INTRODUCTION

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ALTHOUGH THIS VOLUME FOCUSES ON CHILD SOLDIERS, it is not limited to children brandishing a gun. It also examines the roles of children, many of whom are preadolescent, linked to armed groups with a variety of functions. As such, child soldiers work as spies, cooks, porters, messengers, sex slaves, and, indeed, as both armed and unarmed combatants who serve in government armies, militias, and nonstate groups.[1] The authors in this collection analyze the phenomenon of child soldiers, examine what has been done to address it, and explore what remedies exist, if any.

Dating from the signing of the United Nations (UN) Convention on the Rights of the Child nearly two decades ago,[2] the number of international protocols, treaties, and conventions intended to shield children from the worst excesses of armed conflict has proliferated.[3] Many of these initiatives focus explicitly on the protection of children (under eighteen years) from recruitment into armed groups. In 1996, the landmark *Graça Machel Report* on child soldiering led to the establishment of the Cape Town Principles. A decade later, the anniversary of this report was notable for a UN-organized conference in Paris where fifty-eight countries signed what has been referred to as the Paris Commitments. These governments agreed to act against the unlawful recruitment and use of children by governments and rebel forces.

There is little evidence that these measures have been effective. One strategy, "naming and shaming," has frequently been used by the UN and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) against transgressors of the norm. Advocates privately argue that this approach has had some effect on some governments, such as Colombia and Britain, although there is scant evidence to support their claims. In 2006, the United Kingdom banned the use of seventeen-year-olds in combat. Colombia has suspended the enlistment of child soldiers and now treats doing so as a war crime. Whether public calls played an important role in those decisions is unclear.

Nevertheless, many states still seem impervious to public pressure. Myanmar provides the most egregious example, with tens of thousands of children reputedly members of the armed forces.[4] Moreover, ten of the twelve signatory nations to the Paris Commitments appear on the UN blacklist of countries that recruit child soldiers. They are Burundi, Chad, Colombia, Ivory Coast, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Nepal, Somalia, Sudan, Sri Lanka, and Uganda. The remaining two offenders, Myanmar and the Philippines, neither attended the conference nor signed the document.[5]

The worst forms and largest degree of child soldier recruitment are now generally carried out not by governments but by nonstate actors, insurgency groups, and government-supported militias.[6] Public pressure appears to have little effect on these nonstate actors, with few examples of success. Naming and shaming has little influence in shaping the behavior of armed groups that depend heavily on children as combatants, such as the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) in Uganda. Rebel groups care little about external organizations, the media, or the United Nations. For the international community, translating words into action, therefore, has proven elusive thus far.

The campaign against child soldiering seems to be exceptional in terms of its limited success. In other celebrated campaigns, such as those aimed at human trafficking or the ban on land mines, the efforts of NGOs have brought tangible results. Fewer states use landmines and more have enforced the criminalization of trafficking. But attempts to highlight and address the human rights abuses of children—who are simultaneously engulfed in conflict as both perpetrators and victims—seem to have exerted little influence on the behavior of belligerents. Across Asia, Africa, and Latin America there are high and sustained rates of noncompliance with child protection agreements that often have the status of international law. Armed groups use children as direct combatants with little concern about the consequences.

Moving beyond formal protocols, and possibly in response to the failure of moral suasion, the international community has shifted its focus to criminalizing the recruitment of children for combat in what Tonderai Chikuhwa terms an "era of application." As the first case to come before the International Crimi-

nal Court (ICC), Thomas Lubango Dyilo's celebrated trial is the most palpable attempt to constrain the use of child soldiers.[7] But the trial foundered on 2 July 2008 when judges ordered his release on the grounds that he could not receive a fair trial because evidence had been withheld from the defense.[8] Despite the attempt to prosecute Lubango, it is premature to judge whether such prosecutions will prove to be a deterrent. The leaders of armed forces most strategically reliant on children, and thus the worst offenders, are unlikely to release these children if they calculate that doing so will result in their defeat. Furthermore, if rebels are interested in negotiating a peace agreement, they may be less likely to lay down their weapons and stop fighting if they fear postwar prosecution. Many rebel leaders still believe they can negotiate an amnesty as part of a peace agreement, granting them immunity from postconflict prosecution. Indeed, a government interested in securing peace may be willing to incorporate amnesty with a peace agreement to buy off rebels and end the violence.

