

# Beyond Cimo Tok

The post-conflict stigmatization of children born of war in Gulu district, Northern Uganda



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*Cover image:* Formerly abducted woman holding her children. In 2015, the International Center for Transitional Justice in cooperation with Watye Ki Gen and the Women's Advocacy Network, started a research project in Northern Uganda to analyze the long-term consequences of sexual violence committed during the conflict. Retrieved from the photo gallery 'From Abducted Children to Empowered Mothers', International Center for Transitional Justice.

## ABSTRACT

In conflicts all around the world, sexual and gender based violence are central to tactics of abuse and humiliation. The prevalence of sexual violence has been increasingly recognized and addressed in policy-making and academia. Yet, while they are a particularly vulnerable category of war-affected people, attention to children that were born from sexual violence is largely lacking. In the over two-decade long war in Northern Uganda, many children were born as a result of sexual and gender based violence committed by the Lord Resistance Army, government forces, and in overcrowded internally displaced person camps. In this thesis, I analyze how stigmatization continues to challenge the life opportunities of children born of war in Gulu district, Northern Uganda. While some scholars on stigma have argued that the defining feature of the process of stigmatization is negative evaluation, I argue that stigma goes beyond negative evaluation and translates into discrimination and exclusion. The stigmatization of children born of war is interlinked with the patrilineal identity structure of Acholi society, affecting not only social acceptance but also economic security and community participation. Furthermore, stigmatization is rooted in cultural and social norms on sex and marriage, is influenced by spiritual beliefs, and is partly shaped by economic considerations. This research constructs a better understanding of the stigmatization of children born of war in Northern Uganda, hereby adding to the academic debate on stigmatization, contributing to existing knowledge on children born of war, and forming a basis to develop targeted policies that can address their challenges and allow them to have a better future.

*Keywords:* children born of war, sexual and gender based violence, war-affected children, stigma, discrimination, Northern Uganda.

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## **ABBREVIATIONS**

<b>ARLPI</b>	Acholi Religious Leaders Peace Initiative
<b>CBC</b>	Children Born in Captivity
<b>CBW</b>	Children Born of War
<b>ICTJ</b>	International Center for Transitional Justice
<b>IDP</b>	Internally Displaced Person
<b>JRP</b>	Justice and Reconciliation Project
<b>LRA</b>	Lord's Resistance Army
<b>NGO</b>	Non-Governmental Organization
<b>SGBV</b>	Sexual and Gender Based Violence
<b>UPDF</b>	Uganda Peoples' Defence Forces
<b>UN</b>	United Nations
<b>WKG</b>	Watye Ki Gen

## **CHAPTER 1:**

### **INTRODUCTION**

In the course of this research project, I had the honor to meet some of the most resilient people. I have spoken with children and their mothers who are facing enormous hardship, ranging from continuous insults to unequal treatment. Yet, despite all the challenges that they face, during one of the interviews, two mothers advised me not to get too overwhelmed or “broken” over their struggles. This touched me deeply and encouraged me to tell the story of a category of war-affected people that are often not heard by the public, policy-makers, organizations, and academics: children born of war.

#### **1.1 INTRODUCING CHILDREN BORN OF WAR**

From 1986 until 2007, Northern Uganda was plagued by conflict between the Lord Resistance Army (LRA) and the government forces: the Uganda Peoples’ Defence Forces (UPDF). During the war, widespread violations were committed against civilians resulting in the displacement, abduction, and death of the people of Northern Uganda. Generally, authors on the Northern Ugandan conflict agree that children have borne the brunt of the war (Apio, 2007, p.94), especially because of the LRA’s policy of abducting and forcibly recruiting children in their forces (WKG, 2015). Although the dominant image of a child soldier is one of a young boy with a gun, girls too cover a relatively large proportion of children associated with armed forces (Derluyn, Vindevogel & de Haene, 2013, p.870; McKay, 2005, pp.387-388). Girls were used for combat purposes, support roles, and were forced to become the wives of LRA commanders, including the obligation to become pregnant (WKG, 2015, pp.12-13). During the war in general, sexual and gender based violence (SGBV) was central to tactics of abuse and humiliation, including rape, sexual slavery, and forced marriage. SGBV was committed not only by the LRA but also by other actors. The dire conditions in internally displaced person (IDP) camps, where food and supplies were continuously insufficient, led to women being vulnerable to fall victim to sexual exploitation: exchanging sex for goods and services. In addition, women were raped by their fellow community members in the crowded camps. Moreover, government soldiers have been accused of sexual violence. As a result, many female survivors of SGBV returned to their home communities with children after the war



(Ladisch, 2015, pp.4-5; McClain Opiyo, 2015, p.1). However, no deliberate mention has been made of the children that emerged as a consequence of the war (Apio, 2007, p.94).

#### 1.1.1 Who are the Children Born of War in Northern Uganda?

Carpenter, who was one of the first to advocate for more research on children born of war (CBW), defined CBW in his book 'Born of War' as "persons of any age conceived as a result of violent, coercive, or exploitative sexual relations in conflict zones" (2007a, p.3). According to Apio, CBW in Northern Uganda are made up of three categories. Firstly, there are children who are born as a result of the abduction and sexual abuse of their mothers by the LRA. This includes both children who were born in captivity as well as children who were conceived in captivity but born after demobilization (Apio, 2007, pp.97-98). However, a distinction is not always made between these two types of children born from the LRA. For example, reports by Watye Ki Gen (WKG), a community-based organization for formerly abducted girls and women, and the Justice and Reconciliation Project (JRP), a NGO working for justice and reconciliation with affected communities, use the term children born in captivity (CBC) to refer to both children born in the bush as well as children conceived in the bush but born after demobilization. Although existing research on CBW in Northern Uganda has primarily focused on children born of the LRA, there are two other categories of CBW in Northern Uganda: children born as a result of the sexual violence of women in IDP camps and children born from rape in UPDF detachments or in war fronts (Apio, 2007, p.97).

It is incredibly difficult to estimate the number of CBW. In most parts of the world, there is persistent stigma attached to victims of sexual violence, making it very difficult for them to come forward (Jefferson, 2004, p.12). As will be elaborated upon further in this thesis, this is unquestionably the case in Northern Uganda as there is silence surrounding sexual violence, making it challenging to identify women who faced sexual violence during the war and the children who were born from this. In addition, due to a limited focus on CBW as a war-affected category, there have only been few efforts to get more insight into the magnitude of the problem. Furthermore, it is important to note that research estimating the number of CBW are considering Northern Uganda as a whole, hence not distinguishing between different regions and the number of CBW in those regions. WKG in cooperation with CAP International are the first attempting to

concretely document the number of CBW in Northern Uganda. As outlined in their report<sup>1</sup>, more than 7500 girls were abducted by the LRA alone and virtually all of them were forced into sexual relations. While they identified a little over 950 children in this initial research, they argue that this number is no doubt considerably lower than the actual number of children born from the LRA (WKG, 2015, pp.12,15). Akello estimates the number of girls abducted by the LRA and forced to become mothers higher, approximating it at around 10.000 (2013, p.149). In contrast, the UN estimates that ‘only’ 1000 girls conceived while in LRA captivity (UN, 2006). This shows that there is already much debate surrounding the number of CBC, not even taking into consideration other categories of CBW. The report by WKG is solely on CBC and has no estimates regarding *all* categories of CBW. According to Akello, another 88.000 girls became mothers in IDP camps, of which a large number may have bore children from sexual violence (2013, p.149). Numbers on children born from sexual violence by UPDF soldiers remain unaccounted for. When conducting fieldwork, it was equally difficult to estimate the scope of the problem. While some villages hosted a number of CBW, in other villages there was only one or sometimes none. Likewise, whereas one CBW narrated that there are many CBW in her school<sup>2</sup>, another CBW explained that there are only three other CBW in her school<sup>3</sup>. In sum, while it is challenging to precisely estimate the number of CBW in Northern Uganda, existing research shows that there are a significant number of them.

### 1.1.2 Situating the Research Question

In recent years, NGO’s and experts in the field have started to map the challenges that are faced by CBW. Apio (2007), one of the first authors to explore CBW in Northern Uganda, identified stigmatization to be one of the main problems facing children born of the LRA, because they symbolize over two decades of suffering in the communities. These children thus exist as evidence of the atrocities committed by the LRA and are blamed for the acts of their parents (Apio, 2007, p.103). As Ladisch, who leads the International Center for Transitional Justice’s (ICTJ) work on children and youth, emphasizes, the father’s perceived association with rebels will loom over the children (2015, p.17). The concern about the stigmatization of CBW is widely shared by NGO’s

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<sup>1</sup> The data in this report was collected through a community process by Watye Ki Gen and was produced with the assistance of CAP International, who aided in the funding and the compilation and analysis of the information (p.4). In further references, I will refer to this report as WKG, 2015.

<sup>2</sup> Author’s interview with CBW. Participant number 53. 07/05/2017.

<sup>3</sup> Author’s interview with CBW. Participant number 52. 07/05/2017.

and experts, as it is a constant factor in all aspects of the children's lives (Ladisch, 2015, pp.21-24; McClain Opiyo, 2015, pp.4-5; Stewart, 2015, pp.8-13; WKG, 2015, pp.18,25-26). CBW have complex relationships with their family and are often badly treated by stepfathers (Ladisch, 2015, pp.17-18; McClain Opiyo, 2015, p.4; Stewart, 2015, pp.10-11; WKG, 2015, p.24). A major problem facing CBW are culture and heritage issues because they often do not know who their father is (Stewart, 2015, pp.15-17; WKG, 2015, p.32). Furthermore, even if they do know their paternal heritage, they are sometimes stigmatized and avoided by their paternal families (Stewart, 2015, p.10; WKG, 2015, p.33). This is problematic in a society that is based on a patrilineal system of identity provision (Ladisch, 2015, p.17). As McClain Opiyo explains, identity and belonging is tied to one's father. As CBW enter adolescence, the question of identity becomes of increasing concern (2015, p.6). Relatedly, a great challenge for CBW is land access since land is customarily passed down to sons through the paternal family (Ladisch, 2015, pp.17-18; Stewart, 2015, p.42). Further challenges identified by both WKG and JRP for CBW and their mothers include poverty, which limits access to food, clothing, shelter, and transportation, access to education due to the inability to pay school fees, and inadequate school performance because of difficult home situations (McClain Opiyo, 2015, pp.5-6; Stewart, 2015, pp.48-49; WKG, 2015, pp.24,29-30).

Even though the conflict in Northern Uganda ended ten years ago, the challenges mothers and their children face "have not disappeared, but rather, for many have actually worsened" (Ladisch, 2015, p.1). According to Ladisch, stigmatization does not end with name-calling but translates into real obstacles for advancement and integration as children are rejected, discriminated against, excluded, and treated as social outcasts (2015, p.21). While stigmatization is cited as one of the main issues facing these children, no attempt has been made to research how stigmatization further challenges the 'life opportunities' of CBW. It is interesting to note that when talking about stigma, the Acholi use the word *cimo tok* which literally means 'finger pointing at the back of someone's head' in English. However, I argue that stigma does not only mean the negative evaluation and insulting of individuals, but also translates into further discrimination and exclusion: it goes beyond *cimo tok*. Therefore, it is important to further explore the link between stigmatization and the challenges that CBW face. This leads to the formulation of the following research question:

*How does stigmatization continue to challenge the life opportunities of children born of war in Gulu district, Northern Uganda in March - May 2017, ten years after the conflict ended?*

When referring to life opportunities, this includes challenges related to social, economic, political, and cultural opportunities. To include all of these aspects, I have decided to use the term ‘life opportunities’ in the remainder of this thesis.

## 1.2 SOCIETAL AND ACADEMIC RELEVANCE

In conflicts all over the world, SGBV has become a prevalent tactic of war. Wartime sexual violence can take on many different forms which inevitably results in the birth of children (Carpenter, 2010, p.21). Although the prevalence of sexual violence in conflict has been increasingly recognized and addressed in academic and policy circles in recent years, this attention is often focused on short-term needs, overlooking the longer-term consequences of SGBV. Specifically, the acknowledgement of children born of sexual violence during conflict is largely lacking (Akello, 2013, p.150; Ladisch & McClain Opiyo, 2015). While the protection of children in armed conflicts around the world has received unprecedented attention since the 1990’s, international discourses on war-affected children often leave out the category of children born of war (Carpenter, 2010, pp.37-39). Yet, despite the fact that CBW have not taken part in hostilities, they are a particularly vulnerable segment of war-affected children as they may face severe stigmatization which can challenge their life opportunities. The lack of research on this issue reveals a need for further exploration of the challenges that stigmatization forms for CBW. Carpenter argues that there is a need for more information about the different dimensions of vulnerability for CBW (2007b, p.3). In his 2007 book ‘Born of War’, he argued that although CBW are acknowledged in the press and aid community, very little scholarship exists on the fate and well-being of these children. According to Carpenter, “without a better understanding of the scope and nature of the problem, best practices regarding their care cannot be established, promoted or evaluated” (2007a, p.2).

In Uganda specifically, attention to CBW has been extremely limited. While there is increasing acknowledgment of CBW and the challenges that they face by NGO’s, government attention and action remains lax. In the National Transitional Justice Policy that was drafted in 2013, it was recognized that there is an “absence of a comprehensive Government policy on children born while their mothers were in captivity of the armed groups” (p.19). Yet, despite this acknowledgement in the National Transitional Justice Policy, there has been no targeted action by

the government towards addressing the challenges of these children. Furthermore, no mention has been made of children born from other actors, such as government forces. On a positive note, while conducting my interviews it became apparent that there have been several sensitization attempts in Gulu district to sensitize communities about formerly abducted people and their children, hereby trying to reduce stigma surrounding them. However, these sensitization campaigns were solely geared towards returnees from the LRA and did not focus on victims of SGBV from other actors. Moreover, it is very difficult to get a clear picture of who are responsible for these campaigns and where exactly they were conducted. While several interviewees explained that there had been sensitization programs in their community, others argued that there was only sensitization via radio programs, that sensitization campaigns were only present in IDP camps, or that they had never existed in their villages. Furthermore, it is difficult to establish who developed and is responsible for these campaigns, and whether there is coordination regarding the different campaigns. Some respondents explained that rehabilitation centers such as GUSCO set up sensitization programs, while others mentioned NGO's or the local government as the organizers. Unfortunately, during the course of this research, I was unable to get a complete picture of all sensitization projects in the district. Local leaders that I interviewed were mostly only aware of the sensitization projects that were set up in their community or that were broadcasted via the radio. Similarly, NGO representatives that I spoke with primarily referred to sensitization campaigns that were set up by their organizations.

This thesis aims to make a valuable contribution to both the academic knowledge on CBW as a largely neglected category of war-affected persons and contribute to the attention for CBW in the Ugandan context specifically. It approaches the challenges that CBW face from the theoretical frame of stigma, which is cited to be a main issue facing CBW but is not linked to further life challenges. It aims to add to the academic debate on stigma, which is marked by a discussion on what dimensions are included in the process of stigmatization. Furthermore, it aims to expand on the existing body of literature on war- and sexually-related stigmas. This thesis hopes to add knowledge and draw more attention to the challenges faced by CBW in Northern Uganda so that targeted policies to address their challenges can be established.

### 1.3 CHAPTER OUTLINE

This research is the product of an extensive literature study combined with data gathered in the field. The next chapter will discuss the methodology of this research project, elaborating not only on the research design but also on the research process. It is important to note that during the course of carrying out this research, several changes were made, especially in consideration of the ethical implications of this research. In chapter three, before diving into the case-study of the stigma surrounding CBW in Northern Uganda, the theoretical debate surrounding stigmatization is reviewed. This includes a review of the key works on stigma as well as more recent additions to the concept. I will outline the different dimensions of stigma considered in this thesis and introduce sub-questions to guide the remainder of the thesis. In the following three chapters, the case-study is presented by analyzing the empirical data using the theoretical framework, hereby placing it in the larger debate on stigma. Chapter four categorizes CBW in Northern Uganda, allowing for a review of how existing knowledge on CBW matches the situation on the ground. In addition, it provides an overview of the social, cultural, economic, and political setting of Northern Uganda that can help to unravel components that influence the stigmatization of CBW. In chapter five, I will analyze the specific dimensions of the process of stigmatization for the case-study. To end the empirical chapters, responses to stigmatization that are employed by CBW are identified and discussed. Finally, a conclusion is drawn, addressing the main research question of this thesis and outlining suggestions for further research.

