Understanding the Complex Inter-Connections of Civil war and Communal Violence: the Case of Uganda

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Understanding the Complex Inter-Connections of Civil war and Communal Violence: THE case of Uganda

Inzicht in de complexe verwevenheid van burgeroorlogen en sektarisch geweld: Het geval van Oeganda

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Dedication

I dedicate this thesis to my late elder brother, William Odele (1981-2013), to my dear parents, Mr. David Hannington Okalanyi and Mrs. Grace Elizabeth Kakayi Okalanyi, and to my loving brothers and sisters as well. I am grateful for their resourceful support and love that has brought me this far. And to my lovely daughter Nambuya Elizabeth Isimon who has endured several years without motherly love and care. I love you.

Contents

509974-L-bw-isimon
Processed on: 1-5-2017
PDF page: 6

509974-L-bw-isimon
Processed on: 1-5-2017

List of Tables, Figures, Maps and Appendices

Tables

Figures

Maps

509974-L-bw-isimon
Processed on: 1-5-2017
PDF page: 9

Acronyms

ACLED	Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project
ARLI	Acholi Religious Leaders' Initiative
ASTU	Anti-Stock Theft Unit
AU	African Union
CAR	Central African Republic
CONIS	Conflict Information System
COW	Correlates of War
CSOPNU	Civil Society Organization for Peace in Northern Uganda
DFID	Department for International Development
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EGIP	Ethnic Group in Power
FEDEMU	Federal Democratic Movement
FGD	Focused Group Discussions
FLN	The National Liberation Front
FRELIMO	The Mozambique Liberation Front
GUSCO	Gulu Support the Children Organisation

509974-L-bw-isimon
Processed on: 1-5-2017
PDF page: 10

HRW	Human Rights Watch
IDP	Internally Displaced Persons
IGAD	Inter–Governmental Authority on Development
IMF/WB	International Monetary Fund and World Bank
IRIN	Integrated Regional Information Network
KOSIMO	The Konflikt Simulations Model
LRA	Lord's Resistance Army
MEG	Marginalised Ethnic Groups
MPLA	Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NRM/A	National Resistance Movement/Army
OCHA	Office of the Prime Minister
OPM	Office of the Prime Minister
OPM	Office of the Prime Minister
PAIGC	The African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde
PRIO	Peace Research Institute Oslo
RENAMO	Mozambican National Resistance
RPF	Rwanda Patriotic Front
RUF	Revolutionary United Front
SADC	South African Development Community
SALW	Small Arms and Light Weapons
SPLA	Sudan People's Liberation Army
UCDA	Uganda Christian Democratic Army

509974-L-bw-isimon
Processed on: 1-5-2017

UCDP	Uppsala Conflict Data Program
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Emergency Fund
UNITA	National Union for the Total Independence of Angola
UNLA	United National Liberation Army
UNOCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
UPDA/M	Uganda People's Defence Army/Movement
WHO	World Health Organisation

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This thesis has been a challenge but is ultimately a rewarding knowledge experience. I feel indebted to a number of people who have contributed to this learning experience and have supported and encouraged me throughout the process. My first appreciation is extended to the staff of Makerere University, Department of Development Studies, especially to the Head of Department, Prof. Godfrey Asiimwe, who encouraged me to embark on an academic career. I am grateful for the guidance and encouragement Dr. John Cameron offered me during the write up of the PhD Proposal and the application process for admission. I am indebted to the International Institute of Social Studies, especially the Governance, Globalisation and Social Justice Group (GGSJ) for considering my application to further my studies. My heartfelt gratitude goes to my Promotor, Prof. Mohamed Salih, for his guardianship, his critical and professional guidance right from the initial stages of this academic journey to date. My co-promotor, Dr. Helen Hintjens, who has tirelessly reviewed my work and provided me with support, critical advice and guidance, that have helped shape my analysis and presentation of this thesis. I do appreciate both of them. A special thanks to my partner J. Parker-Allotey for his support and encouragement through out this journey. I am deeply grateful. I am especially indebted to my senior research assistants, Maurice Akope from Karamoja, Byron Obwona from the Gulu District and my friend Jamilla Oluka in Kampala. Their support made my fieldwork an enriching exercise. I would also like to thank the local people who participated in this study, as well as the local government officials in the north and north eastern regions of Uganda for allowing me into their communities and sharing their realities with me. Thanks finally to the Netherlands Fellowship Programme (NUFFIC) without whose financial support I could not have pursued my doctoral studies; I cannot thank them enough.

509974-L-bw-isimon
Processed on: 1-5-2017
PDF page: 13

Abstract

This study explores the interlinkages between civil war and communal violence which conflict literature has endeavoured to categorise as two significantly different types of intra-state warfare typologies. A lot has been written about civil wars, but their connections with other conflict categories have so far been under-researched. This is especially true of the connection between civil war and communal violence, which this study explores in the context of northern and north-eastern Uganda. Much quantitative conflict research uses statistical data as the basis for arriving at conclusions about typologies and categories. However, quantitative approaches in conflict studies are usually based on secondary sources, which sometimes have little regard for the complexities of the changing dynamics of violent conflicts in specific locations like Uganda. This study combines a qualitative and interpretative approach with reflections on the Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP) data sets. Empirical data collected from interviews and focus group discussions with various key actors was combined with reflections on dataset measurements of civil war and communal violence in Uganda, and a range of scholarly documents. This study looked closely at quantitative measures of these two conflicts, in northern and north eastern Uganda, questioning the typologies and quantitative indicators used, as well as the key actors identified in the UCDP and PRIO (Peace Research Institute Oslo) databases. Through two distinct case studies from within Uganda, this research examines the complex interconnections between the civil war in northern Uganda and what is often termed communal violence in north eastern Uganda. The study examines the causes as well as the actors involved and how these conflicts changed course and direction, and what implications this has for the conceptualisation of these conflicts.

Key words

Uganda, civil war, communal violence, UCDP/PRIO datasets, interpretative.

509974-L-bw-isimon
Processed on: 1-5-2017
PDF page: 14

Inzicht in de complexe verwevenheid van burgeroorlogen en sektarisch geweld: Het geval van Oeganda

Samenvatting

Dit onderzoek gaat over het onderlinge verband tussen burgeroorlogen en sektarisch geweld. Deze twee typen conflict worden in de literatuur opgevat als twee duidelijk verschillende categorieën van gewapende strijd binnen staten. Er is veel geschreven over burgeroorlogen, maar tot nu toe nog weinig onderzoek gedaan naar het verband tussen burgeroorlogen en andere typen conflicten. Dit geldt in het bijzonder voor het verband tussen een burgeroorlog en sektarisch geweld, dat in dit onderzoek wordt verkend in de context van Noord- en Noordoost-Oeganda. In kwantitatief onderzoek naar conflicten worden de conclusies over typologieën en categorieën veelal gebaseerd op statistische gegevens. Kwantitatief conflictonderzoek is echter gewoonlijk gebaseerd op secondaire bronnen, waarbij er soms weinig aandacht is voor de complexe werkelijkheid van de veranderende dynamiek van gewelddadige conflicten in bepaalde gebieden zoals Oeganda.

In dit onderzoek wordt een kwalitatieve en interpretatieve benadering gecombineerd met inzichten verkregen uit gegevens van het *Uppsala Conflict Data Program* (UCDP), een databank van de Universiteit van Uppsala. De empirische data die zijn verzameld in interviews en focusgroepsdiscussies met verschillende hoofdrolspelers zijn gecombineerd met bestudering van de datasets over burgeroorlog en sektarisch geweld in Oeganda en bestudering van de wetenschappelijke literatuur.

In dit onderzoek worden de kwantitatieve data over het conflict in Noord-Oeganda en dat in Noordoost-Oeganda onder de loep genomen, waarbij kritisch wordt gekeken naar zowel de gebruikte typologieën en kwantitatieve indicatoren als naar de hoofdrolspelers die worden onderscheiden in de databanken van het UCDP en PRIO (*Peace Research Institute Oslo*). Met twee aparte casestudy's in Oeganda is onderzoek gedaan naar de complexe verwevenheid van de burgeroorlog in Noord-Oeganda en het conflict in Noordoost-Oeganda dat vaak wordt aangeduid met de term sektarisch geweld. Het onderzoek gaat over zowel de oorzaken als de bij de strijd betrokken partijen en

509974-L-bw-isimon
Processed on: 1-5-2017
PDF page: 15

belicht de wending die de conflicten hebben genomen en de implicaties daarvan voor de conceptualisering van deze conflicten.

Trefwoorden

Oeganda, burgeroorlog, sektarisch geweld, datasets van UCDP/PRIO, interpretatief.

1 Background to the Study

1.1 The research problem

Over the years, conflict scholars and organisations have preoccupied themselves with defining various types of violent conflict, which has raised a lot of debate and contestation. Conflict scholars have often discussed conflicts in Africa using generic definitions or concepts of violent conflict that do not grapple with local African realities. Often, terms such as violent conflict, civil war, and communal violence have been used with little in-depth clarification of how these concepts differ and what are the dynamics involved among and within these conflicts. Violent conflict, a major problem for many third world countries, such as Uganda has been experienced almost throughout much of its post-independence history (Fituni 1995:147, Hironaka 2005:01).