In Uganda, the Lord's Resistance Army overwhelmingly relies on children to make up its military force.[9] For any peaceful resolution to the conflict, the Ugandan government must negotiate with its leader, Joseph Kony. Yet Uganda, as a signatory to the Paris Commitments and a member of the ICC, is expected to abide by the principles and rules of both. Such commitments are therefore potentially in tension with Uganda's need to negotiate a peace agreement with Kony, whom the ICC has declared to be a criminal suspect in abrogation against its prohibition on the use of child soldiers. Criminalization may therefore prove an obstacle to peace in the absence of consistently applied enforcement mechanisms, leaving little reason for optimism that deterrence will work unless the risks of using children outweigh the rewards—and the prospects of prosecution are significantly increased. Without a greater capacity to implement new enforcement measures, deterrence and the force of law have limits.

In many ways the fundamental problem is armed conflict itself. Certainly there have been significant efforts to address the issue of children in armed conflict, including a variety of measures taken by diverse UN agencies and NGOs. The number of children active in armed groups is clearly nominal when compared to the millions of children who do not participate directly as soldiers but are profoundly affected by war. Nonetheless, this group is a tangible, visible, and dramatic example of the deprivation of the human rights of children. Clearly, boys and girls with bloated bellies, no parents, and bruised and broken bodies present a compelling image of victimhood. But as demobilization, disarmament, and rehabilitation (DDR) programs reveal, child soldiers suffer in several other dimensions. They are subject to intense psychological trauma associated with their participation in or witnessing of atrocities associated with combat. They are frequently humiliated and abused. And they are typically unable to reintegrate into their former communities.

The humanitarian aspect of child soldiering is a subject of publicity in Europe and North America. Popular books by former child soldiers (such as Ishmael Beah's [2007], which was sold at Starbucks across the United States) offer compelling narratives by the victims and have become the foundation for public advocacy campaigns on their behalf. Yet, the humanitarian aspect is only one of a series of components of the problem of child soldiers.

The contributions by Chikuhwa and McMahan discuss the issue of culpability, as well as authority and redress. Such issues have implications for postconflict justice. The movement toward the criminalization of international law, whereby culpability shifts from governments to individuals, could have profound implications for guaranteeing the rights of children who have been members of armed groups, as well as protecting those who might be in the future.

The issue of ethics also bears on the question of the rules of engagement for professional military personnel when they encounter child soldiers. Currently there is no consistent policy, and few countries have explicit rules of engagement. Those that do differ considerably in their content.

Meanwhile, child soldiers are now involved in terrorism and insurgency as direct participants. For example, in Sri Lanka, the territories of the Palestinian Authority, and Iraq, children have been reputedly used as suicide bombers.[10] In Afghanistan, a fourteen-year-old was responsible for the first killing of a NATO soldier, and sporadic reports claim that the Taliban's forces comprise a notable number of child soldiers.[11]

Once demobilized, former child soldiers suffer from a lack of educational and vocational skills that dramatically reduces their earning potential and enhances the possibility of intergenerational violence (Blattman and Annan 2007). They are more at risk of gang membership, violent behavior, and (re-) recruitment in combat forces than other children, a point discussed by McClure and Retamal.[12] This reality is not surprising given that the factors that led to their participation in an armed group are likely to persist after the termination of hostilities. Criminal leaders often play a significant role in the dynamics of armed conflict, motivated by the drug trade or the control of natural resources. They have comparably easy access to arms. As a result, it is often functionally difficult to distinguish urban youth gangs from armed groups that recruit children.

