Places of Belonging
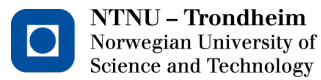
- Exploring the everyday of primary school pupils in Tororo, Uganda.

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Abstract

This thesis explores the lived experiences of school children in Tororo District, Uganda. The aim of this study has been to understand how children and childhood are understood in their local contexts of eastern Uganda, together with understanding children´s places of belonging.

This study is based on an ethnographic fieldwork conducted during a period of three months in Tororo District, Uganda. To understand the everyday of school pupils, the study focused on children enrolled in two different primary schools: Rock View Primary School and Morukatipe Primary School.

The thesis shows that there are multiple places of belonging, and school pupils orient themselves differently within their everyday. School is a place children spend much time. It is perceived as important for children to attend primary school in order to become responsible adults. Children emphasise that school is important together with other places. Common for all the children involved in this study was that their present experiences of places influence their future aspirations.

Key words:

Children, childhood, everyday, primary education, place, belonging, home, lived experiences, eastern Uganda.

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1.0 Introduction

During the last decades the interest of including children in research has increased. Based on the rights based focus, children´s right to be heard in matters that concerns their life is central within academic work, as well as in other areas of societies. Primary education is given much emphasis from global to local actors after the Education For All (EFA), the Millennium Development Goal nr. 2 (MDG) and Universal Primary Education (UPE) were introduced (UNICEF 2013). Children´s right to be heard have been included in research, especially within the new sociological studies of childhood, where the aspect of children as active agents in order to say something about their lives, as central.

With the wish to contribute to the growing body of academics on children and how they relate to their everyday life I chose to write about children attending primary school in Uganda. Much literature is found about children in atypical places, and with respect for this, I decided to do research with children in the so-called "normal" situations from an everyday view, in order to understand children´s places of belonging.

This thesis draws on an ethnographic fieldwork conducted from August-October 2013 among children in two different primary schools in Tororo District, eastern Uganda. The knowledge created for this thesis is based on a reflexive and reciprocal relationship between the different research participants and me as a researcher. Multiple ethnographic methods as semi-structured interviews, participatory observation, informal conversations and autophotography were used to create the knowledge this thesis builds upon. Through teaching at the two schools I got to understand the everyday of the school life from the inside, and the emphasis on this research is to explore children´s everyday life through the eyes and voices of the children participating in the fieldwork.

The study of this thesis shows how school children perceive their everyday life through the focus of place and belonging. Key benefits of this research are to improve the knowledge about children´s everyday lives inside and outside primary school. Related to exploring places of belonging, this study focuses on the understanding of children´s social orientation as well as how children are socially constructed. The study draws attention to children who are enrolled in

two government-managed primary schools. This means that this thesis focuses on children who are perceived by adults in the society to be in the appropriate place for them to be.

1.1. Personal experience and goals that guided the research

Choosing a topic for this thesis was easy for me, and this process can be linked to my journey to Brazil 16 years ago. This made me as a youth from Norway very interested in social and economic inequalities. Looking back at my attitudes towards the world's inequalities at that time I must say it was Eurocentric based on western values. Many years later I travelled to Uganda (still with the western values), with the aim to study at Makerere University and work with disabled children in Kampala. On the journey I met my husband, and the interest for Uganda, it´s languages and cultures increased. My understanding enriched and the western values were highly contested. This process of living in and learning about another culture has been incredible valuable for me during the work with this thesis, and especially during the period of the fieldwork. With the pervious experiences from Uganda it made it easier for me to be reflexive and reflect more upon my position as a researcher and the social relationships that developed during the fieldwork. Being familiar with cultural and social norms and values before entering the field was also helpful in order to form the topic as well as getting contacts.

The decision to study children was based on my experience from working with children in both Uganda and Norway, as well as managing a local NGO centring on children in Uganda. Another motivation for studying children in Uganda was part of a reaction towards the images of children as poor, oppressed, victims, living in an African context. And I wanted to oppose these images by showing the everyday life and places of school children in Uganda.

Another compelling reason for studying children in Uganda was the interest of children as socially constructed. To see children as individuals reflecting several positions within a society, and to explore how different stakeholders within the Ugandan context understand children was appealing to me. To identify children´s places and belonging from their point of view through an ethnographic research process seamed both challenging and interesting.

1.2 A child centred approach

To see children as socially constructed is common in both geography and the new sociological studies of childhood. This view is based on the UN convention of the right of the child (UNCRC), with the emphasis on children´s right to be heard in matters that concerns and influence their life (Abebe 2009). In this way children are seen as social actors and agents of their lives, and they are seen as active *beings* instead of passive *becomings*. Within this view there are multiple sets of childhoods that are partly shaped by children themselves within their own socio-cultural context. This means that the different cultural, historical and temporal aspects of childhood are included within this view. In this line participation will also be something that is culturally constructed. And how a child can participate, with what activity and within what context will be culturally constructed. This means that when including children in research, it is essential that the researcher is familiar with the local and cultural norms for what is appropriate for a child to participate with within that specific socio-cultural context (Skeldon 2008).

1.3 Research Questions and Objectives

In exploring children´s sense of belonging, this thesis relies on the definition of children as socially constructed, able to say something about their everyday lives. The following research objective and research question have been identified for this research:

Research objective

To identify children´s perceptions of place and belonging. In order to study this objective I need to understand:

1. The way children are defined within their socio-cultural context and by different stakeholders.
2. Children´s perceptions of school and home.

Research questions

1. How are children defined within their socio-cultural context?

- Parents/caretakers.

- Teachers.
- Other stakeholders.

2. What places influence children´s sense of belonging?

- The school.
- Family and home.
- Other places.

1.4 Limitations

This study has a number of limitations that the reader should keep in mind while reading this thesis.

First, a major limitation can be related to the child-centred focus of this research. I am an adult, white, female researcher who travelled to Uganda to explore children´s places of belonging. This can create a number of limitations. First of all, I will have an adult-centred view since I am an adult and it is difficult, if not impossible, to gain a complete child perspective from the children´s point of view. Second, to be a white woman can influence how the research participants were relating to me, and to create an authentic reciprocal relationship could be difficult. This can easy influence the knowledge created during fieldwork.

The second main limitation is time of the fieldwork. The fieldwork was done in a period of three months, and to gain better insights it could be interesting to study the same research participants over a longer research period in order to get a deeper understanding of what factors that influence their sense of belonging and future aspirations.

The third limitation is connected to the topic of this research. Studying subjective feelings and the relationship between people and place is based on the relationship that develops between the research participants and me. My personal understanding of the world and places will influence how I interpret my research participants feelings and perceptions of their everyday lives, as well as how I will use the knowledge created during this fieldwork.

1.5 Organisation of the thesis

The thesis is organised in seven chapters, where the thesis aims to gain better understandings on school children´s places and belonging in their everyday life. As well as developing an understanding on how pupils of primary school is placed and understood in the Ugandan context.

Chapter 2: *Contextualizing children´s sense of belonging*, contextualizes children´s places and belongings in their everyday lives. It gives a picture of the geographical area of the study. The chapter also contextualizes the education system that can influence children´s lives, as well as it presents the socio-cultural context that surrounds children´s everyday lives in their local context of Tororo District.

Chapter 3: *Theorizing children´s sense of belonging*, presents the concept of children and education, as well as it presents the place theory. The focus is on place as locale and sense of place, which is closely related to sense of belonging. This chapter shows critiques as well as benefits of the theory and relevant concepts. It will also present how the theory and concepts will be used in the empirical part of this thesis.

Chapter 4: *Studying children´s sense of belonging*, shows the methodological part where the knowledge for this thesis is created. It presents the methods used during fieldwork, ethical reflections and my positioning as a researcher studying children´s sense of belonging.

Chapter 5: *Perceptions of children and primary education*, explores how children are understood within their local context. It also focuses on how parents/caretakers and teachers view primary education, as it is a place where children spend much of their time, as well as a place that are influenced by decisions made at multiple levels.

Chapter 6: *Everyday places of belonging*, explores the everyday places children showed me as important for them. It reflects how children orient themselves within their local worlds and how the everyday experiences are creating and forming future aspirations.

Chapter 7: *Concluding discussion*, is revisiting the theory in order to link theory to the empirical parts of chapter 5 and 6. The aim is to get a deeper understanding of children´s belonging from both a theoretical and empirical point of view.

Chapter 8: *Conclusion,* is answering the research questions and makes the final conclusions.

2.0 Contextualizing Children´s sense of Belonging

The aim of this chapter is to give a brief contextualisation related to children´s belonging. First, I will present the study area of my fieldwork. The emphasis will be on the people and place in Tororo town and Morukatipe. Second, this chapter will contextualize children in Uganda in general, and further, more specific, in Tororo town and Morukatipe. This is to get a better understanding of children´s local context. Third, this chapter will present the historical development of the formal education system in Uganda and Tororo, and finally it will give a contextualisation of UPE and the resent reforms that influence the every day life of children and teachers.

2.1 The study area
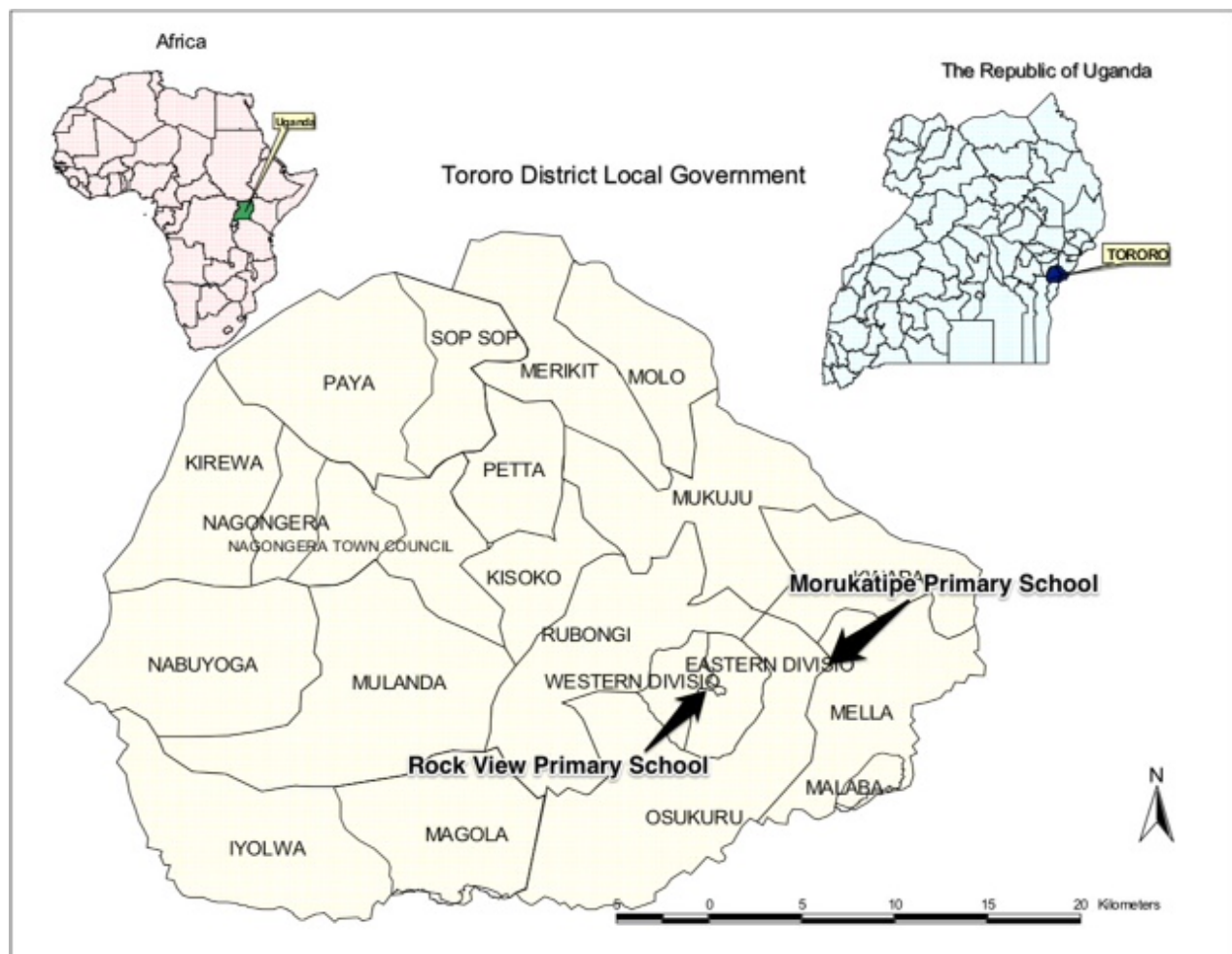
Map 1. Map of Tororo District (Tororo District Planning Unit 2012).

My research took place two places within Tororo District: Tororo town and Morukatipe, with the focus on Rock View Primary School and Morukatipe Primary School. As seen from Map 1, Tororo District is east in Uganda, on the boarder to Kenya.

Tororo town is the main centre of Tororo district and it is located between the western and eastern division within Tororo municipal council. With Malaba as the closest boarder town, only 15 km away, Tororo can be described as a migration passage with impulses from different tribes and countries. The town can be seen as a mosaic of different tribes and languages. Jopadhola, Iteso, and Bagiso are the three dominating tribes, yet people from more than seven other tribes are identified (Tororo census report 2002). Because of this, most people are multilingual. Children grow up learning at least two-three languages and they often speak a mix of the most common languages. Tribes live peacefully together on an every day basis, yet in times of elections, tensions and disagreements are identified. To use the term *tribe* regarding the different groupings can be problematic (Meinert 2009). However, the expression is used in every day language in Tororo, and my research participants perceived it as a part of their belonging and identity. When research participants presented themselves to me for the first time they would often present their name followed by what tribe they belonged to.

The children participating in my research from Tororo town was enrolled in Rock View Primary School. The school is located in the centre of the town and is considered to be one of the best government schools in Tororo District, as it was ranked as number four by the government schools in the districts best Primary Leaving Examination (PLE) results (Tororo District Local Government 2012).

Morukatipe is approximately 10 Km away from Tororo Town (see Map 1). Some of the family members of my research participants worked as boda-boda drivers (Bicycle or motorbike taxi) in town, and some of the mothers could walk to town to sell their crops. Although Morukatipe was close to town it had clearly different physical and cultural characteristics then Tororo town. The village was spread around the mud road that connected Morukatipe to Tororo town in the southwest and to Malaba in south. Small paths were seen in the landscape of maize, cassava, sunflowers and matoke (plantain).

Morukatipe Primary School was the only school in Morukatipe, and most of the children living in Morukatipe were enrolled in the school. The school had poor exam results and were among the schools with few resources available (Tororo District Local Government 2012).

2.1.1 The Iteso in Morukatipe

The research participants in Morukatipe belonged to the Iteso tribe. For many of the pupils and the parents/caretakers, it was seen as very important to speak the language of their tribe, Ateso. They also emphasised that to be a real Iteso you have to know how to make Atapa, which is the main food of the Iteso. It is made from grinded cassava and millet flour and boiled to a thick paste. Both the language and the food were related to their sense of belonging to the cultural group of the Iteso.

The Iteso are divided in to two groups: the northern Iteso who live in North-Eastern Uganda (Kumi, Soroti, and Pallisa district), and the southern Iteso who live on the boarder to Kenya (Tororo, Busia and Mbale district) (Karp 1978). The Iteso in Morukatipe belong to what is defined as the southern Iteso group. Significant cultural differences between the two groups are not existing (Meinert 2009), and my research participants emphasised that the main difference is seen in pronunciations of words, where Swahili influences the southern Iteso´s language. The division between the groups did not appear to be distinctive as many of my research participants had relatives from the northern Iteso, and it was common for children to be sent to relatives in the north to go to school or help with other chores.

The homes of the Iteso are of the same characteristics of most rural houses in Uganda. They are round, grassed-hatched with walls of mud and cow dung. As the research participants from Tororo town lived in monogamous homes, many of the research participants living in Morukatipe were living in polygamous homes with several huts placed on the same compound. It was common for men to have two-three wives and for the whole family to live together. Every wife had her own hut and there were two huts for the children, one for boys and one for girls.

2.2 Contextualizing Children

Almost half of the world's population are under 25 years old, and 90% of these live in the Global South. Children´s lives and experiences in the Global South are incredible varied and

influenced by local, national, international and global processes (Ansell 2005). As seen from figure 1, Uganda's population is very young, with almost 50% of the inhabitants below 15 years old. This is related to the high fertility and high mortality level within the country (US Census Bureau).
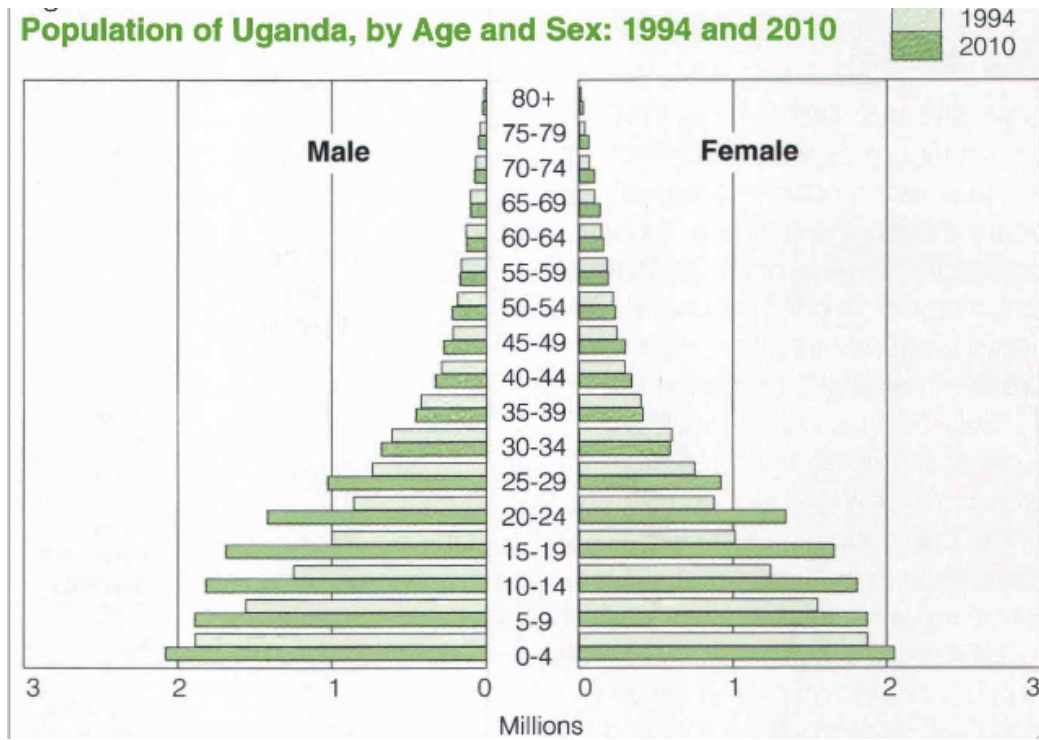
Figure 1. Population triangle (US Census Bureau, 2010).