## **CHAPTER 2:**

### **METHODOLOGY**

This thesis explores the stigmatization of CBW and how this continues to challenge their life opportunities. Before diving into the content of this thesis, it is important to elaborate on the methodology. Therefore, in this chapter, I discuss the general research method before moving to a detailed elaboration of the research design. In addition, the research process, including the adaptations that were made along the way, are explained and the ethical considerations and limitations of this research are outlined.

#### **2.1 RESEARCH METHOD**

In this research project, exploratory social research is conducted, analyzing the process of stigmatization in the case-study of CBW in Gulu district, Northern Uganda in-depth. Many of the people interviewed for this research project had their own stories to tell. The data was thus gathered by collecting individual stories, hereby using a narrative approach. In this research project, qualitative data is used to align with my epistemological stance of interpretivism. This is coherent with my ontological stance of meaning and symbols as I aim to understand the construction of meaning that surrounds action. Qualitative data can help me to better understand the creation of stigma around CBW and how this translates into actions such as discrimination and systematic exclusion.

It is important to acknowledge that my findings may not be representative for all CBW in Uganda. Furthermore, my findings cannot simply be generalized to CBW in other contexts. However, as my interpretivist epistemological stance shows, this is not the intention of this research. In addition, the goal of this thesis is not to empirically test the theoretical knowledge on the process of stigmatization. Rather, I aim to map the specific challenges of CBW in Gulu district, Northern Uganda. The theoretical framework has helped to guide my research project and structure and analyze the data. While I will be placing my case-study in the larger frame of stigma, I have approached this research with an informed, yet open mind, allowing for the possibility of finding data that is outside the realm of my analytic frame.

### 2.1.1 Research Design

The research setting of this research project is the Acholi sub-region of Northern Uganda. While the greater Northern region of Uganda has suffered from conflict, the Acholi sub-region of Uganda, which consists out of seven districts, suffered the greatest impact of the war. It was the core of LRA activities and abductions and was the epicenter of the violence between the LRA and government forces (ACCS, 2013, p.74; Ladisch, 2015, p.5). Apio argues that “every life in Acholi land has been affected by the war” (2007, p.97). Specifically, the research project was carried out in Gulu district. This district was chosen for multiple reasons. Gulu town is the biggest and most developed city in the Northern region of Uganda. This proved to be beneficial for the research project as people in town speak English relatively well, it can be easily reached from the capital Kampala, and it accommodates practicalities such as access to printshops and the availability of housing for international short-term residents. In addition, Gulu town hosts a large array of NGO’s and civil society organizations, which is beneficial in terms of connecting with relevant organizations to this research project. Furthermore, during and after the war, many people fled to Gulu town which makes it a prime location for interviewing relevant participants to my research.

From Gulu town, it is relatively easy to reach locations where I was able to conduct interviews in a rural setting. Due to time limitations, I conducted interviews in villages in two sub-counties in Gulu district, namely Patiko and Paicho. Villages in these sub-counties were reachable within 40 to 60 minutes by boda boda, a local form of motorcycle transport which proved useful as many villages cannot be reached by car. Patiko was mainly chosen on the advice of my local translator, who has connections there and informed me that Patiko was severely affected by the war. Paicho was added on advice of another researcher who argued that the abduction rate of the LRA was higher in Paicho than Patiko, thus increasing the probability of identifying CBW<sup>4</sup>.

Although English is relatively well spoken in Gulu town, most research participants in the rural setting only spoke the local language Acholi. Furthermore, the research participants of this study were severely affected by the war which often resulted in the inability to access education. Hence, several interviewees in town were not educated in the English language. Therefore, I conducted the majority of interviews with a local translator. Even though there are certainly risks involved when using a translator, I believe it has also worked beneficially in this research project. As a white, European researcher with a different culture, I am an outsider to my research

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<sup>4</sup> Author’s interview with expert. Participant number 6. 20/03/2017.



participants. Conducting interviews together with a local translator may have created more trust and has helped me to better understand local cultural practices. Furthermore, the local translator that I worked with was formerly abducted himself, which in several cases helped to build rapport with interviewees. Additionally, he was an able networker which helped tremendously with identifying research participants. Yet, it is important to note that literal translation from English to Acholi and from Acholi to English is often not possible. Therefore, the translator also had to assume the role of interpreter at times. This might have resulted in interpretative errors, hereby losing relevant information that respondents revealed. Furthermore, the translator was a male, which might have influenced the responses of my interviewees. Although the majority of local leaders I spoke with were male, the care-takers of CBW were almost solely female. Talking to a male might have made them feel less comfortable, altered their responses or made them decide not to disclose certain information. I attempted to compensate for this risk by using a female translator for the urban interviews.

In the remainder of this thesis, when quoting respondents, these quotes are almost all translations from Acholi to English. I have intentionally precisely quoted the translations provided by my translator, which accounts for some quotes being grammatically incorrect. Furthermore, when referring to field notes, this includes observations made during my stay in Northern Uganda and informal conversations that I had. I mostly collected these field notes after a day of conducting interviews in the field, noting additional information that I picked up outside of official interviews. Moreover, supplementary information was gathered during informal conversations with boda-boda drivers, with my translator, and with friends and acquaintances in Gulu.

### 2.1.2 Data Collection & Sampling

The main data-collection technique used in this research project is in-depth interviewing, with an additional two focus groups as a supplementary technique. In the preparation for this research project, I established in-depth interviewing to be the most suitable technique rather than document analysis and participant observation. Document analysis is limited as there are very little policy documents, reports, and existing research on the topic. Moreover, participant observation is quite difficult as stigmatization might be very embedded and not be concretely observable, especially considering the limited time available for this research. On the other hand, in-depth interviewing allowed me to explore the individual challenges of my participants in detail. By conducting one-

on-one in-depth interviews, I could fully focus my attention on that participant and his or her experience. The interviews that were conducted were semi-structured, hereby having a clear focus as similar topics were addressed in all interviews but allowing space for additional interview topics when necessary.

In addition, a focus group was set up with eight women. Although the women were very open and shared their feelings and struggles, focus groups as a data collection technique was not the most suitable to this research as the women all really wanted to share their experience and talked over each other. For example, while I will elaborate on this further on in this thesis, one of the women told me that her daughter is raped by family members. While telling me about this, she started to cry and was unable to continue for a few minutes. Another participant then immediately started to talk about the challenges that she and her children were facing. This made it difficult to dedicate time to acknowledge the experience of the woman whose daughter is raped and to gather more information about her specific situation. The same problem occurred with another focus group participant who is facing particular struggles due to an accident she had. Because of this, I decided to do a follow-up with these two women, enabling me to collect detailed information about their situations.

In the identification of research participants, a non-probability purposive sampling technique was employed, allowing me to identify relevant participants within the limited time frame of this study. Four categories of research participants were defined: 1) relevant organizations and experts; 2) local leaders, including cultural, religious and governmental leaders; 3) mothers and other care-takers of CBW; and 4) CBW. Firstly, several relevant organizations and experts were identified prior to fieldwork, whom I found through an analysis of existing literature on CBW in Northern Uganda and projects geared towards them. In addition, other relevant organizations came to my attention when I resided in Gulu, who had a more indirect link with CBW or were able to provide more background on local and cultural practices. Secondly, local leaders were interviewed. Gulu district is comprised of counties and sub-counties, existing out of parishes that are made up from several villages. In villages, there are several leadership structures. The main powerholder is the local government council (LC1), which exists out of nine people who are elected by the people. This council is part of the government and is present at each level of the district, ranging from LC1 (the village level) to LC5 (the district level). In addition, there are cultural

leaders and religious leaders at all levels of the district<sup>5</sup>. In this research project, the majority of interviews with local leaders were in a rural setting. These leaders were identified through the sub-county government offices that had a list of all LC1 chairmen in the villages of their sub-county. These local government leaders were often able to refer me to cultural and religious leaders. In addition, in Gulu town, I interviewed the Acholi Religious Leaders Peace Initiative (ARLPI) which gave me more insight regarding religious leadership on the district level. Besides the interviews that were conducted with governmental, cultural, and religious leaders, two teachers were interviewed to gain more insight on a school level, which I found to be an important additional dimension.

The final two categories of research participants, which are closely interlinked, are mothers/ other care-takers of CBW and CBW themselves. In the rural setting, I used snowball sampling to find mothers/ care-takers of CBW. When conducting interviews in villages, I commonly first held interviews with local leaders. They were often able to identify mothers/ other care-takers of CBW or CBW themselves, whom I could then contact to interview. Furthermore, these mothers and other care-takers could sometimes connect me with other mothers and CBW. In the urban setting, I mainly found mothers of CBW through relevant organizations that work with war-affected women such as Amani Ya Juu, 31 bits, and Comboni Samaritans<sup>6</sup>. In addition, rural research participants were sometimes able to connect me with urban research participants since many people moved from villages to Gulu town during or after the war. In this research project, CBW were only interviewed after speaking with their mother or care-taker and were chosen based on a selection of criteria that will be elaborated upon in the following section.

In total, 60 semi-structured in-depth interviews and two focus groups were conducted during the nine weeks of fieldwork in Uganda. My in-depth interviews consisted out of a) six interviews with relevant organizations and experts; b) 13 interviews with local leaders; c) two interviews with teachers; d) four interviews with community members; e) 23 interviews with mothers of CBW; f) four interviews with grandparent(s) of CBW; g) one interview with a father of CBW; and h) seven

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<sup>5</sup> Field notes. March – May 2017.

<sup>6</sup> These organizations work with formerly abducted women and provide vocational skills training. These women are then able to work there as tailors, producing hand-made clothing, jewelry, and accessories. There are many similar organizations in Gulu that work with war-affected women.

interviews with CBW<sup>7</sup>. In addition, one focus group was conducted with eight war-affected women, of which the majority bore CBW. The second focus group was a follow-up with two women of the first focus group.

The majority of rural interviews were conducted in the homes of the research participants. Because the villages are very far out of town and difficult to reach, this was the most convenient place to meet for the research participants. Furthermore, the comfort of being in their own homes may have helped to create an appropriate and comfortable environment to talk about sensitive issues. Moreover, the research participants were often working on their farmland. Asking them to come all the way to Gulu or a trading center would take away valuable time for them. As I mentioned above, many of the urban research participants were identified through organizations. Therefore, the majority of urban interviews were conducted either at the organization's working space or in the home of one of the members of the organization. These members were usually also one of the research participants and opened their homes to me and the other interviewees that were identified through the same organization.

## 2.2 RESEARCH PROCESS, ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS & LIMITATIONS

When defining CBW in the preparation of the fieldwork, children born or conceived in LRA captivity, children born from rape in IDP camps, and children born from rape by the UPDF were included. However, while doing my fieldwork, it proved to be very difficult to find women that bore children out of rape from other actors than the LRA. There is silence surrounding sexual violence because of cultural norms, making it difficult for victims to come out. Furthermore, women might be ashamed or fear stigmatization. In addition, women might fear government intimidation if they expose sexual violence by the UPDF<sup>8</sup>. Therefore, the large majority of interviews conducted were with women who forcibly conceived in LRA captivity and their children. During the course of this research project, I managed to talk to one mother who had one child as an outcome of rape by the UPDF and another child who was born from forced conception in an IDP camp. Additionally, I gained further information about this category of CBW through speaking with local leaders and organizations.

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<sup>7</sup> For an overview of these interviews, including information on the setting (rural or urban), please see the appendix.

<sup>8</sup> To note, chapter four elaborates more extensively on these issues.

In the preparation of this research project, an important category of participants that I planned on interviewing were CBW themselves as this would shed light on the challenges that these children face from their perspective. However, I had to revise and modify this aspect of my research due to ethical considerations. Organizations and experts that have experience in working with and researching CBW, as well as individuals who I met in Gulu who work in similar fields, emphasized the dangers of interviewing children as this can risk re-traumatization and an increase in stigma. The ‘do no harm’ principle was emphasized and it was pointed out that a master thesis is not very likely to get published or have a lobby/advocacy component to it. Therefore, a set of criteria was developed for interviewing CBW. Firstly, only children that were 16 years of age or older were eligible. Secondly, only children that *clearly* know they were born from war were spoken with. This meant that their mother or care-taker specifically told them the circumstance of their birth. Thirdly, the mother or care-taker of a CBW was interviewed first and consent was asked for interviewing their child. Finally, only children who do not hide that they are born from war were interviewed. Although not as many interviews with children were held as planned due to these criteria, seven in-depth interviews with CBW were nonetheless conducted.

During this research project, it was extremely important to carefully consider who to interview as there is a risk of increasing stigma. Asking local leaders to identify women and children helped to find mothers and CBW whose identity was known in the community. In general, it is difficult for women who were formerly abducted and are living in villages to hide that they were abducted and bore children in captivity. This is more the case when women move to Gulu town, where community members do not know about their history. In Gulu town, potential research participants were called in advance and asked if they wanted to be interviewed. Furthermore, research participants were mainly found via specific organizations working with formerly abducted women, hereby making sure that I did not jeopardize the safety of women who did not want to be associated with my research.

While it would have been interesting to conduct interviews or focus-groups with friends, classmates, and fellow community members of CBW, I decided against this. Although I spoke with local leaders and care-takers of CBW, it was difficult to get a complete and accurate picture of who the stigmatizers are, whether everyone in the community knows the child was born from war, and how they are treated in the community, family, and at school. In several cases, the accounts of mothers of CBW, grandparents, community members, and local leaders did not correspond. For

example, a community member informed me that a CBW in her community is insulted, does not have many friends, and was beaten by a fellow pupil in school<sup>9</sup>. Yet, no mention of this was made by the mother of this child<sup>10</sup>. Because of these constraints, I deemed the risk of increasing stigma too large and decided not to conduct interviews or focus-groups with friends, classmates, and fellow-community members. The four interviews that were conducted with community members were unintended as I received false information that these women were mothers who conceived CBW. This was only revealed while doing the interview, which is why I decided to continue the interview and slightly adapt my questions.

In general, prior to each interview, verbal consent was asked. I decided to ask for verbal rather than written consent since many research participants are unable to read or write. In addition, a formal consent form might have intimidated research participants. All research participants were assured that their identity would remain anonymous to avoid risking further stigmatization. It is for this reason that I attached an anonymized list of research participants in the appendix, which does not include the exact village, sub-county, or area in town but is rather specified as urban or rural. It is important to note that local people (especially in villages) do not regularly speak with external researchers. It might therefore have been difficult for interviewees to refuse the interview. In a few cases, it was evident that the research participant did not want to share much. I then decided to either conclude the interview early or move to a different and lighter topic.

Due to the sensitivity of this research topic, some of the research respondents reacted emotionally to the interview. In the interviews in which this happened, I paused and asked once more whether they wanted to continue the interview. Furthermore, I often tried to move to a lighter topic. In addition, when the emotional distress was severe, I provided the number of my translator who could be contacted if the emotional distress continued, and I asked my translator to follow up with these participants a few days after the interview. Moreover, I was in contact with a psychologist working in Gulu whose contact information I could give if people felt the need to talk to a professional.

In every interview, I highlighted that I was a student researcher with limited funds. However, in the majority of interviews, research participants nonetheless asked whether I would be able to help support them financially. It is important to acknowledge that being an external

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<sup>9</sup> Author's interview with community member. Participant number 58. 27/03/2017.

<sup>10</sup> Author's interview with mother. Participant number 26. 27/03/2017.

researcher may have biased some of the answers I received. Respondents may have exaggerated the challenges faced in the hope that it would draw my sympathy and hence support. In contrast however, respondents may have also decided to hold back on disclosing sensitive information as I had a time limitation affecting my ability to build rapport. In a similar sense, some respondents possibly gave politically correct answers due to trust-issues or wanting to present their community positively.

In sum, this thesis is the product of an exploratory qualitative research project on CBW in Gulu district, Northern Uganda. I established Gulu district to be the best location for this research, both because it is one of the areas most prominently affected by the conflict and for the practical benefits of conducting research in and close to the biggest and most developed city in Northern Uganda. The main data collection technique of this research is in-depth interviewing, allowing me to explore the individual challenges of my research participants in detail. This chapter showed that there are important ethical considerations related to this research that affected the research process. Now that I have clarified the methodology of this research project, the following chapters will delve into the question of how stigmatization continues to challenge the life opportunities of CBW in Gulu district, Northern Uganda.