The activities of a variety of violent groups thus contribute toward ensuring that countries experiencing civil war—or at risk of doing so—remain in a perpetual state of insecurity. The failure or incapacity to address these problems sows the seeds of future war and criminality—what Paul Collier et al. (2003) has called "the conflict trap." As in the case of Guatemala, postconflict societies are sometimes as violent as they were when at war as rates of criminal activ-

ity soar. This lawlessness serves to foster a host of both economic (poverty, lack of education, and lack of employment opportunities) and social (domestic and sexual abuse) problems that drive child recruitment.

Child soldiering provides an interesting and potentially rewarding avenue into understanding the dynamics of political and economic development and civil conflict. Since children (especially young children) are rarely employed by military groups in peacetime, it is obvious that the major immediate cause of the employment of children as soldiers is conflict itself. Thus, in order to comprehend the threats posed to children in armed conflict, we must understand the dynamics of civil war. Recent works by Jean Paul Azam, Stathis Kalyvas, Scott Gates, and Jeremy Weinstein feature the dynamic qualities of civil conflict, focusing on issues such as the targeting of violence, recruitment, and the organization of rebellion.[13] Child soldier recruitment forms a part of this mosaic.

One of the theoretical components of this work concerns economic factors, which play a particularly important role in explaining the onset and continuation of civil conflict.[14] Indeed, children are much more likely to be directly engaged in the types of wars associated with low gross domestic product levels and low growth rates (Collier et al. 2003). In societies where child labor is common, it is not so surprising that armed groups also recruit children. Moreover, the opportunity costs of joining are likely to be lower in poor countries (Collier and Hoeffler 2002, 13–28; Collier and Hoeffler 2004, 563–595; Collier and Sambanis 2005a, 2005b). Christopher Blattman, drawing on interviews with rebel leaders and surveys of 462 conscripts associated with the LRA in northern Uganda, demonstrates how the benefits and costs of recruits varied systematically with age, and that adolescent (twelve- to fourteen-year-old) recruits yielded the largest expected net gain to the rebel leader. While adults were generally regarded by the leadership of the armed group to be more skilled as guerrilla fighters, they were also more likely to desert. Adolescents and younger children were more easily indoctrinated and disoriented, and thus likely to stay, but were relatively ineffective as fighters.

Gross domestic product is more indirect. It tends to accompany inefficient governments, which are associated with a high risk of civil conflict (Hegre et al. 2001, 33–48; Fearon and Laitin 2003, 75–90). Dysfunctional governments caught in the conflict trap, moreover, tend to have long-lasting wars with small-scale fighting organizations (Hegre 2004, 243–252). These are precisely the types of conflict that are characterized by the recruitment of children to armed groups.

Historically, Kalyvas demonstrates that small wars fought with rudimentary technologies are nothing new (Kalyvas 2001, 99–118). What may be new is an increase in the number of small wars and the relative accessibility of ef-

ficient small arms (e.g., AK-47s). These wars involve relatively little direct combat among belligerents. Rather, most violence is directed against unprotected and unarmed civilians (Azam 2002, 131–153; Kalyvas 2003, 475–494; Kalyvas 2006; Weinstein 2007). The dynamic created, in terms of large-scale flows by vulnerable populations, is marked. Jean-Paul Azam, for example, offers the novel observation that the targeting of a leader's own civilian supporters, and their coerced movement, may be part of a broader strategy aimed at achieving specific strategic goals. He argues that military leaders often target their own supporters for violence and forced migration in an attempt to consolidate the geographic breadth of their support as well as their manpower and material resources (Azam 2006, 53–73). Colombia provides an example of this pattern.

Where these populations settle is nonetheless undetermined. Self-settlement in cities, towns, and villages is often eschewed by the displaced in favor of camps for internally displaced persons (IDPs) and refugees for practical reasons, particularly the promise of food aid and security. In practice, the camps may serve as bastions for militarization, recruitment, and abduction by government forces, militias, and rebel groups, as the chapters by Achvarina and Reich and by Lischer demonstrate.

Children become especially vulnerable under these circumstances. The breakdown of traditional extended familial, communal, and broader societal structures has a severe impact on them, given their greater dependence. In theoretical terms, the literature, although increasingly sophisticated, has failed to note the centrality of this issue. This volume seeks to contribute to an understanding of this problem.