A child in Uganda is by government law an individual below 18 years old. All my research participants used this definition, however, they emphasised on other definitions and understandings as well of who a child is and what a good childhood should be. This reflected their own positions as adults in the society and the children´s different positions within the local community. Children in Tororo town and Morukatipe belonged to different tribes, but they share the same reality of unstable weather, periods of food shortage, underemployment and general poverty.

2.3 School system in Uganda

All societies expect their children to learn new skills and knowledge within their society. Knowledge has been passed on to children through practical, cultural and verbal practices for

generations. These were usually everyday practices within the society done together with parents, friends, extended family and other members of the local community (Ansell 2005). In Uganda each tribe has had it´s tradition of education. Ssekamwa (1997) in Meinert (2009): 46, describes that:

…each tribe had an education system with aims, organization, content, methods of teaching, teachers and places where education was imparted. In pre-colonial times the education of children took place in practice: in the fields, around the fireplace, during rituals, etc. There was also verbal teaching in the sleeping huts at night, through storytelling, and `mini-lectures´ combined with instant practice. Education at that time was available to all children and was the responsibility of all adults in the tribe.

This shows that all children had access to the education that was needed for them to be grown-ups within their socio-cultural context. Skills were given by the elders and knowledge created and based on verbal disclosure. To educate children was every adult´s responsibility and children were seen as a valuable part of the local community in terms of social and cultural reproduction, as well as a resource in agricultural and household's economic income activities.

2.3.1 Colonial education in Uganda

European missionaries were the first one to start a formal education system in Uganda. Kabaka Mutesa I, the king of Buganda (central Uganda), invited missionaries to teach his people about Christianity and give them knowledge from the western part of the world. The first official school was opened in 1877, led by British missionaries from the Church Missionary Society. These schools were based on the Bible and one can still see the impact Christianity and the Bible has on the education system. Churches expanded the Christian schools in Uganda and the early colonial powers were not involved in matters related to education. Still, during the first years of the 1900s, discussions on the education system rose between the missionaries and the colonial government, as both parts wanted the power to influence future Ugandans. After some decades a system where the missionaries were responsible for the lower levels as primary school and the colonial government were in charge of the higher education levels, were developed (Meinert 2009).

After Uganda's independence in 1962 the government took control over all schools. Although there was a form of unification between the government and the religious groups that were in charge of the primary schools, tensions and disagreements related to curricula can still be

identified. However, it seems like the perceptions of both children and adults consider the church and the schools to be related and connected (Meinert 2009).

2.3.2 Universal Primary Education (UPE)

Universal Primary Education (UPE) as Millennium Development Goal number 2 (MDG 2) and Education For All, has the target to: *Ensure that, by 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling* (UN 2013). Education is seen as a means for development and social change. World bank emphasise this and looks at several development benefits from education; more rapid growth and poverty reduction, better health, reduced fertility, improved resilience to economic shocks, and greater civic participation (World Bank Group Education Strategy 2020). To assume that school are the most significant institution for economic growth, development and modernisation is related to modernisation theory. Some scholars have emphasised that modernisation and schools are not a homogenising process producing social levelling, they often work as a conservative force reproducing class structures and social inequalities (Ansell 2005 and Meinert 2003).

Based on MDG 2, UPE was introduced as a part of President Museveni´s election campaign in 1996, and implemented in 1997. The mission of UPE was to get well-educated citizens that would bring economic and social development and help the poverty level to decrease.

15 years after the implementation, UPE is well established and all children have the access to primary education (Ministry of Education and Sports 2012). If one focus on the access rate to primary education, UPE has been quite successful. However, to understand the situation of the school children, teachers, and parents/caretakers, it is useful to look at the influence, perceptions and challenges of UPE in Tororo and Morukatipe.

2.3.3 Primary school and reforms in Tororo

The Primary school system in Uganda consists of seven years where every year has three terms. Depending on the school size, every year has different streams, normally from A-D, or more. The children´s exam results decide what stream they will join in the following term. Depending on the exam results, the best performers are enrolled in the A stream and further it continues to D. Primary School is leading to the Primary Leaving Examination (PLE), and the results from these exams will determine if and where the children can continue with secondary education.

The District Edcation Officer (DEO) and the Inspectors of Schools at The Ministry of Education and Sports in Tororo District are working with implementation of government policies regarding education and UPE within the district. The function of the DEO is to implement education policies and to act as the link between local government and the minister of education. The inspectors of school are mainly working in the field to map the situations at the different schools, supervising teachers and see if the government policies and reforms regarding education and UPE are implemented at local level. They are the body connecting ground level school activities to national policy (Ministry of Education and Sports, Tororo 2012).

Throughout the period of UPE there had been several reforms regarding the instruction and contents of different subject. Reforms in the school system have an influence on the everyday lives of children. Sometimes these policies bring about positive change and other times they are not so helpful. During the last five years there have been three main reforms of policy changes: Thematic curricula with emphasis on local language (LOLA), Physical education and Automatic promotion. This thesis will focus on thematic curricula with the emphasis on LOLA and Automatic promotion.

Thematic Curricula and LOLA

Thematic curricula focus on the issue of LOLA. By teaching in the local language during the first four years of primary school the intention is that children get a better understanding of the main concepts in different subjects. The objective is that it will help them in the more advanced years of primary schools. Thematic Curricula focus on centring the education on themes rather then subjects. For instance, can one theme be *my house* where the teachers include all subjects as mathematics, social studies, music and arts, English, and history in the study of *the home*. Primary four is called transition class where English is gradually implemented in all subjects during the year. From primary five to seven, English is the main language and the local language is a subject that is examined like the other subjects.

Thematic curricula and LOLA were considered and implemented in both Rock View and Morukatipe. Rock View did not consider teaching in the local language; this was because of practical reasons where children in the same class did not have the same native tongue. At Morukatipe the classes were given in Ateso language from class one to four. English were mostly used in the classrooms from year five to seven, yet Ateso were used to underline examples in class and was the main language outside the classrooms. The pupils spoke mostly

Ateso in all communication between themselves at school. At home Ateso was the only language spoken.

To use local language at school is important, but for the Iteso in Morukatipe it might not be to their benefit when it comes to the exams that are given in English. This was especially noticed during the time of exam results. From P1-P5 exams are given by the end of every term, and the school makes the exams. P6 and P7 have Middle Term Examinations made by Uganda National Examinations Board (UNEB). P7 have PLE made by UNEB as well, and based on the national curricula. The Middle Term Examinations and PLE are the same for all pupils in Uganda. The results of these exams are the essential ground for if and where the pupils can go to secondary school. All the exams are given in English and the pupils are expected to answer in English. Poor results and a low passing rate existed, and basic understandings of different concepts were absent (Tororo District, Education department 2012). The performance of the children at Morukatipe was week even though they might know the answers in Ateso.

Automatic Promotion

The Ministry of Education and Sports communicated that automatic promotion is connected to attendance rate where the pupil has acquired enough knowledge to continue to the next class if he/she has attended 95% of the time in the class. This means that the promotion to the next year within primary school is now based on attendance rate rather than exam and test results. Automatic promotion seemed to be a term that created confusion and disagreements between the intentions of it and the actual practice that was found in the schools. The issue of the attendance rate was not communicated to head masters and teachers who communicated that the automatic promotion was a problem and that it leads to more cases of illiteracy and gives the pupils reduced opportunities regarding secondary education.

Children are automatically moved to the next year, and can end up being in class without understanding what is thought. Some of my research participants were in P6 without knowing how to read and write. UPE has been misunderstood regarding the automatic promotion and in practice the schools are not considering the attendance rate since it has not been communicated from the national level of the Ministry of Education and Sports.

2.4 Summing up and the way forward

This chapter have contextualised the topic for this thesis. It has presented the study area and the two schools were the fieldwork was conducted. Further, it has shown that Uganda has a young population and this can show that research with children in Uganda can be important. Lastly, this chapter has explained the development of the formal school system in Uganda. This is to understand the historical context, and the present background for the every day reality the children live within.

The next chapter will present the theoretical framework and relevant concepts for this thesis.

3.0 Theorising children´s sense of belonging

This chapter assesses the theoretical foundation of the research. It´s aim is to identify theoretical concepts that will be used in the analysis of this thesis.

First, this chapter presents the concept of children and how the thesis operationalizes children and childhood. Then, it will outline how primary education can influence children´s sense of belonging. Further, it will focus on the place theory with the emphasis on place as locale, sense of place and sense of belonging. This chapter draws on the everyday processes of belonging influenced by actions at different levels. Second, this chapter will connect the theory to the context of this thesis, in order to understand how the theoretical concepts can be related to the situation of Uganda.

3.1 Conceptualizing children.

Figure 1 shows that UN agencies define a child as a person below 18 years. Adolescent and teenager are up to 19 years, while young adult and youth define further terms within the age groups up to 24 years.
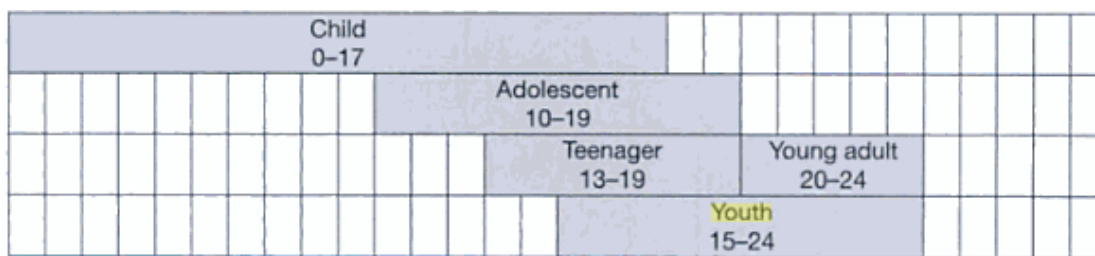
Figure 2 (Ansell 2005).

What they all have in common is that they are younger then adults, *less* than adults, or *becoming's* of adults, and in simple terms they have to grow to learn the skills one needs to be an adult. This can be related to the varying degree of age-based discrimination in different social contexts. These are hegemonic representations of children and childhood placed in an age range where they sequentially grow physically and mentally. It can also be seen in relation to the

lower part of a developmental process where the leading purpose is to become an adult (Aitken 2001, Holloway and Valentine 2000, Holt and Holloway 2006).

Within humanistic geography and other disciplines of social science, the epistemology and focus of placing children within categories changed during the 1980s. Aitken (2001) describes this period as a crisis that had an influence on how adults and researchers within social science situated themselves in the relation to children and young people. Discussions were regarding methodology and the terms and definitions of child, childhood, adolescence and youth. The notion of children as *less* then adults seen in a developmental process of becoming adults used to be commonly accepted, were now contested and problematized by scholars within different disciplines of social science (Aitken 2001).

A child can be defined on different levels. State level defines a child by the law, and at other scales e.g. in cultural, social and local terms, children are defined within generational orders related to place and socio-cultural context. And the lines between child and adult are more complex and blurry. Some view childhood as the absence of adulthood, while others describe children as pre-pubescent becoming youths. Adolescent are intended to describe older children. The different meanings and approaches to defining a child and childhood are defined in relations to adults (Aitken 2001), which can also be seen in relation to the western notion of children and childhood, where the view of children in the Global North is that children are *less* competent then adults. Children are seen as innocent, in need of protection, and passive in creating their identities and reproducing social and cultural structures. They are not expected to contribute to the household income or take care of their parents or caretakers (Holloway and Valentine 2000). However, geographical studies from the Global South have shown that the western view of children and childhood is not a relevant understanding for many of the social contexts. This is also emphasised within the more recent geographies and the sociological studies of childhood (Ansell 2005). Children and childhood are understood as being socially constructed in different ways at different times and places; depending on where and within what social context they are constructed in. Children do not only define their identities based on age, rather they reflect gender, class, cast and cultural context. It is the social cultural context of societies, place and time, that defines if age is a biologically and/or a socially experience (Aitken 2001, Holloway and Valentine 2000, Holt and Holloway 2006). In this way, positioning children within the social context and their everyday circumstances is important. To understand the children´s everyday lives and the way childhood is constructed one should look at children as active parts of the socio-generational categories that they are placed in. Children manoeuvre and shape their

lives within the generational order, and as Christiansen, Utas and Vigh (2006) emphasise it is important to see children both as social *beings* and social *becoming´s*. Meaning that one have to focus on both how children position themselves, and on how others (adults) position them in the local socio-generational order.

In Uganda a child is someone who is below 18 of years. This is the official definition the government is operationalizing. Yet, as I will show in the analytical chapters, this definition was not used in all social contexts that I was involved in during the fieldwork. Differences were found between the rural and the urban, among children and adults, and between different cultural belongings (clans). I will therefore argue that for this research it is most appropriate to see childhood as socially constructed within the local Ugandan context, with the emphasis on children´s sense of belonging and children as *beings* and *becoming's*.

Children and childhoods are socially constructed in multiple ways. To some extent children them selves construct and influence the local notion of children and childhood. However, one should not ignore the impact global policies as the Millennium Development goal 2 (MDG2) and Universal Primary Education (UPE), can have on the social and cultural construction of childhood. Implementation of global policies made in the Global North can influence how a child is viewed and what activities are appropriate for a child to do at local scale. Childhoods are changing over time and are influenced by changes and structures at different scales (Skeldon 2007).

3.2 Children and education

Related to the conceptualizing of children, education is seen in many socio-cultural contexts as a means for children to be formally educated in order to become an adult (Ansell 2005). Seen from the background chapter, there is a global focus on primary education, especially as a development strategy embedded in the MDG 2 and UPE. Among scholars there have been several debates concerning primary education. Emphasis has been on schooling as a way of bringing development through a modernisation process (of modernisation development theory), or if education is reproducing social and economic inequalities.

More recent debates question whether schooling leads children and how it influences children's spatial orientation. Studies have showed distinctive meanings of education, especially in forms

of children`s social mobility, future limitations or opportunities at different levels/in life (Meinert 2003). School dominates a big amount of time for children across the world. And it influences the everyday life of children in a way few other institutions are capable of. Schooling is also seen as an identity shaper for many children that can influence children´s sense of belonging and future aspirations. The influence of education is underrepresented in many studies, and Meinert (2003) argues that there is need for more research about this topic. With this said, one should not underestimate other factors outside school and education that can influence children´s everyday lives, their social orientation and their sense of belonging (Ansell 2005. Meinert 2003).

3.3 Place

The understanding of place varies within and between academic disciplines. Within psychology and social anthropology the focus have been on human's understandings and identification with places, and how place can influence identity. Other scholars have seen place as a physical site with focus on the physical character of a place, where place are influenced by the physical place characteristics. The place theory is central within human geography, and was developed during the 1970s by American human geographers, especially dominated by Relph (1976) and Tuan (1974,1975,1977), who wanted to address and include humans in theories of geographies. They criticised the positivistic, quantitative focus of understanding place, and focused on the importance of the difference between abstract space and meaningful place. Instead of looking at place as a physical location, they wanted to understand place as a subjective experienced phenomenon, and explore how humans, both individuals and groups, interpreted and related to various areas of their lives; people´s sense of place. This approach was focusing on the relation between people and place, where places influence people´s identity and vice versa. The concept was further developed during the 1980s, along with, and inspired by Giddon´s structuration theory (Berg & Dale 2004, Dale & Berg 2013, Lewika 2010).

Three main ways of understanding the concept of place can be identified. They are not competing perspectives, but rather three perspectives that can be intertwined and combined with each other. First, there is place as *location*. This is a specific physical area where economic activities are found, and this understanding can be related to theories of economic geography. Secondly, place as *locale* focuses on place as a setting for social interaction in the everyday life.

Thirdly, there is *sense of place* or identification with a place, focusing on human's experiences and emotional dimension of place (Agnew 2005, Berg & Dale 2004). Within this chapter I will focus on place as locale and sense of place.

The concept of **place as locale** presents a connection between structures and sense of place. It presents a setting where everyday activities take place. Home, schools, working place, the local shop or market can all be seen as locale because they are structured by formal and informal institutions, and at the same time they are shaped by the people and the activities that take place. This means that the formal and informal structures give conditions for human action, but human actions also give conditions for the structures (Agnew 2005). Human geographers adopted the idea of the concept from the sociologist Anthony Giddens, who said that locale needs to be understood as a meeting place where individuals` everyday activities meets and interacts in time and space. Geographers inspired by Giddens transferred his theory to place where they see that people continuously change the place, and the place continuously construct and influence the human activities (Berg & Dale 2004).

Geographers have been criticises place as locale. One of the central critiques was by Entrikin (1991) (Berg & Dale 2004), who underlined that by including structuralism to place, the focus is considerable on the routines of people, and not on the emotional aspect and intended actions. Berg & Dale (2004) describes this as one of the common critiques towards place as locale. They further emphasise that place as locale contains more than the structural aspect; it includes the social dimension and the dynamic relation between actors and structures (Berg & Dale 2004).

Sense of place is related to people's experiences and emotional ties to place. It refers to the meaning people give to different places, and the feelings of a sense of place are often about people's homes and the place growing up as children (Cresswell 2004). Further, sense of place is about how humans subjectively experience and understand the places surrounding them. This can be related to both individual and social experiences aspects/feelings of place. Individuals see place from their own experiences in their everyday lives that creates different feelings for or against a place. Sense of place should also be interpreted from individual's social position and place-bound social relations (Gustafson 2002. Holloway & Hubbard 2001. Rose 1995). For many people sense of place is about feeling belonging to the place as well as caring about the place and the persons and social relations at the place (Berglund and Wollan 2004).

