

# Children affected by war and conflict article analysis: the psychological effects...

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This reaction paper will cover readings from Chapter Five in our textbook titled, " Children Affected by War and Conflict." It will also include points made from an article in the Journal of Social Science and Medicine. Children are susceptible to physical or emotional attack or harm during conflict and post-conflict settings. These experiences can have a permanent effect on children which often leads to post-traumatic stress disorder. Loss of relatives or a parent may cause disruption in a child's life and some children could eventually suffer from depression and anxiety. I was most impacted by the fact that, " Despite the high level of extreme violence to which the refugees had been exposed, daily stressors related to a lack of basic needs and a lack of safety in the camps were better predictors of PTSD than war exposure; in fact, daily stressors fully mediated the relationship of war exposure to PTSD" (Miller, p. 12). It never occurred to me that children could suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder because they did not have food, clothing, security, and shelter.

These daily stressors can have an impact on a child's mental health in the same manner that being a child soldier can. I had many preconceived notions about child soldiers one being the fact that they were willing participants. I thought they were willing to help their country fight and kill the enemy. I was under the impression that these child soldiers were acting as lures or guides to show their troops where the enemy was located. Until I took this class, I didn't realize the living conditions were so poor. I didn't know some children were considered caretakers and had to find food to feed the family because their parents could not work. I wasn't aware that some children lacked education because they had to stay home for protection

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during times of violence. Mapp states, “ While schools should be a safe place for children, isolated from the conflict, this is too often not the case” (p. 93). Teachers and schools are targets for guerillas, bombs, and other forms of violence. Therefore, schools were basically closed during times of war and conflict.

Cultural impacts include an increase of violence and an unreasonable conduct characteristic of people involved in conflict. For example, more civilians are becoming the target of armed conflict. This is shown by the increasing amount of civilian fatalities in proportion to the total amount of casualties. Women and their children are more likely to suffer casualties which can cause families and communities to collapse and lose their unity. Even though young children are not involved in discussions or the manner of war, they are still exposed to severe injury. These children experience poverty, neglect, neglect, abuse, mistreatment, and long-term emotional and psychological effects. In educating others about the topic of child soldiers, I would argue the point that we cannot keep ignoring these children. We cannot conduct ourselves as if the problem in these countries does not exist, these children and women need help. The United States should be organizing platforms to send aid to these countries. Another crucial point would be to ask ourselves why child soldiers still exist today and what can we do to help these children recover. Mental health counselors along with educators and other support services could be very instrumental in getting women and child soldiers out of conflict zones.