiers must have their ecosystems restored (Betancourt & Khan, 2008). Also, collective actions within and between each ecosystem is crucial (Bronfenbrenner, 1986)

Some groups of former child soldiers are believed to be in urgent need of reintegration such as girls who have been subject to sexual abuse. Many of them are unable to return home, as they might be rejected by their families. In some cultures, girls who have suffered sexual abuse cannot be married, regardless of the fact that sexual activity was not consensual. Children who have been made addicted to narcotics, alcohol,

or even human flesh are particularly difficult to reintegrate, as their habits are hard to break and punishable by law, sometimes severely (Maguire, 2011).

One of the most imminent dangers is re-recruitment. According to social workers participating in reintegration program in Liberia, hundreds of demobilized child soldiers already reunited with their families during the Liberian disarmament exercise, have rejoined armed forces (Human Rights Watch, 2005). Those who are unable to reunite with their families are at increased risk. (Maguire, 2011). In preparation for war, thousands of these children are at risk of being recruited once more, as an intensive child recruitment epidemic is ongoing and has been for the past year at least (Human Rights Watch, 2013a).

UNICEF (2013) recently confirmed and condemned the murders of two re-recruited child soldiers who had been demobilized and in rehabilitation at the time of recruitment (UNICEF, 2013). In January 2013 UNICEF also announced they possessed credible evidence of both state and non-state armed forces increasingly recruiting children into armed conflict in the Central African Republic (UNICEF, 2013a).

In conclusion

It has been established that the environment plays a key role in child soldiering and human trafficking. When children's ecosystems become vulnerable, and risk factors exceed protective factors, the same goes for push and pull factors, the likelihood of recruitment increases. Even when a child lives within a very stable and safe *Microsystem,* food is ample, family or caregivers are sensitive to children´s needs; they have access to education, adequate housing and so forth, the security can be compromised when the *Macrosystem* suffers. For example, when villages are raided by warlords who abduct children for child soldiering, in patriarchal cultures and where there is a lack of opportunities, like education.

Children who belong to a safe *Microsystem* may be less likely to enlist, but they are as vulnerable as anyone else if abducted by force. Looting is popular among active child or adolescent soldiers, during recruitment more prosperous villages become enticing places to attack. These children are in constant terror and fear for their lives. They are punished severely should they try to escape capture. They are traumatized, often having had to commit violent acts against their own families and are often scarred for life, physically and psychologically and show high rates of Post-Traumatic stress disorder (U.S Department of State, 2008). They often become subject to violence and abuse.

Having survived recruitment, reintegration and rehabilitations are important factors according to the International Community. Resettling with families is considered crucial. In the case of so many child soldiers returning to the *Microsystem* is sometimes impossible. The family might have relocated to a place unknown, which is often the case in conflict zones. Being unable to speak the language or after having been sold or lost one's virginity, sometimes going home is not an option.

Children facing retribution for war crimes or who have dependency problems may have trouble readjusting to the life in the *Macrosystem*. This includes cities, villages and broader surroundings including jurisdictions and legislation. The *Macrosystem* often affects the *Microsystem*. Parents in a highly religious, patriarchal society are often as traditional as the next. However, if that is not the case, such a family might welcome back

a daughter who has been sexually active despite the traditional co-inhabitants opinions. In addition, *Macrosystem*s can be more tolerant of reintegrating a child soldier than the family within the *Microsystem* can be. Social services, NGO´s, the health care system and broader minded citizens might come to the aid of an ex-child soldier in need.

Currently, child soldiers are involved in armed combat in several countries, Syria and the Central African Republic to mention a couple. There are as yet few theoretical sources on these subjects as they have yet to be researched by scholars and reliable humanitarian institution. In personal opinion, one of the main reasons is likely to be the difficulties caused by ongoing conflict. This is the main reason why past conflicts within the Macrosystem, as discussed in chapter 5, and not on-going ones, like the current conflict in Syria, are cited in this paper. In order to follow ongoing conflicts, it is necessary to rely on the media and essential to remember that sources may not include empirical data. During the composition of this paper such unreliable sources were therefore exempt.

At this moment in time armed conflict is taking place somewhere in the world. Everything points to children being involved and that preparation for war has been in progress for a while. Reuters Geneva reports that now there are around 6.000 child soldiers active in the C.A.R. alone, after having been estimated around 2.000 in April 2013. No plan has yet been announced by any organization to prevent their recruitment or protect these children (Nebehay, 2103).

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