Sense of place is closely related to a sense of belonging and vice versa. To have a strong sense of belonging to a place, either deliberately or through everyday activities can be revealing a sense of place. And to have a sense of place can influence and uncover a sense of belonging (Agnew 2005. Gustafson 2002).

3.4 Place and belonging

The development of the place concept has approached an understanding that combine the "inside" feelings and emotions and the "outside" society and structures. These two ways of looking at place are both common within geography. Identity *of* a place refers to the identity of the place itself where the physical aspects are important, while identity *with* a place raises the issue of people's identification with the place. Relph (1976), in Dale and Berg (2013), connected identity *with* a place, to the concepts of place and sense of place. In practice these two ways of looking at place is intertwined because of humans ability to see place from both the "inside" and the "outside". Meaning that a person can be attached to the place from both the social relations created on the place and its physical characteristics. The social relations can be influenced by the physical aspect of the place, but it is the social relations itself and the humans feelings of social belongingness that creates human´s sense of place and sense of belonging (Dale and Berg 2013).

During the last decades there has been an increased interest in what it means to belong and not to belong, and overall what belonging means. According to Wood and Waite (2011), everyone belongs, to some extent, to places, social relations, cultures, and social groups. The main point is that people have different intensity and strength in their belongingness. As seen, belonging is connected to sense of place. Sense of belonging has an emotional character where feelings of secureness and being `at home´ is essential. Wood and Waite (2011) emphasise on the emotional and social quality of sense of belonging and describes it as a:

 … dynamic emotional attachment that relates individuals to the material and social worlds that they inhabit and experience. It is about the feeling `at home´ and `secure´, but it is equally about being recognised and understood.

(Wood and Waite 2011: 201).

To understand place and human´s sense of belonging it is important to include the aspect of place levels. Within this context, place levels means distinct hierarchical ordered levels as home, neighbourhood, village, cities, regions, and countries, transnational and global. Belonging can be conceptualized at different levels, and when studying belonging it is important to acknowledge the plurality of scales within the ordered levels of the categories mentioned above; meaning that one hierarchical level can have multiple levels of belonging. And belonging is not necessary influenced by only one hierarchical ordered level, but by different levels (Wood and Waite 2011).

Home for children might be understood as extended to neighbourhood. It is a place characterized by privacy, comfort, security, attachment, etc. It can be a physical place with walls, windows and doors, or it can refer to the more emotional aspects of home as an emotional space with structures of feelings. Home can also be a metaphor for all places where people feel attached (Caluya 2010). The home in relation to sense of belonging might be influenced by intra-household power relationships manipulated by gender and age, and the grade of the person´s involvement in giving the home meaning, through personal investments and involvements in space (Cresswell 2004). Neighbourhood and village can be characterized with diffused borders. Residents give it different meanings and it influences their sense of belonging in several ways depending on their own social and material contribution to the place. Cities have boarders that are clearer then neighbourhoods and regions. These can be seen as more stabile then national boarders that can change during times of conflicts and war. Cities are related to the place concept and it is seen as created exclusively for human's social and economic interactions (Lewika 2010). Region is considered by some scholars, especially Tuan (1975) and Paasi (2003) in Lewika (2010), to be too big for people to give it meaning, further they are valued as less important object for the influence of place attachment and humans sense of belonging. However, regions can have symbolic value and influence identification, identity and people´s sense of belonging. Country as a national level can be related to a common history and can have a symbolic value for its people. It is related to group belonging where social symbols and national identification is important. Transnational, or supranational level can contribute to sense of belonging as well. Africa, for instance can be a symbolic value across national boarders and local cultures through historical, political and cultural similarities. Finally, a sense of belonging can be experienced at a global level. This can be related to new information and communication technology where one can develop a global sense of belonging by using new technology that shows aspects from different parts of the world and influence how people view and perceive the everyday lives at local level (Lewika 2010, Massey and Jess 1995).

Levels of belonging can be influenced and interconnected to structural economic and social changes on regional, national and global scale. Policymaker's decisions are influenced by global politics, policies and economy and can directly influence people's everyday life and sense of belonging. Various levels of belonging are intertwined and influence each other. This is an intersectionality of belonging and individuals negotiate multi-layered senses of belonging that occur at different spatial levels. The mutual, and sometimes contesting, relationship between different levels of scales is essential in the focus of the underlying factors and processes, as well as the larger structural changes that take place in order to understand what influence people's everyday lives and sense of belonging (Wood and Waite 2011, Massey and Jess 1995).

3.4.1 The Place and Everyday Spaces of Belonging

The everyday is something regarded as close to all humans. The everyday is something that is unnoticed but always present, and it is related to the everyday routines that humans perform in different places as home, school, garden, market, etc. Lefebvre is one of the academics that have invested much time in the concept of the everyday. He argues that by looking at the everyday, one is finding and focusing on the extraordinary in the ordinary (Holloway and Hubbard 2001). The everyday is focusing on the ordinary lives people are living, rather then the irregular and extreme events. Rigg (2007) includes ordinary people in to this understanding. The contribution of ordinary people in everyday events are important together with the personal understandings, stories and actions done in everyday space. This is related to a personal geography where:

The focus on the everyday is not only because normal living is everyday living, but also because the everyday begins and ends with the personal.

(Rigg 2007, 17).

The personal can be connected to the spaces people experience and live within (Agnew 2005). Everyday spaces of belonging are connected and characterized by the same unnoticed, but always-present perspective seen from the everyday. It views the world the way persons perceive and understand it. Physical aspects as seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting and touching, mental aspects as emotions, remembering, etc., and social aspects like social relations related and influenced by physical and mental aspects will have an impact on the everyday. It is also influenced by experience, and the everyday life is in constant change since persons growing experiences in the social world will influence the way the person senses and perceive his/her everyday life (Holloway and Hubbard 2001. Seamon 1984).

Spaces are related to the everyday. People manoeuvre within and between everyday spaces as home, school, garden, market, road, tree, etc. in their everyday life and what they experience in their everyday spaces is influencing individuals sense of belonging. To look at and include the everyday important, yet, one should not ignore how wider scalar socio-economic processes that take place, influence the everyday Ansell (2007).

3.4.2 Processes of belonging

Processes of sense of belonging are influenced by the time period spent at the specific place. Activities are performed by individuals and groups and create social relations that can influence human's sense of belonging. Places where people live for long periods and go through life changes and life stages can give a deeper place related meaning, in both social and physical aspects of an individual's life. Time can also be seen as an indirect connection to the social relations in a place developed over time and can enrich and have a deep influence on individual´s sense of belonging (Lewika 2010). This can be related to time-space activities as everyday routines performed at a place. Seamon (1980), in Holloway and Hubbard (2001) and Lewika (2010), describes how people operate space in their daily routines by using the metaphor "body ballet". This is related to the repeated everyday activities people perform in their everyday life. E.g. driving to work, walking to school, meeting friends, making a meal etc. To some extent, this can be seen as choreography performed by persons without deliberately thinking about the body movements. Together the "body ballet" and the time-space everyday activities contribute to the "place-ballet", where groups of people are interacting together in specific places. This produces the feeling of belonging to a place, and belonging to the life beat of the everyday time-space activities (Holloway and Hubbard 2001, Lewika 2010). By looking at the "body ballet" and "place ballet" one can see hints and clues of how a person relates to the world, in practical, everyday time-space activities Seamon (1984).

3.4.3 Children, place and belonging

Olwig & Gulløv (2003) argue that when using the place theory and concepts in relation to children, it becomes double edged. Firstly, place can refer to places allocated to children by others. Mostly by adults as parents, caretakers, extended family members and the wider local community who define children`s places. This can be related to common-sense beliefs about children´s best interest within the cultural context of the society. Secondly, place can refer to

more informal places created by children as they engage in various activities and relationships. These relationships can be both inter and intra-generational. This means that children's` places becomes a matter of their status in the relative generational order within the socio-cultural context they live in. It becomes a matter of what are appropriate places for them as children and juniors (Olwig & Gulløv 2003).

Adult's views of children and childhood are socio-culturally contextualized, and this is reflected in the places society consider as suitable for the children. Children´s places can exist on several levels, from home, to the neighbourhood, to more distanced areas like schools, playgrounds, etc., and policies that influences children´s lives are made on global and national scales. The mobility of children in public space relies on numerous complex factors as age, gender, family relations, ethnicity, and cultural values existing in the locale community. These factors will influence the children`s ability to develop new social contexts, and this can in some way limit the modifications they can do in existing social orders and cultural reproduction. The placement of children, and their opportunities and limitation of developing new places for them selves, can also lead to reconfiguration of the places already intended for them, e.g. schools, playgrounds, activity centres, etc. (Olwig & Gulløv 2003).

Recent geographies are about young peoples´ communities, places and institutions that shape their lives. Places are important because these contexts play a large part of forming social reproduction, making future aspirations, and give meaning to daily activities and create a sense of belonging. Global economic restructuring and social change influence connections between space, place and power. This is related to children´s experience of their everyday lives and sense of belonging (Aitken 2001). School is a place where children spend a big part of their everyday lives and it can, indirectly or directly, have an impact on children´s sense of belonging. Social structures that emplace children and how children´s ability to place themselves and to say something about their sense of belonging is influenced by the present social and political structures at the place.

3.5 Relating theory to context

The focus of this chapter has been on the four concepts of children, primary education, place and sense of belonging. In order to understand sense of belonging I have used place theory, which have been seen and operationalized in different ways by different scholars and academic

disciplines. I have positioned myself between the two approaches of seeing place from the inside and the outside. This thesis argues that internal and external factors, as well as several aspects on different levels influence children´s sense of belonging. It emphasise that places and socio-cultural aspects of children´s everyday lives can impact their sense of belonging.

Children as socially constructed are in this context in relation to how the society children´s lives take place within, define and understand children and childhood. Society is also related to children as social becoming´s, and it is about how children are socially constructed within their local, cultural context. This can also be seen in line with place as locale, where everyday activities take place in everyday places as home, garden, market, etc. This is related to family, extended family, religious groups or belonging, cultural belongings (tribes), neighbourhood, friends and parents/caretaker´s placement of children. Children as socially constructed can also be related to the perceptions parents/caretakers, extended family, teachers and children have of primary education and other places children live their lives within.

Primary education can be seen in the light of ***place as locale***, where primary school is a place for everyday activity. Processes related to the time spent at school are included here as well as the everyday structures of school. Primary education is influenced by policy changes on local, national and global ***level***, and global policies of education as the MDG2 and UPE can influence the structures of the everyday activities of the school children, as well as influence children´s future aspirations and sense of belonging (Meinert 2009).

Place is not just a location or an object in the world, but it is a way of seeing, knowing and understanding the world. Through the study of place one see social interaction, attachments and links between people and place (Cresswell 2005). Sense of place is about the emotional aspects of place and this can be related to what places the children see as important for them. Place includes the *everyday processes of belonging* as repeated everyday activities, as well as sense of place and the different place levels.

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Sense of belonging is influenced by the individual's experience of the everyday life, as well as the influence of wider scalar structures. Children´s everyday lives cannot be explained without relating the everyday activities to the social-cultural context that they take place in. Children´s position within the society and culture surrounding them, along with the emotional and personal aspects of social relations, is also relevant to understand and include in research regarding children´s sense of belonging. Everyday places influenced by family, extended family, religious groups or belonging, cultural belongings (tribes), neighbourhood, friends and schools are all factors that are relevant to the everyday contexts of Uganda, and they can influence children´s sense of belonging at various scales and with different intensity.

The concepts of children, primary education, place, and sense of belonging are intertwined and the lines between them are blurry. Processes of belonging are constituted by everyday spaces. Children´s senses of belonging will in this way be a variable influenced by the social relations, the wider society, and the formal institution of primary education.

3.6 Summing up and the way forward

This chapter has shown the theoretical base for this thesis. It has identified concepts that will be used in the empirical part of this thesis as well as presented the place theory where sense of place and sense of belonging has been central.

The following chapter will present the methodological part of this thesis. The emphasis will be on how the fieldwork the knowledge used in this thesis was created by using multiple methods. The chapter will also focus on ethics and critical reflexivity throughout the fieldwork process.

4.0 Studying children´s sense of belonging

My fieldwork is based on considering children as subjects of research, rather then objects of research. It is focusing on seeing children as active agents of their own lives, and the view that they are fully capable of being research participants who generate knowledge about their everyday lives is central. The fieldwork was including both children and adults as they both can influence children's sense of belonging. This chapter consider the choice of methods used for this research, and to understand the children´s life´s and their structures I used a multiple choice of participatory methods. With respect to the challenges that come with every method, one method´s weakness can be supplemented with the others strength. The participatory methods that were used to collect data and create knowledge are: semi-structured interviews, group discussion, autophotography, informal conversations, story writing, and participatory observations.

4.1 Performing ethnographies

In this research I wanted to learn about children's everyday lives, and the places that could influence the children's sense of belonging. To get this knowledge, ethnographies were an appropriate choice of methods. Crang and Cook (2007), describes ethnographies as qualitative methods as interviews, participant observation, group discussions, photography, video, and story writing. The different methods seek to understand people's places and the everyday life experienced by the research participants. Ethnographic research has the aim of understanding people's lives in a certain society at a certain time and place. This knowledge is constructed and produced by intersubjective processes that characterize ethnographies (Crang and Cook 2007). Dowling (2000, p.31) understands intersubjectivity as: *the meanings and interpretations of the world created, confirmed or disconfirmed as a result of interactions (language and action) with other people within specific contexts*. This is a process influenced by power relations between the researcher and research participant. These power relations are created by the researchers elements of subjectivity that can be personal background, social position, social abilities (Dowling 2000) and personality (Moser 2008). The way that the intersubjective relationships

develop will have an impact on how the researcher represents the "findings" and "results" of the research project (Crang and Cook 2007).

4.2 Preparing for fieldwork

Preparations for fieldwork started already in September 2011, the first year of the master program, by doing literature review and deciding for the topic and area of interest. The research proposal gradually developed through the first two semesters of the master program and by July 2012 I was ready to go to Tororo, Uganda. The area of Tororo was familiar to me after visiting the place several times before and by managing a local NGO in the area. A great part of my Ugandan family lives in this area and that did not only influence the choice of place for fieldwork, but it gave me an opportunity to get a deeper understanding of the spatial and cultural context of the area. Although, as I will elaborate, to be a part of, and associated with, a local family could bring some biases to the research.

4.2.1 Access to the field and research participants

My main gatekeeper for the Ministry of Education and Tororo Municipal Council was my own mother in law. She is one of the councillors of the Mayor in Tororo municipal council, through Tororo Eastern Division. Her main areas of focus are women empowerment, agriculture and education. Major parts of her work include going to the field to talk to people about their situations, and further advice the major about the issues that are discovered. This makes her well known in the area. She belongs to the political party of Uganda's President Yoweri Museveni, National Resistance Movement (NRM), and to get this position in the municipal council she had to be elected. Because of her political position I was aware of the bias that could occur by being associated with her. A research diary helped me to make further reflections on both her and my position in the meetings with different research participants. However, I mostly had positive experiences with her as my gatekeeper. One of the first times we walked together in the municipal council she introduced me to the mayor, deputy mayor, and all the other municipal staffs who were at work that day. The normal introduction she would give was clearly influenced by us being related when she would put the focus on my Ugandan surname, Emong, and hesitate to call me daughter in-law without a pause between daughter and in-law:

This is my daughter- (pause), in-law. She has taken interest in her husband's homeland to do research. She is her with her family and her name is Ingrid Emong, - (pause) Overå.

(Jane Emong, Gatekeeper).

Much time was spent writing in several visitors books and explaining what kind of research I wanted to do, how I liked Uganda, that I have been there before, greeting in different languages and so on. I had the same positive experience when we went to the Ministry of education and sports. I experienced that her position and introduction of me helped me get the interviews with the District Educational Officer, three District inspector of schools, Municipal Education Officer and municipal inspector of schools. I got the official documents that I needed to continue with the research and the impression is that this process was shortened because of her position in the local society.

The gatekeeper to the schools was the letter of introduction from Tororo Municipal Council and The Ministry of Education and Sports, which both introduced me as a student and requested the school to give me the maximum of support. I wanted to use schools as the gatekeeper for the children, and to teach at the schools was a way to "give something back" to the local society. This worked as a gatekeeper for me to get access to the children, their parents/caretakers, teachers and head masters.

Two different schools, one rural and one urban, were selected. I was given the permission to choose the schools I wanted by the Ministry of Education and Sports. I therefore chose one urban school: Rock View Primary School, and one rural school: Morukatipe Primary School. Rock View Primary School was close to where I lived in Tororo. Before deciding to get access to the school I asked people I met around town about their impression of the school. I heard stories in the local food marked and on the street. People gave me the impression that it was the best government owned school in the whole of the district. This made me curious to find out more about the school and the children enrolled in it. I asked around for a rural school as well. One of my conditions' was that it had to be somewhere I could go and come back the same day, and that it would be convenient if it were people from the Ateso tribe living there because of the language spoken and translated by my research assistant. My gatekeeper told me about Morukatipe and one Sunday I drove northeast and found Morukatipe Primary School. After meeting people and greeting in Iteso language, I decided to come back the next day and ask the head master and teachers for the permission to do fieldwork at the school.

4.2.2 Research assistant

The process of finding a research assistant was longer than expected, and in the end I decided to hire the one who had helped me in the search of the research assistant. Upon arrival in Tororo I asked my gatekeeper if she knew anyone who had university education within development studies or geography who could act as my research assistant. Another criteria were that the person knew how to speak some of the local languages within the district. She did not know any particular one, so I kept asking different people I met. My sister in law, who had a holiday from her bachelor studies from Makerere University, helped me to search for a person. We found two who both had bachelor in development studies from Makerere University. However, they both got permanent jobs at the World Food Program just the day before I was meeting them. My sister in law, Gorrety, said in a humorous way:

Maybe I can be your assistant. Then this would be the complete family research project.

(Gorrety, research assistant).