This study uses two distinct cases of conflict, referred to as civil war and communal violence. It challenges the dominant view that these can be clearly distinguished from one another and constitute two significantly different forms of violent conflict that can be measured in different ways (Small and Singer 1982:217, Sarkees and Schafer 2000:130, Gleditsch et al. 2002:619, Sundberg et al. 2012:253). This study seeks to correct a widespread tendency for scholarly researchers to put increasing effort into showing how civil war and communal violence are distinct forms of conflict. Instead, it suggests that, whilst these may be significantly different intra-state warfare categories, there are also some significant linkages and continuities between these two broad forms of violent conflict.

According to 'conflict' literature, the main parties to a civil war are the state as the principal party and the rebel faction or factions as the other (Small and Singer 1982:213-214, Fearon and Laitin 2003:76, Sambanis 2004:829-830). In communal violence, by contrast, violent interactions are said to be mainly between communal groups without the involvement of

509974-L-bw-isimon
Processed on: 1-5-2017
PDF page: 17

external actors (Sundberg et al. 2012:353, Brosche and Elfferversson 2012:33). These have been seen as the most significant distinguishing factors that set the two types of violent conflict apart. Sometimes violence is categorised as communal violence, despite pronounced levels of state involvement. Some examples that can be cited are Somalia, where warfare between clans was facilitated by the state, when Said Barre's regime encouraged warfare against insubordinate clans by arming loyal clans (Adam 1999:174). This laid the foundation for the continuation of communal clashes between clans for decades, but it was strictly speaking as much civil war as it was communal violence. Violent clashes among warlords thus initially emerged as a form of defending and attacking the government of the state; only later did the violence in Somalia evolve into communal violence, as defined by the datasets. Yet this complex form of violent warfare in Somalia is largely termed 'communal violence' throughout in the UCDP Non- State conflict datasets (UCDP Non-state conflict dataset V 2.4-2012).

The case of Darfur and Southern Kordofan (Nuba Mountains) is similar, since there communal violence arose in which the Sudanese Government was criticised for arming the 'Janjaweed' militias, mainly comprised of Sudanese of 'Arab' origin, against the Fur, Masalit and Zaghawa ethnic groups, of more 'African' origin (Flint and De Waal 2008:80-95, Salih 2005:8-13). Such was also the case in Kordofan in the Nuba mountains, where the Sudan Government was accused of openly arming the 'Baggara Arabs', militias fighting the Nuba people, in turn said to be backed by the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) (Salih 1995:75-7, Salih and Harir 1994:186-202Salih 1995). This kind of proxy civil war aggravated tensions between different groups and could possibly explain the persistence of violent warfare. As Brosche and Elfferversson (2012) confirm, armed conflicts between the government of Sudan and SPLA (and SPLM, the political movement linked to the SPLA), played a contributory role in perpetuating what is defined by datasets as 'communal violence'. In this way, between 1989 and 2010, a total of 27 communal violence-type conflicts were recorded within south Sudan, the Darfur region and Kordofan, which was distinguished in a very clear way from the 'civil war' between north and south Sudan (UCDP Non-state conflict dataset V.2.3-2011, UCDP Non-state conflict dataset V.2.4-2012).

Cases such as Somalia and Sudan can reveal how the politics of a communal violence-type conflict is a matter of interpretation, especially

509974-L-bw-isimon
Processed on: 1-5-2017 PDF page: 18

when communal violence is connected to wider civil wars. This has significance for the present study, since some traits of civil war can be found within communal violence, and vice-versa. Thus communal violence, or conflicts defined as such in the datasets, can be characterised by state involvement and state-funded militia groups.

Debates among 'conflict' scholars have centred on the question of how to measure death tolls, and this question is linked with the question of how to exactly define civil war. Some scholars note that communal violence is mainly characterised by a few days of intense clashes, with relatively fewer fatalities than those resulting from civil war over a more sustained period. Apart from a few exceptional cases, civil wars, it is argued, have been more lethal and protracted than communal violence (Petterson 2010:190-191, Brosche and Elfversson 2012:43, Sundberg et al. 2012:353). However, in practice there are complex overlaps in time span and lethal effects between civil war and communal violence. In terms of death toll, for example, the record appears to be not that different between the two types of conflict, since some communal violence-type conflicts have been very lethal and produced devastating death tolls which can be equated to those of a civil war (Sundberg et al. 2012:351). For instance, cases of armed conflict between the Cameroonian government and the Union of the People of Cameroon (UPC) rebel faction between 1957 – 1958 and the Togolese government and the Togolese Movement for Democracy (MTD) rebel faction in 1986, were all recorded as minor cases of armed conflict, throughout the course of these short-lived civil wars (UCDP/PRIO Armed Conflict Version 4-2014). According to Sundberg et al. (2012:357), between 1989 and 2008, communal clashes in the following countries generated the following estimates of annual fatalities: Sudan -12,676; DRC - 11,886; Somalia - 9,319; Nigeria -7,635; India - 4,264; Ethiopia - 4,017. These numbers of fatalities can certainly be compared to the numbers of fatalities in some civil wars. Another issue is the characterisation of communal violence as intermittent and brief, whereas some of the violence categorised in this way lasted for years and had a devastating toll on local people such as in the cases noted above: Sudan, the DRC and Somalia, among others.

Overall, a lot has been written especially about categories of collective violence with high levels of state involvement and coordination, mainly civil war (Hironaka 2005: 3-9, Sundberg et al. 2012:351). Much less scholarly attention has been paid to other conflict categories such as

509974-L-bw-isimon
Processed on: 1-5-2017

communal violence, even though the latter is not a new or rare phenomenon (Sundberg et al. 2012:352, Sarkees and Schafer 2000:130, Brosche and Elferversson 2012:36). This is significant because it results in the inter-connections between civil war and communal violence being under-researched. In the light of this, Sundberg et al. (2012) point out a pertinent issue when they note that:

> "In addition to questions regarding the origins and dynamics of communal violence, the phenomenon is also interesting vis a vis other forms of violence: do communal violences spill over in to armed rebellion against the Government? Or are they a consequence of armed conflict, a result of social polarization or enmity? This relationship has received little attention..." (Sundberg et al. 2012:352; see also Brosche & Elfverversson, 2012:55-56).

The questions raised above highlight the need to examine the connections and inter-linkages between the conflict categories of communal violence and civil war. The way communal violence and civil war are conceptualised in academic and policy discourse often differs significantly. This study will challenge the common understanding in much of the conflict literature that civil war is disconnected from communal violence and differs significantly from it. The study starts from the assumption that these two conflict categories are not static in their course and that their complex interconnections have been under-theorised. Using the case of the civil war in northern Uganda and the communal violence in north eastern Uganda, this study seeks to show how these two conflict categories display traits that are similar and may in practice not only overlap and inter-connect but even merge into one another, under certain circumstances. This is done by examining the underlying causes of these conflicts, the conditions under which these conflicts changed form and direction over time, the actors involved and what their role was in influencing the course and direction of these conflicts. Changes in the dynamics and characteristics of the violence conflicts can also alter (or not be reflected in) how these conflicts are conceptualised.

1.2 Violent conflict in Uganda

Conflict scholars note that during the Post-Cold War era, many African countries were engulfed by violent conflict and the continent was very

509974-L-bw-isimon
Processed on: 1-5-2017 PDF page: 20

unstable (Wallensteen and Axell 1994:334-337, Wallensteen and Sollenberg 1999:593). According to Fearon and Laitin (2003:77), Sub-Saharan Africa had the highest number of armed conflicts. By 1994, an estimated 28 countries in Sub-Saharan Africa had been or were still affected by violent conflicts, most of these civil wars. In the same year, 12 of the 48 countries had armed conflict, while others were coming out of war into a post-war transition (Sandberg and Smith 1994:02-5). By 1999 the number had risen to 18 armed conflicts in the same 48 countries, with a further 11 affected by severe political crises (Adedeji 1999:03-05). Countries such as Angola, Algeria, Burundi, Congo-Brazzaville, Ethiopia, Mozambique, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Somalia, Rwanda, Sudan, the Central African Republic, Zaire and Uganda among others were involved in serious violent conflicts over sometimes quite prolonged periods of time (Allen 1999:368, Ali and Mathews 1999:5).

As noted above, Uganda was one of these conflict-affected countries. The northern and the north-eastern region of Uganda were engulfed in violent conflict that for decades. The Government of Uganda has battled with the Lord's Resistance Army/Movement (LRA/M) rebel faction led by Joseph Kony since 1987, after the National Resistance Army/Movement (NRA/M) took over power (Nsubuga 1999:15, Branch 2007:154-176, Doom and Vlassenroot 1999:05, Gersony 1997:30-35).

As shown in Map 1.1, Uganda is also located at the centre of several regions of violent conflict and political crisis, including sharing a border with South Sudan to the North, formerly Sudan, and with the Democratic Republic of Congo, formerly Zaire, to the south west, as well as Rwanda to the south, where Uganda was closely involved in the genesis of civil war that eventually culminated in genocide in 1994.

Besides the civil war in the northern region, communal violence has also plagued the north eastern part of the country for decades, among the Karamojong sub-groups, with neighbouring ethnic groups across other frontier districts such as Katakwi, Kumi, Kapchorwa, Kitgum, and the cross border ethnic groups in Kenya and Sudan as well. Like the civil war in the northern region, this communal violence in the north eastern part of the country had been ongoing since the pre-colonial era, throughout the colonial era and the successive governments of Uganda, till the early 2001, when a disarmament programme was launched (Gray 2000:412, Muhwereza and Otim 2002:163, Mkutu 2006:61, Safer World 2010:8-88).