Another theoretical aspect is the linkage between war and criminality in the context of civil wars. Parts of the literature on violence have discussed the similarities between the behavior of warlords and the leadership of criminal gangs. In his discussion of the former Yugoslavia, John Mueller (2003, 507–518) draws a comparison between the motives of and methods used by differing ethnic groups both during a war and after the cessation of military conflict. This includes an emphasis on intimidation, coerced membership of the group, racketeering, and robbery. It also has much to say about the construction of identity and group solidarity (Gates 2002, 111–130). In the Balkan wars, for example, criminal elements were explicitly recruited and even released from prison in order to enlist. These soldiers were among the most violent and may have been recruited for that very quality. As rebel and militia groups operate outside the law, they often act in ways more often associated with common crime (extortion, trade in illicit drugs, smuggling, etc.) in order to fund their operations, as the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia's (FARC) heavy involvement in the coca trade in Colombia illustrates.

The study of children in armed conflict thus has significant analytic value

in linking economic factors with the prevalence of small arms, the dynamics of population movements, and the use of force targeted against civilian populations. Many of the chapters that follow feature these linkages. Child soldiering thus constitutes a template through which the conjunction of sociological, economic, and political influences can be studied.

The issue of child soldiering also poses a puzzle to those interested in the influence of norms and international sanctions on actor behavior, particularly with regard to postconflict justice. In theoretical terms, consolidation of the norm should be of interest to scholars working on the issue. The evidence contained in these chapters challenges the idea that child soldiering is a product of either ancient or modern hatreds. Nor is it one of embedded cultural views of childhood (Kaufman 2001). Different countries with similar ethnic compositions vary enormously in their propensity to use child soldiers; there is no evidence that child soldiers are consistently employed in a particular country across different conflicts over time, with the possible exception of Liberia; and those countries where child soldiers compose a high proportion of troops are spread around the globe. In sum, there is no cultural or historical thread that links the use of child soldiers to particular national cultures or a set of historical experiences. Using child soldiers is not, for example, "an African thing," nor is it to be found where genocides have recently occurred. Neighboring countries vary enormously in their propensity; Rwanda suffered from a mass slaughter but is not notable for its use of child soldiers.

From a human security perspective, where the focus is on the human rights of the individual, both the children themselves and the communities from which they are drawn are part of the broader conundrum of vulnerable populations whose lives are at risk in countries across the globe. The international community—composed of policymakers and NGOs—has worked extensively to address the problem. Yet, realistically, they have made limited headway, perhaps as a result of a lack of credible data and, in part, due to a lack of systematic analyses across cases.

The contributors to this volume remain modest in their claims. Nonetheless, drawing together such an experienced and qualified multidisciplinary group to participate in this project may contribute to the development of a credible, foundational basis for the promotion of novel, feasible policy proposals. Indeed, analyzing child soldiering may have policy implications for the larger population of civilians at risk from direct physical violence. Education can also play a significant role in mitigating the problem of child recruitment by military groups, as discussed in the chapters by McClure and Retamal and by Vargas-Barón. Education is particularly relevant for demobilization, disarmament, and reintegration programs.

Collier et al.'s work (2003) claims that nearly 60 percent of the countries

that have experienced a civil war experience it again. Failure (or an inability) to attend to the problems that lead to the onset of civil war in the first place sows the seeds of future war. While it is true that the number of civil conflicts has fallen dramatically since 1992, the world experiences between twenty-eight and thirty-three armed conflicts per year, with many experiencing low-intensity conflict that varies from year to year. Such countries are hard pressed to sustain even modest levels of economic growth. They are caught in a trap in which the conditions that lead to the onset of armed conflict are maintained by the conflict. Poor countries with low rates of growth are more likely to experience civil war, which in turn slows economic growth and keeps them poor (Collier et al. 2003).