Even though she was joking we discussed it. I hesitated in the beginning, first of all because working with someone in your family can create some unintended tensions. Secondly because she is the daughter of the Mayors councillor and I was afraid that her mother's political position would influence the fieldwork in a negative way. We discussed this issues and I decided to hire her as my research assistant based on that she had not been schooling in Tororo, so she was not immediately associated to her mother. She is a student of social science at Makerere University, she knows Tororo well and she speaks English, Luganda, Lusoga and Iteso fluent. We discussed my research topics, she read some articles about methodology within geography and said it was interesting to build on the knowledge she had from the university.

As a research assistant and interpreter, Gorrety where present at both the introduction meetings at the schools. It was important for me that both of us were there so the staff and parents knew who was involved in the research project. She was also present at the interviews with the parents where she acted as an interpreter. This was especially useful for me since it helped me seeing myself from "the outside". During a period of three months Gorrety lived with my family and me. This gave us a unique opportunity to discuss and reflect on the day every evening. Like me, Gorrety was taking notes during and after the interviews she was present at, and she would take notes and observe when I was "hanging out" with the children. During the time I worked at the

schools the days were quite hectic beginning at 7.am and ending at 5.pm. I found time for interviews, home visits, participatory observations in the breaks, during playtime, lunch and after school. It was therefore very useful for us to discuss what happened that day, reflect on our roles and find out if I had to change the way of asking questions, the way I was behaving, if there was something that I wanted to know more about and so on.

I paid Gorrety accordingly to the Ugandan standard and I wrote a reference letter to future employees.

4.3 Interviews

Interviews can be in various forms from the very structured to the unstructured, from the formal to informal. It can vary from big statistical surveys involving thousands of people, to small settings where a researcher has a few numbers of research participants he/she interacts with. Crang and Cook (2007) argue that interviews cannot be separated from any other ethnographic methods because all social research is based on conversation. The formal interviews are when the researcher has a set of questions asked in a specific order, while the semi-structured interviews are when the researcher has a check-list or some points for discussion. Semi-structured interviews are characterized as a social interaction and the researcher has to be sensitive and listen to what the informants say. This can give the respondent the chance to answer the questions in his/her own words (Clifford 2010). There is questioned whether the truth can be expected or if the knowledge that is produced between the researcher and the research participant in an intersubjective relationship can be seen as the truth. Thagaard (2009) describes that the research participants are influenced by cultural and social spaces/surroundings and argues that this influence how the research participant formulates his/her questions and further the knowledge produced. The result of this is also questioned because of the bias that the researcher can bring into the situation based on own experiences and attitudes towards the topic (Crang and Cook 2007).

I used semi-structured interviews to get knowledge about the school structures, educational policies, and views on schooling and childhood from parents and caretakers. I interviewed 7 policymakers from Tororo Municipal Council and Ministry of Education and Sports, 8 parents/caretakers, 3 teachers and 1 deputy head master at Morukatipe. 10 parents/caretakers, 7 teachers, 2 deputy head masters and 1 head master was interviewed at Rock View.

4.3.1 Preparing for interviews.

I made an interview guide with questions that covered my main areas of interest. Before conducting any interview Gorrety and me reviewed the questions and did some changes so the research participants would easier understand the questions. It was important for me to ask questions in a way that made it easy for the participant to answer freely, and at the same time use a language that would not influence the social interaction and power relation between me as a researcher and the research participant. This can help in establishing an open and informal environment for the participants to answer freely (Crang and Cook 2007). During the fieldwork the interview guide was modified as we saw some topics we wanted to know more about. At the same time we saw that some questions made the participant talk much about topics that were not relevant for the research. We edited them so they would be understood in the way that was more helpful.

Before starting an interview I would present myself as a student and when my research assistant was present I would also present her as my research assistant and a student. I explained my research project, why it was important for me to speak to that person, and what and how the information was going to be used. I would also ask for permission to use a tape recorder before starting the interview, in which I did in all the interviews.

4.3.2 Practice and experiences

As mentioned previously, the access to the research participants that worked within the Ministry of Education and Sports and Tororo Municipal council, were given to me by my gatekeeper and mother in-law. She took me to the different offices, presented me and after the introduction I asked for an interview. I wanted to speak with the ones working with primary education, so there was no issue of who to involve as research participants. At the Ministry of Education and Sports I had together four interviews, one with the District Education Officer and one interview with each of the three inspectors of schools. At Tororo Municipal Council I had two interviews, one with the Municipal Education Officer and one with the inspector of schools.

To accomplish a good interview requires practice and experience (Kvale 1997). During the first interview I had, with a highly educated man, I experienced that it was difficult to have a floating conversation. My appearance might have been nervous, as it was my first interview, and that could have influenced him. When I asked if I could record the interview he hesitated and

requested to look at the questions before starting the interview. He took a photocopy of the questions and after reading through he said:

Ah, these are very easy questions. Please, you are welcome to use the recorder.

He took full charge of the interview himself by reading out the questions before answering them. This made me as a researcher insecure, but I thought it was more important that he felt comfortable with the situation and wanted to answer my questions. I asked follow-up questions when I wanted to know more about something, so it turned out to be a more two-way communication then what was first expected. After some practice the interviews were more relaxed and the flow in the conversations came more naturally. But there were still some challenges experienced. As mentioned I would present myself and the reason for why I wanted to speak to that person before starting the interview, and the first time I interviewed someone who was not holding a municipal or district position I realized that I obviously had not explained my self very well when the reply for my last question: *is it anything you would like to ask me?* Was:

Now, why have you asked me all these questions?

I realised that I had not explained in a way that she understood. My research assistant was present during that interview, and she advised me to speak slowly, and make my explanations more unpretentious. Even though it made me feel uncomfortable, it was very good for me as a researcher to experience this. It made me reflect more of whom I was meeting and how the impression of me as a researcher are made in these situations, and more importantly how this can influence the research (Crang and Cook 2007).

After some more practice the interviews had a better flow and the form of the interviews developed to be more of a checklist and at some interviews I did not use the paper with the questions because the conversations were flowing and I had control of the topics that needed to be covered. It was very useful and rewarding to have reached that stage of the process since some of the interviews were happening abruptly without an agreement of time and venue for the interview, and without time to prepare for it.

The interviews with the staff at the Ministry of Education and Sports, Tororo Municipal Council, and the head masters and deputy head masters took place at their offices. It was most convenient for them that I would come there when they were at work. This would result in many interruptions during the interview. Different people came for several issues. This made the

interview take much time. However, I got some insights in the work of the different officers when they insisted for me to stay in the office during the different disruptions. During the interviews we had complete privacy.

I asked different teachers, especially working with P6 students, for interview at times that could fit their schedule when we had tea break together or was just meeting at the school. We facilitated the interviews with the teachers at the school in their breaks. These were characterized by a friendly tone and they were all done in English at both Rock View and Morukatipe.

Having their children present during interviews can influence parents and caretakers answers and ability to talk freely. At the same time the children can hesitate to talk about certain topics in front of their parents/caretakers (Crang and Cook 2007). I had this in mind when setting the time and place for the different interviews. The interviews with the parents and caretakers took place in their homes mostly during the afternoon and early evening. I got access to the parents/caretakers through their children, by asking if there was possible for me to meet their parents/caretakers and visit them at home. Mostly I met mothers with small children at home, and I could not ask them to leave their children to someone else to give us some privacy, that would have been very inappropriate for the situation and it would be to ask a question far away from the local cultural context. I discussed this with my research assistant and she said:

You know, in Uganda, mothers are always with their children. We are used to listening to our mothers talk about anything with their friends and sisters as well. They even fight with their husbands in front of the whole family, cause where will the children go? They belong to the family.

(Gorrety, research assistant).

I realised that this was the way it had to be and I experienced that it gave me the opportunity to get to know their lives more from the inside as well. At the same time we could talk about being mothers and connected as parents and not just researcher and research participant. To share similarities with research participants can have positive influence on building rapport and trust between the researcher and the research participant, and sharing the experience of motherhood

can work as a frame of sameness (Valentine 2005). At some of the interviews I brought my son, which worked as a great way of reducing the power differences. With his brown skin and curly hair it was easy to see that he is half Ugandan and it seamed like I became more *one of them* after they got to know my son and realized that I was married to a Ugandan.

Interviewing parents in Tororo town took place at their homes, mostly inside their houses or on the stairs while they were cooking or taking care of their children. The interviews in Morukatipe often took place under a tree in the middle of the family compound. Most of the research participants in Morukatipe were living in polygamy households with up to three wives in every home. This resulted in interviews with many children around and some interruptions from the other wives who had a different opinion or who just wanted to participate in the conversation. I realised that this would influence the answers from the research participants; I therefore involved myself in some of the daily activities where one could have some informal conversations walking together, peeling mays, looking at the crops, and so on.

Interviews as a method gave me great insight of the research participant's meanings and perceptions of the school system and other structures that can influence children´s sense of belonging. It also gave me very important insight of the perceptions and cultural meanings of what a child is within the social cultural context of Tororo.

4.3.3 Language and interpreter

Language has an influence on the researchers choice of place for the research project, and it should be taken into considerations when planning practical issues related to the fieldwork. When in the field, the researcher should be aware of that in some way or another there would be some translations even if the researcher and research participant speak the same language. This is related to the language the researcher is speaking in the field, and the one that is spoken and written at the academic institution after the fieldwork. The researchers worldview(s) and language will shape the research as well, and where there is need for an interpreter her/his worldview, language and personality will also influence the knowledge produced and how it´s understood (Crang and Cook 2007).

As I mentioned in the section about research assistant, Gorrety were also involved in this research project as an interpreter. I made a choice of the rural place because of the convenience of the fact that she speaks fluent Ateso and is Iteso by tribe. When we had an interview in Ateso,

Gorrety would first ask the question, then translate the answer to me in English and further translate my follow-up questions if I had any. In this way the information given and knowledge produce would first be influenced by Gorrety´s subjectivity and background, and it would be my subjectivity analysing and understanding her translation. To get more knowledge out of this it can be rewarding to treat the interpreter as a key-informant where one discuss the topics with the translator (Temple and Young 2004, in Crang and Cook 2007). Gorrety transcribed the translated interviews, so she could go deeper into the information. After every interview we discussed the different aspects that aroused.

In Morukatipe, English were used in the interviews with the deputy head master and the teachers, while Ateso were used in interviewing the parents. The children mostly spoke English to me, with some words of Ateso in between. If I didn´t understand what they said some of the other children or Gorrety helped to translate.

4.4 Participant observation

Ethnographies are about understanding the lives and live worlds of people in a certain cultural context. Crang and Cook (2007) describe participant observation as a deep hanging out, and the core means of the ethnographer. Further they describe that participant observation means that the researcher involve him/her self in the culture of the research participant, meaning involving yourself in the daily activities and lives of the people within the particular culture at the particular time and place to develop relationships between the researcher and the research participant. When involving children in participatory methods it is crucial that the researcher creates spaces where the children can pull themselves out of the research project, to make sure that the children are participating by their own will, and not because they think they have to participate because the researcher is an adult (Abebe 2009)

As a part of participatory observation I volunteered to teach at both the urban and rural school. This was to understand the school system from `the inside´, the teachers situations, and to take part of the school children´s every day lives. To teach at the schools also functioned as a gatekeeper for me to get access to the children and their parents/caretakers. Initially I had planned to focus on pupils on the last year of primary school, P7. But when I reached Tororo I realised that P7 was going for their final examinations and I decided together with the teachers and head masters to focus on P6 instead.

4.4.1 Participant observation at Rock View

At Rock View Primary School, the head master immediately made me one of the staffs by presenting my research assistant and me for the teachers the same day as I arrived. He explained my research project and encouraged everyone to assist where there was necessary. He asked me to sign the teacher's book, just like the other teachers had to do every day. His actions made me feel very welcome and I observed that it made it easier to interact with the teachers as one of the staff. Everyday at 10 am the teachers gathered at the teacher's room to have morning tea. This was a great opportunity for me to interact with the teachers and have informal conversations about their lives. I experienced that many teachers wanted to discuss the education system and their challenges about it with me. And after interacting and working with the teachers for some days I realized that the relationship between them as research participants and me as a researcher, became more of a mutual subjective relationship of friendship and colleagueship.

The intersubjective bond that developed between the teachers and me were good for one part of the research that were about understanding the structures of the school system and the spatial frames of some parts of the lives of the school children. However, I realized that it was quite damaging for my relationship and work of the participatory observation and informal conversations with the children. I was associated with the more authoritative role that the teachers were holding, which made it difficult to create a reciprocal relationship between the children and myself. I had to change my behaviour so I talked to the head master and the teachers about this, and we agreed that I should not sign the teachers book anymore, and I would not mark school works (which I had not been doing, but which were expected of me as one of the staff). Unlike the other teachers, I started to share lunch with the children sitting on the grass in the shadows of the trees in the school yard, I would "hang out" with them during games time talking, playing or watching them play football. As I lived in the same neighbourhood as some of the children we started to walk home together and I would also get occasional home visits by the children during weekends. By doing this I realized that it was easier to interact with the children and to develop the relationship that were more rewarding for the research. I was taking the role as the atypical adult (Abebe 2009) in order to reduce the inequality of the power relationship between the children and me.

4.4.2 Participant observation in Morukatipe

We were arriving Morukatipe after driving 30 minutes on a small mud road from Tororo Town. As I had been at the school the day before to find out the distance between Tororo town and Morukatipe, I had observed the area and decided to come to Morukatipe the first day with my research assistant and my 4-year-old son. This was a choice I made seeing that the area had rural characteristics with round grass hashed mud houses, agricultural land, small paths between corn fields, and I assumed that the people living there most likely had more limited financial resources than in the urban area of Tororo town. I realised that I might be seen as a potential financial source, and hoping that positioning myself in generational order as a mother to a half Ugandan boy, would make the introduction and relationship with the research participants easier and more mutual. When we arrived, all the pupils from the school came running and circling around us. The teachers tried to calm down the exited children and one of the teachers took us to the office to meet the deputy head master. After giving him my letter of introduction from the Ministry of Education and Sports and explaining my research project, he said:

Since you are muzungu (white person) we were all assuming that you were from Plan International.

(Deputy Head Master, Morukatipe Primary School).

He explained that Plan International had build one of the school buildings and that they used to come for occasional visits. After explaining my research project more in detail to him, he welcomed me and gave me informed consent to do research at their school. He also agreed to let me teach if one of the teachers were absent.

Since I arrived to Morukatipe Primary School with the experiences from Rock View Primary School in fresh memory, I realised that I had more confidence as a researcher. I felt more prepared for what I was doing and whom I was meeting. I experienced that the introducing phase where the navigating and negotiating of the social relationships is more intense, was shorter, and it was easier to interact with, and take part of the research participant's life at an earlier point in the research, then what I experienced at the urban school. This is from my fieldwork diary after the second day in Morukatipe:

I don´t know if it´s the place and people at Morukatipe, or if it´s me developing better social skills as a researcher, but I really feel that it´s easy to talk about the topics related to my research. Today was just the second day at Morukatipe, but I feel I know some of the children, parents and teachers already. Playing football with the boys was clearly an icebreaker, and I know I have the experiences from Rock View Primary School in my "backpack".

(Research diary 18.09.2012).

4.4.3 My experience as an observer/researcher

When undertaking research at Morukatipe, as a researcher I had the choice of when I wanted to enter research space. When I arrived in the village I was a researcher, but in Tororo town my experience is that I was constantly in research space also when I was not actively undertaking research, for example when I was in the local market buying vegetables the sellers could be some of the children or their parents. I also realized walking in town I was observed; some of the children visited me at home and so on. How I behaved outside the school and my home had an influence on my research, and I realized that doing ethnographies is not about deciding a time of the day when the research is over. In all these informal social interactions that happened at the market, in my home, on the street, the local supermarket, contributed to the knowledge creation made by the research participants and me. It is hard to find the "off-switch" in ethnographic research.

4.5 Informal conversations

Informal conversations can be seen as informal and unstructured interviews. The informal dialogues can provide new and more information about topics which are not discovered in the more formal interviews. In this way it can create new ideas and deeper understanding between the researcher and research participant (Crang and Cook 2007. Mikkelsen 1995).

I used informal conversations related to the children, teachers, and some of the parents/caretakers. Informal conversations with children would happen when I "hang out" with them during lunch, games time, and walking home from school. I would also have informal conversations with some of the parents/caretakers who were working at the local food market, when I was visiting their home or when we were walking together. During lunch breaks,

teachers meetings, morning tea, and shopping in the market I would have informal conversations with the teachers. These conversations were characterized by friendship and colleagueship.

The informal conversations would take place in more relaxed atmospheres, where the research participants were in more of a "normal" situation. The relationship between the research participants and me as a researcher was more as two friends meeting to talk, rather then the researcher asking questions and research participant asking. By using informal conversations I got to understand and experience the research participants in other situations that might have been more natural for both them and me. Knowledge were produced and exchanged on different terms then in the more formal methods that were used. I experienced that it gave me very useful insights of the research participant's life that guided the research further.

4.6 Autophotography and voicing

Autophotography is when the researcher askes the research participant to take pictures of parts of their lives and surroundings. By asking research participant to take photographs of places and things that are important to them, new insights of their places and lives can be discovered. The main aim is to learn more about how the research participant understands and interpret their own lives within their own social structures. Cameras can be given to the research participant by the researcher, or the researcher can use his/her own camera, mobile phone, etc. The researcher can give instructions, however, it is very important how the researcher explains the task in order to avoid influence the results of the photos. The researcher should also emphasis to the research participant that the pictures do not have to be of a certain standard or at the level of artistic photos; the essential thing is to get photographs at all (Crang and Cook 2007). Photographs can show responses that are hardly talked about by the research participant. It can give more insights in the children´s everyday lives, by using a method, which is not focused on speaking and writing (Crang and Cook 2007). If the researcher is discussing the photographs with the research participant after taking the pictures, the method is called voicing. By asking questions as: Why have you taken this picture? What is in the picture? What do you fell when you look at this picture? And so on the understanding and the description becomes deeper and the voice is given to the research participant. Looking at the pictures and discussing them with the children can discover new insights. And as seen with story writing, using autophotography with children, as

research participants it can in some way be less exploitive, since the children themselves decide what to take pictures of and what to say about the different photographs (Skovdal and Abebe 2012). Yet, this depends on how the researcher asks the questions related to photography.