## **CHAPTER 3:**

### **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

In this chapter, the theoretical framework of this thesis will be outlined. Although the goal of this thesis is not to empirically test a theory, the case-study is placed within the larger debate on stigmatization. In this chapter, a critical literature review on the academic debate surrounding stigmatization is provided, which results in the formulation of a definition of the process of stigmatization that will be drawn upon throughout this thesis. In addition, I shortly touch upon specific war- and sexually-related stigmas. Moreover, responses to stigmatization are discussed before outlining the main research question and sub-questions of this thesis.

#### 3.1 CONCEPTUALIZING STIGMA

Before diving into specific theories on stigmatization, it is useful to situate stigma in a larger debate on social identity. According to social psychology, we all have a need to categorize in order to impose order and simplify our complex social world. Although this categorization is a social construction, these social categories have extensive emotional meaning and impact: our social identity is based upon our membership in social categories and the value and emotional significance attached to that membership (Demmers, 2017, pp.22,41-42). Thus, individuals participate in group formation to reduce uncertainty and achieve a secure and positive sense of self, which in turn results in the establishing of in-groups and out-groups (Demmers, 2017, p.43). Stangor and Crandall place stigmas exactly in social categorization and boundary formation. According to them, “stigmas come from (among other things) the perception of group boundaries, the sense of “us” versus “them” [...]” (2003, p.63). Social identities are constructed, they are contextual and can have different meanings across different contexts (Demmers, 2017, p.23). Similarly, stigmas are locally and culturally constructed. What is considered to be stigmatizing can differ across cultures, but also within cultures. Furthermore, it can change across time (Stangor & Crandall, 2003, pp.64-65). What exactly is stigma however? What are the different dimensions constituting the process?

##### 3.1.1 Negative Evaluation

Stigmatization is a widespread phenomenon that dates back to the ancient Greeks, when stigma referred to a mark, a bodily sign, that was applied to a person in order to visibly identify that person



as blemished (Goffman, 1963, p.1). Although the concept of stigma is still used to refer to a person's unusual or bad status, over the years, the concept has evolved to refer not only to physical signs but also to the disgrace itself (Goffman, 1963, pp.1-2). How can we understand the contemporary notion of stigma? In 1963, Erving Goffman, one of the most influential scholars in the field of social stigma, defined stigma as "an attribute that is deeply discrediting" (p.3). Goffman introduced the terms 'actual social identity' and 'virtual social identity' to explain the stigmatization of an individual who possesses a deviant attribute. Stigma arises when the attributes an individual is *proved to* possess (individual's actual social identity) does not meet society's normative expectations of the attributes the individual *should* possess (virtual social identity) (Goffman, 1963, pp.2-3; Kurzban & Leary, 2001, p.187). It is thus a highly normative process. According to Goffman, there are three different types of stigma: physical deformities, blemishes of the individual character, and 'tribal' stigma that refer to traits of a certain race, ethnicity, nation, or religion that are different from the prevailing norm (1963, p.4). Since the publishing of Goffman's seminal book on stigma (1963), the concept of stigmatization has been continuously revised and refined.

Jones and colleagues (1984) build upon Goffman's initial conceptualization of stigma. Similarly to Goffman (1963), they emphasize the importance of an individual possessing a deviant, flawed, or generally undesirable trait (not necessarily physical), which they label as a 'mark'. Yet, according to Jones and colleagues (1984), the bearer of a mark does not necessarily face stigmatization. This is only the case when a mark is linked to dispositions that discredit the bearer. Thus, Jones and colleagues emphasize the importance of the attributional process through which other aspects of an individual are interpreted in terms of the mark (1984, pp.8-9). This is related to the emphasis that Jones and colleagues place on the role of stereotypes, which they argue are "at the heart of the stigmatizing process" (1984, p.155). Stereotypes are defined as "overgeneralized, largely false beliefs about members of social categories that are frequently, but not always, negative" (Jones et al., 1984, p.155). By stereotyping an individual as a member of a certain category, additional information is generated about that individual: we believe that the knowledge that we have about members of the category is equally true for this individual (Jones et al., 1984, p.156). Drawing upon the work of Goffman (1963), they argue that the process of categorizing 'marked people' has important consequences, as labeling an individual as marked serves as a justification for stereotyping these individuals. People are particularly stigmatized when "their

membership in one category pervades most or all of their social interaction” (Jones et al., 1984, p.157). Thus, people are stigmatized when the mark is the most important aspect of a person’s identity and dominates all interactions.

### 3.1.2 From Negative Evaluation to Discrimination and Exclusion

Several authors add to the earlier works on stigma and move beyond negative evaluation as the defining dimension of the stigma process. According to Kurzban and Leary, there is a problem with the major perspectives on stigma because these conceptualizations suggest that stigmatization occurs when an individual is negatively evaluated (2001, p.188). Yet, negative evaluation alone is not the defining feature of stigmatization. Rather, “stigmatization occurs when individuals are systematically excluded from particular social interactions because they possess a particular characteristic or are a member of a particular group” (Kurzban & Leary, 2001, p.187). Kurzban and Leary shift the analysis of stigma from negative evaluation and discrediting to interpersonal disassociation (2001, p.188). However, both Goffman (1963) and Jones and colleagues (1984) actually recognize that ‘normal’ individuals disassociate from stigmatized individuals. According to Goffman, because stigma might spread to the connections of the stigmatized individual, “such relations tend either to be avoided or to be terminated, where existing” (1963, p.30). Similarly, Jones and colleagues argue that people associated with stigmatized individuals might “adopt strategies of gradual disengagement” (1984, p.71). Although Kurzban and Leary (2001) shortly review the works of Goffman (1963) and Jones and colleagues (1984), they overlook the fact that both works consider the possibility of disengagement and disassociation. Nonetheless, the focus on the systematic exclusion of stigmatized individuals in social interactions by Kurzban and Leary is an important aspect in the process of stigmatization that should not be ignored.

Link and Phelan clearly emphasize the importance of adding the component of discrimination in stigma analysis (2001, p.365). According to them, stigmatization occurs when four components converge. In the first two components, similar to what Jones and colleagues (1984) coined ‘marking’ and linking the mark to dispositions that discredit individuals, Link and Phelan argue that individuals are labeled and linked to undesirable characteristic (2001, p.367). In the third component, labeled individuals are placed in categories to separate between ‘us’ and ‘them’. This leads to the belief that labeled individuals are fundamentally different from those who do not share the label (Link & Phelan, 2001, p.370). These three components together lead to the

final component – status loss and discrimination – because a rationale is created for rejecting and excluding labeled persons (Link & Phelan, 2001, p.371).

Although many conceptualizations of the stigmatization process do not include the final component of status loss and discrimination, Link and Phelan argue that “the term stigma cannot hold the meaning we commonly assign to it when this aspect is left out” (2001, p.370). According to Link and Phelan, stigma research should explore the full consequences of the stigma process. Rather than focusing simply on the attitudes towards stigmatized individuals, these attitudes should be connected to behavior, hereby gaining a greater understanding of the processes through which labeling and stereotyping lead to social inequalities in life circumstances (2001, p.372). Thus, Link and Phelan add to the definition of Goffman (1963) and Jones and colleagues (1984) by placing emphasis on discrimination and the negative effects that this has on “all manner of opportunities” (2001, p.373). Although Kurzban and Leary consider the systematic exclusion of stigmatized individuals in social interactions, Link and Phelan expand on the consequences of stigmatization by arguing that stigma processes can have a drastic and underestimated impact on life chances such as careers, social ties, housing, and health (2001, p.381). In a similar fashion, Major and O’Brien argue that negative evaluation and stereotypes can become the basis for excluding and avoiding members of a certain category. This can limit the access of stigmatized individuals to important life-domains (2005, pp.395-396). Likewise, according to Major and Eccleston, “exclusion is an essential aspect of stigmatization” (2005, p.63).

### 3.1.3 Formulating a Definition

The above review of the literature on stigma reveals several important aspects that need to be considered when researching the stigmatization of CBW in Gulu district, Northern Uganda. Several scholars that were reviewed in this chapter do not fully capture the different aspects that I argue to be important in the process of stigmatization in their definitions. While Link and Phelan acknowledge that stigma is a broad and inclusive concept that exists when labeling, negative stereotyping, exclusion, discrimination, and low-status co-occur (2001, p.367), their work is primarily concerned with conceptualizing these different dimensions rather than formulating a definition. Combining the various components of the process of stigmatization, leaning most strongly upon the work of Link and Phelan (2001) and the emphasis put on exclusion by Kurzban

and Leary (2001), I formulate the following definition of stigmatization that will be drawn upon throughout this thesis.

The process by which individuals are labeled as **deviant** and are targets of **negative stereotypes**, leading to **discrimination** and **systematic exclusion** from certain domains of life, because these individuals possess a particular characteristic or are a member of a particular group.

#### 3.1.4 Specific Forms of Stigma

While the above sections contextualized the process of stigmatization more generally, it is important to link the stigma surrounding CBW to war-time identity politics. As Weitsman, a scholar on sexual violence and identity in war, has argued: “during wartime, questions of identity become outlined in sharp relief” (2008, p.566). Identity construction is a dynamic process that responds to crisis: it is often based in endangerment (Murer, 2010, p.4). Under conditions of threat, social groups become more cohesive and ‘others’ are constructed and excluded (Weitsman, 2008, p.566). The construction of ‘others’ is important in understanding the difficulties for CBW. As outlined in the beginning of this chapter, social identities are relational and limited, “we are what we are not” (Demmers, 2017, p.23). Identity revolves around difference and is understood through contrast. Yet, as Weitsman highlights, children born of war-time sexual violence embody both the self and other (2008, p.566).

The relation between identity politics and violent conflicts has been discussed quite extensively by scholars. While it is beyond the scope of this research to delve into a discussion on these theories, examples include the debate between elite and alliance theorists who discuss the strategic use of violence, identity boundaries, and groupness. Furthermore, there are discursive scholars, who focus on collective narratives in analyzing violence<sup>11</sup>. In addition, scholars such as Fearon and Laitin have reviewed different approaches that can link identity construction to violence, ranging from broad structural forces, to supra-individual discourses, and individual actions (2000).

Although the beginning of this chapter established that identity formation is important in understanding the process of stigmatization, the link between violent conflict and stigmas has remained largely unexplored. War-related stigmas are primarily researched on a case-study basis.

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<sup>11</sup> For a discussion on these different theories, see Demmers’ book ‘*Theories of Violent Conflict*’ (2017).

Likewise, and highly relevant for this particular research, sexual-related stigmas are often analyzed context-specific. For instance, MacKenzie has analyzed the stigmatization surrounding the strategy of war-time rape in Sierra Leone (2012). According to her, war-time rape was an effective strategy because it has long-term and extensive impacts. It violates the conjugal order – or the norms associated with marriage, family, and paternity – of Sierra Leone, hereby creating disorder and eroding the fabric of communities (MacKenzie, 2012, pp.100-103). Another case-study specific example is that of Rwanda, where the conflict has resulted in many women bearing ‘illegitimate’ children<sup>12</sup>. This carries considerable social stigma; resulting in the classification of women as “loose” and freeing her family from their responsibilities of providing and protecting her (Jefremovas, 1991, p.383). While case-study specific research may be necessary as war- and sexually-related stigma are often dependent on cultural and social notions<sup>13</sup>, this means that war- and sexually-related stigmas have not been explored on a higher theoretical level. Although this research is limited in the sense that it will equally analyze stigma in a specific case-study, it hopes to contribute to existing knowledge on specific types of stigma which can form a basis for comparing war-related and sexually defined stigmas.

### 3.2 RESPONSES TO STIGMA

The above section was concerned with conceptualizing stigma and for providing a basis to analyze how the process of stigmatization unfolds itself. Yet, it is not only important to analyze how certain individuals are stigmatized by others, it is also highly relevant to examine how stigmatized individuals respond to negative evaluation, discrimination, and exclusion. In this thesis, the focus will be on the strategies that stigmatized individuals employ to counter or cope with stigma, rather than researching mental or physical health outcomes of stigma.

According to LeBel, strategies employed by stigmatized individuals can range from reactive to proactive (2008, p.417). Reactive strategies entail those strategies that allow the stigmatized individual to cope with stigma, but not to counter it. As outlined by Major and Eccleston (2005), drawing upon the work of Leary (2001) and Crocker and Major (1989), stigmatized individuals may attempt to enhance their relational value to other, non-stigmatized

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<sup>12</sup> Children who are born outside of culturally and socially legitimate sexual relations.

<sup>13</sup> An exception to case-study specific research may be the analysis of stigma surrounding HIV/aids, which has been widely explored by academics across different contexts.

individuals. They can do this in three primary ways. One approach, which is only available to those who can control their stigma, is to try to eliminate one's stigmatizing conditions. Another approach is to distance themselves from the stigmatized group by concealing or disguising the stigma. A final strategy is overcompensation, when stigmatized individuals work to be particularly skillful in social situations (Major & Eccleston, 2005, pp.72-74). The importance of the strategy of concealing stigma has similarly been discussed by LeBel, who argues that research has shown that "stigmatized individuals frequently try to 'pass' as normal or strive to keep their stigmatized status a secret from others" (2008, p.419). In addition to enhancing one's relational value, another reactive strategy that stigmatized individuals may employ is to withdraw from relations, domains, and situations in which they anticipate stigmatization. However, as Major and Eccleston rightly acknowledge, it is not always possible to physically withdraw from certain situations, which may result in stigmatized individuals withdrawing psychologically rather than physically. Furthermore, it is important to note that withdrawal may be negatively interpreted by others, leading to further rejection and exclusion (Major & Eccleston, 2005, pp.77-76).

In addition to reactive strategies to stigma, more intermediate strategies can be employed. One of these intermediate strategies is for stigmatized individuals to try to seek alternative relationships in which they are more highly valued by identifying and affiliating with similarly stigmatized individuals. Drawing upon Baumeister and Leary (1995), although individuals have a need to belong, they do not need to belong to all groups (Major & Eccleston, 2005, p.76). It is important to note that identifying other equally stigmatized individuals is not always easy. Furthermore, similarly to withdrawal, this strategy may also lead to further exclusion by the 'out-group' (Major & Eccleston, 2005, p.77). Another intermediate response for stigmatized individuals is to attribute exclusion to discrimination, hereby deflecting stigmatization away from their personal identity but rather attributing it to the prejudice of others (Major & Eccleston, 2005, p.78).

Besides the responses outlined by Major and Eccleston (2005), there are also more proactive strategies. As explained by LeBel, stigmatized individuals can challenge the validity of the stigma by social activism (2008, p.418). This places a larger emphasis on the agency of stigmatized individuals and does not merely view them as 'victims'. Stigmatized people are not powerless or passive, but can play active roles in the de-stigmatization process (LeBel, 2008, p.418). Thus, the responses to stigma lay on a continuum that ranges from reactive to proactive.

While every individual may respond uniquely to stigma, the responses elaborated upon above can help to make sense of the strategies employed by CBW.

### 3.3 RESEARCH QUESTION & SUB-QUESTIONS

Although several NGO's have identified some of the challenges that CBW face in Northern Uganda, no attempt has been made to analyze these challenges by situating it in a larger debate on stigma. On the basis of the literature review on both CBW and stigmatization, the following research question has been formulated that will be addressed in the remainder of this thesis

*How does stigmatization continue to challenge the life opportunities of children born of war in Gulu district, Northern Uganda in March – May 2017, ten years after the conflict ended?*

In order to answer this question, several sub-questions have been formulated that will help to structure the findings of this research, allowing for a consideration of the various dimensions of stigmatization. This will create an in-depth understanding of the process of stigmatization of CBW in Gulu district, Northern Uganda. The first two sub-questions are concerned with identifying categories of CBW as well as creating more insight into important contextual factors, analyzing both relevant literature and matching this to the situation on the ground. The latter five sub-questions are formulated to address the different dimensions of stigmatization that were identified above and systematically analyze this for the case of CBW in Gulu district, Northern Uganda.