509974-L-bw-isimon
Processed on: 1-5-2017
PDF page: 21

Map 1.1: Map of Africa showing the location of Uganda

Source: Google images

https://nl.pinterest.com/pin/313844667756578712/

Chapters 4 and 5 contextualises these distinct cases of violent conflict and the pathways they took, raising interesting questions about the complex inter-linkages between them. To examine these complex connections between the civil war in northern Uganda and the communal violence in north eastern Uganda, the study uses a conflict analysis framework. As elaborated upon below, the conflict analysis framework significantly assists in suggesting levels of analysis that are significant in opening up debates about the inter-linkages between these two distinct cases of violent conflict.

1.3 Conflict analysis framework

A conflict possesses dynamic features and sometimes its pathways can be influenced by several factors. These dynamic features can alter the

structure as well as inter-actor relationship of a conflict. As conflicts transform over time, new issues come up and several other actors are drawn in as well. This means that a comprehensive understanding of the pathways of civil conflicts and communal violence is important.[1]

Since conflict can sometimes be multi-leveled and complex, a multi-disciplinary conflict analysis framework is used. With regard to a conflict progression model, Ho-won Jeong argues that conflict stages (or phases) are usually portrayed "as an orderly evolution from initiation of struggles, escalation, entrapment, de-escalation and termination" (Jeong 2008:97)[2], as illustrated below, in Fig. 1.1.

The linear progression model describes the intensity of a conflict with a peaked curve where eruption of hostilities builds in to violent interaction before any de-escalation attempts. And it conceptually helps to imagine a series of scheduled phases. However, he also notes that this is a very simplistic model because pathways of conflict are full of "discontinuous, transformative events" that happen in a non-linear, self-sustaining way. He notes that:

> "Diverse passages of a conflict are illustrated by the fact that most events do not go through a prescribed trajectory. The messiness does not fit in to a simple stage by stage that is within any particular actor's control" (Jeong 2008:100-101)[3].

Each conflict phase is characterised bya different degree of complexity, with differences in the nature of transition and developing retrospectively other than prospectively planned. So conflicts can be caught up in protuberances of "escalation, continuing stalemate, de-escalation and re-escalation" (Jeong 2008:104).

In the light of the above, Christopher Mitchell notes that 'conflicts are not static phenomena, and hence the dynamics aspects of conflict which alter both structure and inter-party relationships over time, are essential aspects of any satisfactory analysis' (Mitchell 1981:33). He highlights further how complex conflicts can be and how they can draw

[1] See Crocker et al. 2001, Jeong 2008, Mitchell 1981:33, Kalyvas 2003:487.

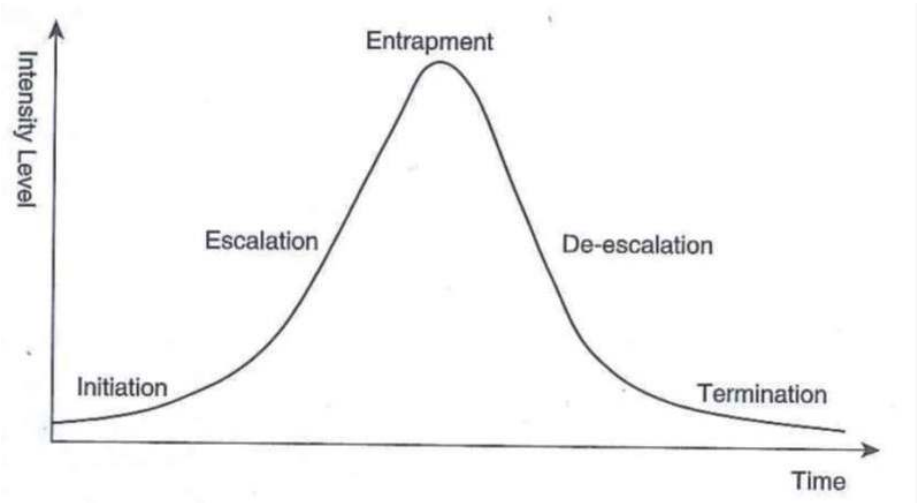
[2] For details on these phases see Jeong (2008).

[3] See also Kriesberg (1998)

509974-L-bw-isimon
Processed on: 1-5-2017 PDF page: 23

in diverse actors not only from the local level but from national, regional and global level.[4]

Figure 1.1: Conflict Progression Model



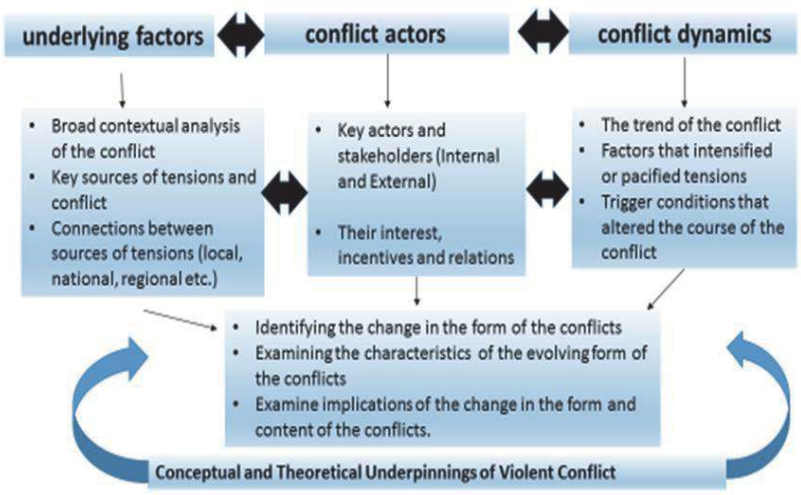
Source: Jeong (2008: 97).

With that in mind, the study uses a multidisciplinary approach with different theoretical frameworks effective in examining the evolution of these conflicts. This conflict analysis framework blends different conceptual elements which focus on three key levels, i.e., the structures, actors and dynamics which are used to systematically assess these conflicts. The study analyses structures, which involves an historical analysis of the conflict and the key sources of tensions and conflicts. The study identifies the key actors and highlights their role in influencing the direction of these conflicts.

[4] On complexities of contemporary conflicts, see Kalyvas (2003:487). Edward Azar refers to their complex episodes as "blurred demarcations" (Azar 1990:06).

509974-L-bw-isimon
Processed on: 1-5-2017
PDF page: 24

Figure 1.2: Conflict Analysis Framework.



Source: Authors own design, adapted from O'Gorman (2011)

Examining the dynamics of the conflict involves tracking the development of the conflict. These several levels were analyzed together, so as to establish the interlinkages between the civil war and communal violence in these different regions of Uganda. This is the case because the study focuses on the need to understand the complexities and dynamics of these violent conflicts through underlying tensions, actors involved and how the development of these conflicts impacts how these violent conflicts are defined.

1.3 Objectives of the study

This research examines conflict dynamics of and complex interactions and connections between civil war and communal violence. Specifically, it looks at these complexities and interlinkages in the Ugandan context. The study seeks to:

- Identify the underlying tensions that caused and prolonged the civil war in northern Uganda and the communal violence in

north eastern Uganda, and determine how these tensions influenced the form and direction of both conflicts

- Identify and map the various actors involved in the conflicts, their motivations, as well as the major inter-connections and changes in the form and direction of these conflicts
- Reflect, on the basis of field findings and interpretative data analysis, the implications of how civil war and communal violence are conceptualised.

1.4 Main research question

What are the complex interconnections between the civil war in northern Uganda and the communal violence in northern eastern Uganda?

1.4.1 Sub-questions

1. What were the underlying causes of the civil war in northern Uganda and the communal violence in north eastern Uganda?
2. Who were the main actors in the two conflicts? What were their incentives and their role in influencing the direction of these conflicts?
3. Under what circumstances did the form, content and direction of these two conflicts inter-connect and overlap?
4. What are the implications of the distinct and overlapping nature of these two conflicts for how civil war and communal violence is conceptualised?

1.5 Chapter outline

The structure of the thesis will be presented as follows: Chapter 1 provides the background to the study, the research problem and objectives of the study. Chapter 2 presents the methodology, field experiences and challenges faced during the field work in each region, and its implications for the study. This is followed by Chapter 3 which theorises civil war and communal violence including the causes and actors in violent conflict. This is followed by Chapters 4 and 5 which contextualise the armed conflict in northern Uganda and the communal violence in north eastern

509974-L-bw-isimon
Processed on: 1-5-2017
PDF page: 26

Uganda, respectively, based on scholarly materials and empirical findings about the realities of the target population of the study. Chapter 6 critiques conflict categorisations of both conflicts and highlights what this means for conflict coding and conceptualisation. For both conflicts, and in comparison between them, Chapter 7 synthesises the causal and actor linkages, and Chapter 8 concludes with a discussion on the contribution of the study to the field of conflict studies and policy recommendations.

2 Methods of Inquiry and Field Experiences

2.1 Introduction

This document presents the methodology of the study, the challenges experienced in implementing the research design during the fieldwork process in each region, and how the researcher was able to overcome some of these challenges by making adjustments. It proceeds to show what implications these adjustments have for re-doing the research design and its effects on the field outcomes.

2.2 Research methods

The methodology of the study usually comprises how various approaches combined can generate relevant research information that forms a response to the research objectives or questions (Sumner and Tribe 2004:13). Any research always considers how it is going to be carried out and where it is going to be carried out and with whom, and finally how to process, interpret and analyse the data. These research procedures enable one to reach credible conclusions about the field findings (Hancock and Algozzine 2006:4).

A qualitative approach is what the study mainly took, as the focus of the study was intended to carry out an investigation about phenomena. According to Ritchie (2003:31) qualitative research is an "independent research strategy" useful in studying complex subject matters that require understanding of occurrences or events that are "innately intricate or conceptually difficult to relate" and require reflection on the issues and processes to derive meaning significant for the study such as the protracted cases of armed conflict in northern and north eastern Uganda.