During this fieldwork I used autophotography as a method in order to develop more insights about the children´s lives. I hoped to see other aspects of their lives and places that were not discovered though participatory observation, informal conversations and story writing. It was only the children who were defined as research participants who were asked to take pictures. I had bought cheap digital cameras from Norway who did not take pictures of the best quality, but that was not the main objective either. I thought it was more important that the pictures could be used and that the cameras did not look so expensive that they could put the children at risk. Before handing the cameras to the children I discussed the issue related to the children's` safety walking around with cameras with the teachers and parents/caretakers. They were positive to the task and gave me the informed consent to continue with the method.

I handed the cameras to 15 children (8 from Rock View and 7 from Morukatipe) when I was visiting them at home, or at school. At first I asked if this was a task they wanted to do, when they agreed, which they all did with excitement, I requested them to take pictures of important places for them. The cameras could take an amount of 26 pictures so that was the quantity limit of the pictures. I showed the children how to use the camera and based on Skovdal and Abebe (2012) we discussed the issue of informed consent related to the autophotography. If the children wanted to take pictures of persons, how would they get the informed consent from the persons that they took pictures of? In Skovdal and Abebe (2012) this issue is discussed with their own experiences from the field. For children to formally request for adult's informed consent were in some socio-cultural settings not appropriate, and in some places to ask for informed consent with pen and paper was not possible since the involved were illiterate. Their solution was to make sure that the children did not take any pictures that could show embarrassing situations of the person(s). I therefore discussed what could be embarrassing situations with the children and they all contributed with their views and agreed to have that in mind when taking pictures. During the discussion the children talked about this and they were all agreeing on what is embarrassing and not. Rose said this in a way that sums up the children´s conversation:

I will not take my mother a picture when she is bathing or sleeping, only when she looks smart, like after bathing or when she is washing plates and cooking. Maybe when she carries the last born.

(Rose, 13 years).

After having the camera for one or two days the cameras were given back to me. I uploaded the pictures to my laptop and printed them for further discussions with the children. I noted that some of the children had only taken pictures of things and places without people. Some of them had done that intentionally because it was a part of their most important places, while some told me that they would not take pictures with people because they did not feel confident enough to ask for permission due to different reasons. When discussing the pictures it was the child photographer, Gorrety and me who were in the room. At both schools we borrowed a room that was available for us to use. I discovered that discussing the pictures with the children brought up new topics related to their everyday lives. This was very interesting for my research and I learned a lot about being a child and what is important for the children involved in this method.

4.7 Other methods

In addition to the above methods I also used group discussion and story writing.

Initially I wanted to have repeated group discussions with the teachers at both schools. This did not work as I planned. At Rock View I was able to have one group discussion with the teachers of P.6. There was hard to get more because of the limited time the teachers had to be attending the group discussion. At Morukatipe there were simply not enough teachers to form a group the weeks I was there. This was due to several reasons, where the main reason was that many had travelled from the village to attend a burial of the brother of one of the teachers. Another reason was that the teachers who were remaining at the schools had to teach all the classes which did not give them time to participate in a group discussion.

Story writing can be an effective took in understanding and exploring issues that are not commonly spoken about. It´s also a type of method where the research participant has more control over what he/she wants to share with the researcher (Skovdal and Abebe 2012). I asked the children involved in the research to write me stories about places that were special for them, what made them happy and what aspirations they had for the future. In the urban area the

children wrote stories that were the same as the informal conversations we had, while in the rural area I found out by using this method that most children did not know how to write. This was an interesting observation that I followed up by using informal conversations and autophotography.

These methods did not supply with new information for the research, I have therefore not given them as much space as the other methods in the methodology chapter.

4.8 Transcribing and analysing data

Transcribing the interviews was done during and after the fieldwork. This is a time consuming process where everything that is said during an interview is written down. This process is very rewarding as it allows the researcher to re-experience the interviews, get better insights in topics discussed, and it creates the basis for analysing the data. I had the benefit of being in Uganda while transcribing my interviews; this gave me the opportunity to contact research participants after the fieldwork in order to ask more questions about topics I wanted to know more about.

Coding is a useful way of organising qualitative data for analysis, and this can be done in several ways. Coding can be referred to as the preliminary stages of qualitative work, and can be related to different ways of structuring the data (Mikkelsen 1995. Jackson 2001). In order to code and analyse my data I used open coding. I printed out my transcripts and used colour markers for the different words, topics and themes I was identifying. After the topics were identified I realized that there was a enormous amount of knowledge produced from the fieldwork, and the further work of choosing what was to be included and excluded were guided by the theoretical choice of this thesis in order to connect theory to the empirical parts of the thesis.

4.9 Ethics in ethnographies

Ethnographic research involves social relationships and social interaction between the researcher and the research participant (Dowling 2000). When `doing´ ethnographies socio-ethical dilemmas are important to take into considerations. By socio-ethical dilemmas, Skovdal and Abebe (2012), describes that ethnographic fieldwork is situated in social relationships with

the research participants that go beyond data collection. Ethical guidelines and committees are important, however, they can be problematic since geographic research is created in different places at different times. It can be difficult to make general instruction for what is appropriate and not when the varied research projects have different characters, involves different people at different times and places (Dowling 2000). It is therefore important that the researcher continuously reflects upon his/her position, and at the same time is open for negotiations with the research participant taking ethical guidelines and local cultural code for social interaction in to account (Skovdal and Abebe 2012).

4.9.1 Critical reflexivity

Critical reflexivity refers to the way researchers reflect upon their research practices before, during and after the fieldwork (Dowling 2000, Skovdal and Abebe 2012). This process starts in the beginning of a research project when the researcher is forming the focus of the research design. If the researcher is creating a research project that is de-contextualized in his/her understanding of the research participants, the fieldwork can be inappropriate in relation to the local cultural context and the outcome can represent the research participants and their situation in damaging and negative ways (Skovdal and Abebe 2012). In order to avoid this it is very important for the researcher to critically reflect on this in all parts of the research project. This means that the researcher has to study the social relationship between her/him self and the research participants as if it was the main research project. It is recommended to reflect upon this in a research diary where a researcher notes down her/his reflexive reflections (Dowling 2000). Every evening during the fieldwork I was writing in my research diary, and I asked my self questions like; what is happening with this social relationship? How does it influence my research? How is my behaviour seen from the research participants view? Is it anything I have to change? As I have shown in this chapter I was very concerned with this issue regarding my family-relation to my gatekeeper, and especially in regard of the work with the children where I had to change my behaviour in order to get a more reciprocal relationship to help the knowledge produced for the purpose of the research. I experienced that to constantly be reflexive on my self as a researcher was from time to time quite hard. This because I had to train my self to see my behaviour from the outside, it was embarrassing or uncomfortable because I found out things about my self that I were not aware of. But to go through the research process with a reflexive attitude is very rewarding both for the research project and personal development of social skills as a person and a researcher.

4.9.2 Power

The dimension of power exists in all social relationships and in all parts of the research project (Dowling 2000). As a researcher I had to manoeuvre myself through and between different types of power relationships. From the one where I interviewed older, men with master degrees, who took completely charge of the interview, to the interviews with parents who saw the white lady with stronger financial resources then them, through the colleagueship between me and the teachers, and the adult-child power relationship between me and the children. During the fieldwork I tried to be very sensitive in the way I acted around my research participants. I changed my behaviour to reduce the power differences between us, and I used my son and husband actively in this. I reflected on these relationships through the fieldwork and while writing the master thesis.

Language has also been a way of reducing power differences between researcher and research participant (Crang and Cook 2007). I experienced this clearly in one of my interviews in Tororo town where one interview were held in all together three languages; English, Luganda and Ateso. We arrived at Shanita´s home and the mother welcomed us inside. She was speaking English to me and Luganda and Ateso to Gorrety. I could see that she seamed nervous, so I started to talk about the home and her children to loosen up the tension. When I talked she hesitated to answer me, so I asked if she wanted to speak in her own language. She replied that she would like to speak in Luganda and Ateso. As I have lived in Kampala before I know how to speak Luganda on a basic level. She was so happy when she heard that I answered her back in Luganda, the tension in the room disappeared and the following conversation took place:

Shanitas mom: *I am so happy you know even our language. I have never met a muzungu (white person) who loves Uganda like you. I have ever seen you in the market with that boy. Is he your son?*

Ingrid: *Yes he is. I am married to a Ugandan.*

Shanitas mom: (laughing) *Ah, that is very good. You are making me very happy!*

We continued the interview in Luganda, English and Ateso, where I stumbled my way trying to make sense out the questions in Luganda and English. She would reply in Luganda and sometimes Ateso. When there was something I did not understand Gorrety translated.

4.9.3 The `muzungu´(white) insider/outsider

As argued in this chapter, ethnographic research is based on social relations, and there is a complexity in the roles and relationships that occurs and develops during an ethnographic research process (Crang and Cook 2007). I experienced that taking part of different activities of the teachers and children's lives in Tororo helped me gain trust and develop a mutual relationship between us. And I believe that having a son that is half Ugandan and a Ugandan husband was making this process easier and quicker for me as a white, female, Norwegian university student. One of the research participants said:

But for you, you are not like the other muzungu´s (white person). You are like a Ugandan; your husband is Ugandan, your son is Ugandan, even your accent is Ugandan. You are one of us.

Even though I felt having the connection to Uganda through my husband and son and involving my self in the daily routines and activities of the persons involved in my research was extremely helpful, I reflected upon the aspect of how much do you as a researcher really get involved? Is the main objective to be *one of them* or is it to be different, but to fit in the social and cultural context. Crang and Cook (2007) describes that researchers simultaneously will feel that they are both `inside´ and `outside´ the community and place of research. I could not change the fact that the colour of my skin is white with the certain expectations related to that, either could I change the fact that I am a female, highly educated student, from a European country. And at the same time I have the Ugandan part of my family with me. I carry my values that have shaped me from my life and growing in Norway. These values are a part of me, and I think it is important to acknowledge that, because in some way or another they will influence the research. To ignore them would be naïve, but to critically reflect on this and how it can influence the research will be a more appropriate approach on the way to understand the intersubjective relationships that develops during an ethnographic research project like this.

4.9.4 Giving *something* back

There is debated whether or not one as a researcher should give something back to the research participants in form of financial support, gifts and money. If researchers from the global north do research in the global south and pay the research participants money for the participation questions about the motivation for the participation of the research can be raised, and the point that this can create future difficulties for researchers from the global south with limited resources should not be left out. But at the same time researchers cannot just expect to take

peoples time without giving something back (Skovdal and Abebe 2012). With this in mind I talked to my gatekeeper and mother in law. I wanted to understand the local way of giving back in Tororo. She said that if I were sharing a meal with the research participants it would be appropriate if I paid, and visiting at peoples home it would be considered to bring tealeaves and bread or mandazi (deep fried sweet buns) as an appreciation. I followed her advises and brought bread and tea, when we shared meals I would pay, when I got visits at home I would share the food and drinks we had with research participants. I gave the head masters pictures that were taken of the teachers and me together with a card to show thankfulness for the cooperation from the schools and teachers.

Surprisingly, I was not the only one giving back. When I was leaving the urban school the head master gave me an envelope with money equalising the pay of a teacher working there and he thanked me for everything I had done for the school and the children. The children at both Rock View and Morukatipe showed their different appreciations and gave me green peppers, onions, tomatoes, cassava flour, letters and cards. The day I was leaving Morukatipe, Okello, one of the boys, came proudly walking on the path to school. He was carrying to young chicks. With a big smile on his face he said: *This once are for you*. I was overwhelmed by the gifts and it made me realize how much of an influence you can have as a researcher, and how much of a social process ethnographic research is. We had learned to know one another in the process of generating knowledge for the purpose of the research.

4.10 Summing up and the way forward

This chapter has shown how the knowledge this thesis bases upon was created. It has presented the different methods, described preparations, and considered ethics from a reflexive point of view. The next chapter will explore how children and childhoods are understood in Rock View and Morukatipe. It will also show parents/caretakers and teachers perceptions of the everyday of primary school.

5.0 Perceptions of Children and Primary Education

Picture 1. P6 Rock View (Emong-Overå).   **Picture 2. P6 Morukatipe (Emong-Overå).**

This chapter is about perceptions of children and primary school, from the perspective of parents/caretakers, teachers and policymakers. First, this chapter will focus on how children are defined and understood in Tororo and Morukatipe. Then, it will explain what is seen as a good childhood and whether the perceptions is that childhood has changed since the parents/caretakers, teachers and policymakers were children. Second, this chapter will give attention to teachers and parents/caretakers opinions of UPE and the everyday life of schooling. This part will explore what is seen as challenges and benefits of primary education as well as future hopes and aspirations. This chapter aims to give answer to research question 1:

How are children defined within their socio-cultural context? By:

- Parents/caretakers.
- Teachers.
- Other stakeholders.

As this chapter also looks at how teachers and parents/caretakers perceive school, it can give insights to aspects of research question 2:

What places influence children´s sense of belonging?

- The school.
- Family and home.

This chapter is based on knowledge created by semi-structured interviews with teachers, parents/caretakers, policymakers from Tororo District and Tororo Municipal Council, and participant observation in Tororo and Morukatipe.

5.1 Children and Childhood in Tororo

Childhood is constructed in different ways at different times. It is important to understand how children are defined, and how childhood is constructed in Tororo during the time of my fieldwork, in order to understand children´s sense of belonging in the context of their everyday places (Holloway and Valentine 2000). A child is according to the Ugandan government policy someone who is below 18 years old. When I asked **policymakers** what a child is, they replied that a child is an individual below 18 years. **Teachers and other school staffs** in both Tororo and Morukatipe were all using the same definition. However, they were giving more emphasis to defining a child as someone who needs to be counselled and guided through the different steps on their way to becoming adults. *A child is someone whom you guide, someone who is in need of guidance and sensitizing* (deputy head master, Rock View). Guiding was seen as an important role of the adults. Responsible adult would advise children on how to dress, how to behave in different situations, how to plan for the future, how to socialize, and how to behave in relation to other adults. At Rock View, teachers had meetings with all the girls of P6 and P7 the last Friday of the month. This was to *sensitize* them of topics related to hygiene, economy and future plans. At Morukatipe the teachers were *giving advise where it is needed* (Teachers, Morukatipe). One morning at my arrival to the school one of the teachers sat with a group of four pupils. They were arguing and the girls were visibly upset. Later, the teacher told me that she had to advice them on relationships:

We don't accept them to be in relationships, but what can we do when they are stubborn like that? We have to advice them, so they don´t do mistakes that will harm their future (Teacher Morukatipe).

The teacher meant that she had to advise the children by talking to them about their problems. In this situation the four children had been arguing because one of the boys had been kissing both

the girls. The teacher said that they did not accept children to be in relationships at the school; however, she saw that the children would defy the rules, so instead of sending them away from school, she would advise them on how to handle and deal with situations related to relationships. She emphasised that her role was important in influencing the children to take what she saw as the right decision's, in order to avoid early pregnancy, or in her words: *mistakes that will harm their future*.

Similar to the teachers, **parents/caretakers** in Tororo and Morukatipe started their definition of a child with the government's definition. Yet, when teachers were focusing on guiding, parents were emphasising on care from them as parents/caretakers. By care, parents/caretakers emphasised on basic needs identified as food, shelter, cloths, education, and financial support, as well as love from the parents/caretakers and a good relationship with the extended family. In Tororo town parents/caretakers were seeing the transition from child to adult related to education and jobs, while in Morukatipe children were defined to be adult both by education and by marriage.

Well, according to law in Uganda, a child is that one below 18 years old. But again to me I have a different say. Even if you are 18 you can still be under your parents' care because you are still not able to sustain yourself. Unless you have completed your education and you have something like an employment that can sustain you on your day-to-day living. I have this one who is at the university, he is still a child because he is under my care.

(Mother, Rock View).

The age of 18 years old was by law, but in practice a child is someone who is still in need of his or her parents/caretakers care and support. The transition from child to adult was seen in relation to whether or not the child had completed his/hers education, and the ability to sustain him/her self in the everyday cost of living.

In Uganda a child is below 18 years old. But when he is 18 and above he is a big person. But here in Africa you will still look after a big person. You have to look after them unless he has

achieved his education and started to work. Then from there he can be free because he can look after him self.

(Grandmother, Rock View).

In Morukatipe the definitions of a child had more aspects to it then what experienced at Rock View. A child was defined as someone below 18 years. *A child is someone below 18, but if the child has passed 18 you can still help because it is your child* (Mother, Morukatipe). The transition to adulthood was described in different ways in Morukatipe. Some parents/caretakers related it to completed education and the ability to maintain themselves, while others related it to marriage and reproduction. In the Iteso tradition boys become men when they get married. Bride wealth has to be paid from the men's family and then all the children he will get with his wife is considered to be children belonging to the man´s side of the family. Another aspect of the transition from a boy to a man is the ability to sustain your self, to own land and to keep cows. Girls become women when they get married. These traditions are important for the Iteso in Morukatipe, however, it is also seen that the traditions are changing with time and are not strictly obtained (Meinert 2009).

In Tororo and Morukatipe all research participants saw children as someone below 18 years of age, yet, the transition to adulthood was perceived differently. Children were seen as human *becomings*, on their way to become adults. However, the position of the adults within the society defined further how they defined children and how to further relate to the child. Teachers and school staffs saw children as becomings in need of *guiding* and *sensitizing,* while parents/caretakers defined children as becomings in need of *care* and *parental love*.

What is a good childhood?

A good childhood was consisting the same aspects in both Tororo town and Morukatipe, and there were no significant varieties between the different research participants. It is perceived that a good childhood should contain *basic needs* that were defined as food, medical care, shelter, security, clothes and education. Further, parental love was emphasised; *a child is someone who deserves love from the parent* (Deputy head master, Rock View). Then, good relationships with other relatives were seen as a very important part of a good childhood. This was talked about as *relating* the child to extended family members.

It is important to relate the child with other family members so the child can be counselled and guided by some responsible people. That child will be healthy and if he takes the instructions required, it will be a good childhood (Teacher, Morukatipe).