- 1) What are the different sub-categories of children born of war in Gulu district, Northern Uganda?
- 2) What are important social, cultural, political, and economic contextual aspects in Gulu district, Northern Uganda?
- 3) How do children born of war violate existing social norms in Gulu district, Northern Uganda?
- 4) What labels are used to describe CBW and which undesirable characteristics are attributed to them?
- 5) How are children born of war unequally treated?

- 6) How have disassociation and the denial for full participation in social and economic life manifested itself for children born of war?
- 7) How do children born of war and their mothers respond to stigmatization?



## CHAPTER 4:

### POSITIONING CHILDREN BORN OF WAR IN ITS CONTEXT

Before unravelling the process of stigmatization of CBW, it is important to first create an overview of the context. This chapter will begin by elaborating on the different categories of CBW, analyzing how the categories that were identified during fieldwork match the categorization that was identified in former research. The following section describes the social field, hereby addressing the social, cultural, political, and economic contextual factors in Gulu district, Northern Uganda that are important to acknowledge in this research. This is imperative to be able to analyze the first aspect of the process of stigmatization: the deviance of CBW. The third section in this chapter thus examines how children born of war violate existing norms in Gulu district.

#### 4.1 CATEGORIZING CHILDREN BORN OF WAR IN NORTHERN UGANDA

As was outlined in the introduction, existing knowledge on CBW in Northern Uganda has distinguished between three different categories: 1) children born as a result of the abduction and sexual abuse of their mothers by the LRA; 2) children born as a result of the rape of women in IDP camps; and 3) children born in army/UPDF detachments (Apio, 2007, p.97). How does this match the situation on the ground? Interviews with local organizations, local leaders, and mothers of CBW resulted in several interesting findings. As was already found in reports by WKG and the JRP, no real distinction is made between children born in LRA captivity and children conceived in LRA captivity but born after demobilization: all of these children are viewed as children from the LRA. Nonetheless, it is slightly more complicated than this and it is important to acknowledge some nuances. In one case, a mother of a CBW told her child, who was born in LRA captivity, that she was born in a rehabilitation center<sup>14</sup> rather than in the bush<sup>15</sup>. While the mother did not explicitly say so, it implies that being born in a rehabilitation center is relatively better than being born in the bush. Furthermore, a few respondents argued that the behavior of CBC depends on how old they were when they escaped from LRA captivity and what they experienced in the bush<sup>16</sup>. Similarly, a grandmother argued that her grandson was very young when his mother escaped with him from the

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<sup>14</sup> These rehabilitation centers such as GUSCO and WorldVision were set up to rehabilitate LRA returnees, including CBC.

<sup>15</sup> Author's interview with mother. Participant number 40. 03/05/2017.

<sup>16</sup> Author's interview with community member. Participant number 55. 16/03/2017; Author's interview with teacher. Participant number 59. 07/04/2017.

LRA, therefore he is no different than other children<sup>17</sup>. This seems to imply that there certainly is a difference between children born in the bush and children conceived in the bush but born after demobilization. Yet, in the majority of interviews, children were categorized as CBC regardless of where they were born. It seems that the object of stigmatization is not so much about where they were born, but how and where they were conceived.

Notably, the category of CBC is sometimes even extended to children who were not born in the bush at all, connecting their identity to that of their mother. Some of the mothers of CBC that were interviewed had multiple children, of which some were born in the bush and others were born in the community after the women escaped from LRA captivity. However, while some of the children were born in the community, fathered by a community man and hence are not CBC, they can be similarly insulted and categorized. This is done not only by relatives or community members, but in one case a mother also categorized her child as CBC even though she was not born in the bush. During the interview, it was revealed that one of the children she referred to as “from the bush” was actually conceived and born in the community and was fathered by the brother of her bush-husband. Nonetheless, the mother also categorized this child as “from the bush”, hereby connecting the identity of her bush-husband to his brother and categorizing her children identically<sup>18</sup>. These different examples indicate that the sub-categorization of CBC is complicated and is variable across different settings. It is therefore important to acknowledge possible variations and exceptions. Nonetheless, because it is very difficult to make a distinction in the majority of cases, this thesis refers to both children born in the bush and children conceived in the bush but born after demobilization as CBC.

The (sub)categorization of children born from sexual violence from other actors than the LRA is equally difficult. Although there are undoubtedly multiple perpetrators that committed sexual violence during the war, it is extremely challenging to clearly categorize these children. CBC are relatively easy to identify because it is very difficult for returnees to hide that they were once in the LRA, especially if they return to their home villages. When these women bring children with them, it is evident that they were born in the bush. In the occasional cases that the identity of these women and children is hidden, it is often because they no longer live in their home village but rather moved to Gulu town. On the contrary, identifying women who suffered sexual violence

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<sup>17</sup> Author’s interview with grandparent(s). Participant number 43. 29/03/2017.

<sup>18</sup> Author’s interview with mother. Participant number 22. 03/04/2017.

from other actors is very difficult, due to the following issues. There are cultural norms governing sex, which will be elaborated on in the following section, causing silence around sexual violence and making it difficult for women to come out<sup>19</sup>. Furthermore, women might be ashamed of what happened and might not tell anybody, sometimes not even telling their husbands that they were raped<sup>20</sup>. In addition, women and girls were not only raped but sometimes also accepted sexual advances because of poverty<sup>21</sup>. Moreover, victims of rape committed by UPDF soldiers are difficult to identify. The Ugandan government has been in power for over 30 years and its role in the Northern Ugandan war is disputed. The International Criminal Court has only investigated the crimes committed by the LRA and the Ugandan government has blamed the LRA for the brunt of human rights violations. Yet, the UPDF is believed to have committed similar crimes. However, there is a culture of silence surrounding these violations because of fear for government intimidation<sup>22</sup>. In addition, while it is widely recognized that sexual violence was prevalent in IDP camps, local leaders are sometimes unaware of its occurrence. Even if they might be aware, they may deny it<sup>23</sup>. These issues with identification make it extremely difficult to distinguish between sub-categories of CBW and map the different challenges that these children face. While this highlights a limitation in the sense that this research is unable to adequately elaborate on and address all different types of CBW and the specific challenges that they face, the following sections will nonetheless analyze how the findings of the field-research can be connected to different categories of CBW.

When distinguishing between different types of CBW, it is important to consider the gender dimension. Challenges for male CBW and female CBW are not always similar, but can be gender-specific. This is very much related to cultural norms on gender and the position of men and women in society, which will be elaborated upon in the following section. Whereas male CBW may face more economic challenges, female CBW may have an increased risk to sexual violence. The stigmatization of CBW is thus not only analyzed according to the category of CBW, but is also evaluated gender-specifically.

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<sup>19</sup> Author's interview with JRP. 13/03/2017.

<sup>20</sup> Author's interview with Ker Kwaro Acholi. 13/04/2017. To note, Ker Kwaro Acholi is the traditional cultural institution in Acholiland.

<sup>21</sup> Author's interview with local leader. Participant number 10. 22/03/2017.

<sup>22</sup> Author's interview with anonymous organization.

<sup>23</sup> Author's interview with local leader. Participant number 11. 22/03/2017; Author's interview with local leader. Participant number 12. 22/03/2017; Author's interview with local leader. Participant number 13. 27/03/2017; Author's interview with local leader. Participant number 14. 27/03/2017.

## 4.2 THE SOCIAL FIELD

Northern Uganda is populated largely by the Acholi, a Luo people that migrated from Southern Sudan to Northern Uganda from the beginning of the 13<sup>th</sup> century (Amone & Muura, 2014, p.240; Harlacher, 2009, p.16). In Acholiland, identity is constructed along patrilineal lineages: children belong to the clan of their father. When children grow up and get married, men usually settle with their paternal family while women are expected to leave the family and settle with the clan of their husband (Harlacher, 2009, p.22). A household is the smallest social unit in Acholiland, consisting out of a husband, wife (or wives), and their children. Often, a few households live together in a compound among patrilineal kin. A number of families together form a patrilineal clan and one village often consists out of one to three clans. Chiefdoms are then formed from one or more villages<sup>24</sup> (Harlacher, 2009, pp.22-24). Yet, while Acholiland was governed by independent chiefdoms in pre-colonial times, the British destroyed the old chiefdoms and created one unified ‘Acholi district’ (Amone & Muura, 2014, p.251).

During British colonialism, the North-South division in Uganda was deepened. The British favored the South for its political structures and concentrated their investments in the South while the North was mainly seen as a “reservoir of cheap labor” (Harlacher, 2009, p. 20). In the North, administrative reforms were carried out, eventually creating one political-administrative unit in Gulu that governed the former independent chiefdoms and took away the powers of the Acholi chiefs (Amone & Muura, 2014, p.251). Even though Acholiland was administered through the policy of ‘indirect rule’, the traditional political organization of the Acholi was completely transformed (Harlacher, 2009, p.25). Nonetheless, despite the changes that were made under British rule, traditional leadership and clan structures still play an important role in contemporary Acholi society.

In Acholi society, a male is always the head of the household and is responsible for the well-being of that household. The day-to-day management of the domestic home is left to women (Baines & Rosenoff-Gauvin, 2014, p.6; Hannay & Scalise, 2015, p.258). While the household head manages and protects the land of the family, this is overseen by clan elders who make sure that family heads manage the land well. Land is extremely important in Acholi society as Northern Uganda is a predominantly agrarian society, dominating the economy and accounting for an

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<sup>24</sup> Field notes. March – May 2017.

estimated 80 per cent of employment. Not only are people dependent upon agriculture as a way of living, it is also seen as an important aspect of their culture.

The majority of land is governed by customary tenure, meaning that it is governed by the customs, rules, and regulations of the community; one can only access land based on the membership to a community, clan or family (ARLPI, 2010, p.7; Hannay & Scalise, 2015, pp.254-255). The land rights of men and women are highly unequal: while men have rights to land by birth, women's rights to land are dependent upon their relationships to a male clan member (Hannay & Scalise, 2015, p.251). The cultural way for women to access land is marriage, as women move to the homestead of their husband once they get married. For unmarried women, this is highly problematic. Although an unmarried woman may use her family's land to cultivate subsistence food products, being unmarried is seen as a period of transition: it is expected that she will get married eventually. Although it is not strictly practiced anymore, traditionally a bride-price is paid for wives. Thus, an unmarried woman is seen as a source of income for her family, yet not really part of it as she will leave once she gets married. Remaining unmarried can result in disputes with male relatives, who would otherwise get rights to the land the unmarried woman is now using (Hannay & Scalise, 2015, p.259; Human Rights Focus, 2007, pp.25-26). For unmarried women with children, this issue is even more severe as the likelihood of marriage is reduced which can result in the family viewing her as a burden. Because identity is constructed along patrilineal lines, the children of the woman are not considered as part of the maternal clan. If the child is a boy, this is problematic because he will have no rights to land (Hannay & Scalise, 2014, p.259).

The war in Northern Uganda aggravated issues with land. The large majority of people in Northern Uganda were forced to move to IDP camps where food was no longer produced on clan land but distributed by international organizations (Baines & Rosenoff-Gauvin, 2014, p.8). This eroded the traditional importance of agriculture, reduced knowledge of and adherence to customary land governance, and resulted in unclear and disputed land boundaries when people returned to their home villages after the war. The fact that there is generally too little land to live and farm on due to a significant population increase over the years is worsening the issue (ARPLI, 2010, pp.12-13). For women, the land rights that would have been provided to them in the customary tenure system were largely eroded. Not only did many people die or disappear during the war, hence losing male relatives that could have provided land, the traditional ways of marriage and entering a husband's clan were severed. Besides the fact that men and women now started living together

without being married, many women faced sexual violence and were forced to have children during the war without marriage or partnership with the father (Baines and Rosenoff-Gauvin, 2014, p.8; Hannay & Scalise 2015, p.254). This has resulted in a large number of ‘illegitimate’ children, whose access to land has been challenged even further by impoverishment from the years of war and displacement. The process of legitimizing children in patrilineal lineages – or recognizing children as officially belonging to the paternal clan – has become more difficult, as people do not have enough resources. According to Reynolds Whyte and colleagues, there has been a turn to “patrilineal fundamentalism” which has resulted in the exclusion of people who are not recognized as part of the clan (2012, pp.294-295; similarly explored by ARLPI, 2010, p.13; Baines & Rosenoff-Gauvin, 2014, p.9; Human Rights Focus, 2007, p.26).

In addition to the issues of land that arose as a result of the war, several cultural practices and beliefs were no longer adhered to, causing friction in society. According to Acholi cultural norms on sex and marriage, children are only to be conceived out of marriage between husband and wife<sup>25</sup>. However, during the war many children were born out of wedlock. Many people could no longer afford the bride-prices and men and women started living together and conceiving children without being married. In addition, children were conceived in short-term relationships in IDP camps or were born out of forced sexual relations (Baines and Rosenoff-Gauvin, 2014, p.8; Hannay & Scalise 2015, p.254). For women that were abducted by the LRA and bore children in captivity, yet another norm is violated: it is culturally forbidden to have sex in the bush or give birth in the wilderness<sup>26</sup>. While the conception of these children already breaks the cultural norms on sex and marriage, it more importantly often results in the violation of one of the fundamentals of Acholi society: patrilineal identity construction. ‘Having’ a father is viewed as essential in Acholi culture, but many women who were forced to conceive or engaged in short-term relations have no connection with the father of the child, resulting in problems of belonging and clan membership for the child.

While aspects of the social and moral order of Acholi society were violated during the war, it is equally important to acknowledge the importance of the spiritual order of the Acholi. Traditionally, the Acholi people do not believe in one, omnipresent God with absolute powers.

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<sup>25</sup> Author’s interview with JRP. 13/03/2017; Author’s interview with local leader. Participant number 19. 13/04/2017; Author’s interview with mother. Participant number 24. 24/03/2017.

<sup>26</sup> Author’s interview with ARLPI. 20/03/2017; Author’s interview with Ker Kwaro Acholi. 13/04/2017; Author’s interview with local leader. Participant number 19. 13/04/2017.

Rather, they believe in a number of spiritual forces that can explain hardships in life and that provide ways to cope with these hardships. Harlacher, drawing upon the works of Okot p'Bitek – a Northern Ugandan scholar who wrote multiple books on the Acholi in the 1960's, 70's, and 80's – explains that in pre-colonial times there were three types of spiritual forces: ancestors, clan/chieftom *joggie*, and free *joggie*<sup>27</sup> (2009, p.34). Ancestors are highly respected clan members that died and are believed to guide and protect the social and moral order of the community. An important notion is that of taboo, as doing something taboo is not only violating cultural and social rules, it also offends the ancestors who safeguard these rules. When a taboo is committed, ancestors can send illnesses and misfortunes to punish people (Harlacher, 2009, p.35). In addition to the ancestors, there are clan and chieftom *joggie* whose spirits are tied to a particular space. These *joggie*, similar to ancestors, are believed to protect and assist the people in the community and play a significant role in sustaining the moral order in society (Harlacher, 2009, p.36).

Different to these aforementioned spiritual forces are free *joggie*, which are prone to possess people, can cause serious harm, and are important in explaining diseases (Harlacher, 2009, p.37). While the belief in clan and chieftom *joggie* has tremendously reduced, and to a lesser extent so has reverence to ancestors, there has been an enormous proliferation of the belief and influence of free *joggie* during the conflict in Northern Uganda. This is often perceived as being fueled by new threats and increasing tensions (Harlacher, 2009, pp.38-39). In addition to these traditional spiritual beliefs, the introduction of Christianity since colonialism has significantly contributed in shaping the social order of contemporary Acholi society. While traditional spiritual beliefs and Christianity may co-exist in Acholi society, missionaries have largely emphasized the exclusionary nature of their teachings, declaring other spirits as evil and disregarding traditional rituals and healings (Harlacher, 2009, pp.40-41). Although it is beyond the scope of this research to delve into the spiritual order of the Acholi in-depth, it is important to acknowledge that it can help to create a better understanding of the process of stigmatization of CBW.