509974-L-bw-isimon
Processed on: 1-5-2017
PDF page: 28

In this approach, studies are usually carried out in their natural settings, attempting to create sense out of the social reality experienced by people and how they understand it. In the light of the above, some of the key elements that give qualitative research its distinctive character, are its aims of providing an in-depth and deduced understanding of the social world, its processes and events through people's lived experiences and histories (Snape and Spencer 2003:3-4, Denzin and Lincoln 2000:3, Bryman 1988:8).

There are many ways of doing qualitative research. The research process is influenced by various factors such as ontological and epistemological orientation, purpose of the study, the characteristics and settings of the target population and the audience of the research. (Snape and Spencer 2003:1). Furthermore, the different methodological approaches are supported by specific philosophical assumptions and consistency between them should be maintained to ensure the generation of valid findings (Demmers 2012:15-17, Morse et al. 2001:3-4, Seale 1999:465-6).

Some of the main qualitative methods are: in-depth interviews, group discussions or focus groups, life histories/narratives (biographies) and document and text analysis (Snape and Spencer 2003:4). This study also combines the qualitative approach with a quantitative one which mainly examines the quantitative measures of civil war and communal violence in UCDP/PRIO datasets. This combined approach proved to be very significant in understanding the cases used in the study and its implications on how they are conceptualised. The section below highlights how the information obtained during the field exercise was used.

2.3 The ontological and epistemological stance

The ontological and epistemological stance taken by the study was very instrumental in influencing the research process right from the formulation of the research problem, data collection strategy, data analysis and interpretation of data. The traditions of this specific stance dictated the whole research process and below are some of the specifications of this tradition and their relevance to the study.

There are differing traditions in the study of violent conflict. These traditions differ in the way the ontology, which is what exists, and the epistemology, which is how is this knowledge derived, are used (Hollis

509974-L-bw-isimon
Processed on: 1-5-2017

1994:107, Demmer 2012:15). This is because the ontological claims have to be connected to the epistemological positions to make sense. The relevance of this is clearly expressed below:

> 'But facts do not make history; facts do not even make events. Without meaning attached, and without understanding of causes and connections, a fact is an isolate particle of experience, is reflected light without a source, planet with no sun, star without constellation, constellation beyond galaxy, galaxy outside the universe—fact is nothing' (Morse et al. 2001:5).

And within epistemology (the way knowledge is derived) there is a divide as well. This is illustrated in Table 2.1

Table 2.1: The Hollis Matrix

Ontology/Epistemology	Explaining (Positivist)	Understanding (Interpretativism)
Structuralism	Social structures are systems (like clocks, planets, bodies, beehives) external and prior to actions and determining them fully.	Social structures are sets of meaning (games) telling people how to do social life (language, religion, economy). Actors are role/rule followers.
Individualism	Actors are self – contained units and the source of action (act upon individual laws of utility maximization, natural preferences, psychological laws)	Actors are embedded in society but have agency they can act, initiate change, they have room for reflexive self-direction.

Source: Based on Hollis (1994), the Philosophy of Social Sciences, cited from Demmers (2012: 16)

Some social scientists claim the social world can be studied from 'without (explanation)' and 'within (understanding)'. The 'without explanation' departs from a positivist stance that claims human behaviour is predictable and follows causal laws. So with the creation of hypotheses,

509974-L-bw-isimon
Processed on: 1-5-2017

general explanations of human behavior can be generated. This positivist stance claims theory is derived from hypotheses that relate cause and consequence (Demmer 2012:15, Hollis 1994: 107-110).

Furthermore, opponents of the positivist stance that the study relies on claim that the 'within (understanding)' seeks to understand the meaning of human action instead of looking for the cause. This interpretative epistemology claims that the meaning of human action is acquired from common notions and rules of social life. And this meaning is historically and culturally specific, hence examined in context through the relevant population and informants. So the meaning of human action depends on the environment. This interpretative epistemology stance claims theory building is all about making sense of the social world (Demmers 2012:15-16, Hollis 1994:107). Hence, this tradition acquires knowledge through the target population and how they understand their social world. A qualitative study 'focuses directly on meaning and interpretation' as a result of stressing the value of the interpretative features of understanding the social world and the importance of the researcher's interpretation ability of the events or processes being studied (Snape and Spencer 2003:13). This is why the study took up a qualitative research approach and methods of inquiry that necessitated an interactive process that focused on the realities and experiences of the target population.

Wilhelm Dilthey, one of the key contributors of a more participatory, interpretative orientation, noted that this stance strives to understand the actual accounts or experiences of people studied within specific historical and social settings. Through this, links between social, cultural and historical aspects of that population are revealed and, consequently, how certain events come about in these settings is understood (Snape and Spencer, 2003:7). In addition to the above, they argue that the qualitative research practice provides methods of data collection that align with this stance and can generate data that can provide a holistic view of the lived experiences of the target population as well as the researcher's view.

In conclusion, the approach the study adopted was useful in studying such complex events/phenomena that are conceptually difficult to relate and require reflection on the issues and processes to derive meaning for the study. This provided an in-depth understanding of the processes leading up to these events through these local communities' lived experiences and histories. The ontological and epistemological stance that the study took guided the research process in several ways.

509974-L-bw-isimon
Processed on: 1-5-2017
PDF page: 31

This stance influenced the data collection strategies employed, sampling approach, data analysis and interpretation of findings. Given the complexities of the conflict phenomenon, the preferred methods of inquiry used open ended questions that encouraged participants to elaborate on issues of the subject. Even the target populations were purposefully selected. This purposeful sampling reflected the research problem, and was meant to tackle the important questions of the phenomenon under study. Even in data analysis and interpretation, the researcher dialogued with the data, making sure that the informants' voice is heard and not overpowered. By allowing the data to speak for itself, essential features of the phenomenon were unveiled. This is what an interpretative process requires; respecting the data and using the voice of the participants. The researcher's preparatory journey while in the field is described below

2.4 Steps taken before the field exercise

Before the field exercise, from the research question, sub-questions were developed[5]. These sub-questions were broken down into understandable questions which could be used by the facilitators/research assistants. These question 'guides' were in a 'logical sequence,' aimed at developing thematic areas or structure.

Before anything was done on the ground, the researcher sought permission from the authorizing agents in both regions. These agents were quite supportive. Through recommendations from friends and persons the researcher met in the field, as well as based on her own assessment, the researcher was able to identify two research assistants for the north eastern Region, and three for the northern region. The researcher interviewed the assistants, and then trained them for eight days. The whole exercise was a learning process for all of us. These assistants were quite useful as they were very informative about the Dos and Do Nots of the community. To avoid any difficulties, the researcher hired assistants with a proper command of the local language, and a minimum of a completed high school level of education.

[5] Billson (2014:9) highlights the significance of research questions before a field exercise is embarked on.

509974-L-bw-isimon
Processed on: 1-5-2017

Even after obtaining consent from the district level officials, the researcher followed the procedure of seeking the consent of the local leaders of various sub-counties, parishes as well[6]. The researcher sought consent from the various constituencies and this was done before indulging in any exercise. With the local leaders' recommendations, the researcher was given guidance on how to penetrate the communities and which people should be contacted first and where to find them. The researcher realised it was also important to build rapport and gain the trust of the participants. Visiting the village a few times and meeting the local leaders who took her around, introducing her to some of the people in the community, made the exercise a bit simpler because, afterwards, the people were willing to open up and talk[7]. Through their guidance, the researcher was able to penetrate the communities, as some participants would always first ask if the researcher had sought permission from the authorities of their constituencies. News travels really fast in local settings, so any actions that would lead to misinterpretation had to be avoided, and the right channels ensured that word went around that there was a researcher, and she and her assistants were always welcomed, especially in the north eastern region.

While in the field, the researcher preferred not to rush into the exercise. She first went around introducing herself to the relevant people in the constituencies. This made it easier to make appointments for face-to-face interviews with some of the people, and not rely only on recommendations from local leaders who would in some cases send someone to escort you as well[8]. The researcher actively involved in the selection of participants, also in an effort to avoid pre-existing groups which could have cultivated rules on what should be or should not be said. Such pre-existing groups could have developed hierarchies within, which could obstruct the contributions of participants. The researcher found this important because various research projects in these regions have offered tips for the participants and some leaders have been quick to recommend their close relatives, in some cases. In view of this, the researcher tried to

[6] Billson (2014:7-16) recommend proper identification prior to any research activity on ground.

[7] See Finlay (2002)

[8] Kitzinger and Barbour (1999:9) warns about possible bias as a result of the pre-selection of specific groups by gatekeepers.

509974-L-bw-isimon
Processed on: 1-5-2017 PDF page: 33

be involved in the selection or recruitment of the participants as much as possible.

In addition to the above, the researcher also tried as much as possible to convince the leaders not to be part of the interviews, so as to avoid any uncomfortable or intimidating situations for the participants. The researcher introduced herself as a student at all times, and avoided giving unnecessary promises, as many participants claimed a number of people give them a lot of promises in exchange for information, but never to be seen again.

2.5 Methods of inquiry

Qualitative research is known for employing methods of inquiry that are flexible and are popular for being sensitive with the social context within which the data is generated[9].