Playing was also seen as a part of a good childhood. This can be related to the way adults perceive children as innocent, where games and playing are seen as a natural part of childhood (Aitken 2000). Children in Tororo and Morukatipe are expected to play when it is the right time to play. Social activities and play are placed at break hour at school, and when the domestic chores in the home are completed. In Morukatipe girls were expected to fetch water, help cooking, wash plates, take care of the compound, take care of and bathe their younger siblings. Boys were expected to take care of the animals in the evening, if the family had any. In Tororo town the gendered division of labour was not so clear in the homes I visited. Both girls and boys could involve themselves in the same activities and it was expected of them by the parents/caretakers. One reason for this can be related to families living both in town and in the village. The families often have family members traveling to the village for shorter or longer periods. The ones remaining in the home had to collaborate in order to finish the chores.

To grow up and *reach the next step* was seen as part of a good childhood as well. To reach the next step was talked about, as a way of growing up to be an adult. This was emphasised by some of the children as well. *You know, as a child your work is to grow up. And you feel so sweet when you are growing because it is what you are supposed to do* (Rose, Morukatipe). On the way to adulthood, children as well as adults, saw different steps the child took on the way to become a responsible citizen. This could be related to more responsibility in the home, or reaching the next class at school. Children in Morukatipe, mostly talked about growing and reaching the next step in relation to chores in the home, and activities within their local community. When children are 4-5 years old they are expected to fetch water. They start by carrying a small jerry can of 3-5 litres, and as they grow older and get more experience they *reach the next step* and are able to carry more water. The same aspect can be related to other domestic chores as taking care of younger siblings, cooking, being responsible for cows and

pigs, etc. At Rock View, children saw growing and reaching the next step in relation to education.

You know that you are growing and learning more when you go to the next year, and also if you have performed so well that they give you a better stream. Like for me last term I was in B but now I am in A. That tells me that I´m moving ahead.

(Boy, Rock View).

Parents/caretakers at Rock View and Morukatipe saw **education** as an important aspect of a good childhood. Children are supposed to be in school to *learn and reach their next step* (Mother, Rock View). This was closely linked up to parents/caretakers future hopes and aspirations for their family. This will be further elaborated in section 5.3.

Childhood transformations

Childhoods are changing over time and are influenced by structures at different levels. Children can to some extent change and construct their own childhoods (Skeldon 2007). In Tororo, my research participants talked about different ways childhood had changed from when they were young. It was emphasised that children are disrespectful towards adults.

In the past we as children used to listen to all duties with respect. Whether they (adults) are related to you or not. And we used to respect the elders. But nowadays children can challenge the parent.

(Mother, Rock View).

Many parents see it as inappropriate for children to oppose them and question traditions and habits. *How can you as a child sit before an elder?* (Mother, Morukatipe). This could be related to family hierarchy where the children are manoeuvring within and contesting traditional generational orders (Meinert 2009).

Another issue is when children are to engage in activities that by adults are seen as inappropriate. It was given much attention to children selling fruits and vegetables on the street in school hours.

Even though it is very common, the research participants saw it as very inappropriate and a teacher at Rock View saw it in connection with children as disrespectful of the adults: *Like a child can refuse to go to school. Instead of going to school a child can decide to go and do some work to get a little money.*

Poverty and lack of resources in general was seen as an indicator for why childhood had changed. Parents from both Morukatipe and Rock View were concerned with lack of money and access to material that a child needs. *Now childhood is harder, because now you have to buy everything with money, even in the village you cannot get anything without money* (Parent, Rock View). Related to poverty and lack of resources, HIV/AIDS orphans were something that concerned the teachers and the administrative staffs at the schools.

Childhood is very different now. For us when we were still at school most of us had parents, but now because of the hazard (referring to HIV/AIDS), children live without their parents and that creates big wounds in them.

(D. Head Master, Rock View).

Mothers in Morukatipe were emphasising that children nowadays have less time with their parents. They understood this as a problem and something that would have a negative impact on the children and how they experienced the childhood.

Childhood is a bit different now, because for us we used to go to school with the food that is given to us by our parents. But now there is no money. And also these days parents are so busy, we don't have time for our children, but with us we really had enough time with our parent.

(Mother Morukatipe).

This can be related to change in the everyday structures. Children are placed in school and they are expected to be there in order to become good, responsible citizens. Since education became free most families send all their children, boys and girls to school. They are not supposed to be seen in the garden digging with their parents/caretakers, taking care of younger siblings, or at home during school hours. This can result in less time spent with their parents, and the work

load for the parents will be more, so they see it as they have too much to do, and less time for their children.

Childhood and the way society define children and look at childhood is influenced by actions at different levels (Skeldon 2007). As seen in the background chapter UPE can have an influence on how children and childhood is socially constructed. Some of the teachers at Morukatipe said that UPE and primary education had changed childhood. The local communities' view of education is that it is accessible for everyone and that it is a child's right to go to school.

I say that education has changed it (childhood). Because of the way it is suppose to be now it is from the western countries. If the government could only go back to our local life we could have developed.

(Teacher, Morukatipe).

The change in children's childhoods in Morukatipe was in one way seen as a negative change. UPE have been implemented for 15 years, and the adults saw that it might not work as they had hoped for. At the same time adults saw primary school as an appropriate place for children to be, and as a way to a bright future. This will be further elaborated in the next section.

5.2 Teachers perceptions of UPE and the everyday life of schooling

Before the introduction of UPE, the teacher's position in society used to be seen as the gatekeeper to modernity. In the villages they were the only ones with a salary paid job that could maintain their living. They were seen as smart and privileged and their social status within the community was high. Teachers had the power to fail or exclude pupils if they had not completed their school fees or paid the PTA (Parent Teacher Association) fee. This could result in disagreements between teachers and parents, and the introduction of UPE was welcomed, especially by the parent´s since the PTA was not included in the program of UPE (Meinert 2009).

Teachers at both Rock View and Morukatipe cared much about the curricula and the content in their teaching. However, they emphasised that they needed to see a change in their social status as teachers and in the every day life of teaching in order to make the situation better. There were several issues that were repeated in my interviews and informal conversations with the teachers

regarding UPE policy and their everyday life as teachers. Many of these issues were related to their own position within the society. Within this thesis I will focus on the issues that can be directly linked to the children´s everyday life as pupils; Teacher-pupil ratio, lack of food for pupils, low salaries, stigmatizing differences between the rural and the urban, and policy being implemented from a top-down perspective.

Teacher pupil ratio

Both teachers and policymakers from the Ministry of Education and Sports and Tororo Municipal Council, saw the teacher-pupil ratio as a problem. According to the District Education Officer (DEO) the ratio should be 40 pupils to one teacher. In practice, in most classes there are between 80-120 pupils to one teacher. Children sit closely together with small space to write and the teachers explained that is was very hard to teach under these circumstances. In both the urban and the rural school they regarded this as a problem. They addressed that it was hard to identify the pupils who needed extra help and it was hard to know how to explain so everyone could understand what was taught. The wish was that the government would focus on educating more teachers and that the UPE grant would include money for more teachers. As teachers saw children as someone who needs to be guided and thought knowledge in order to grow up and benefit the society, they emphasised that this was not possible with the teacher-pupil ratio that existed in Tororo District, and generally in public schools in Uganda.

Lack of food for children

Pupils coming hungry to school was an issue brought up by policymakers, teachers and head masters. Lack of food is seen as a very big setback.

At Rock View Primary School lunch was served to the pupils who had paid for it. Every day at 12.pm the children lined up according to class in the food line. Teachers were there with books controlling that only the ones who had paid would get food. Some children lived near the school so they walked home to have lunch with their family, while others did not have food at all. *Some of the pupils cannot learn on an empty stomach. They sleep without food* (Teacher, Rock View).

At Morukatipe Primary School food was given to only children at P.6 and P.7. The decision was based on the period of time spent on school compared to the other children. It was also seen as a way to make them succeed on their Primary leaving examination (PLE). The school requested every child to bring 4 kg of maize and 1000 USH (0,39 USD) to pay the cook. Everyday they were served maize porridge for lunch. The children who walked home to have lunch, very often walked far distances so they would not return back after lunch. The deputy head master addressed this as a problem at the school. *Most children don´t eat from here, yet they come from very far. So when they go home for lunch they mostly don´t come back or they come very late* (Deputy head master, Morukatipe). Lack of food was an issue for learning. Teachers were concerned about children fell asleep in class and were not able to concentrate in class without food.

Perceptions of the urban and rural

I got the impression from both urban and rural teachers that working at the rural schools were seen as very hard. Firstly, many teachers had a long way to go to work and it was not uncommon that it would take them two to three hours of riding the bicycle or walking to get to work. A teacher working at Morukatipe had some thoughts of what could be a solution of this problem:

It would help us to get money to build teachers quarters here. So the teachers are living here. In that way I would not have to wake up very early to ride my bicycle to work.

The deputy headmaster at Morukatipe emphasised that long way of travelling for teachers was a problem. And this was visible during my fieldwork period at Morukatipe where children spent days in the classrooms without a teacher. Being granted money from UPE or other organisations for building teachers quarters would improve the situation significantly. Secondly, there was the impression that rural schools don´t have access to good teaching material and good school facilities. One of my research participants said that when teacher's don´t behave well at urban schools (referring to drinking alcohol and showing up drunk at school) they are sent to teach in the rural schools.

When you send them there (to the rural schools), they will come back pleading to return to the urban schools, being sorry for what they have done.

Sending teachers to rural schools were used as a punishment for bad behaviour and as a way of changing unwanted behaviour. This shows that working in the rural areas are seen as hard, far away from modern things, and that it can be used as a threat to maintain the behaviour wanted.

5.3 Parent´s perceptions of UPE and the everyday life of schooling

Primary education was by parents/caretakers seen as the only way to a good future. A good future was to have a good, salary paid job, be smartly dressed, to have a *settled* family and to be good, responsible citizens of Uganda.

Challenges faced by parents/caretakers

At Rock View Primary School all the children have to pay 10 000 USH (3,8 USD) every term, and if they are to eat lunch at school they have to pay for it in addition to the school fees. They also have late afternoon/evening classes and Saturday classes for the once who can pay for the extra tuition. Books, other school materials, school uniform and a building maintenance fee had to be provided by the parents/caretakers. For many of the parents/caretakers it was a challenge to pay the fees, and especially if there were many children in the family. Single parent/caregiver or single income families emphasised more on the difficulties of paying fees. To dig for school fees was mentioned by several of the parents/caretakers, and was referred to as the physical act of digging in the soil when cultivating food. Some of them had land in their villages of origin, while others owned land in Tororo. To dig was talked negatively about. It was seen as a very hard job that only belonged to peasants. In Tororo town this was especially noticed where people tried to involve themselves in informal economy activities as driving taxies, motorcycle taxies, selling food, clothes, or other things at the market in order to *make the ends meet without digging* (Father, Rock View). At the same time some had salary paid jobs in restaurants, hotels, banks and in different ministries. Many of the research participants identified themselves against the "hard life in the village" and emphasised that *even though life was hard in town, it is even harder in the village* (Mother, Rock View). However, it was quite common that families had their land to cultivate in order to provide them with food and money in times where there was no other solution.

Paying fees are difficult. Normally I wait for my children to send, but when they delay it get's difficult. I have to dig to get enough money for food and fees.

<div align="right">(Grandmother, Rock View).</div>

When family's don´t pay school fees, the children are not allowed to come to school. The ones who come anyway are mostly told to go back home until the school fees are paid. Normally this is not accepted in UPE policy, yet in practice this will happen, especially at schools like Rock View Primary School that takes extra tuition fee for the pupils. One of the mothers was concerned with this. She experienced that her son and daughter who are both in Rock View Primary School are determined in their work and get good results. She saw schooling as a way for a brighter future and was very concerned when the children were sent back because of lack of money.

Sometimes they send them back because of money. I want them to go ahead and not remain like me their mother. Maybe if God wishes any of them to succeed and get any of the jobs to help themselves. Because life is very hard and for us we don´t have jobs, we are just gambling.

<div align="right">(Mother, Rock View).</div>

Others again, thought that the fee at Rock View was fair compared to other schools and for the quality of the education at Rock View. One father I put it this way:

"The number of children I have makes it challenging. The money I have is not always enough to provide them all, but at Rock View the money is somehow fair and the learning is good."

<div align="right">(Father, Rock View).</div>

In Morukatipe the parents/caretakers do not pay school fees. It is expected that they contribute money for maintenance of the school buildings, however this was not common in practice. Parents/caretakers emphasised that the most difficult aspect of sending children to school was lack of money for school materials and uniforms. Most of the children who attended Morukatipe Primary School were wearing a school uniform. Black shoes are supposed to be a part of the uniform, yet most children did not own shoes as of money shortage.

Some of the mothers found it challenging that their daughters left the home for school. This was often related to the work girls are doing in the home, and in periods of harvest, or at days where

the mothers walk to Tororo town to sell their fruits and vegetables they need girls to help with the daily chores.

Positive experiences from parent/caretaker perspective

When asked about the positive effect of primary education, all the research participants emphasised friendship, socialising with other children and teachers, and learning new things that they could not learn from home. Learning English was seen as very important and it can be related to *being smart* and *educated.* At the same time, primary education can be seen as a means of future aspirations and as a step in the process of becoming responsible citizens of Uganda.

Primary education helps them to come out as responsible citizens and they acquire knowledge from school and that´s their primary level. They come out and widen their brains so it´s important for them to come to primary then continue up to another level, but they have to be in primary first.

(Mother, Rock View).

Parents/caretakers saw friendship as very important, and they related it to school. School was a place where children could meet friends, and it was seen as an appropriate place for children to play with friends. *School is important because they are supposed to get knowledge and associate with their friends* (Mother, Morukatipe). In this way, social relationship like a friendship is placed at school, where the school are the structures and the place for social interaction.

Parents/caretakers perceived learning as an important means of primary school.

The only thing I know is that the child learns more when he goes to school. He learns mathematics and English. It is important for the child to go to school because he learns different things from there.

(Mother, Morukatipe).

Parents/Caretakers in Morukatipe emphasised that children should go to school to learn other skills than what they could learn from home. English was seen as very important, and parents/caretakers from both Morukatipe and Rock View emphasised this. *School is important*

because they learn how to speak English and that is important to know if you want a job (Mother, Rock View). My research participants saw salary paid jobs as something smart, and in this way school was important. *School is very important for the future and she loves to learn* (Mother, Rock View). A good future and to be a responsible citizen was seen as the benefits of education. Education was also seen as a way to secure the whole family´s future. *Send them there to get knowledge, so that tomorrow they can help us* (Mother, Morukatipe).

Future aspirations and placement of children as adult citizens

Parents/caretakers saw school as an opportunity for their children to get a better life then what they experienced.

My future hope is that they go further beyond where I reached and they may achieve a better living. They can work hard to level what they want to reach, because these days without papers you can´t find a good living so you have to read hard so that you are able to acquire the living standard.

(Father, Rock View).

School was seen as the only way to a bright future, and this father is describing what is the reality of many Ugandans. You cannot get a job without education. Another parent talked about this as well, and she emphasised the importance of learning to interact with different cultures.

You know after education she will get open to the world and she learns more. As she gets education she can also get a job to help her in the future. You see, when you are learning, you socialize with very many people and tribes. You learn how other tribes behave and their culture and very many other things.

(Mother, Rock View).

She was not alone to see this as an important aspect of education. Parents/caretakers at Rock View meant it was important to learn about other cultures and tribes to be able to be flexible in future work. Tororo town is a myriad of tribes and on a day-to-day basis there is not any conflicts related to cultural belongings. However, during the last election campaign (2011) for Tororo´s Member of Parliament (MP), there were conflicts between the two leading tribes (Iteso

and Jap´adola). This might influence how parents/caretakers see the importance of learning about other tribes and traditions.

Parents/caretakers based their future aspirations on the experiences from the everyday. Many parents/caretakers defined themselves as poor with little resources. Their hopes were that education would bring their children out of poverty. *I wish that she could only do better then me. For us we struggle everyday to eat. I don´t want her to experience the same hard life in the future* (Mother, Rock View). She wanted her children to have a better life then what she had, and continued to say that she wanted her daughter to be a lawyer and her son to be a doctor. This was a common answer to my question about how they pictured their children in the future. *I want my children to grow up and become something useful for the community, I want her to become a lawyer when she grows up* (Mother, Morukatipe). Most parents/caretakers had big hopes for their children, and the hopes were not necessarily based on the resources available and plans they had for the future. Parents/caretakers saw children holding different positions in the future, even though the most likely scenario is that the children will be given their land and live as farmers, the parents/caretakers have wishes for an *easier* and *smarter* future for the children. The main wish was that the children could get a job with a monthly income in order to have a good life where the ends meet.

Parents/caretakers future aspirations are closely linked to the experiences in their everyday lives. Parents/caretakers perceive their life as economically hard, where there is a every day struggle to make the ends meet. They hope for a better life for their children, where they can get a smart, salary paid job and become responsible citizens who take care of their families. Education is seen as important step in order to achieve this, and to secure the whole family´s future.

5.4 Summing up and the way forward

This chapter has given insights of how children are defined within their socio-cultural context by parents/caretakers, teachers and other stakeholders as the policymakers. It has shown that the line between childhood and adulthood are blurry, and they should be seen in relation to the local, socio-cultural context. My research participant emphasised that a child is someone below 18 years old. However, in practice it was showed that this is related to other aspects of life as completing education, having a job and the ability to sustain a family. School was seen as a way to a good future and was an appropriate place for children to learn from as well as a place for

children to play and have friends. School system has an impact on how children are socially constructed and school was a place adults placed children to be. This chapter has also given some insights on some of the challenges faced at school by the teachers. Challenges such as few teachers, lack of food for children and negative perceptions about working in the rural areas can influence how children experience school.

In the next chapter attention will be given from a child centred perspective in order to understand what places that are influencing children's sense of belonging.

6.0 Everyday places of belonging

Picture 3. Tree at school, Morukatipe (Emong-Overå).   **Picture 4. Homes, Morukatipe (Emong-Overå).**

This chapter is about the everyday places of the children at Rock View Primary School and Morukatipe Primary School. Its aim is to explore what places children saw as important to them and to answer research question 2:

What places influence children´s sense of belonging?

- The school.
- Family and home.