#### 4.3 VIOLATING SOCIAL NORMS

The social and cultural norms and beliefs of the Acholi are essential in understanding the stigmatization of CBW. Deviance was identified as an important dimension in the process of

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<sup>27</sup> *Jok* or *joggie* (plural) are terms referring to spirit forces, spirit powers, or God (Harlacher, 2009, p.36).

stigmatization in the theoretical framework. Goffman introduced the terms ‘actual social identity’ and ‘virtual social identity’ to explain the stigmatization of an individual who possesses a deviant attribute. Stigma arises when the attributes an individual is proved to possess (individual’s actual social identity) does not meet society’s normative expectations of the attributes the individual should possess (virtual social identity) (Goffman, 1963, pp.2-3; Kurzban & Leary, 2001, p.187). In simple terms, deviance can be defined as actions or behaviors that violate social norms.

The violation of social and cultural norms is clearly present in the case of CBW in Gulu district, Northern Uganda. As exemplified above, a fundamental aspect in Acholi culture is the importance of patrilineal identity which has extensive socio-economic implications. Children belong to their patrilineal clan, which is particularly important for boys whose access to land comes from their paternal lineage. In addition, the paternal clan of a boy is responsible for paying the bride-price. Furthermore, when there are issues or conflicts between people of different clans, the paternal clans engage in a process of reconciliation to solve these problems<sup>28</sup>. Yet, this is problematic for CBW because they often have no connection with their paternal clan.

For CBC in particular, women often escaped alone with their children and not with their bush-husbands. Yet, in many cases, the fathers of these children never informed the mother of his home village, making it nearly impossible to find the child’s paternal clan. This is because many LRA commanders used pseudonyms. Furthermore, those who were abducted often adopted a false name to protect their family from retaliation by the LRA (JRP, 2016). Even if the paternal clan of the child is known, they are not always well-received in that clan. The father might no longer be alive, meaning that other relatives have to take care of the child, who represents an extra economic burden in times when there are limited resources. Moreover, women do not always want to find the paternal clan of their children, due to the trauma they endured in their bush-experience. This difficulty is not only present for formerly abducted women, but is also a reality for women who conceived children out of forced sexual relations with other actors. These women might not know who the father of their child is, the father might not live in Northern Uganda and be of Acholi heritage, or the mother and child are rejected by or do not want a connection with the father and/or his clan<sup>29</sup>.

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<sup>28</sup> Field notes. March – May 2017.

<sup>29</sup> Field notes. March – May 2017.



The majority of CBW were either born out of wedlock or born from forced marriages, which violates cultural norms on marriage and sex. This results not only in economic challenges as the mothers have to take care of the children single-handedly, but is also a source of labeling these mothers and children as deviant. Because there is little or no connection with the paternal clan, these children and their mothers often have no other place to stay then to reside in the homestead of the maternal clan. Yet, this is not where the children officially belong: in Acholi culture women should settle with their children at the husband's homestead. An unmarried mother remaining at the maternal homestead is frowned upon and can result in her children not being fully accepted in the community. Even though many respondents argued that these children have to belong to the maternal clan now<sup>30</sup>, this can often cause problems in families as other relatives do not want to give these children access to land for example. This shows that the deviance of CBW is partly embedded in the larger taboo on unmarried women and their children, who are viewed as a burden. Furthermore, when these women get married to another man, the children are often not accepted by the new man and his family as they do not belong to their clan. Yet, many women feel as if they need a man for economic security and social acceptance<sup>31</sup>. CBW thus often face issues of belonging, which puts them in a precarious situation and can result in further challenges such as negative evaluation in the community, no access to land, identity issues, no sense of belonging, and no say in community matters. These issues will be further explored in the following chapter.

Besides issues of patrilineal identity and belonging, CBW violate several other cultural norms and spiritual beliefs. Specifically for CBC, there is a violation of Acholi cultural norms on sex, which condemns sex in the bush or under trees. Cultural institutions I interviewed explained that there is a widespread belief that evil spirits watch you and can enter you if you have sex in the wild, which can result in the possession of the evil spirit known as '*cen*'<sup>32</sup>. *Cen* is a free *jok* and is the vengeance ghost, or the spirit of the dead that haunts the living to revenge their violent death.

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<sup>30</sup> Author's interview with local leader. Participant number 11. 22/03/2017; Author's interview with local leader. Participant number 12. 22/03/2017; Author's interview with local leader. Participant number 16. 31/03/2017; Author's interview with mother. Participant number 24. 24/03/2017; Author's interview with mother. Participant number 28. 30/03/2017; Author's interview with mother. Participant number 31. 31/03/2017; Author's interview with mother. Participant number 33. 05/04/2017; Author's interview with mother. Participant number 36. 05/04/2017; Author's interview with grandparent(s). Participant number 43. 29/03/2017; Author's interview with grandparent(s). Participant number 46. 12/04/2017.

<sup>31</sup> Field notes. March – May 2017; Author's interview with mother. Participant number 23. 23/03/2017; Author's interview with CBW. Participant number 49. 05/05/2017.

<sup>32</sup> Author's interview with ARLPI. 20/03/2017; Author's interview with Ker Kwaro Acholi. 13/04/2017; Author's interview with local leader. Participant number 19. 13/04/2017.

While this implies that people who have killed can be possessed by *cen*, it is important to realize that this can affect the entire family or clan. Moreover, *cen* can also be contracted by finding someone who has been violently killed or by passing through an area where killings have happened. When someone is possessed by *cen*, traditional cleansing rituals are often performed to ward off the consequences of possession (Harlacher, 2009, p.171). While some interviewees argued that *cen* mainly possesses former abductees (both women and men) and is not common to possess CBW<sup>33</sup>, other interviewees explained that children can also be haunted by the evil spirit<sup>34</sup>. There are also people who do not believe in *cen*. As one mother explained, when her daughter who was born in the bush started misbehaving, the community argued that her daughter might have “the evil spirit or the bad behavior from the bush like her mother” and recommended that she should take her daughter to get cleansed. Yet, this mother is “born again” (a denomination of Christianity) so she does not believe in spiritual forces<sup>35</sup>. This shows the differences in spiritual beliefs and the influence that this has in setting the deviance of CBW.

With regards to children born in IDP camps, they are sometimes viewed as violating the traditional, hard-working agricultural set-up of Acholi society. As has been mentioned before, people in IDP camps were highly dependent upon NGO donations for basic needs and there was a significant decrease in the dependency on customary land to live and farm on. This has sometimes been seen in negative light, which is exemplified in an interview with a local leader who argued that children born in IDP camps are lazy because they witnessed free things being given to their parents<sup>36</sup>. It is important to note that this can apply to *all* children who were born in IDP camps, and not specifically to those born out of sexual violence. CBW who receive scholarships are sometimes viewed similarly: everything is given to them for free<sup>37</sup>. Yet, this might be more out of envy as there are generally high levels of poverty and paying school fees is a difficulty for the majority of families. It can therefore not simply be considered as violating social norms or be attributed to stigma. Unfortunately, the scope of this research did not allow for an extensive analysis of community dynamics, resulting in the inability to conclude whether views on being lazy and

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<sup>33</sup> Author’s interview with local leader. Participant number 10. 22/03/2017; Author’s interview with grandparent(s). Participant number 44. 29/03/2017.

<sup>34</sup> Author’s interview with Ker Kwaro Acholi. 13/04/2017; Author’s interview with local leader. Participant number 8. 18/03/2017; Author’s interview with mother. Participant number 20. 18/03/2017.

<sup>35</sup> Author’s interview with mother. Participant number 23. 23/03/2017.

<sup>36</sup> Author’s interview with local leader. Participant number 18. 12/04/2017.

<sup>37</sup> Author’s interview with CBW. Participant number 49. 05/05/2017; Author’s interview with CBW. Participant number 52. 07/05/2017.

privileged or spoiled are solely geared towards CBW or are present within the community in general.

According to Stangor and Crandall, one of the most important functions of stigma is to avoid a threat. This threat can be of many different natures. It can be a ‘moral’ threat, when stigmatized individuals undermine shared common values of society, but it can also be a more tangible threat related to for example scarcity of resources (2003, pp.78-79). As can be concluded from the above, stigma surrounding CBW is rooted not only in the violation of cultural and social beliefs, it also has an economic dimension and is related to the scarcity of resources. Although this can help to unravel the stigmatization of CBW, it is imperative to acknowledge that the views on CBW are by no extent universal. In contrast, they are evaluated diversely by different members of Acholi society. Furthermore, as will be shown in the following chapter, stigmatization is by no means absolute. It is thus important to acknowledge that a variety of narratives are in place. Although this research does not have data on the relative importance of these narratives or *why* certain members have distinct narratives or behaviors, the following chapter will highlight interesting exceptions, deviations, or contrasting narratives and attempt to explain these.

## **CHAPTER 5:**

# **UNRAVELLING THE PROCESS OF STIGMATIZATION OF CHILDEN BORN OF WAR**

“Life would be better if [I] was still in the bush”<sup>38</sup>.

These are the words of one of my interview respondents, a mother with children from the bush. This mother narrated to me how she and her children are severely insulted, unfairly treated, and sometimes even excluded from participating in community activities. While my findings are inconclusive on whether or not stigma surrounding CBW and their mothers has reduced over the years, my findings suggest that stigmatization is still a prevalent experience for CBW. The following sections will systematically address and analyze the different dimensions of stigma that CBW face in Gulu district by drawing upon the theoretical framework outlined in chapter three.

### **5.1 THESE CHILDREN, THEY ARE...**

An essential dimension in the process of stigmatization is the negative evaluation of individuals. While I have examined the first dimension of negative evaluation; the deviance of CBW, another important aspect is the negative stereotyping of stigmatized individuals. Jones and colleagues define stereotypes as “overgeneralized, largely false beliefs about members of social categories that are frequently, but not always, negative” (1984, p.155). According to Link and Phelan, negative stereotypes are labels that link a person to a set of undesirable characteristics (2001, p.369). Drawing upon both Jones and colleagues (1984) and Link and Phelan (2001), I understand negative stereotypes to be overgeneralized labels that link a person to a set of undesirable characteristics. How does this play out for CBW in Gulu district? In this section, I will research what labels are used to describe CBW and which undesirable characteristics are attributed to them.

At the heart of negative evaluation is that many CBW do not ‘have’ a father, they violate cultural norms on patrilineal identity construction and belonging. This is a major source of negative stereotyping of CBW in Gulu district. In many cases, mothers of CBW and CBW are insulted for not knowing the father and are told to find the paternal home. When asking how these children are

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<sup>38</sup> Author’s interview with mother. Participant number 36. 05/04/2017.

described, one mother narrated: “They always say that these children, they don’t have their father. Their father died in the bush, so they are like bastard children”<sup>39</sup>. In some cases, relatives or community members not only insult CBW for not having a father, but also argue that their behavior is different because of it. As one CBW explained, community members always say that: “They are misleading other children” because “there is no one who is bringing them up well and who is teaching them how to stay in the community”<sup>40</sup>. Likewise, one of the local leaders that was interviewed argued that those without fathers are not brought up well. He argued that when you try to correct their misbehavior, these children say that “you give them a headache”<sup>41</sup>.

Negative labeling surrounding children that have no connection with the paternal clan is very closely connected to the fact that the majority of CBW live with the family of the mother. One CBW, currently living with his grandfather (of the maternal clan) explained how his grandfather emphasizes that his father is dead and that he does not want the children to stay close to him<sup>42</sup>. Furthermore, similar negative evaluation arises when the mothers of CBW find a new partner/husband. In several interviews, mothers of CBW explained that the new husband and his clan do not accept children from a different clan. This is exemplified by the account of a mother who explained that her partner’s family says that she should take away the children that do not belong there<sup>43</sup>.

While cultural norms on patrilineality play a large role, it is also important to acknowledge economic reasons. As one CBW explained, the new husband of his mother used to treat him like his own son. However, he has his own children that he needs to take care of, so he cannot afford to financially support the boy<sup>44</sup>. Furthermore, one mother argued that her relatives do not like her and her children, because they see her as someone who needs help; she is viewed as a burden<sup>45</sup>. Likewise, a mother of two children that were born from sexual violence in an IDP camp explained that the relationship with her family is not very good. She thinks that this is the case because she brought children without fathers, hereby bringing problems<sup>46</sup>.

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<sup>39</sup> Author’s interview with mother. Participant number 41. 05/05/2017.

<sup>40</sup> Author’s interview with CBW. Participant number 50. 05/05/2017.

<sup>41</sup> Author’s interview with local leader. Participant number 18. 12/04/2017.

<sup>42</sup> Author’s interview with CBW. Participant number 50. 05/05/2017.

<sup>43</sup> Author’s interview with mother. Participant number 34. 05/04/2017.

<sup>44</sup> Author’s interview with CBW. Participant number 54. 07/05/2017.

<sup>45</sup> Focus group. 07/04/2017.

<sup>46</sup> Author’s interview with mother. Participant number 21. 23/03/2017.

Although no connection with the paternal clan is a problem that disproportionately affects CBW, there are also other children that face this issue. It is important to acknowledge that these children can face similar insults and name-calling as CBW. This demonstrates that the stigmatization of CBW is embedded in the wider socio-cultural disapproval of unmarried women with children. As was described in the previous chapter, unmarried women, especially when having children, are viewed as a burden. Moreover, when they stay on the land of their parents, this can cause disputes with male relatives. One of the focus group participants does not have contact with the father(s) of her children. Even though her children are not CBW, she argued that her family does not like any of her children. They do like the children of her sisters however, because her sisters are married and their children have fathers. Similarly, another focus group participant is staying at her maternal home with her two children. Although they are not CBW, she is told by community members to look for the paternal home of the children, because this is not their home<sup>47</sup>.

It would seem as if connecting with the paternal clan reduces the negative evaluation of CBW. Yet, even when CBW find their paternal family, they are not always accepted by that family. One of the focus group participants described how she tried to connect with the paternal family of her child, whose father had died in the bush. However, when she went there, the wife of his brother told her to never come back or she would kill her<sup>48</sup>. Another story that exemplifies rejection by the paternal clan is that of a 25-year old CBW who has been living with his paternal family, but without his father, ever since he came back from the bush. His family has been continuously insulting him because he came back from the bush, saying that maybe he is possessed by *cen* and that he has a bushmind. Nonetheless, he has decided to remain at the paternal clan because he is a boy and is supposed to stay where his father comes from<sup>49</sup>. Moreover, there is also possible negative evaluation and rejection of CBW by their mothers. Even though I did not encounter this frequently in my interviews, it is important to acknowledge that one of the focus group participants revealed that she used to view her children as “spoiling her future” and her “chance to education” because she was forced to have children at a young age<sup>50</sup>.

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<sup>47</sup> Focus group. 07/04/2017.

<sup>48</sup> Focus group. 07/04/2017.

<sup>49</sup> Author's interview with CBW. Participant number 48. 09/04/2017.

<sup>50</sup> Focus group. 07/04/2017.

While many labels evolve around CBW not having a paternal clan, it is evident that there are also insults specific to their CBW identity. Several CBW recounted that community members keep referring back to their past. They are called “child from a rebel”<sup>51</sup>, “children of killers”<sup>52</sup>, “these are Kony”<sup>53</sup>, “choppers”<sup>54</sup>, or people say that “characters from the bush have entered them”<sup>55</sup>. As a focus group participant narrated, when she asks her new partner to help support her two children that were born in the bush, her partner always argues that she should “ask for help from Kony”<sup>56</sup>. CBW were born from a violation of Acholi cultural norms on sex. As has been mentioned in the previous chapter, this can result in people believing that you are possessed by the evil spirit. However, it is very difficult to pinpoint what exactly *cen* is. One mother explained that one of her children is possessed by *cen*. When asking what exactly this means, she explained that her child “does abnormal things”; the girl is pushed down by *cen* and she becomes very strong and starts shouting. This mother explained how the community insults her children who were born in the bush by saying that they have mental issues<sup>57</sup>. Another mother narrated how her family describes her three children who were born in the bush: “They say that children who have come back from the bush, they don’t have minds”<sup>58</sup>. In a similar way, a mother narrated that the children in the community who know that her daughter was born in the bush tell others that her daughter has *cen*. They tell people to watch out, or the girl might fight them<sup>59</sup>.

On a related note, many mothers explained how their children are always blamed when there are issues between children. Community members argue that because these children have the evil from the bush, they get into fights<sup>60</sup>. When these children misbehave, people blame it on the evil spirit or bad behavior from the bush that the child inherited from the parents<sup>61</sup>. One CBC explained how teachers always first suspect the children who came back from the bush if something happens in school<sup>62</sup>. Additionally, several respondents explained how CBW are not only insulted

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<sup>51</sup> Author’s interview with grandparent(s). Participant number 44. 29/03/2017.