This study was carried out in phases. The first phase of the study involved an extensive review of existing literature. This included a historical analysis of these two conflict phenomena, their origins, the actors involved, and their form, content and direction. These historical records relevant to the topic helped the researcher study and understand the chronology of events and sources of tensions that impacted on the course of these conflicts. There is an enormous amount of reports written by various NGOs, international organisations as well as government reports on the armed conflict in the north as well as on communal violence between tribal groups in the north eastern part of Uganda. These reports, articles, local newspapers and video clips were reviewed by the researcher before, during and after the field exercise. This provided information that could be further investigated by the researcher, and kept for her write up as well.

The study used secondary sources such as published books, journals, articles, publications from relevant ministries of Uganda, NGOs and the local government. The examination of what various scholars have written about these phenomena offered various perspectives from which the researcher was able to assess facts in relation to those from the primary sources.

[9] See Snape and Spencer (2003:4).

509974-L-bw-isimon
Processed on: 1-5-2017
PDF page: 34

The second phase of the study combined different forms of data collection sources. These were mainly primary sources involving fieldwork using individual and participatory group data collection research tools such as FGDs, in-depth face-to-face interviews and unplanned conversations with the target population. Triangulation of research tools was used, to guide against misinterpretations[10]. This is because different participants had their own experiences and realities, and, hence, had different perceptions about certain issues which some participants were reluctant to share[11]. So, cross-checking with other participants about some highlighted issues was done throughout the field exercise.

2.5.1 Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)

The study used FGDs, which provided vast perspectives on the issues of the subject, and these were followed up using in-depth face-to-face interviews with the target population[12]. The FGDs generated a lot of vastly complex perspectives, because of their interactive nature that encouraged group participation, in contrast to individual interviews. However, issues raised during the FGDs were pursued further using in-depth individual interviews. The researcher observed participants and was always interested in those who appeared to be sometimes holding back information because of the crowd, or who would obviously appear to be in disagreement over certain issues raised by the members[13].

In relation to the number of participants for the FGDs, the exercise was conducted based on the availability of the people. The FGDs had a

[10] Van der Haar et al. (2013:23) refer to this exercise as a 'complex information economy'.

[11] This is not a problem, as long as the researcher understands the reasons for the lack of neutrality, so that the accounts given are not used as a representation for all, knowing that the knowledge is partial and situated. See Haraway (1988), and Drury & Stott (2001).

[12] On the importance of FGDs see Fern (1982), Baker (1999), Kitzinger and Barbour (1999), Billson (2014) and Bloor et al. (2001).

[13] The researcher should be able to understand that her subjects are not 'neutral', due to difference in motive and interest, and their narratives may be aimed at putting the blame on the other group or protecting their own image, and some may be unsure and use rumours or simply silence to hide whatever it is that they do not want you to know (Fuji 2009:147).

509974-L-bw-isimon
Processed on: 1-5-2017

minimum of four and a maximum of twelve people. In some cases there were few people willing to participate and in other cases, others failed to turn up, and cancelling the exercise was not the best option. In some others cases, there were more people willing to participate, and there were moral challenges in asking the extra two or three people, especially the elderly, to leave the group[14]. The research assistants told me that this would be detrimental to the success of future exercises because some of the willing participants, when asked to leave, will pass around unpleasant rumours that would make us unwelcome in the next village. This would be a big challenge, so we were forced to carry on the exercise.

Ethical issues were taken serious during the study, and participants were always informed in advance about the purpose of the study. At every exercise I always introduced myself, and would talk about the importance of their insights for the community and the country as a whole. Furthermore, the functions of each member of the team, such as the facilitator and note taker, were always laid out to create a conducive environment for the FGDs. The use of audio recordings in some cases was refused, and this wish was always respected.

However, though confidentiality is an important ethical issue, the researcher could not guarantee participants' confidentiality within FGDs. As in any group discussion, the researcher had little control over what participants would discuss outside the meeting, but care was taken to request participants to not disclose the details of the discussion in the FGDs.[15] Furthermore, in a post-conflict setting with such traumatic events that have impacted people's lives, some information's significance goes beyond the merely academic. Information that might not seem sensitive, could become politicized in a highly polarised setting[16]. However, the researcher always tried to ensure the safety of those who preferred to remain anonymous, respected their wishes and kept their identity concealed by using pseudonyms.

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[14] Finch and Lewis (2003:190) and Billson (2014:2) recommend a minimum of six to eight participants for a time span of one and a half hours for a productive exercise, and the maximum pursuit of each question in the guide.

[15] Wood (2006:379), Billson (2014:5), Kitzinger and Barbour (1999:17) advise researchers to guarantee the participants' anonymity.

[16] See Hilhorst (2003:227).

509974-L-bw-isimon
Processed on: 1-5-2017 PDF page: 36

The venues in which FGDs were conducted[17], were usually within easy reach for community members. However, though the researcher always sought the best venues for the exercise, in some cases it was difficult to keep the non-participating community members from observing the course of the exercise at close range. This disrupted the course of an exercise only once, when, in the Napak District, a snake spotted by one of the participants within the vicinity disrupted the exercise! The FGD had been held under a tree shade near a bush (like in Photo 1).

Photo 1: FGDs under a tree shade facilitated by a translator/research assistant in NamNam Village, Rupa Sub-county, Moroto District (24/09/2014).

[17] Kitzinger and Barbour (1999:11) recommend easy-access venues that are quiet and comfortable, without constant interruptions.

509974-L-bw-isimon
Processed on: 1-5-2017

The group had soon relocated to a safer area, near the District offices. On other occasions, FGDs were typically carried out in the research subject's compounds, community halls, churches, or next to community meeting places, and at times in local government offices and barracks. More than once we were forced to have the meeting meet inside police posts, especially in Karamoja.

Photo 2: FGD in Naguru Surburb, 30/01/2015, Kampala District.

2.5.2 In-depth semi-structured interviews

The in-depth semi-structured face-to-face interviews contained open ended questions which the researcher and the research assistants used to

509974-L-bw-isimon
Processed on: 1-5-2017

get clarifications about issues relevant to the subject of the study.[18] These interviews were like conversations with guideline questions, and with the possibility of new questions arising during each interview. Since the focus of the study was to attain breadth and depth of coverage across and within each key issue, it was necessary to dig deeper. For this reason, content-mapping questions were used for initially opening up the subject matter of the study and trying to get an overview, from interviewees, on how they would elaborate on the most relevant issues. This was followed up by content-mining of questions. Content mining involves exploring a fuller description of issues raised by the mapping process. The overview of issues obtained from content mapping is deepened through four kinds of content mining questions: amplificatory, exploratory, explanatory and clarificatory (Legard et al, 2003:50). In a nutshell, content mining questions drilled deeper and made it possible for interviewees to highlight sometimes hidden issues that improved the researcher's understanding of less obvious issues arising in relation to the study focus.

Photo 3: Researcher with Rwot Onen David Acana II, the Paramount Chief of the Acholi after an interview (09/01/2015)

[18] See Heslop (2002: 51)

509974-L-bw-isimon
Processed on: 1-5-2017

Exploratory probes in interviews are generally aimed at finding out more about the meanings behind the interviewees' experiences and the events they talk about (Legard et al., 2003:148-155). Furthermore, *explanatory* probes helped to make sense of the reasons people gave for their perceptions about certain key issues around violence and conflict. Lastly, *clarificatory* probes helped to highlight some inconsistencies in the interviewees' responses[19]. These probes proved useful in elaborating on basic factual information, and encouraging respondents to analyse the situations they described.

Photo 4: Severino Lukoya, Leader of Lord's Army (1987-88). Father to Alice Lakwena and Uncle to Joseph Kony leader of LRA. (Gulu District 25/01/2015)

[19] Legard et al. (2003:141-155) recommends the use of a number of probes and a range of techniques to acquire depth in response "*in terms of penetration, exploration and explanation*".

509974-L-bw-isimon
Processed on: 1-5-2017
PDF page: 40

2.6 Sampling criteria for the study

Once upon a time it was called the Karamoja District. Now, with the creation of new districts, the Karamoja District has been sub-divided into a number of districts, from the time of the Obote I regime shortly after independence (Uganda, 1965:18). Under the current government, the Karamoja region now consists of seven districts: Abim, Kaabong, Kotido, Moroto, Nakapiripirit, Amudat and Napak. The ethnic groups that inhabit this region are the Dodoth, Jie, Pokot, Bokora, Matheniko, Pian and other smaller ethnic and sub-ethnic groupings such as the Tepeth, Nyakwe, Ik, Ngipore and the Ethur (Dyson and Hudson 1966, Turton 1994:15, Mirzeler & Young 2000:407-11).

As will be elaborated on in Chapter 5, the Jie are considered to have a distinctive identity as the result of their migration into the region (Lamphear 1994:63-94). During the colonial and early post-independence years, the Karamoja ethnic groups and sub-ethnic groups were seen as part of the wider 'Nilotic' peoples notably with close linguistic ties (Greenberg 1966:85-6).Cultural continuities with other groups from northwest Kenya, notably the Turkana, have led some anthropologists to term these groups the 'Ateker' cluster, which stretches from southwest Ethiopia and south-eastern Sudan to northwest Kenya and north-eastern Uganda. Groups such as the Turkana in Kenya, Toposa and Nyanatom in Sudan and Iteso in Uganda are also connected to the Karamojong through links that can be cultural and also competitive, involving inter-marriage but also cattle raiding, for example (Lamphear 1976, Dyson-Hudson 1966, Barber 1968, Okalanyi 1980).