The emphasis in this chapter is on the places that children identified as important for them during my fieldwork. The school and the home is central as well as the practical issues of schooling and the children´s experiences of the everyday life as school pupils on their way to becoming `educated citizens´.

This chapter is based on the knowledge created by informal conversations, participant observation and autophotography.

6.1 Processes of belonging

When arriving Rock View Primary School at 7.am children were sweeping the compound and classrooms for dust, leaves and garbage encouraged by the teacher on duty. Other children continued to arrive through the gate, making sure that they were not late for the school assembly that took place at the school compound at 7.30 am. The teacher on duty stood on the assembly stage speaking loudly to the children in order to make them stand in the right way. During the assembly children have to stand according to the year and stream they belong to. The tall ones are supposed to stand behind so everyone can see what is going on. The assembly starts with singing the national anthem, which is also painted on the school buildings.

National Anthem

1. Oh Uganda, may God Uphold Thee.
   We lay our future in thy hand.
   United free.
   For liberty.
   Together we´ll always stand.

2. Oh Uganda. The land of freedom.
   Our love and labour we give.
   And with neighbours all
   At our country's call
   In peace and friendship we live.

3. Oh Uganda. The land that feeds us
   By sun and fertile soil grown.
   For our own dear land,
   We´ll always stand,
   The Pearl of Africa´s Crown.

The older children knew the lyrics of the national anthem and the younger ones were trying to show that they knew the words by convincingly mumbling. The Ugandan flag was raised while singing the national anthem, and the teachers belonging to the different classes and the monitor of the assembly were walking around making sure everyone stood properly and did what they were suppose to do. If they were not doing as expected a slap on the back of the head was given in order to discipline the children and keep order on the schools approximately 2000 pupils.

After singing the national anthem, the children were singing the National Schools Anthem: Marching song. (This was also something that was observed with Meinert's (2009) study on school children and health in Tororo District). The National Schools Anthem was also painted on the school building at Rock View. The children were walking at the same place as a symbol of marching in to the future on the paths of education.

National Schools Anthem

Chorus:
We young women and men of Uganda
Are marching along the path of education
Singing and dancing with joy together
Uniting for a better Uganda.

We are the pillars of tomorrow´s Uganda
Let us rise and embrace true knowledge,
Yielding discipline, resources
To rebuild a great, great pearl.

Chorus.

We know the way into the land of enlightenment
Has thorns, Creepers, vales and mountains
Come what may, we shall overcome
For the glorious times to come.

Chorus.

Parents and teachers and youth of this nation
Rise with us, support our endeavour,
Led by God who is the source of life
To uplift our motherland.

Chorus.

Afterwards, the teacher of duty and the head master would be informing the children on issues regarding their school day, competitions, rules and regulations. This process of singing, dancing and getting information from school staff were done twice a day, once in the morning and once at 5.pm after games time, and before evening class for the ones affording it. Every Friday a singing and dancing performance would be given by one of the classes at the morning assembly.

In Morukatipe the children sang these two songs every morning at the morning assembly, and the routines for sweeping the classrooms and school compound were the same as in Rock View. However, it was not supervised in the same way as in Rock View. Teachers had a long way to travel and would not be at school during early morning hours, and sometimes the routine of singing would be done before lunch break.

The everyday ritual of singing the national anthem and the national school song has become a marker of identity and belonging. Children who are not enrolled in schools in Tororo town and in Morukatipe are mostly described as *orphans* or children of *uneducated* parents. And passing by the school during the morning assembly can be a painful reminder of being excluded from the future of educated and smart Ugandans. It becomes a matter of belonging or not belonging, being inside or outside the everyday structures and processes of primary school.

6.2 Children´s places

During informal conversations, participant observation and autophotography, children emphasised what they saw as important places for them, where they feel they belonged, and where they want to live and what they want to be in the future. Places seen as important were school, home, church, playing fields and Uganda as a country. Children described places and why they felt/not felt belonging to the place. This was related to social relationships, family, cultural traditions and occasional extraordinary events.

6.2.1 School

Children at Rock View and Morukatipe spend much of their time at school. At Rock View the children are there ten hours a day, five days a week. And for those who paid for extra tuition, two extra hours were spent at school in the weekdays and before exams, Saturdays would be used for extra tuition. The children at Morukatipe spent ten hours a day at school, five days a week. However, there were no extra tuition classes in the afternoons or in the weekends. In general children at Rock View were given more tuition than the children at Morukatipe. During my stay at Morukatipe I observed this and teachers, the deputy head master and the children talked about it. Lack of teachers was a challenge and some day's children sat in their classroom the whole day without a teacher.

All children I met during my fieldwork emphasised that school was very important to them. At Rock View many of the children had taken pictures of different places at school during the autophotography exercise. Pictures were taken in the schools field, of the water tank, the medicine box, the national flag, the tree, the school garden, the classroom, and of the main gate. During the picture discussion it was shown that these pictures reflect places that children engage within every day. Children at Morukatipe did not take pictures of their school. However, during informal conversations they emphasised on certain areas at school as places that are important for them.

At school you get very many friends and you learn good things. If I don´t know the answer I say: will you help me my friend? So I get help. We play, we share together, read, do our things.

(Jane, 12 years, Morukatipe).

The **school field** is used every day in break time. This was common for both Rock View and Morukatipe. It is the place for social interaction, play and training for competitions. In Morukatipe the field was mostly used for playing football, and for friends to group up to talk and laughs. The children also described it as a place where couples fell in love and interacted with each other.

At Rock View, play and social interaction was an important part of the field as well as training for competitions. Agnes was one of the girls involved in sports and who saw the playing field as very important for her. *I like the playing field because it is where we train netball. We were in the semi-finals in Mbale* (third-largest town in Uganda, by Mount Elgon. North-West of Tororo). *And all the trophies you see in the Head Masters Office are from our competitions* (Agnes, 13 years, Rock View). The field was important for her because it was where she was with friends as well as where she trained for the competitions. She said it gave her a good feeling to represent the school and to meet new people through the competitions, and she felt proud to present Rock View.

The **water tank** was described as very important because it was where the children could get clean drinking water. If water were taken from other places they explained that they would get sick, and that would make them miss school and burden their parents to get medical treatment.

The **medicine box** was also important for many of the pupils. Different children took many pictures of it. It seamed like it was a symbol of security. *If anything happen to you they will treat you from the medicine box* (Doreen, 12 years. Rock View). This was seen as a good security for the pupils. They could involve themselves in different activities at school, and they knew that if anything happened they would get help an assistance from the office building. The security around the medicine box was also related to expensive medical treatment in Uganda. Many pupils emphasised that it was good the school was well equipped, so they did not have to burden their parents in order to pay for medical treatment. My observations were that feelings of secureness were linked to the medicine box, however, the box was quite small, and the perceptions of feeling secure might not relate to the real contents of the medicine box.

Both Morukatipe and Rock View had a **school garden**. At Rock view, children worked with the teachers who were responsible for the school garden during school hours or break time. Matoke (plantain), beans and maize were planted. The children who helped got some food to bring home or eat at school, the rest were given to the teachers. Children who took pictures of the school garden saw it as a positive activity and emphasised that it was good to learn to be in the school garden as well as they liked being there and help the teacher. This can be related to the formal role teachers often have. *I like to dig, it is not so tiresome and I love my teacher* (Gloria 12 years). To be in the garden and help the teachers with the crops could give another view of the teacher since they worked together on the project, rather then the teacher telling the pupil what to do. In these situations the power hierarchy between the teachers and the pupils would not be so significant. In Morukatipe, pupils from P6 and P7 helped in the school garden where maize was planted. The maize was dried in the sun, grinded into maize flour that the cook made maize porridge from. This was eaten for lunch every day by P6 and P7. Children in Morukatipe were used to work for their food at home and at school. Okello (13 years) saw it like this: *we have to dig to eat; there is no other option*. As explained in chapter 5, to dig was used as an expression of agriculture activities. Children as well as adults have to physically dig in the soil in order to plant and maintain their crops.

Several pupils at Rock View discussed the **national flag**, and pictures were taken of it. It was described as a very important symbol of Uganda. As seen the everyday activities were related to the flag as it was raised in the morning and hoisted down in the evening accompanied by the

children were singing the national anthem. *I just feel proud of being a Ugandan. Because in Uganda there is good weather, the soil is fertile* (Gloria, 14 years). Belonging to a nation can be rooted in common history and the idea of belonging to one people across tribes and cultural groups (Lewika 2010).

Pictures were taken of different **trees** in the schoolyard. It was described that to sit under the tree with your best friends to talk and help each other with homework was very important for many of the children, and especially the girls. To sit under the tree would give them privacy to talk about their *own personal things.* This created a sense of belonging, firstly because they were socially accepted by each other, and secondly as it created a place of their own.

Children in Morukatipe described to sit under trees as a social activity as well. The tree in the middle of the schoolyard (picture 5) was a place where especially girls shared secrets and helped each other with homework. *I like this tree because it is where me and my friends can sit and chat and laugh. And it is a good place because it gives shadow* (Rose, 14 years. Morukatipe).

Children at both Rock View and Morukatipe expressed that they felt proud to be a part of their school. To put on their uniform was *smart* and learning was *good*. This can be related to the parents/caretakers, teachers, policymakers, and other adult's perceptions of primary school as a place for children to be. Children who belonged to the schools were at the place they supposed to be within society, and to be seen as smart and on the way to a bright future would influence the importance of school as a place of belonging for the children. School was also closely linked to future aspirations, which will be further elaborated in section 6.3.

All these places were seen as important for the children within primary school, and related to social relations and processes of belonging. Pictures were taken of diverse places within the primary school were all related to social interaction and social relationships. The actions made on their special places were related to everyday activities and were manipulated by friendship, emotional feelings of love, rest and belonging inside the social relationships at school.

6.2.2 Home and belonging

Children at Morukatipe and Rock View talked much about their homes too as they took pictures of the houses and family members. For most of the research participants at Rock View, home

was a house or a room where the family lived together. During the autophotography sessions the pictures taken from their homes were mostly of the compound, if they had any, or by things the family owned (plates, basins, food, etc.). In Morukatipe, home was described as the house(s), the compound, the garden, the animals, and in general where the family lived and owned/had access to land. There is much pride related to having a *smart* home. The compound should be swept and clean and the mud and cow dung should be smeared so the walls look plain and smooth. Inside, the flour should be flat and posters or pictures from newspapers are considered to be decorative.

Children also emphasised on their parents/caretakers as an important aspect of the home as a special place. *I took a picture of mommy because mommy is important. She is the one who produced me. I love her so much and I want to help her in the home* (Doreen 15 years, Morukatipe). When talked about their mothers or female caretakers like grandmothers, children saw them as very important in keeping the home and take care of all family members. Fathers were often out of the family home the whole day, and were talked about as the ones earning money for the family. In general this was common for the situations in both Morukatipe and Rock View.

Most of the children participating in my research in Morukatipe lived in polygyny households. Some of them were structured to different compounds, but mostly the wives would share the compound and live in individual round, grass-hashed, clay and cow dong houses. The children slept in two smaller houses, one for girls and one for the boys. The husband chose what hut to sleep in. The women were mostly sharing a kitchen and kitchen equipment outside, in the corner of the compound. Living in polygyny homes can be an experience of conflict. The wives can have arguments between themselves and this will influence how they treat the other wives children. Janet was the daughter of wife number two and referred to the other wives as her stepmothers. It seemed like the wives in this home collaborated quite well compared to other polygyny households I visited during my fieldwork. However, after spending more time with Janet she told me that she would not want to get married to a man with many wives. We had the following conversation:

Janet: *I don´t want to get married to a man with many wives.*

Ingrid: *Why is that?*

Janet: *You know living with a man with many wives creates quarrelling every time.*

Ingrid: *What kind of quarrelling?*

Janet: *One wife accuses the other one to use too much food or to be lazy. Then the quarrelling is there the whole day. I don´t need that. I´m tired of quarrelling.*

All the girls participating in my research, from both Morukatipe and Rock View emphasised that they would not wish to marry a man with many wives. This can be related to the disagreements within this household that existed and were observed, as well as the perception of a modern life. The girls emphasised much on that it was only men who were not educated who married more than one wife.

It was not only children who lived in polygyny households who experienced conflict in the home. Alcohol abuse was an issue brought up by many children, as well as mothers. When walking along the mud roads of Morukatipe, as well as walking outside the main streets of Tororo town, there was a distinct smell of Malua (in Luganda) or Ajono (In Ateso), a local made drink. This is made from fermented millet, something that it is paradoxically produced and sold by the women. Children experienced conflicts and domestic violence when their fathers/male caretakers came home drunk. This was described by children at Morukatipe and Rock View. *They drink alcohol, and if you say: stop do wrong things, they will beat you* (Rose 13 years).

As described in section 6.3, this had an influence on how children saw their future and how they could find solutions to this as they defined as a problem that had a negative impact on their lives.

6.2.3 Church and Belonging
Church and Christianity are important in Uganda. In Rock View, children belonged to different churches, yet mostly Catholic or Pentecostal churches. In Morukatipe, there was one Pentecostal church. Church was seen as a good place for children to be at, and many of my research participants were active parts of the church choir and were in church on a daily basis. As seen from chapter two, Christian missionaries were the ones who introduced the formal education system in Uganda, and Christianity is reflected in everyday activities at school. Children told me that church was important for them in many ways. First, church is important because it teaches them to be *God fearing* which is perceived to be an important part of being a good citizen. Second, church was a place for meeting other people to sing and pray together. Many children focused on the social aspect and they liked to participate in the church´s activities since they interacted with other children and adults. Third, children saw church as a means for change. One

of the girls told me that she used to have a father who was *abusing alcohol*. She described the situation as a part of the everyday, as the father would come home drunk every evening and start beating her mother. The local neighbours got concerned and the minister of the church was contacted to solve the situation. For her, church was the agent of positive change. *He no longer drinks because he is now born again* (Pentecostal). She saw the church as the solution-maker of the challenge she was facing home, and this could influence why she perceived church as so important for her.

6.3 Future aspirations

Future aspirations are influenced by everyday experiences. The everyday is defined as the life people live between the extraordinary events (Rigg 2007). School is an important part of children´s everyday lives, and the school system can influence how children are placed within the society as children, and as future grownups. Parents/caretakers´ perceptions and expectations of what they want their children to become can naturally influence how children view themselves and how they express their future. During my fieldwork, I understood that the everyday situation where children live their lives, influence their future hopes and aspirations. Children who had challenges in their lives often placed themselves as the change of the challenges, or away from those challenges in the future. In one of my first meetings with Okello (12 years, Morukatipe), he told me that he wanted to be a lawyer in order to keep law and order. At first I assumed that it was a future hope to become a lawyer, as it is perceived as a high-class profession in Uganda. After spending more time together I understood that Okello wanted to be a lawyer because of domestic violence in his home.

My father is quarrelling with my mother. So I want to be a lawyer so I can solve the problems. When he comes back drunk my mom complains about less food in the house and they quarrel. Me I just keep quiet.

(Okello 12 years. Morukatipe).

Okello wants to be the agent who can change the difficult part of his life. To be a lawyer for him meant that he would get the power to change the behaviour that he found difficult.

Several of the other research participants explained that they wanted to become police. This was related to security and lack of protection from thieves in both Tororo town and Morukatipe. One

of my research participants who lived in Tororo town explained that she wanted to become a police and work in Kampala. She wanted to be a police in order to *handle a gun* to protect her. Further, she explained that she wanted to live in Kampala so the thief could not reach her.

People come and break others doors. If they see you have very many things they will come and break. People even kill you. If they find you in the house they will come and beat you and you make an alarm. In Kampala they will not come and steal from me because I´m located far away and they will not have transport (money to pay means of transport to go from Tororo to Kampala) to come there.

(Girl 12 years, Rock View).

In this way she placed herself away from the danger in the future, and wanted to become a police in order to protect herself from danger and difficult situations. She told me her experience from when a thief entered their house. She was afraid that the thief would come back as she emphasised that *they all knew who he was*. In this way, an extraordinary event like this will influence the everyday and the future plans and aspirations, and school was seen as a means to reach a better future, away from the insecurity.

Living in Kampala was often seen as the future aspirations of the children. Children at Rock View talked about Kampala in a positive way and the perception was that *Kampala has a good environment*. Good environment was understood in two ways. First, good environment was related to the weather where the weather in Kampala was seen as better and more stable than in Tororo. Second, it referred to the several opportunities that Kampala had. None of my research participants had relatives or knew anyone who had succeeded from Kampala. Still, the perceptions of Kampala´s opportunities were the same. Many wanted to move to Kampala because they viewed the chances of getting a paid job as higher in Kampala. *The situation in Tororo don´t bring future hopes, Kampala is better* (Pricilla 12 years, Rock View).

The aspiration of moving to Kampala can also be connected to marriage. Girls from both Morukatipe and Rock View emphasised that they did not want to get married to an uneducated man from the village. This was connected to how they saw men treating their wives as well as perceptions about uneducated men and the hard life in the village.

I don´t want to get married from the village because I don´t want to dig. The man wakes you up very early in the morning and sais lets dig, if you say you feel sick the man says: you are lying to me.

(Rose 13 years, Morukatipe).

I don´t want to get married from the village because most of those people are not educated. I want to have a educated man because of work and treatment. Sometimes the men from the village treat women badly.

(Esther 13 years, Rock View).

Everyday experiences were shaping future hopes and aspirations of the children in Morukatipe and Rock View. Security threats, domestic violence and health issues were reflected in their future plans. This was something that was talked about after spending much time together and after we got to know each other on a deeper basis.

The school system in Uganda is influencing how children view the future. All my research participants saw education as a means to get a paid job. However, they were aware of the situation around them, and had a view of their future based on their everyday reality. Children from wealthy families understood that they would get more education after primary school, and children from families with limited resources knew that most likely they would not go higher than primary school. Yet, as they emphasised themselves: *you can never know, maybe God will provide in one way, or another* (Jane 12 years, Morukatipe).