<sup>52</sup> Author’s interview with local leader. Participant number 16. 31/03/2017.

<sup>53</sup> Author’s interview with teacher. Participant number 60. 07/04/2017.

<sup>54</sup> Author’s interview with mother. Participant number 36. 05/04/2017.

<sup>55</sup> Author’s interview with mother. Participant number 29. 30/03/2017.

<sup>56</sup> Focus group. 07/04/2017.

<sup>57</sup> Author’s interview with mother. Participant number 20. 18/03/2017.

<sup>58</sup> Author’s interview with mother. Participant number 28. 30/03/2017.

<sup>59</sup> Author’s interview with mother. Participant number 38. 03/05/2017.

<sup>60</sup> Author’s interview with mother. Participant number 28. 30/03/2017.

<sup>61</sup> Author’s interview with mother. Participant number 23. 23/03/2017.

<sup>62</sup> Author’s interview with CBW. Participant number 53. 07/05/2017.

at school by other pupils as being stupid, but are also negatively evaluated by teachers. While it is difficult to say whether or not this is actually the case, one teacher I interviewed argued that the performance of CBW in school is very poor<sup>63</sup>. Similarly, as one CBC narrated, her teacher argues that: “Some people are very stubborn. Especially these ones who are born from the bush, they don’t understand”<sup>64</sup>.

When conducting interviews, it became apparent that several CBW are sponsored by organizations or individuals to go to school. Although this offers an important opportunity for them, it can also result in negative stereotyping by fellow pupils, community members, or teachers as school sponsorship programs can reveal the identity of CBW due to follow-ups at schools or when school fees are paid for. One CBW I talked to whose school fees are sponsored argued that people “backbite him” because he is studying. According to this CBW, community members say that: “this one, this person’s son is very lucky, this war has helped some other people”<sup>65</sup>. They thus feel that it is unfair that he received a scholarship while others did not, arguing that the war has helped him. Likewise, another CBW explained that people at school know that she was born in the bush because of the sponsorship. This has resulted in insults towards her, as fellow students and teachers say that “you are bigheaded” and that “everything is given to you for free”<sup>66</sup>. Similar insults are given towards children who were born in IDP camps, who are sometimes viewed as lazy because they were given free things. As a local leader revealed, they are called names such as “born in town” and “Gulu bank”<sup>67</sup>. These names are meant negatively; people who live in Gulu town are sometimes viewed as lazy and are considered to spend a lot of money<sup>68</sup>.

Another interesting evaluation that I heard during several interviews is that CBW and “bastard” children watch the treatment of others towards them. Although one of the teachers did not specifically say that she disliked CBW, her behavior and way of talking about CBW suggested otherwise. According to her, CBW at school are very careful in observing how you act towards

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<sup>63</sup> Author’s interview with teacher. Participant number 60. 07/04/2017.

<sup>64</sup> Author’s interview with CBW. Participant number 52. 07/05/2017.

<sup>65</sup> Author’s interview with CBW. Participant number 54. 07/05/2017.

<sup>66</sup> Author’s interview with CBW. Participant number 52. 07/05/2017.

<sup>67</sup> Author’s interview with local leader. Participant number 18. 12/04/2017.

<sup>68</sup> This is illustrated by the following story. As I mentioned before, the main way of earning income for people who live in villages is farming. Because the people do not have modern machinery nor do they possess a lot of cattle, farming is mostly done manually. Farming, which is also called ‘digging’, is not only important for sustaining a livelihood, but being able to ‘dig’ well also gives one respect in society. When conducting interviews, community members continuously made jokes about me not being able to ‘dig’, because I did not grow up in Uganda. Interestingly, they similarly joked with my translator and argued that he was probably also unable to ‘dig’ well, because he is living in Gulu town.



them. She argues that this is because of their parents, who tell their children that people treat them unfairly because they were in the bush<sup>69</sup>. Similarly, one of the local leaders that was interviewed argued that bastard children “always cry that people do not like them” because they have no parents or single parents. According to him however, they are treated and evaluated the same as other community members<sup>70</sup>.

Notably, almost all local leaders that I interviewed denied any name-calling or differential treatment of CBW. Some leaders argued that there is no stigma because everyone was affected by the war so people sympathize<sup>71</sup>. However, this is in contrast with what I heard during interviews with mothers, who argued that people in the community are jealous that they returned from captivity while others did not<sup>72</sup>. Furthermore, in many cases, mothers and CBW did argue that they were negatively evaluated in the community. However, it is important to note that local leaders may not always be informed about these issues. Some of the villages are populated by over 1000 people, making it impossible for local leaders to know all issues with and conflicts between people. On the other hand, the denial of negative evaluation and discrimination by local leaders might also have to do with their position in the community and them wanting to sketch a politically-correct image of their village. Added to this is the fact that as a researcher, I am an outsider, and they might not have enough trust to reveal everything that they know or that is happening in their community.

Finally, it is important to acknowledge that not all CBW are negatively evaluated. In several cases, mothers or CBW argued that there was no negative labeling towards them. In contrast, some argued that they were warmly welcomed after the war and that their children are evaluated the same as other community children. Yet, the findings of this research are unable to explain *why* some CBW are not negatively evaluated. Furthermore, in some cases, contrasting information was provided on the negative evaluation of CBW. While one of the mothers denied any issues at school and argued that her child has many friends<sup>73</sup>, one of her fellow community members explained that this child is often insulted, does not have many friends, and was even beaten by a fellow pupil<sup>74</sup>.

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<sup>69</sup> Author's interview with teacher. Participant number 60. 07/04/2017.

<sup>70</sup> Author's interview with local leader. Participant number 18. 12/04/2017.

<sup>71</sup> Author's interview with local leader. Participant number 12. 22/03/2017; Author's interview with local leader. Participant number 17. 03/04/2017.

<sup>72</sup> Author's interview with mother. Participant number 23. 23/03/2017; Author's interview with father. Participant number 47. 13/04/2017; Focus group. 07/04/2017.

<sup>73</sup> Author's interview with mother. Participant number 26. 27/03/2017.

<sup>74</sup> Author's interview with community member. Participant number 58. 27/03/2017.

What might partly explain the mother not revealing this information is that she got into an argument with the mother of the pupil who insulted and beat her child. She might have been embarrassed to explain this. Moreover, as has been mentioned before, this research project was limited in time which made building rapport difficult. Some women might not have had enough trust in me as a researcher to disclose sensitive information.

## 5.2 BEYOND NEGATIVE EVALUATION: FURTHER CONSEQUENCES

While negative evaluation is an essential dimension in the process of stigmatization, stigma does not end with negative evaluation but translates into further discrimination and exclusion. Before delving into an analysis of the discrimination and exclusion of CBW in Northern Uganda, it is important to operationalize these concepts. Discrimination can refer both to unfair treatment and treating individuals different than others. Yet, differential treatment is not necessarily negative and therefore does not capture the negative nature of the process (Sayce, 1998, pp.340-341). According to Sayce, discrimination can be defined as unfair treatment, taking the form of continuous segregation and exclusion (1998, p.334). Similarly, Major and O'Brien view discrimination as negative treatment in which access to important life domains is limited (2005, p.396). Pager and Shepherd add to this definition that this unequal treatment is based on group membership or a perceived or ascribed trait, such as race and ethnicity (2008, p.182). In this thesis, discrimination refers to the unfair, negative treatment of persons or groups on the basis of a perceived or ascribed trait. The final aspect of the process of stigmatization is systematic exclusion. Kurzban and Leary define this as disassociating from individuals, thus avoiding, excluding, ostracizing, minimizing interaction (2001, p.188). Drawing upon Kabeer (2000) and Sayce (1998), I include the denial for certain individuals to participate fully in social and economic life. This disadvantage can include both economic injustice and cultural injustice. In this section, I will analyze how children born of war are unequally treated, disassociated from, and denied to participate fully in community life.

Similarly to the negative evaluation of CBW, patrilineal identity construction is an important aspect in the discrimination and exclusion of CBW. The lack of a paternal clan is problematic for feelings of identity for CBW. As one CBW narrated, he argues that he wishes his father were there<sup>75</sup>. In addition, another CBW started to cry during the interview and asked why

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<sup>75</sup> Author's interview with CBW. Participant number 50. 05/05/2017.

her father died and left her<sup>76</sup>. Not only does this cause problems for feelings of identity and belonging, the problems with patrilineal identity for CBW can also result in tangible life challenges. Many respondents argued that CBW have to belong to the maternal clan if there is no connection with the paternal clan, including access to land if they are boys. As one mother explained, this land is her father's, so other community members cannot "chase her away" from there<sup>77</sup>. Although this might be a commonly heard view, it can cause serious issues and disputes. This is illustrated by the story of one mother who is staying at her maternal home with her son who was born in the bush. Although he has tried to join a children's farming group<sup>78</sup> in the community three times, he has been continuously told to leave, hereby excluding him in community activities<sup>79</sup>. Another mother explained that she does not know the paternal clan of her children from the bush, so they have to belong to her maternal clan. However, she feels very worried because: "in the future, if they don't give them the land, where [am I] going to take them?"<sup>80</sup>. Likewise, one mother argues that her son who was born in the bush belongs to her clan. However, the issue of land is complicated and might cause problems in the future. She fears that when she is no longer alive, clan relatives might chase away her son because it is not his paternal clan<sup>81</sup>.

In addition, other issues besides land access may arise. As one mother explains, when these children commit a crime or get into conflicts, no one can solve the issue. In Acholi culture, if issues arise between members of different clans, paternal clans engage in processes of reconciliation. Furthermore, when boys want to get married, they have to pay a bride price which is usually paid for by the paternal clan<sup>82</sup>. Children who have no connection with their paternal clan are thus vulnerable in these situations. Nonetheless, even when the patrilineal lineage of CBW is known, they may not always be accepted. As one mother explained, the father of her child died in the bush but the paternal grandfather is still alive and promised her son land. However, she is afraid that if the grandfather dies, his uncles may not want to give him the access to the land<sup>83</sup>. Similarly, one CBW explained that she and her siblings "don't have a proper place to stay". There are similar

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<sup>76</sup> Author's interview with CBW. Participant number 53. 07/05/2017.

<sup>77</sup> Author's interview with mother. Participant number 41. 05/05/2017.

<sup>78</sup> Farming groups are set up in communities to help one another in the cultivation of land. Each day, the group helps to cultivate the land of one of the group members, hereby enhancing the productivity of farming in the community.

<sup>79</sup> Author's interview with mother. Participant number 41. 05/05/2017.

<sup>80</sup> Author's interview with mother. Participant number 31. 31/03/2017.

<sup>81</sup> Author's interview with mother. Participant number 27. 29/03/2017.

<sup>82</sup> Author's interview with mother. Participant number 26. 27/03/2017.

<sup>83</sup> Author's interview with mother. Participant number 35. 05/04/2017.

issues on the paternal and maternal side, they are not treated well and there is “hatred” on both sides<sup>84</sup>.

In Acholi culture, women are supposed to get married: not marrying is seen as a period of transition. As has been mentioned before, this is not only important for social acceptance, but can also offer economic security. Many mothers of CBW therefore tried to find a new husband after the war. When these women get married or live together with a new man, they often do not bring their children with them. Rather, when there is no connection with the paternal clan of the child, they leave the children with the mother’s parents. As one grandmother narrated, the new husband of her daughter did not allow her children that she conceived in the bush to live with them, because they are not his<sup>85</sup>. As the mother herself explained, her new husband argued that he did not want “children of rebels”<sup>86</sup>. Similarly, a local leader explained that several formerly abducted women with children in his village have left these children with their parents because their new partners do not want to take care of children that are not theirs<sup>87</sup>. The importance of patrilineal identity construction seems to play a major role. While CBW identity may be an aspect influencing discrimination and exclusion, the findings primarily point towards new husbands not wanting to take care of children who are not biologically theirs. As one mother reported, the family of her new husband does not like her other two children. According to her: “They need only children that are their clan”<sup>88</sup>.

In many cases, when CBW do live with the new husbands or partners of their mother they are treated differently. While they may have access to food, the new husbands of these women often do not support these children with clothes and school fees. One CBW who used to live with his father recounted how he wanted to go to school in town for a better education. However, his stepmother refused his father to pay higher school fees for a better school. Yet, while they are not even his children, she does pay school fees for her children with his father’s money<sup>89</sup>. Similarly, one mother explained that her new husband treats her children differently than his own: while he

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<sup>84</sup> Author’s interview with CBW. Participant number 53. 07/05/2017.

<sup>85</sup> Author’s interview with grandparent(s). Participant number 44. 29/03/2017.

<sup>86</sup> Author’s interview with mother. Participant number 36. 05/04/2017.

<sup>87</sup> Author’s interview with local leader. Participant number 14. 27/03/2017.

<sup>88</sup> Author’s interview with mother. Participant 40. 03/05/2017.

<sup>89</sup> Author’s interview with CBW. Participant number 51. 07/05/2017.

does buy clothes and pays for school fees for his own children, he does not support her children<sup>90</sup>. Yet, it is important to note that the differential treatment of CBW or children that do not belong to the clan might partly arise out of financial constraints and the inability to support all children.

It may also take the form of denying basic necessities however. One mother explained that her new husband would only feed her children if she was present<sup>91</sup>. Likewise, as a grandmother explained, the new husband of her daughter refuses her daughter's children that are not his to eat. When there is leftover food, he takes it to his other wives and their children. Although this grandmother is taking care of one of her daughter's children, she explained that one time when her grandson left to stay with his mother and her new husband for a while, he was mistreated and came back very skinny<sup>92</sup>. It is important to note that this boy was not a CBW. Thus, unfair treatment can extend to all children that live with a clan that is not their own.

In some cases, the new partner of the mother might accept CBW and take care of them. One mother described how her new husband helps to support her child that was born in the bush with clothes and school fees<sup>93</sup>. Similarly, another mother explained that her new partner looks at her daughter (who was born in the bush) as his own and helps to support her. However, she is worried that if she dies, there will be issues that her daughter does not belong there<sup>94</sup>. This concern was also voiced by a local leader, who argued that the clans of the new husbands of these women may not allow these children access to land when they grow up<sup>95</sup>. Additionally, one mother narrated that her new husband used to love her other two children and treat them well. However, his father told him that he should not take care of children that are not his, resulting in her partner no longer supporting her children<sup>96</sup>. Likewise, another mother recounted how her new husband's family always tells her to take away the children that do not belong there, once even "chasing away" her child<sup>97</sup>.

While land access is an issue facing male CBW in particular, female CBW also face unique challenges. When asking about future prospects and marriage prospects specifically, one mother

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<sup>90</sup> Author's interview with mother. Participant number 26. 27/03/2017.

<sup>91</sup> Author's interview with mother. Participant number 36. 05/04/2017.

<sup>92</sup> Author's interview with grandparent(s). Participant number 43. 29/03/2017.

<sup>93</sup> Author's interview with mother. Participant number 35. 05/04/2017.

<sup>94</sup> Author's interview with mother. Participant number 32. 03/04/2017.

<sup>95</sup> Author's interview with local leader. Participant number 9. 18/03/2017.

<sup>96</sup> Author's interview with mother. Participant number 22. 03/04/2017.

<sup>97</sup> Author's interview with mother. Participant number 34. 05/04/2017.

explained that her two daughter who were born in the bush “have to get a man from a far distance where their identity is not known”<sup>98</sup>. Moreover, girls might be more vulnerable to sexual violence. Another researcher narrated a story to me about a four-year old female CBW that was raped by a boy in her community. In the community, people argued that her father also used to rape other people’s children<sup>99</sup>. In addition, in one of my interviews, a mother explained that she returned from LRA captivity with her bush-husband. However, in 2009, her husband shot her, leaving her injured and forcing her to move to her brother’s home with her children. Yet, she and her children are not treated well there; she showed me the scars of the beatings that she endured there. Although she moved to town, she has no ability to take care of her children by herself and bring them to town as well. Therefore, they have to stay with her brother. Yet, they are enduring sexual violence there: the oldest girl was raped by a cousin and the second-born is also being sexually abused by clan relatives<sup>100</sup>. Although both children were born in the bush, it is difficult to pinpoint whether the sexual abuse is because they have a CBW identity. Nonetheless, it is this identity that has made these girls particularly vulnerable and forces them to continue living with their uncle, despite the sexual violence that is happening.