Other tribes within Uganda that have conflicted with the Karamojong besides the Iteso are notably the Labwor and Pokot. The Labwor inhabit the Acholi frontier and belong to the Luo linguistic cluster comprising of groups such as the Acholi, Lango and Alur among others. The Pokot, with a few based in Uganda and the majority based on the Kenya side of the border, belong to the Kalenjin linguistic cluster (Greenberg 1966:85-6, Mirzeler & Young 2000:411-412).

Nomadic pastoral tribes from neighbouring countries, with which Karamojong have come into conflict in the past, have included the Pokot, the Turkana and Samburu from Kenya, and the Dinka, Didinga and Toposa

509974-L-bw-isimon
Processed on: 1-5-2017 PDF page: 41

from Sudan (Knighton 2005:23, Dyson-Hudson 1966:148-150, Gray 2000:402, Odhiambo, 2003:58).

The study employed purposive sampling within the conflict affected areas taking in to consideration the aim of the study and the research approach used which is aptly noted below:

> "…the aim of qualitative research is to gain an understanding of the nature and form of phenomena, to unpack meanings, to develop explanations or to generate ideas, concepts and theories. Samples therefore need to be selected to ensure the inclusion of relevant constituencies, events, processes and so on, that can illuminate and inform that understanding. Units are chosen because they typify a circumstance or hold a characteristic that is expected or known to have salience to the subject matter under study. We have termed this principle of qualitative sampling as the requirement for 'symbolic representation' because a unit is chosen to both 'represent' and 'symbolise' features of relevance to the investigation"(Ritchie 2003:82-83).

2.6.1 North eastern Uganda: Field locations

In north eastern Uganda, fieldwork was carried out in the Moroto District (August 2014 to mid-September 2014) and the Napak District (mid-September 2014 to October 2014). Originally, the Kotido District had been selected as one of the districts for the fieldwork. However, after interacting with the Matheniko of the Moroto District, the researcher realized that to trace and understand the evolution of the Karamoja conflict would require inclusion of the perspectives of the Bokora of the Napak District (formerly part of the Moroto District) instead of the Jie in the Kotido District, usually considered 'Turkana'.

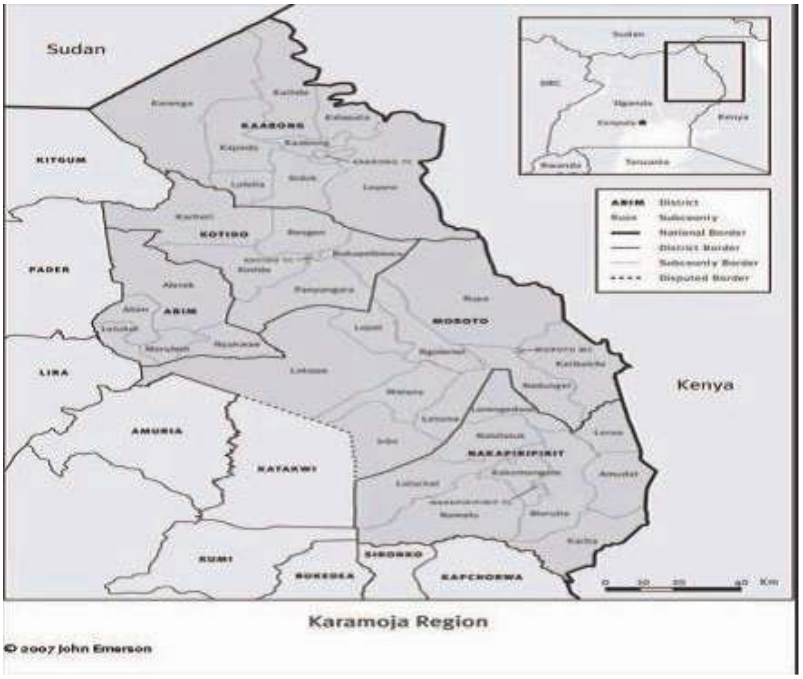
The sub-counties and parishes were selected according to the research objectives. A total of two sub-counties were chosen per district, and out of each sub-county, two parishes were selected and two villages per parish were selected. The selection of sub-counties and parishes was done based upon recommendation from the district planning unit, elders and local council chair persons for the constituencies most affected by communal clashes.

In the Moroto District, the Rupa and Nadunget sub-county were selected. In the Rupa sub-county, the Rupa and Mogoth parishes were selected for their proximity to the Turkana and Jie of the Kotido District. In the Nadunget sub-county, the Loputuk parish was chosen for its

509974-L-bw-isimon
Processed on: 1-5-2017
PDF page: 42

proximity to the Pian and Pokot, while the Nadunget parish was chosen for its proximity to the Bokora. The clashes between the tribal sub-groups and the cross-border/district conflict issue are instrumental in the choice of the sub-counties. In the Moroto District, a total of 26 face-to-face interviews and 10 FGDs were conducted.

Map 2:1: Map showing location of Moroto and Napak District



Source: Human Rights Watch, September 2007

https://www.hrw.org/report/2007/09/11/get-gun/human-rights-violations-ugandas-national-army-law-enforcement-operations

In the Napak District, the Lokopo and Ngoleriet sub-counties were selected. The Lokopo sub-county was selected because of its proximity to the Jie of Kotido and the Iteso of Katakwi, while the Ngloeriet was chosen for its proximity to the Matheniko and Pian. In the Lokopo sub-county, the Apeitolim and Bokora Corridor parishes were selected, while in Ngoleriet the Kautakou and Nawaikorot parishes were selected. A total of

509974-L-bw-isimon
Processed on: 1-5-2017

19 face-to-face interviews were conducted, and 11 FGDs were conducted in the Napak District.

2.6.2 Northern Uganda: Fieldwork Locations

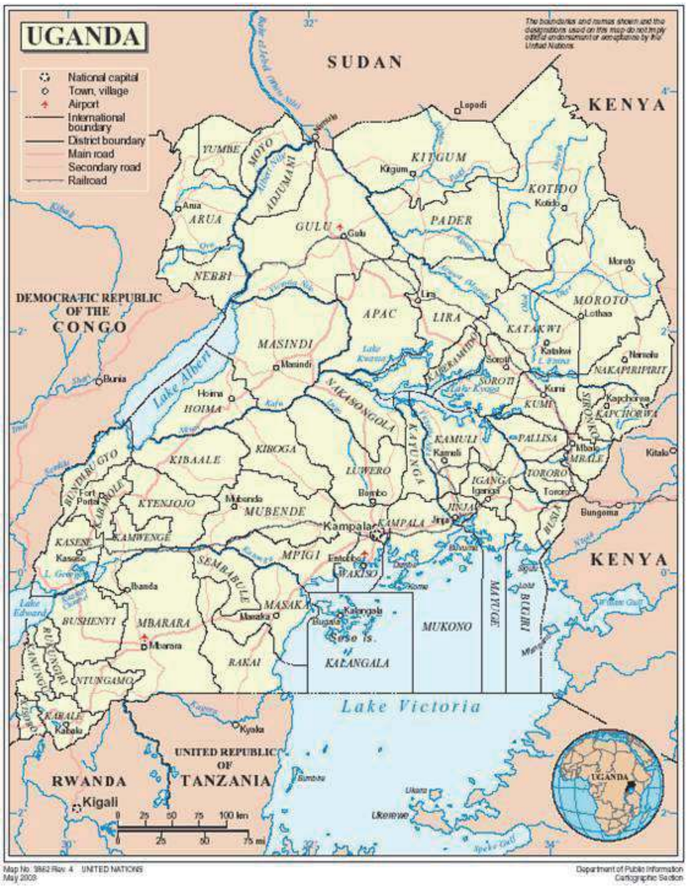
According to the Berkeley-Tulane Initiative on Vulnerable Population, the highest number of abductees (registered as 89%) were from the Acholi Districts of Gulu, Kitgum and Pader; 43% were from Gulu, 25% from Kitgum and 21% from Pader (Pham et al. 2007:14). This was the base for choosing the Gulu and Kitgum Districts for the fieldwork on the war in the north. The study also targeted sub-counties that had the highest number of abductees conscripted into the LRA, as well locations that had IDP camps, as their experiences were vital for the study.

Fieldwork was carried out in the Gulu and Kitgum Districts between November 2014 and January 2015. In the Gulu District, two sub-counties were selected, two parishes were also selected per sub-county. In the Aswa County, the Bungatira sub-county was selected and two parishes, Laroo and Pabwo were selected. In Aswa County, 20 indepth interviews were conducted and 10 FGDs. In the Moro County, the Lakwana sub-county was selected, and two parishes, Parak and Lujorongole, were selected for the study. In Moro County, a 23 face-to-face interviews were carried out and 12 FGDs were conducted. However, it is important to note that most of the people in the specified locations, especially youth ex-rebels that the local chairperson would recommend were not within their home localities, and spent most of their time in the urban areas or trading centers. The researcher had to search for them, using the information provided for those who were reachable. Fortunately, some people were willing to recommend other returnees, although they might then either accept or decline to be interviewed.

In Kitgum, which comprises of only the Chua County, two sub-counties were selected: Kitgum Matidi and Labongo Amida.

Map 2.2 Map of Uganda showing the location of the Gulu and Kitgum Districts

509974-L-bw-isimon
Processed on: 1-5-2017



Source: Map No. 3862 Rev. 4 United Nations Cartographic Section, May 2003
https://www.hrw.org/reports/2003/uganda0803/1.htm

The researcher managed to carry out fieldwork in Kitgum Matidi; in the two parishes of Oryang and Lumule a total of 11 face-to-face interviews and 4 FGDs were carried out due to time constraint. A follow-up was conducted in Labongo Amida, where the research assistants were able to conduct a total of 14 face-to-face interviews and 6 FGDs were carried out.