The logical conclusion of this pattern is sobering: those countries currently or recently engaged in conflict are most likely to be engulfed in war again. It is these future conflicts that presage a higher and higher proportion of wars fought with children. Moreover, there are increasing reports of child soldiers in areas where they were once rare, such as Central Asia and the Middle East. The best policy to prevent child soldiering is to ensure that peace settlements remain robust and vibrant, to move societies from civil war to civil peace. If such efforts fail, however, it is helpful to think about alternative strategies regarding recruitment and demobilization.

In this collection, we move from methodology to how the international community, particularly the United Nations and The Hague, has dealt with the issue of children in armed conflict. Several theoretical chapters feature different aspects of the phenomenon of recruiting children to organized armed groups. Case studies are drawn from sub-Saharan Africa, Asia, and Latin America. Contributions on education policy show how schooling can work to mitigate the risk of child soldiering in the first place and how it can play a central role as the reintegration part of a demobilization, disarmament, and reintegration policy.

Barry Ames addresses questions of methodology, noting that child soldiering as a subject suffers symptomatically from the problems encountered by policy fields overwhelmingly populated by advocates rather than more impartial analysts. Inferences are extrapolated from limited numbers; conclusions are drawn from skewed samples; and guesstimates are often inflated to draw attention to otherwise legitimate issues. The result is that myths get circulated and reproduced to the point that they take on the status of facts and become the foundation for policy. The very issue of the global number of child soldiers illustrates the problem well. Reputedly (although not verifiably), the figure of 300,000 was calculated by a group of NGO representatives looking for a convenient number to use in their public campaigns over a decade ago. Whether there was any attempt to form a substantive basis for the claim or

if it was simply chosen for its dramatic effect is unclear. What is clear, how-ever, is that the number has never been justified in terms of hard data, has no clear basis in fact, was arguably never accurate, and is now certainly wrong.[15] Yet few reports, academic or otherwise, begin without reference to the figure, even though it has been used for years and multiple wars have begun, ceased, or been renewed since it was introduced.[16] Recently, some reports have cited a new figure of 250,000 to account for the cessation of hostilities in a number of major conflicts where child soldiers were involved in large numbers—for ex-ample, Angola, Sierra Leone, and Liberia—but this figure is also not based on hard evidence. Ames addresses the central question of how to compensate for the inherent problem of the limitations of data collection in a policy area such as child soldiering by still employing reputable and reliable methods of data gathering and analysis.

The problem of recruitment is linked to ethical, legal, and international or-ganizational issues. Jeff McMahan examines the moral dilemma of those who are faced with fighting child soldiers, asking under which conditions it might be permissible for adults to use force. His analysis exposes the inherent dif-ficulties that war theory encounters when confronted with child soldiers who, by virtue of their age, may have diminished moral agency and/or diminished personal responsibility for their actions.

Tonderai Chikuhwa, who works in the UN's Office for Children and Armed Conflict (CAAC), analyzes how the debate between the Office of the Secretary General and the members of the general assembly on how to enforce norms on the ground has been played out since the CAAC was created over a decade ago. Progress toward an era of application of human rights norms for children has involved walking a tightrope between the protection of children and a series of political sensitivities. Nonetheless, the pattern is encouraging, particularly in the increasing integration of CAAC concerns into the international peace and security agenda of the UN Security Council.

Peter Singer focuses on the globalization of small arms in explaining the growth of child soldiering since the end of the cold war. In particular, he exam-ines the interplay of a shifting socioeconomic environment, the technological advancements of the small arms industry, and the immorality of the leadership of military groups in explaining why child soldiers are now used in conflicts around the world despite a historical precedence against their use coupled with greater international efforts at prohibition. These three factors, Singer sug-gests, have combined to strip away the normative protections children have traditionally enjoyed, as the benefits and ease of using children as expendable military assets currently far outweigh moral qualms of military leaders.

Simon Reich and Vera Achvarina focus on the significant variance in the use of child soldiers in African conflicts over the course of the last decade.