Finally, CBW are sometimes treated differently than other children in the community or school and may be excluded from community activities. One CBW narrated that her teachers do not treat CBW in a good way. Although they can beat all children if they misbehave, CBW are simultaneously beaten as well as insulted<sup>101</sup>. As mentioned in the section on negative evaluation, CBW are sometimes labeled as stupid or not understanding what is taught at school. This can translate into further discrimination and exclusion, which is explicated by the story of one CBW whose teacher does not only insult them, but also calls the sponsorship coordinators of these children to tell them that: “your girls have a lot of problems, you better come and pick them”<sup>102</sup>. Similarly, one mother reported that her daughter was insulted as being stupid and is being beaten by other children<sup>103</sup>. In addition, another CBW explained that his relatives beat him and quarrel

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<sup>98</sup> Author’s interview with mother. Participant number 23. 23/03/2017.

<sup>99</sup> Author’s interview with expert. Participant number 6. 20/03/2017.

<sup>100</sup> Focus group. 07/04/2017; Follow-up focus group. 14/04/2017.

<sup>101</sup> Author’s interview with CBW. Participant number 52. 07/05/2017.

<sup>102</sup> Author’s interview with CBW. Participant number 52. 07/05/2017.

<sup>103</sup> Author’s interview with mother. Participant number 40. 03/05/2017.

with him<sup>104</sup>. Furthermore, as one mother described, when she returned from the bush, she lived with her family for a while. When she used to cook food, but there was not enough for everyone, the wife of her uncle and their daughter used to ask her why she would give food to children from the bush<sup>105</sup>.

CBW may also be excluded from participating fully in community life. One CBW described how the relatives of his mother always say that “he should not cross their home” because they do not want him to meet with their children, hereby disassociating him from their children<sup>106</sup>. Similarly, one of the focus group participants explained that when her children who she came back with from the bush get into fights or quarrel with others, community members isolate him: “They say you don’t play with this boy, you don’t play with this child. He has come back with the evil from the bush so he is a not a good person, don’t play with him”<sup>107</sup>.

CBW are not only treated differently in social interaction, but may also be excluded from having a voice in community matters. As a local leader admitted, CBW are ignored if they give advice on land issues in the community. People argue that they do not belong to the community and that these children should go to their own clan to have a voice<sup>108</sup>. Similarly, one mother explained that her two children who were born in the bush, who are living with their maternal grandmother, were stopped from attending a children’s meeting in the community by her uncle<sup>109</sup>. Although these two examples are from CBW living with the maternal clan, a 25-year old CBW who is living with his paternal family faces similar issues and explained how he is always informed late of community meetings and community issues<sup>110</sup>.

In sum, patrilineal identity construction plays a major role in the discrimination and exclusion of CBW, especially regarding issues of belonging and land access. This is problematic for CBW living with the clan of the mother and can cause issues when these women get re-married or find a new partner. CBW might be denied of staying there because families do not accept children that do not officially belong to their clan, they are often denied access to land, and are treated differently than

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<sup>104</sup> Author’s interview with CBW. Participant number 50. 05/05/2017.

<sup>105</sup> Author’s interview with mother. Participant number 22. 03/04/2017.

<sup>106</sup> Author’s interview with CBW. Participant number 50. 05/05/2017.

<sup>107</sup> Focus group. 07/04/2017.

<sup>108</sup> Author’s interview with local leader. Participant number 15. 29/03/2017.

<sup>109</sup> Author’s interview with mother. Participant number 36. 05/04/2017.

<sup>110</sup> Author’s interview with CBW. Participant number 48. 09/04/2017.

other children in the family. While this may be an issue for all children that have no connection with their paternal clan, CBW are more vulnerable to not having this connection. Furthermore, the particular identity of 'being a' CBW contributes to discrimination and exclusion. This is exemplified by the fact that even if the patrilineal lineage of CBW is known, they might not always be accepted by that family. Besides discrimination and exclusion in the family setting, CBW can face further unequal treatment in the community and are excluded from participating fully in community life.

### 5.2.1 Acknowledging Variability

It is important to acknowledge that discrimination and exclusion are not necessarily present in all domains. Furthermore, not all CBW are discriminated against or excluded from important life domains. The notion of positionality is important, which is based on the idea that cultures are characterized by internal variation: it is not absolute in the sense that people either belong or do not belong (Merriam et al., 2001, p.411). There can thus be variation in the stigmatization of CBW.

While the former paragraphs show that CBW may face tremendous issues of discrimination and exclusion, it is important to acknowledge that CBW identity can also work in one's favor in terms of participation in social and economic life. Poverty is widespread in Northern Uganda and access to education is difficult for the majority of families. There are several possibilities for school fee sponsorship by organizations and individuals, but it seems as if these beneficiaries are more likely to be CBW than 'regular' children. Unfortunately, I was unable to confirm this with organizations or individuals that grant these sponsorships due to time constraints and because they are often based outside of Northern Uganda. Nonetheless, it is evident that the many NGO's and small civil society organizations in Gulu district work with formerly abducted women, which naturally also draws attention to their children. Furthermore, NGO projects are often targeted to help the most vulnerable people in society. Because of this, CBW might have more chances of being beneficiaries of NGO projects or scholarship possibilities than people who are just generally poor. Thus, because of their identity, CBW may have a better chance of accessing this opportunity. However, when children are sponsored, it is often revealed that these children were born from war, which can lead to further negative evaluation, discrimination, and exclusion.

How can we explain the variation in stigmatization? In theoretical debates on stigma, it is largely agreed upon that stigma can only exist when it is largely shared among a group. However,



as Stangor and Crandall rightly point out, “the question of ‘among whom’ the sharing must take place is complex” (2003, p.64). In the case of NGO’s, they are generally outside the realm of Acholi culture. Stigma is thus dependent on different ‘lands’ and does not reflect a dichotomy of either being fully stigmatized or not stigmatized whatsoever. Rather, social identities are contextual and can mean different things in different contexts (Demmers, 2017, p.23). In addition, between different members in the same culture stigmatization may vary. Stigmas are locally and culturally constructed and can differ both within and across cultures, as well as over time (Stangor & Crandall, pp.64-65). This chapter illustrated that there is variation in the stigmatization of CBW within Acholi communities as different people take different attitudes towards CBW.

## **CHAPTER 6:**

### **RESPONDING TO STIGMATIZATION**

In the former chapter, the process of stigmatization of CBW has been unravelled and their challenges have been elaborated upon. However, while these sections have primarily been concerned with the stigmatizing actions of others towards CBW, it is also important to consider the responses against the stigmatization of CBW. The following paragraphs will be concerned with analyzing how children born of war and their mothers respond to stigmatization, drawing upon the reactive-proactive continuum of responses that were outlined in the theoretical chapter.

#### **6.1 REACTIVE STRATEGIES**

According to Major and Eccleston (2005), there are several ways in which stigmatized individuals may respond to stigma. As outlined in the theoretical chapter, the first strategy is to enhance one's relational value to other, non-stigmatized individuals by either eliminate one's stigmatizing conditions, disguise one's stigma or distance oneself from it, or overcompensate. As pointed out by Major and Eccleston, eliminating one's stigma is only available to those whose stigmatizing conditions are actually in control (2005, p.73). CBW identity is uncontrollable and can therefore not be eliminated. The second strategy of distancing and disguising one's stigma is widely employed by CBW and their mothers however. Several respondents distance themselves from the stigmatized CBW identity and emphasized that CBW are the same as other children. As one CBW explained, people would never know that he was born in captivity if he does not tell them<sup>111</sup>. Similarly, one mother proudly said about her children that "you wouldn't believe they were born from the bush"<sup>112</sup>. Furthermore, hiding CBW identity is one of the most prevalent responses I noted. As one grandmother narrated, she registered her grandchildren as orphans at school to make sure that they do not know that these children are CBW<sup>113</sup>. Likewise, another mother explained that at school, she only informed one teacher that her children were born in the bush but hid it from the schoolchildren and other teachers. When I asked her why she decided not to tell the others, she

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<sup>111</sup> Author's interview with CBW. Participant number 49. 05/05/2017.

<sup>112</sup> Author's interview with mother. Participant number 36. 05/04/2017.

<sup>113</sup> Author's interview with grandparent(s). Participant number 44. 29/03/2017.

argued: “Schoolchildren, they are very stubborn”. “Maybe if teachers and they know, they can just make it like an abuse to them”<sup>114</sup>.

Notably, mothers or care-takers prevalently try to hide CBW identity from CBW themselves. One grandmother explained that her grandchildren are insulted for being born in the bush. However, when the children ask her about this, she tells them it is not true and that they were born in the family<sup>115</sup>. Likewise, one mother, who wrote a book about her experiences in LRA captivity, reported that she has never told her daughter that she was born in the bush. Although she did not seem worried about this, she explained that her daughter will know now that the book has been published<sup>116</sup>. Reasons for not telling their children vary. According to one mother, she will not tell her children that they were born in the bush, because this means that she is discriminating them<sup>117</sup>. Another mother on the other hand argued that she will tell her children that they were born in the bush when they get older. She argued that they are too young and that if she tells them now, they might not “grow up well”<sup>118</sup>. An alternative reason is that mothers are afraid that if they tell them, their children will ask where their father comes from. However, often these mothers do not know this<sup>119</sup>.

Even though an attempt is made to hide CBW identity, it is nonetheless often revealed. One of the reasons for this is that in Acholi culture, it is customary to name children after the event of their birth. For example, the translation of a child’s name may be ‘white ants’ because this child was born during white ants’ season<sup>120</sup>. This can have wide implications for CBW however, because their name may give away their CBW identity. As one mother narrated, her child’s name literally means ‘when you are in a problem’. Coincidentally, one of the higher ranking LRA commanders has the same name as her child. Because of this, people in the community mock her child with that name<sup>121</sup>. In a similar fashion, the name of a CBW means ‘many deaths’, which results in people asking him to explain his name<sup>122</sup>. Likewise, one of the mothers I interviewed conceived two children from sexual violence in an IDP camp. The name of one of her children means ‘I am alone’,

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<sup>114</sup> Author’s interview with mother. Participant number 33. 05/04/2017.

<sup>115</sup> Author’s interview with grandparent(s). Participant number 44. 29/03/2017.

<sup>116</sup> Author’s interview with mother. Participant number 24. 24/04/2017.

<sup>117</sup> Author’s interview with mother. Participant number 25. 27/03/2017.

<sup>118</sup> Author’s interview with mother. Participant number 22. 03/04/2017.

<sup>119</sup> Author’s interview with mother. Participant number 23. 23/03/2017; Author’s interview with mother. Participant number 31. 31/03/2017.

<sup>120</sup> Field notes. March – May 2017.

<sup>121</sup> Author’s interview with mother. Anonymous.

<sup>122</sup> Author’s interview with mother. Anonymous.

raising questions about the child, his birth, and his identity<sup>123</sup>. In addition, as has been mentioned before, people may know because of sponsorships. As one mother explained, people know at school that her children were born in the bush because the organization sponsoring them told the school<sup>124</sup>. Likewise, a teacher explained that everyone knows who the CBW are in that school, because the organization who is sponsoring them is following their progress, including visiting them at school<sup>125</sup>.

The final way to enhance one's relational value is to overcompensate. Major and Eccleston theorized overcompensation as trying to become particularly socially skillful, hereby improving their desirability as a relationship partner to non-stigmatized individuals (2005, pp.74-75). Although this is not exactly what I encountered during my fieldwork, my findings did point towards CBW trying to work extra hard to end insults and unequal treatment. As one CBW explained, he feels bad because he is insulted and treated unequally. However, he argues that he has to "study hard so that in the future, such kind of abuse will end"<sup>126</sup>. Similarly, one mother narrated how her son works hard to pay for his school supplies. According to her, people view him as a hard worker: even though he was born in the bush, he works hard<sup>127</sup>. In this way, CBW attempt to overcompensate so that people will no longer view them as CBW but as hard-workers.

Besides enhancing one's relational value to non-stigmatized people, another reactive strategy that is widely employed by CBW and their mothers is to withdraw from stigmatizing domains. This is exemplified by the report of one mother, who often stays home because she does not like to visit other homesteads. When asking her why this is the case, she explained to me that if anything happens, she will be blamed. Thus, to avoid issues she decides to remain at her home. According to her, even her children remain at their own homestead most of the time<sup>128</sup>. Similarly, another mother explained to me that she does not want to inform the local leaders that she and her children are insulted and discriminated against, because she fears that she will be blamed for talking too much or "bringing a headache" because she returned from the bush<sup>129</sup>. In addition, one CBW

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<sup>123</sup> Author's interview with mother. Anonymous.

<sup>124</sup> Author's interview with mother. Participant number 28. 30/03/2017.

<sup>125</sup> Author's interview with teacher. Participant number 60. 07/04/2017.

<sup>126</sup> Author's interview with CBW. Participant number 54. 07/05/2017.

<sup>127</sup> Author's interview with mother. Participant number 30. 30/03/2017.

<sup>128</sup> Author's interview with mother. Participant number 39. 03/05/2017.

<sup>129</sup> Author's interview with mother. Participant number 2. 03/04/2017.

explained that he feels very annoyed if he is insulted, which makes him leave and stay alone. Hereby, he is thus isolating himself and withdraws from stigmatizing domains<sup>130</sup>.

## 6.2 INTERMEDIATE STRATEGIES

In addition to the reactive strategies outlined above, CBW may also respond in ways that are not on opposite ends of the reactive-proactive continuum but are more intermediate. One of these ways is to seek alternative relations with similarly stigmatized people. In existing research on CBW in Northern Uganda, and according to organizations working with these children or their mothers, CBW often associate with children with a similar identity. However, during the interviews that I conducted, I did not find this to be a main coping strategy. When asking whether CBW often relate to other CBW, they often argued that they do not know many other, similar children. As one mother explained, she does not know anyone who has similar experiences as her<sup>131</sup>. Likewise, a mother explained that in her village, she is the only one who returned from the bush with children<sup>132</sup>. In several villages where I conducted interviews, there was only one CBW. Furthermore, even if a few CBW might be living in the same village, this does not mean they can easily connect. Some of the villages are populated by over 1000 people or people are spread over a wide area, making it difficult for CBW to know or build relationships with similar children<sup>133</sup>. Moreover, as I mentioned above, hiding one's CBW identity is an extremely prevalent response which can complicate the seeking out of similarly stigmatized individuals.

Yet, in contrast, some mothers argue that they do sometimes share their struggles with other mothers of CBW or women who endured similar experiences during the war<sup>134</sup>. As I discussed before, both previous studies as well as my own findings are inconclusive about the number of CBW in Northern Uganda and the proportion of them in villages, in town, or in schools. Nonetheless, it may be easier to know and associate with other CBW in town and in boarding schools. One of the teachers I spoke with argued that these children do tend to relate amongst themselves<sup>135</sup>. However, one CBW who is in a boarding school with multiple CBW argued that

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<sup>130</sup> Author's interview with CBW. Participant number 50. 05/05/2017.

<sup>131</sup> Author's interview with mother. Participant number 21. 23/03/2017.

<sup>132</sup> Author's interview with mother. Participant 20. 18/03/2017.

<sup>133</sup> Field notes. March – May 2017.

<sup>134</sup> Author's interview with mother. Participant number 26. 27/03/2017; Author's interview with mother. Participant number 39. 03/05/2017.

<sup>135</sup> Author's interview with teacher. Participant number 60. 07/04/2017.

she has different friends and not just friends who have a similar identity<sup>136</sup>. Thus, although CBW or their mothers might share experiences and connect with similar individuals in some cases, my findings do not support that the seeking of alternative relations with equally stigmatized people is a major response strategy.