The researcher made contact with a good number of NGOs, but especially for the northern region, she felt a strong interest in GUSCO (Gulu Support the Child Center), a reception center set up in the early

509974-L-bw-isimon
Processed on: 1-5-2017
PDF page: 45

1990s, after former abductees who had escaped LRA had been captured by soldiers and were paraded along the streets in the hope that relatives would identify them.[20] For the northeastern region, the Karamoja Agro-Pastoral Development Programme (KADP) also had a very useful library that provided some resources.

Samples in qualitative research are usally small in scale although one usually has the opportunity to enlarge or enhance the composition as the research progresses. This is the case as emphasis is usually focused on quality of information (Ritchie et al. 2003:82-84). During the course of the field work, the researcher decided to incorporate the same target population from northern Uganda and a few from north eastern Uganda. These were especially immigrants who had fled the conflict torn areas to the capital city and reside in some well-known locations in Kampala such as Wandegeya, Nsambya and Naguru suburbs.

While in Kampala, the researcher visited Makerere University, and its Department of Development Studies, where she taught as a teaching assistant before pursuing her Master Degree in Development Studies specialising in Development Research at the ISS in 2009. At the University, the researcher was able to interact with four academics who were experts in Ugandan history and knowledgeable with regard to the subject of the study.

During the field exercise the researcher encountered a number of challenges and the following sections go deeper into the field practicalities and experiences of the field exercise.

2.7 Field challenges and limitations to the study during fieldwork

Qualitative researchers usually dip themselves in the settings they are studying, which is very vital for critical reflections. A lot of ethical issues have been raised about the researched subjects who are protected by research protocols[21]. Nonetheless, the implication of sensitive research on researchers themselves has been given less attention[22]. This is, in

[20] See Pham et al. (2007:1)

[21] See Dickson-Swift et al., (2006:853)

[22] See Sword (1999), Watts (2008)

509974-L-bw-isimon
Processed on: 1-5-2017
PDF page: 46

particular, with regard to how emotional experiences influence the fieldwork exercise, proper research conduct and the conclusions of the study. Some research projects have an added dimension of profound sensitivity and can come with a challenge of how to deal with the effects of emotional stress brought about by listening to people's suffering. In cases where the researcher gets totally immersed and creates lots of attachments, the effects may be more profound. So, sensitive settings that have brought about suffering do not only affect the researched but the researchers as well. Post-conflict settings are emotionally charged terrains, and can impact on long-term researchers[23].

In the researcher's own short-term experience, the impact was not so great since the research period was a couple of months and not a lot of attachments were made, compared to cases with a research period timespan of years. The researcher felt that these people's experiences were like a doorway[24] that enabled her to feel the participants' bitterness and remorse in both regions. Listening to the realities of groups in the northern and north eastern region, she did feel a deep sense of injustice having been inflicted on them.

The fieldwork period was quite an interesting experience, however, as the researcher faced a number of challenges and unforeseen risks that necessitated readjustment of the number of planned steps, to ensure that the research process would meet the objective intended. For each region, the researcher had different experiences, which are presented below. The section also provides insights on how they were dealt with and the implications they had on the research design. Later, the researcher discusses the significance of and role played by the two research assistants during the fieldwork exercise.

2.7.1 Challenges faced in the north eastern region

Fieldwork in the Karamoja region raised complex issues of cultural barriers and identities. Post-conflict setting sensitivity issues for the participants, among others, are described below.

Before any research is carried out, one has to seek permission from the authorising agents. In this context, the researcher experienced some

[23] See Watts (2008:3-14)

[24] See Li and Aber (2006:27-46)

509974-L-bw-isimon
Processed on: 1-5-2017

unforeseen challenges from the top authorising agent of the Moroto District, who was dodging to approve her study in the district for a couple of days. In contrast, the Deputy Chief Administrative Officer, Mr. Ofwono Emmaunel, was very accessible and wrote a letter supporting her study in the Moroto District. This letter was presented to other authorising agents such as the Police commissioner, the District Internal Security officer, and the Local Council Chairman, who endorsed it, and gave her a go ahead to begin her fieldwork.

One of the main reasons the district originally chosen was later changed was that, once the researcher was in the field, she discovered that the Jie of Kotido were not considered to be Karamojong as such, but Turkana. Some historians such as Augusto Pazzaglia, clearly indicate that the Jie and Turkana are brothers. It is noted that, in the eighteenth century, drought split the groups and the younger group moved far off to distant places in search of grazing land. When the rains returned the elders sent word for them to come back, but they refused. Augusto Pazzaglia notes that:

> "…the herdsmen had made up their minds not to return to their former villages. They opposed their elders' violence with their own, and finally obliged them to withdraw. This is how they are said to have seceded from the main group…'to dispute' is to *'ajikin'* and so the obdurate young tribesmen came to be called Jie" (Pazzaglia 1982:28)

This unfolding fact seemed very interesting as the Jie were constantly referred to as 'Karamojong' because of the land demarcations made by the British colonialists that placed the Jie inside Uganda. This was viewed as an error by the locals. It was a problem because the researcher was interested in communal violence within a specific group, the Karamojong. Researching the Turkana would have implied going over the border into Kenya, which was not the original intention. The Matheniko of the Moroto District were selected, as well as a second group, known as the Bokora from the Napak District. The researcher decided to work with these two groups. During interactions with the host population and local organisations and institutions, there was constant reference to the Matheniko, Bokora and Pian as inter-related and originally one family. These references justified the researcher's decision.

Although the researcher's father is an Iteso from the Kumi District, which is a group closely related to the Karamojong, this was her first visit

509974-L-bw-isimon
Processed on: 1-5-2017 PDF page: 48

to Karamoja. In 2010, I had done her Masters' fieldwork close to the region in Ngariam Sub – county - Katakwi district, examining the effect of Karamojong cattle raids and environmental stresses on the Iteso people. Though it was a frontier location, the insecurity reports made it impossible for her to cross over and visit the neighbouring Karamoja region.

The Karamoja region is still widely regarded in the rest of Uganda as an insecure area. The researcher's family and friends were surprised that she would even consider going there, but fortunately others, more familiar with the area, especially NGO workers, and a well-informed journalist friend, Oluka Jamila, from the Uganda Broad Casting Corporation, told her from experience that the Karamoja region had become safer since 2006. Even so, most people who visited had escorts, even inside public transport. Though it seemed safe to travel there, the researcher, being an Iteso, was very cautious with regard to her identity.

In relation to the above, the Karamojong and the Iteso are related and belong to the 'Ateker' group of people. This family of people recognise their common origin and inter-relatedness and speak mutually intelligible dialects of the same language[25]. Some of the other groups that belong to this group include the Jie, Dodoth, Turkana and Toposa, among others. Despite this, intertribal conflict between the Iteso and the Karamojong has historical links with new grievances evolving over the years on both sides[26]. For security purposes, the researcher, on several occasions, had to conceal her identity, and introduced herself through her mother's lineage, as a Mugisu from the far eastern part of Uganda, from the Mbale District. This was essential to secure the researcher's safety, since wanton raids and killings had taken place among the tribes for decades and had created animosity between groups that were once a one people.

With this in mind, the researcher decided to travel, even without protection, and sought additional information about what she needed to do. Fortunately, through friends accommodation was found, in cheap hotels, and then, once she had authorisation, she found a room in the town of Moroto, for three weeks. She then moved around in the villages, leaving

[25] See Webster (1973)

[26] See Muhwereza and Otim (2002:120, 162 -168)

509974-L-bw-isimon
Processed on: 1-5-2017 PDF page: 49

most of her possessions in town. She travelled with just a few clothes and her recorder, so as not to be too visible, wearing simple clothing so she would fit in. In Rupa, in the small village of Namnam, she found a place to live with a village family, since she wanted to experience living in the *manyata,* even eating the same diet, including cooked (not raw) cattle blood. She took with her minerals and anti-malaria tablets, to ensure that she would be well during the fieldwork period.

The researcher had to get used to easing herself in a nearby bush. There were no toilets; culturally, the local people saw no use for them. Her greatest fear was of snakes or scorpions. But with time, the researcher had to come to terms with the situation, the social-cultural ways of living and the traditional way of dressing.

Talking with people about conflict meant people would talk about it with great bitterness, especially about the loss of youth and children who would be the ones who could not run fast enough during raids and lost their lives. One had to ask questions in an appropriate manner. For instance, the researcher would not ask: "Why did you begin fighting with the Iteso?" Instead, she would refer to the fact that those fighting were once united, and ask how this broke down, and where the fighting originated from. People would then be more willing to talk to her.

Unlike the strong sense of victimhood in the North, the bitterness of people in the Karamoja region was about themselves. For example, the elders regretted that they had lost their say, with the rise of the power of the gun in the region. An elder's punishment or curse could not compete any longer with the power of the gun, and they were also bitter that so many young lives were lost in these reckless raids. The fear and respect of parents and elders was lost. In previous eras, young people who raided cattle would give them to the father. But with the arrival of small arms, young men, even children, would even kill their own relatives, their own families. Women would use guns mainly in self-defence, and there were very few girls carrying arms during raids. However, during interviews it was reported, at times, that women would encourage their menfolk to go and join and raid, in order to bring resources into the community and the household. NGO workers who spoke with the researcher often explained that the cost of dowry, the cost of food, which is mainly dairy-related, would prompt men to go on raids. Being a sensitive topic, with many of the research subjects affected in various ways by the conflict, the questions had to be modified. This was done, after a couple of interactive sessions

509974-L-bw-isimon
Processed on: 1-5-2017
PDF page: 50

with the participants, together with the research assistants, who were quite helpful in pointing out language in the interview list that would invoke unexpected behaviour from the participants. Re-adjustment of the questions, was a continuous process depending on who the participants were, in both regions.