Their chapter assumes that demand is constant and that the real constraint lies in the supply of children in refugee camps, arguing that the degree of access that belligerent parties have to IDP/refugee children is the principal determinant of their likely use as child soldiers. Their finding is not only more robust in explaining the varied use of child soldiers in Africa, but also provides a potential foundation upon which policymakers can implement a practical solution to address the problem in a short time frame.

Jens Christopher Andvig and Scott Gates develop a more generalizable model drawn from theories of organizational behavior and labor economics. They demonstrate that variation in the demand for child soldiers (in conjunction with supply factors) accounts for the tremendous variation across groups in the proportion of child soldiers. This demand, they argue, is influenced by the motivations of the leadership of the military group and by the type of resource endowments available to the organization.

Sarah Kenyon Lischer takes up the theme of camp protection, militarization, and vulnerability in her study of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Building on Achvarina and Reich's chapter, she illustrates how the dangers of displacement for IDPs and refugees can make living in refugee camps almost as desperate as those in the conflict they hoped to escape, especially for children. By viewing the militarization and enhanced insecurity of displaced populations as two major facets of recruitment, Lischer identifies camps as ideal breeding grounds for child soldiers. State capability, international backing, and porosity of international borders are key factors in a camp's vulnerability to recruitment.

Jo Becker's study of three Asian cases further develops the theme of vulnerability. In Nepal and Sri Lanka, Becker finds that quota systems obligate families in rebel-controlled territories to "volunteer" one family member to their cause. In Burma/Myanmar, forced child conscription is the primary method of recruitment. Becker argues that political indoctrination plays a role in these cases and that schools aid in propaganda and forced recruitment in Nepal and Sri Lanka.

Francisco Gutiérrez Sanín's examination of Colombia and James Pugel's survey research on Liberia both employ elements of Andvig and Gates's model. Gutiérrez argues that some specific characteristics of military organizations may carry a strong allure for minors, such as the opportunity for a different life. He counters the presumption that children and adults have identical incentive-based motivations for joining military organizations, and addresses the question of why a military organization may recruit children based on its structure and the characteristics of the general population with which it interacts. James Pugel's study of Liberia supports these findings, comparing motivational factors that drive recruitment of child and adult soldiers through the analysis of a

data set of ex-combatant samples differentiated by both faction and age. Disaggregating the data in this way highlights disparities that would not have been otherwise visible. Rationales, Pugel finds, differ significantly depending not only on age but also on which faction was joined.

Michael Wessells utilizes child psychology theory to study the roles of Angolan girls in conflict. His findings substantiate that girls are recruited for a variety of reasons and that they are often left out of postconflict reintegration programs. Additionally, their distinctive gendered needs are not addressed, creating greater difficulties and stigmatization in postconflict life. Overall, Wessells found research on girls was generally underexamined, even though females constituted a significant proportion of child soldiers.

Maureen McClure and Gonzalo Retamal also use child psychology in their study. They link education strategies to broader social contexts to address the question of why some children become child soldiers. Highlighting the advantages and disadvantages of fugitive literature, they advocate using community-level programs to address recruitment deterrence. The authors note that although these programs can be effective, the international community has done little to specifically target children with these local-level partnerships.

Emily Vargas-Barón focuses on efforts to protect displaced children through the use of preventative education measures intended to thwart recruitment and break the cycle of re-recruitment. With a focus on community-level education reform and conciliation measures—as well as the development and maintenance of basic services wherever possible—Vargas-Barón recognizes the push-and-pull factors that make child soldier recruitment a multifaceted, difficult, and complex problem to tackle.

Andrew Mack focuses on the trends in global human security and children in armed conflict, dispelling myths about the nature of armed conflict, child soldiers, and children as a special dimension of human security.

In the conclusion we discuss why the policies currently employed by the international community have failed so profoundly at curbing the recruitment and abduction of child soldiers. Integrating the findings of the other chapters with broader research on trends in civil conflict, we demonstrate why the problem of children in armed conflict is unlikely to recede. Indeed, it is a phenomenon that likely will be characteristic of more civil conflicts around the globe. Taking these trends into account, we prescribe policy measures to mitigate them while addressing the special needs and vulnerabilities of children in war zones.