Another intermediate strategy that stigmatized individuals may employ is to deflect stigma away from their personal identity and rather attribute it to prejudice and discrimination. According to Major and Eccleston, this requires that stigmatized individuals view the stigma as unjust (2005, p.79). In several interviews, respondents argued that stigmatizing actions towards them makes them feel sad, but that it was not their will to get abducted. As one mother explained, she feels bad because it was not her will to be abducted, she was taken from her home<sup>137</sup>. Likewise, another mother told me that she knows “in her heart” that she did not go to the bush willingly, she was abducted. Hereby, reminding themselves, and sometimes others, that they did not choose this identity. In a similar way, one CBW, who is always informed late of community issues and meetings, narrates how he feels very unhappy about this. However, he explained that he nonetheless tries to attend to make people feel guilty for informing him late and treating him differently<sup>138</sup>. These responses thus show that stigmatized individuals can challenge the moral attributions attached to their identity.

## 6.2 PROACTIVE STRATEGIES

A more proactive strategy that is employed by some interviewees is to report the stigmatization to local leaders. While this cannot be clearly labeled as social activism, it does challenge the validity of the stigma. As one mother explained, she reported stigmatization to a local leader who warned the stigmatizer, which helped to reduce insults<sup>139</sup>. Likewise, another mother told me that community leaders defend her if people insult her or her child<sup>140</sup>. The role of local leaders and the effectiveness of reporting stigma is very disputed however. One mother explained that she reported the case many times but local leaders did not respond or take any action. According to her, local leaders are very corrupt; you have to pay them to help you<sup>141</sup>. Similarly, another mother narrated

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<sup>136</sup> Author's interview with CBW. Participant number 53. 07/05/2017.

<sup>137</sup> Author's interview with mother. Participant number 28. 30/03/2017.

<sup>138</sup> Author's interview with CBW. Participant number 48. 09/04/2017.

<sup>139</sup> Author's interview with mother. Participant number 41. 05/05/2017.

<sup>140</sup> Author's interview with mother. Participant number 42. 05/05/2017.

<sup>141</sup> Author's interview with mother. Participant number 38. 03/05/2017.

that she reported the insults to the village chief but he did not do anything about it<sup>142</sup>. In addition, one mother argued that she does not want to report stigmatization to the community leader, because she fears that she will be blamed instead<sup>143</sup>.

Several respondents argued that there are laws against stigmatization towards returnees from the bush. As one local leader explained, laws regulate that you can be taken to court and be imprisoned if you stigmatize. In his village, when stigmatization happens, people are gathered in the community and the stigmatizer is beaten. Furthermore, you have to compensate the person you stigmatized by giving them a goat or chickens<sup>144</sup>. Similarly, another local leader explained that in his village, you first receive a warning and if you continue to insult, you have to pay a fine which amounts to a goat or 50.000 Ugandan shilling<sup>145</sup>. Interestingly however, a mother living in the village of aforementioned local leader argued that although these laws have been formulated by the government, they have not actually been implemented in her village<sup>146</sup>. Furthermore, some respondents denied the existence of these laws all together. According to a local leader, there are neither legal nor customary laws against stigma<sup>147</sup>. It is unclear whether or not these laws are official. No mention of them has been made in the National Transitional Justice Policy nor have they been mentioned in existing research on CBW. Although these laws are an interesting and relevant aspect that I found during the course of this research project, despite interviewing local leaders and NGO's, as well as researching Ugandan government policies, I was unfortunately unable to clarify what exactly this legal framework is. The ambiguity surrounding these laws might partly explain why some women may choose to report stigma while others do not.

As this chapter has shown, there is a wide variety of strategies employed by CBW and their mothers to respond to stigmatization. In addition to the responses that fall within the reactive-proactive continuum, another response that multiple interview participants employed was not to respond to stigmatization. As one CBW explained, although he does not feel comfortable in his environment and sometimes even feels ashamed, he argued that he “keeps quiet” and does not respond<sup>148</sup>.

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<sup>142</sup> Author's interview with mother. Participant number 39. 03/05/2017.

<sup>143</sup> Author's interview with mother. Participant number 22. 03/04/2017.

<sup>144</sup> Author's interview with local leader. Participant number 11. 22/03/2017.

<sup>145</sup> Author's interview with local leader. Participant number 15. 29/03/2017.

<sup>146</sup> Author's interview with mother. Participant number 20. 18/03/2017.

<sup>147</sup> Author's interview with local leader. Participant number 16. 31/03/2017.

<sup>148</sup> Author's interview with CBW. Participant number 54. 07/05/2017.

Furthermore, another CBW explained that his mother always tells him to ignore the people that are insulting him<sup>149</sup>. Unfortunately, it was beyond the scope of this research to analyze *why* CBW or their mothers respond in a certain way and to research more individual and personal coping strategies. Nonetheless, this research has shown that CBW and their mothers or care-takers respond to stigmatization in a variety of ways. The reactive-proactive continuum of responses has proved to be helpful to structure different responses and shows that CBW may employ many of these strategies.

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<sup>149</sup> Author's interview with CBW. Participant number 50. 05/05/2017.



## **CHAPTER 7:**

### **DISCUSSION & CONCLUSION**

Recently, in April 2017, a UN report on conflict-related sexual violence acknowledged that the stigma and marginalization facing survivors of SGBV and their children is a strikingly consistent concern across different contexts (UN, 2017, p.4). Even though the acknowledgment of children born of war as a war-affected category is slowly increasing, “the topic of war-related sexual violence and its consequences are significantly under-researched and [...] this needs to be changed” (Mochmann & Haavardsson, 2012, p.7). In the over two-decade long war in Northern Uganda, many children were born as a result of SGBV. This thesis has sought to uncover the stigmatization that CBW in Gulu district, Northern Uganda face and the challenges that this poses for their life opportunities. The data collected during fieldwork was analyzed by drawing upon the theoretical frame of stigmatization. It was not the aim of this research to empirically test theories on stigmatization. Rather, this frame guided the research and the findings are placed in the larger debate on stigma. Furthermore, it is important to note that this research was not intended to draw general conclusions but rather aimed to explore the specific challenges of CBW in Gulu district, Northern Uganda. While the findings cannot be generalized to CBW elsewhere, it forms a basis for comparison with CBW in other contexts which can lead to fruitful insights.

There are several primary findings worth summarizing. At the heart of the findings is the intertwining of the stigmatization of CBW with the patrilineal identity structure of Acholi society. As was uncovered in the empirical chapters, patrilineal identity construction is a tremendously important aspect in Acholi culture that affects social acceptance, community standing, and economic well-being. Yet, CBW are particularly vulnerable to not having a connection with their paternal clan. This leads to continuous negative evaluation as they are often forced to live with a clan that is not paternally theirs. They are insulted for not belonging to that clan, are referred to as “bastards”, and are continuously asked to find their father. Moreover, it translates into unfair treatment and exclusion from important life domains, including the denial to access land and to participate and have a voice in community matters. Although the cultural and social norms on patrilineality are imperative in understanding the stigmatization of CBW, it is important to consider the economic aspect as well. Land, which is extremely important in the Acholi society, is scarce and the majority of people in Northern Uganda are poor. The care of children thus adds a financial burden, which also affects the rejection and stigmatization of CBW.

While issues of patrilineal belonging is an important source of the stigmatization of CBW, these children additionally violate Acholi cultural norms on sex and marriage which is important to understand further negative evaluation, discrimination, and exclusion. In Acholi culture, children are only to be conceived out of marriage. Furthermore, remaining unmarried as a woman, especially with children, is frowned upon in Acholi society. However, CBW were born from forced sexual relations that violate traditional beliefs on marriage and are often forced to stay at the maternal clan, resulting in them being viewed as a burden. Moreover, children who were born in LRA captivity specifically violate cultural norms and spiritual beliefs on sex in the wilderness. CBW face continuous referral to their past and birth circumstances, they are suspected from having the evil spirit from the bush, and are often blamed for misbehaving. Additionally, they are disassociated from by fellow community members, are excluded from community activities, and are treated unfairly at school. Yet, is important to acknowledge that stigmatization is contextual. During the course of this research project, it became evident that a number of CBW receive scholarships from NGO's or individual philanthropists. This shows that CBW identity can work in their favor in particular contexts. While this is positive in the sense that it allows for access to important life domains, it can translate into further negative evaluation and discrimination. CBW who receive scholarships are often insulted for being "bigheaded" and receiving everything for free. This is similarly the case for children who were born in IDP camps who are often called "lazy".

The findings of this research show that the stigmatization of CBW does not end with labeling individuals as deviant or negatively stereotyping them. Rather, it goes beyond *cimo tok* and translates into discrimination and exclusion. It is important to note that there is much variation in the stigmatization of CBW. CBW are often not stigmatized in all domains nor are all CBW necessarily stigmatized. In addition, throughout this research project, contrasting information about levels of stigmatization has come to the fore frequently. Although it is beyond the scope of this research to explain this variation in-depth, some preliminary reasons have been outlined. First, as has been theorized, stigmas are socially constructed and can differ both within and across cultures, as well as over time. Furthermore, it may be contingent on the position of the interviewee in the community. For example, local leaders may prefer to sketch a politically correct image of their community, while mothers may exaggerate challenges in the hope that this will lead to support. Moreover, it is important to note that this research project was limited in time, hence constraining

the ability to build rapport with research participants. This may have influenced results, as interviewees did not have enough trust to disclose sensitive information.

In addition to analyzing how the process of stigmatization unfolds itself for CBW in Gulu district, responses against stigma are equally important. Placing the responses of CBW and their mothers on the reactive-proactive continuum was useful to categorize and analyze strategies employed. One of the most prevalent responses found was the reactive strategy of hiding CBW identity. In addition, withdrawing from stigmatizing domains was a frequent response. Yet, this research has shown that CBW can also respond in more proactive ways. Besides deflecting stigma away from their personal identity, CBW can more radically challenge the validity of stigma by reporting it to local leaders. These proactive strategies are important to consider and show that viewing CBW solely as victims is inaccurate; rather they are agents that can play active roles in the de-stigmatization process.

## 7.1 FURTHER RESEARCH RECOMMENDATIONS

Although this thesis is an important step in mapping the stigmatization of CBW and the challenges that this poses for their life opportunities, it is important to address some limitations and further research suggestions. During the course of this research project, it was extremely difficult to identify children that were born from sexual violence from other actors than the LRA. However, these children are an important category of CBW that have often been ignored in research on CBW in Northern Uganda. Further research should attempt to identify women that suffered sexual violence from a wide array of actors and bore children from them. While it may be difficult to research these hidden violations, it can be fruitful to research women who have ‘illegitimate’ children in general. As one expert explained, this may help to identify women who bore children from sexual violence from other actors than the LRA<sup>150</sup>. Furthermore, increasing the time scope might aid the identification of these women and children. Moreover, cooperation with organizations working with women that suffered from sexual violence during the war can be beneficial.

Due to ethical considerations, this research decided against interviewing many CBW themselves. Nonetheless, creating more insight into the challenges faced by CBW from their

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<sup>150</sup> Author’s interview with expert. Participant number 6. 20/03/2017.

perspective would be a valuable contribution to existing knowledge. If this is incorporated in further research however, it is extremely important to carefully consider the risks and closely collaborate with relevant organizations.

Out of time constraints and funding limitations, this research conducted fieldwork in Gulu district only. Although this area was widely affected during the war, the majority of research has solely focused on the Acholi sub-region. For further research, it is important to equally consider other regions in Northern Uganda such as the Teso and West-Nile regions. Similarly to the Acholi sub-region, they suffered tremendously from the LRA rebellion but have largely been left out of research and NGO projects. Furthermore, CBW in these regions may face additional stigmatization. The Acholi people are widely held responsible for the war. Hence, stigma for children born from the LRA (whose members are primarily Acholi) is especially severe as they are blamed for the suffering that people in this region endured.

During the course of this research project, it was uncovered that there is a lot of variation in stigmatization and contrasting information was frequently discovered. Further research should consider unravelling this aspect more deeply, including an analysis of community dynamics. In addition, while my findings pointed towards a legal framework of some kind being in place against stigmatization, I was unable to get a clear picture of this. Further research should attempt to clarify this by for example speaking to (higher level) government officials who might be aware of this framework. Another suggestion for further research is to conduct a longitudinal study, hereby being able to research whether stigmatization and the challenges that this poses develops or changes over time. Moreover, further research should continue to map the numbers of CBW, hereby being able to discover the scope of the problem. Finally, it would be interesting to compare stigmatization and the challenges faced by CBW in different countries and contexts. This would allow for more generalized information on CBW.

## 7.2 A FINAL NOTE

Whilst largely invisible, children born of war are a particularly vulnerable war-affected category of children that face severe challenges. Even though these children have not participated in the hostilities, they are the target of severe negative evaluation, discrimination, and exclusion. I wholeheartedly argue that these children deserve more attention, not only in academic circles but also in policy circles. It is my hope that case studies like these are used to construct a better

understanding of CBW that will allow for the development of targeted policies to address their challenges and allow them to have a better future.

## APPENDIX

NGO AND EXPERT INTERVIEW RESPONDENTS			
Interview Number	Name/Organization	Setting	Date
1	Justice and Reconciliation Project	Urban	13/03/2017
2	Acholi Religious Leaders Peace Initiative	Urban	20/03/2017
3	Watye Ki Gen	Urban	20/03/2017
4	Ker Kwaro Acholi	Urban	13/04/2017
5	Lindsay McClain Opiyo (expert)	Urban	17/03/2017
6	Jackline Atingo (expert)	Urban	20/03/2017

LOCAL LEADER INTERVIEW RESPONDENTS			
Interview Number	Gender	Setting	Date
7	Male	Rural	16/03/2017
8	Male	Rural	18/03/2017
9	Male	Rural	18/03/2017
10	Male	Rural	22/03/2017
11	Male	Rural	22/03/2017
12	Female	Rural	22/03/2017
13	Male	Rural	27/03/2017
14	Male	Rural	27/03/2017
15	Male	Rural	29/03/2017
16	Male	Rural	31/03/2017
17	Male	Rural	03/04/2017
18	Male	Rural	12/04/2017
19	Male	Urban	13/04/2017

MOTHER INTERVIEW RESPONDENTS			
Interview Number	Category of CBW	Setting	Date
20	CBC	Rural	18/03/2017
21	Sexual violence in IDP camp & by UPDF soldier	Urban	23/03/2017
22	CBC	Rural	23/02/2017 & 03/04/2017
23	CBC	Urban	23/03/2017
24	CBC	Urban	24/04/2017
25	CBC	Rural	27/03/2017
26	CBC	Rural	27/03/2017
27	CBC	Rural	29/03/2017
28	CBC	Urban	30/03/2017
29	CBC	Urban	30/03/2017

30	CBC	Urban	30/03/2017
31	CBC	Rural	31/03/2017
32	CBC	Rural	03/04/2017
33	CBC	Rural	05/04/2017
34	CBC	Rural	05/04/2017
35	CBC	Rural	05/04/2017
36	CBC	Urban	05/04/2017
37	CBC	Rural	03/05/2017
38	CBC	Rural	03/05/2017
39	CBC	Rural	03/05/2017
40	CBC	Rural	03/05/2017
41	CBC	Rural	05/05/2017
42	CBC	Rural	05/05/2017

OTHER CARE-TAKERS INTERVIEW RESPONDENTS			
Interview Number	Who	Setting	Date
43	Grandparent(s)	Rural	29/03/2017
44	Grandparent(s)	Rural	29/03/2017
45	Grandparent(s)	Rural	09/04/2017
46	Grandparent(s)	Rural	12/04/2017
47	Father	Urban	13/04/2017

CHILDREN BORN OF WAR INTERVIEW RESPONDENTS					
Interview Number	Category	Gender	Age	Setting	Date
48	CBC	Male	25	Rural	09/04/2017
49	CBC	Male	20	Urban	05/05/2017
50	CBC	Male	17	Rural	05/05/2017
51	CBC	Male	17	Urban	07/05/2017
52	CBC	Female	16	Urban	07/05/2017
53	CBC	Female	19	Urban	07/05/2017
54	CBC	Male	19	Urban	07/05/2017

OTHER INTERVIEW RESPONDENTS				
Interview Number	Who	Gender	Setting	Date
55	Community Member	Female	Rural	16/03/2017
56	Community Member	Female	Urban	23/03/2017
57	Community Member	Female	Urban	23/03/2017
58	Community Member	Female	Rural	27/03/2017
59	Teacher	Male	Urban	07/04/2017
60	Teacher	Female	Urban	07/04/2017

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