6.4 Summing up and the way forward

This chapter has shown that children view several places as important for them, and it has shown what places influence children´s sense of belonging. School is important, as it is a way to a bright future. However, more specific places were emphasised as important for them as well. This was related to places found at school, home, in the village or town. When children spoke about places that made them happy or places where they belonged, it was related to emotions and friendship. It was a matter or being included in social relations between other children or adults. Even though children positioned themselves as belonging to certain places in their

present everyday lives, their future aspirations placed them in different places and away from the situations they found challenging and hard about their everyday life.

In the following chapter, I will link theoretical aspects to the everyday experiences of chapter 5 and 6.

7.0 Concluding discussion

This chapter will revisit the theory chapter and link the theoretical aspects to chapter five and six. First, I will focus on how children are defined by teachers and parents/caretakers in Tororo and Morukatipe. The attention will be given to how children are socially constructed and how social positions within the society influence how children are defined. Second, this chapter will look at the place theory, where the emphasis will be on school, home, church, schoolyard, tree and the school garden. Belonging will be described as a social process in the everyday life with a child-centred focus.

7.1 Children

UN-agencies define a child as an individual below 18 years old. This definition is challenged by new sociological studies of childhood where the focus is on seeing children as social, active actors, capable of both influencing and explain the realities of their everyday lives (Kjørholt 2004). It is considered one-sided to only ask adults to talk on behalf of children, and the focus is on recognising children as competent actors capable of saying something about their everyday life and matters that concerns them (Punch 2001). Children and childhood are within this context seen as socially constructed, placed in a hierarchical order where children and childhood is reflecting gender, social class, ethnicity, age, and historical and political structures and transitions. It is about social position, rather then age (Lee 2001). Kjørholt (2004) describes hierarchical and generational order as a socially constructed system including social relationships that occur among social positions. Children and adult are holders of different positions that are defined in relation to each other. These relationships and positions are establishing social and cultural structures. Children and adults in Tororo and Morukatipe have clear positions within the society, and all my research participants were reflecting their social position when participating in my research.

By Ugandan government a child is an individual below 18 years old. As shown in chapter five, this was a common definition by all my research participants. However, teachers, parents/caretakers as well as the children gave the definition more insights that reflect their social position within the society as well as traditional believes and common-sense notions of

what a child is and what a child needs. Teachers were holding a position in society that had, according to the teachers, changed after the implementation of UPE. Their strong social position of acting as the gatekeeper to modernity had changed to a more stigmatizing position within society. The blame for poor exam results were on the teachers, and they felt that there high social status was changed to a more problematic position. Still, they were teachers, and that position could influence how they saw children and what a child needs. Teachers emphasised that a child needs guiding on the different steps on the way to become an adult. A child, in this context is an individual who is in need on guiding on basic issues as dressing, economic planning, on relationships and on education.

Parents/caretakers were holders of several positions within the society. However, as parents/caretakers they explained what a child is and what a child needs in similar ways. Like the teachers, parents/caretakers saw children as an individual below 18 years old. Yet, the emphasis was that a child is someone who is in need of care. Mothers and other caretakers explained that as long as the child needed financial and emotional support it was still a child. Further, it was underlined that a child is not an adult before the child has finished his/her education and has a job to sustain him/her self. Some differences were found between Rock View and Morukatipe in this regard. While parents/caretakers at Rock View only focused on finishing education and obtaining a job in order for the person to sustain him/her self, parents/caretakers in Morukatipe also considered marriage and being able to sustain him/her self on agriculture. This can be related to the social position within the society as well as the construction of different people within the local community. As mentioned in chapter two and five, Morukatipe is a community where mainly people belonging to the Iteso tribe is living. This can influence the way local traditions and common-notions are kept and understood. Tororo town is a myriad of tribes and languages, as well as the town has more modern characteristics as electricity, supermarkets, access to Internet and the local market as well as trade to Kenya and Kampala, and the idea of a job after education might be seen as more obtainable, then in Morukatipe. However, this dissimilarity between Morukatipe and Tororo town is not as distinct as explained above, and when asked about future hopes for their children the answer was that they would get a job and a better life then what they as parents/caretakers have.

7.2 Place and everyday spaces of belonging

When applying place theory in research with children, it becomes double edged. First, this means that place can refer to the places adults place children within. These are common-sense places adults in the society see as appropriate for children to be in. Second, place can refer to more informal places that children create on their own. Informal places can be identified within or outside the places they are placed by adults (Olwig & Gulløv 2003).

7.2.1 Primary school: children in the right place

This research has focused on children in primary school. This is a place society considers to be the right place for a child to be. Policymakers, teacher´s and parents/caretakers emphasised the importance of going to school, and school as a place was seen as a common-notion of an appropriate place for a child to be. A child in a school uniform was seen as *smart* and defined as someone who will grow up to become a responsible citizen. School can be seen as a place where children are passive becomings (Lee 2001). Lee (2001), drawing on Foucault (1977), emphasised on school as a place where adults are disciplining children as becomings. Individual spaces with a seat and area of desk space are created for each pupil where the spaces are arranged so the pupils are facing forward, in order for the teacher to teach and discipline the pupils. In Uganda, the school system is based on disciplining children, where the objective is to guide children on their way to adulthood to become responsible citizens. The everyday school characterized by routines of discipline and learning. This could be seen every morning and afternoon when the children were singing the national anthem and the national school song, as well as when the teacher came in to the room and the children raised up and said clearly: *You are welcome madam/mister. This is P6 A*. The children would stand until they were told to sit again.

School can be seen as a setting where everyday activities take place. This can be related to ***place as locale*** where the people and activities that take place shape formal and informal institutions that structures the place. Locale can be understood as a meeting place where individual's everyday activities meet and interact (Berg & Dale 2004). Both formal and informal interaction happened at school. And large-scale events as the UPE are influencing and changing the school as a setting where everyday activities take place. After the implementation of UPE in 1997, school was accessible for every child in Uganda. The implementation of the UPE has been

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defined as a critical event that is described as periods in time where large-scale transformations occur and change people's lives. Such transformations can redefine traditional and cultural social systems (Meinert 2009). In Uganda, UPE can be seen as a critical event. After all children got access to primary school, UPE changed the way children were placed within society. Children, boys and girls, are supposed to be at school during school hours. Based on my observations in Tororo and Morukatipe, this was also socially accepted both places. Research participants said that childhood had changed since they were children themselves. Some explained that childhood is better now because everyone has access to primary education. *All children are Museveni`s (The President of Uganda) children now. This is because he is the one paying for school fees* (Mother, Rock View). On the other hand, others emphasised that childhood was better when they were young. For instance the teacher from Morukatipe who said that it would be better if the government would make it´s own education system instead of basing on the western views of education. Some of the parents in Morukatipe emphasised that education was good for the children; still they would prefer that some of the children could stay home and help with domestic chores instead of going to school. One mother talked about this and said that: *I send her to school because that is what the neighbours are doing. If I don´t send her, they will ask: why she is remaining at home while the other ones are learning?* (Mother, Morukatipe).

7.2.2 Places of belonging

A particular place can be different places with dissimilar meanings for different people. And to find a pure, general sense of place might not be possible. One should rather focus on the diversification of different meanings, different sense of places and different sense of belongings that exist within a society (Agnew 2005). In Tororo and Morukatipe children had school as a place in common. The meaning my research participants gave to school was individual or related to social groupings based on friendship and social inclusion. School was a place where the children spent much of their time, and many children found places at school that were important for them and where they felt they belonged. Places that were identified by autophotography, informal conversations and participatory observation were related to security and friendship. Children at Rock View emphasised that the place where the **medicine box** and the **water tank** were located were special for them. This could be a symbol of security and a feeling of being safe at school. Other places identified were **trees**, **schoolyard** and **football field**, **school garden**, **church** and **home**. They were all reflecting social relationships and social

belonging. Sense of place is related to people´s experiences and emotional ties to places. It is about how humans subjectively experience and understand the places surrounding them. A strong sense of belonging of place would be indicative of a sense of place, and sense of belonging and sense of place is closely connected (ibid).

A sense of belonging can be identified at different levels. **Home** as a local level were emphasised as very important for many of the children. Home can be created in several ways and have multiple meanings and experiences. Home can be referred to as a metaphor for people's feelings of belonging. It can be directly linked to the physical structures of the house/dwelling, or it can be related to social relationships created through a process creating a sense of belonging as a part of society (Blunt & Dowling 2006). Children focused on their parents/caretakers as an important aspect of the home as a special and safe place. Children participated in the domestic chores in the home and helped to keep the home *clean and smart*. The structures of the homes were different from Tororo town and Morukatipe, as many of my research participants in Morukatipe lived in polygyny households. Even though parents/caretakers were very important for the children, they would also influence place by conflicts and disagreements. This was experienced in both Tororo town and Morukatipe, however, it was more emphasised in Morukatipe, which can be an indicator of more conflicts among the research participants homes in Morukatipe. Community **churches** were also important for the children. This was explained as a place to sing and meet friends. Church was also a place to learn how to be a good grown up person, as well as it was perceived as a means for change. Some of the children identified **national belonging** as well. The Ugandan flag was an important symbol of the everyday life at school, and one of the girls at Rock View emphasised that she belonged to Uganda and was proud to be Ugandan. This can be related to the social symbol of the flag and the national identification across tribes. The way she felt can also be related to the everyday activity of singing the national anthem and raising the Ugandan flag.

Multiple actions, people and places influence Children´s sense of belonging. Children at Rock View and Morukatipe are very aware of their every day reality and they know how to manoeuvre within the social relationships and the local reality they live within. Children feel belonging to multiple places and they are interrelated to the every day experiences of safety, social inclusion, and the feeling of being in place. In the everyday, children create places of belonging themselves and these places are based on how children view themselves as well as how other actors within the society define them.

7.2.3 Future places

Place can be both lived and experienced and can be seen as a specific place of the setting for social relationships. The experience of place can be different for different groups in society such as children, women, minorities, etc. Children defined several places that they belonged within their everyday lives, and their experiences from the everyday influenced their future aspirations. Children placed themselves to be the future change of the difficulties they experienced in their present everyday. Children also placed themselves in places that were seen as smart by the wider society, e.g. working in an office, bank, being a doctor or a lawyer. All the future aspirations were connected to education and the dream of getting a job. Some of the children saw themselves in Kampala in the future, while others wanted to remain in Tororo. Most children in Morukatipe said that they would like to move to Tororo town or to Kampala when they grow up, as they saw more opportunities in these places. This can also be related to how children who live in the village perceive themselves and how people living in town perceive people from the village. Girls from both Rock view and Morukatipe emphasised that they would not get married from the village, since the men there were *not educated* and could *treat women badly*. It was also believed that men from the village were most likely to marry more then one wife, something that the girls thought of as a life with conflict.

8.0 Conclusions

This thesis has looked at place and belonging with a child-centred focus. It´s aim was to identify how children are defined within their socio-cultural context of Tororo and Morukatipe, and to explore what places children belong in order to understand their sense of belonging. My theoretical and methodological positioning for this thesis was that children and childhood are socially constructed. This made me see children´s belonging from their own point of view in their local socio-cultural context. In order to study children´s places I used place theory with the emphasis on sense of place and sense of belonging. The emotional and social aspects of place and belonging have been central throughout the thesis and the complexity of belonging has been explored by looking at several aspects of the everyday. Parents/caretakers and teacher`s view on primary school has been identified in order to understand what attitudes from the socio-cultural context can impact children´s belonging. The primary school system has also been discovered in order to understand the setting of the everyday life of the pupils in Rock View and Morukatipe.

This section will revisit and answer the research question based on the knowledge created in this thesis.

1. How are children defined within their socio-cultural context?
- **Parents/caretakers.**
- **Teachers.**
- **Other stakeholders.**

The adult stakeholders involved in this research defined children differently. Policymakers defined children as someone below 18 years old. This definition was used when planning for school reforms and other issues related to school. Teachers defined children as someone who needed guiding and to be counselled by them as teachers and other adults in the society. Parents/caretakers defined children as someone in need of care. Children were seen as adults when they were able to sustain themselves and/or when they got married. The thesis showed that the research participants had diverse meanings of when a child becomes an adult, however, they all emphasised that education was the way for disciplining children to be future good citizens

with a smart salary paid job. In Uganda, children were defined by adults in a generational age based order as children on their way to become adults through different steps in a developmental process.

2. What places influence children´s sense of belonging?

- **The school?**
- **Home and family?**
- **Other places?**

Children have several places they consider to be important for them selves. The places identified were related to social relationships, cultural belonging, their place within the society and their future aspirations.

Primary school was first of all a place where children spent much of their time in their every day life. Primary school as locale was a place for many social interactions and relationships. It was the place for play and the place for learning. Several places within the primary school was identified as important for the pupils, and primary school was by children (as well as adults) seen as the only way to a good future. It was seen as a means of reaching their future dreams and aspirations.

Family and home was also emphasised as important for the children participating in this research. Family members were seen as important both for emotional and practical support. And it was related to the matter of feeling at home. Children lived in different kinds of homes and some of them experienced conflict in their homes. This was seen as challenges and difficulties by the children, and often could this everyday worries be seen in their future aspirations where children places themselves away from the problem, or placed themselves as the change of the problem.

Other places within the local society were also identified as important for children. Church as well as the football field was places like that. Church was an important place for most people in Tororo and Morukatipe, and religion is central in the every day life. Children saw church as important because they could engage in singing and social activities as well as they had the common sense believe of church as a way to learn good things about God and how to live the life of a *God-fearing*, good citizen of Uganda. The football field was important for playing different games, friendship, as well as it was a place for girls and boys to fall in love.

Children feel belonging to various places within their everyday lives. Several aspects influence children´s sense of belonging, and children creates places of belonging through social relationships, everyday activities, and though their social position as children in the society.

8.1 Final considerations

With the emphasis on children as agents, able to say something about their lives, including children as research participants in research is essential. To understand what influences children´s lives, children have to get the chance to participate in research projects considering aspects of their lives. Primary education is given much emphasis by the United Nations and multiple donors, especially from the Global North. The institution of primary school is a place children all over the world spend much time. It can therefore have a major impact on children and their families lives, as well as how communities are structured, and it will influence how common sense believes of certain groups within the society are constructed and reshaped. In this way it is important to include children and primary school in research. To undertake a research project on school children over a longer period of time would be interesting and recommendable, as the influence of the school institution will be more visible if the researcher is able to undertake the study over several years.

Based on the notion that children are capable of saying something about matters that concerns them, I have learned that children´s places of belonging are multiple, and they are depending on their everyday experiences based on social relationships and their position as children in the Ugandan context. Children´s orientation in their lives are based on their everyday realities and their future aspirations are shaped by this.

Almost 50% of Uganda's population is below 15 years old (US Census Bureau 2010). With the Ugandan governments emphasis on UPE the aim is that all children should attend primary school. Ethnographic research on the everyday lives influenced by the primary school institution is important. Firstly, as it is relevant for the children whose lives are influenced by government policy. Secondly, it is needed for the policymakers in order to understand how the education system influence children´s lives, places of belonging and future aspirations.

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Appendix

Guide for semi-structured interviews for local politicians (Tororo Municipal Council and Ministry of Education and Sports.

- Age?
- Educational background?
- Position?
- How long have you been holding your position?
- Does the position require any special type of education?
- How did you get this job? (use this political dimension in analysis)
- Can you tell me what a normal day at work for you look like?
- What is the type of decisions that you make?
- How do you think primary education should be in Tororo district? Why?
- Are you in the position to change the primary education within the district?
- Are you tied to national policies? If yes, to what extent?
- Do you think it´s important that all children in the district attend primary school? If yes, why? If no, why?
- What is understood as a child?
- What do you consider as a proper childhood?
- Do you think the way childhood is and is seen, has changed or is changing within the district?
- Have there been any policy changes to primary school the last 5-10 years? If yes, what type of changes? (E.g. curricula changes, seasonality, etc.).
- Do you have any questions for me?

Guide for semi-structured interviews for Headmasters.

- Age?
- Educational background?
- How long have you been holding your position?
- Can you tell me what a normal day at work for you look like?
- Do you have any areas of focus in your school? If yes, what focus areas?

- Are there any challenges to running this school? If yes, what challenges?
- Who decides how you should manage the school?
- Who decides what is taught in this school?
- How do you think primary school should be in Tororo district?
- What is understood as a child?
- How do you consider a proper childhood should look/be like?
- Do you think the way childhood is and is seen, has changed or is changing within the district?
- Have there been any policy changes to primary school the last 5-10 years? If yes, what type of changes and how have they affected the school and the pupils at this school? (E.g. curricula changes, seasonality, etc.).
- What do you think primary education does for the children at this school?
- Do you have any questions for me?

Guide for group discussions with Teachers.

- Age?
- Educational background?
- How long have you been holding your position?
- What subjects do you teach?
- Can you tell me what a normal day at work for you look like?
- Who decides what you should teach in the classroom?
- What subjects are in the curricula?
- Are there any challenges to your work? If yes, what challenges and what could be done to improve the situation?
- How do you think primary education should be in Tororo district?
- What do you think primary education does for the children you teach?
- What do you mean a child is?
- How do you consider a good childhood?
- Is childhood different now than when you were young? /What has changed since you were a child?

- Have there been any policy changes to this school the last 5-10 years? If yes, what type of changes and how have they affected how you teach at this school? and the pupils at this school?
- Do you have any questions for me?

Discussion with children after autophotography session.

- Can you tell me about your pictures?
- Where is it taken?
- Why did you take it?
- What is special about this place?
- Do you go to this place often?
- Do you go to this place with someone?
- How do you feel when you are at this place?
- How do you feel when you look at this picture?
- Who is on the picture? Is that person important for you?
- Anything you would like to add?
- Do you have any questions for me?

Guide for semi-structured interviews with Parents/caregivers.

- Age?
- Tribe?
- Work?
- Educational background?
- Do you think it´s important to send your child to primary school? If yes, why? If no, why not?
- What do you think about the education at the primary school your child/ren attends?
- Do you know what your children learn in school? If yes, what do you think about it?
- Are the curricula the way you think it should be?
- How do you think education should be in Tororo District?
- How do your children like school (the parents' impression)?
- Are there any challenges of sending your child/ren to primary school?
- Are there any benefits of sending your child/ren to primary school?

- What is your main motivation for sending your child/ren to primary school?
- What do you mean a child is?
- What in your opinion is a good childhood?
- What has changed since you were a child?
- Do you have any questions for me?