Furthermore, partly because of the long history of violent attacks, the transport infrastructure in north eastern Uganda is still very poor. The roads are in poor condition, and are currently being improved and upgraded. During the fieldwork period, it often rained, and since the roads are poor, on several occasions the researcher with the rest of the passengers had to sleep in the bus, stuck on the road. It would take up to 20 hours to get the bus moving again. This was scary because in the past, road ambushes, robbery and killings were often reported in this part of the region, at least until the disarmament years. Fieldwork in north-eastern was quite tough because of the danger of wild animals; besides that, finding privacy for the most basic hygiene was very difficult when moving with a group.

The researcher and her team usually had to trek from one village to the next for hours and trek back as well, taking the food and water that we needed with them. The best option was always to wake up early, before sun dawn, and start to trek. However, on some days the rains were very heavy and disrupting the plans for the day, requiring their rescheduling. The researcher had to be flexible and not stick too rigidly to the schedule in such cases. Eating in local restaurants proved a good way to avoid hunger, since local people eat only once a day, and there is simply not enough food for more than one meal for most families.

A good number of participants were very sensitive to gadgets such as cameras and voice recorders. On several occasions they would ask, "What is that thing?" And even after an explanation had been given, some would still decline being audio-recorded. Sometimes the research assistants would help to persuade the respondent that there was no risk of the interviews being passed onto the authorities. Notes would have to be taken by the researcher herself or by her research assistants. This sensitivity also applied to taking photos, and that the number of participants in the villages, would decline. Some believed the camera might cause them ill health. The District Information Officer, Mr Kidon Michael, explained to the researcher that it is because they believe the machine (camera) will suck their blood. Ben Knighton notes the same

509974-L-bw-isimon
Processed on: 1-5-2017 PDF page: 51

understaning when he syays: "Ordinarily they can be very wary of being photographed, feeling that some part of their shade or selves is being taken away by the photographer" (2003:441).

Both in the north east and the north, all military participants refused to be audio-recorded, some saying they were government servants and did not want to be recorded for fear of any unknown implications that might work against them in the future. Some suspected the researcher being a journalist or a spy, even after proper identification. The researcher's effort to take a photo of the famous armoury in the Moroto District, which was looted by the Matheniko in 1979 when Amin Dada was overthrown by Milton Obote, was in vain. Division commanders said this was too sensitive, classified information. The researcher was not even allowed to get anywhere close to the building, even though it had been abandoned for more than thirty-five years. It was pivotal in the violent conflict that engulfed the region, and having a picture of it would have been another achievement on the part of the researcher.

2.7.2 Challenges faced in the northern region

The second region in which fieldwork was conducted was very different from the first. People were much more often too busy to talk with the researcher. The problem of local people being tired of researchers is sometimes called 'research fatigue', and is discussed in the section that follows. The second adjustment that had to be made in the northern region was to the very different culture, where many interviewees did not seem keen to talk openly about their experiences. In the northern region, compared to north-eastern Uganda, it was also harder to get people to join in FGDs. This may have been because of fatigue, bitterness, as discussed in more detail below.

During the fieldwork exercise, the researcher and her team redesigned the interview guides for face-to-face interviews to cater for the more sensitive groups of target population. Having to deal with disturbed and bitter participants was one of the biggest challenges.[27] In some cases, the problem was that some participants, in the course of giving their

[27] The New York Times editorial in an article titled "Armies of Children" (October 12, 2006) referred to these former child soldiers as "walking ghosts". Blattman and Annan (2008:103) referred them as the 'lost generation'.

509974-L-bw-isimon
Processed on: 1-5-2017 PDF page: 52

perceptions about the subject of the study, would find themselves drifting towards their own experiences. At times, whilst making a point in relation to their general perceptions, participants would start to get upset or emotional. Seeking to explain these reactions, Madam Christine Langol, a former counsellor at the Gulu Reception Center, cautioned me to take care, because, even though there were no more gunshots, the war was not really over in people's minds. She explained that there were still many people who were traumatised and still trying to make sense of the past and their current situation, with unresolved grief and loss.

Often their accounts were very disturbing to listen to, so it was important to not show too much emotion. They would navigate into their own experiences, and sometimes they could not be diverted from this. If the researcher and her assistants saw that participants were upset, they would try to divert their focus by asking questions that would change that focus. On some occasions, in the process, participants would break down in tears and others would go mute and unable to continue, resulting in awkward silences. Sometimes, the researcher and her assistants did not know how to react when participants, especially ex-rebels, would stop in the midst of the interview and give the researcher or the translator a drilling stare amidst a silence that could last for as long as two minutes. Sometimes, questions meant to shift their focus would be ignored. Some of these narratives were quite traumatic and violent, and hard to listen to. One old lady had lost five children, all abducted in a single night. She too was abducted but released after a few hours, whilst her children were taken away by the LRA. It was impossible to avoid being moved by such stories. In such cases, the researcher and her team would give the respondent some time to recollect him or herself, and then continue the interview. At other times, the individual would be so distressed that it was agreed to stop the interview.

Despite the emotional distress displayed by some participants, the researcher could do little to ease their pain, and her solution was to show empathy by maintaining eye contact, listening with concern and understanding, but avoiding any physical contact or emotional display (e.g., tears). According to the researcher, emotional display from her part could easily make them respond more emotionally, and even increase their suffering. The choice of words used in such situations was something discussed carefully with the research assistants and this would at times

509974-L-bw-isimon
Processed on: 1-5-2017 PDF page: 53

help.[28] Very direct questions could be modified to some extent, to make them less confronting.

How the researcher felt and the impact of the participants' experiences on her was something she did not think about a lot at first, but later on she understood that the experience did have its own impact on her. She definitely left the regions a different person, in relation to what she knew before, and what she had learnt.

In addition to the above, certain responses, reactions, tearful episodes by participants did raise certain emotional concerns on the researcher's part part; participants walking off, telling point blank that they were tired of re-telling their experiences or shedding tears during interviews did have its weight on her at some point. The researcher was always unsure of what to expect from participants, especially in the northern region. Nonetheless, their realities[29] opened up her mind to understand certain significant aspects of these phenomena that she possibly would have overlooked without such emotional engagement.

The researcher encountered a number of unreceptive participants who claimed they were tired of re-living the past over and over. Some participants would openly complain about these never-ending research projects. This is understandable, and as one former abductee said: *"I'm tired, I do not want to talk anymore"*. When a research assistant was able to take him aside and try to understand why he was not interested in the exercise, he noted that several research organisations had talked to him already, and after the information had been extracted, always left him feeling sad. The research assistant's efforts to convince him were futile. This was not an uncommon response of people who were tired of talking again about the past. On one occasion, the team interviewed someone who continued to dig in his garden during the process.

The problem with the administration centres in the urban areas of Gulu and Kitgum was that the majority of the local government officials were too busy to give the team an audience, in contrast to the villages where the people were receptive. In the villages we spoke mostly with the

[28] On the choice of language during sensitive research, see Thulesius et al. (2003:1360).

[29] Frank (1995) describes such people as 'wounded story tellers'.

509974-L-bw-isimon
Processed on: 1-5-2017
PDF page: 54

elderly, since most youth were absent, and were either in town or travelling away from home.

In the case of the government officials, many would not show up, and even provide dates for interviews knowing that they would be travelling. They often complained about there being too many researchers. The researcher became disappointed that a good number of interviews could not be carried out. This affected the number planned, and actually implemented. A few local government officials rescheduled appointments, and they would sometimes not show up. After two reschedulings, the researcher would often try someone else.

Alternatively, as mentioned earlier, the researcher sought out participants in the capital city who had fled the armed conflict in northern Uganda and communal violence in north eastern Uganda. Most of them were residing in the Nsambya Acholi Inn, Naguru and Wandegeya suburbs. The researcher also interviewed close friends of the refugees from these war torn regions, friends who had grown up here in the city, but were indirectly affected as well through the loss of close relatives. The researcher was also able to interact with four academics from Makerere University in Kampala. Due to busy schedules of some key informants, alternative approaches to data collection had to be devised, such as telephone calls and emails.

The researcher also obtained a variety of reports or publications from government ministries, and international and well as local NGOs that have been operating in these regions. These reports contained a lot of valuable information, alongside the field findings. These reports covered diverse topics, such as IDPs, land conflicts, post-conflict situations and population and health-related issues of former warriors or rebels, as well as other topics, directly related to the subject of the study. Besides, a number of videos related to the study had been posted on-line, on the websites of various organisations working in these regions.

2.7 The Importance of research assistants and NGOs

When the researcher arrived in Moroto, the largest town in the north eastern region, she started to look for a couple of young people who would become research assistants for the study. She sought two people who were fluent in Karamojong and who could advise her on what to do and what not to do. She found two graduates, one from Makerere University and

509974-L-bw-isimon
Processed on: 1-5-2017 PDF page: 55

the other from Kampala International University. A high unemployment rate means that many graduates in Uganda are available for work. Both had been involved in research projects with a number of NGOs in the region and had also supported visiting researchers like the researcher in this study. A local journalist introduced them to the researcher. Both spoke Karamojong fluently and the researcher felt comfortable interacting with them.

They were quite helpful as they constantly informed the researcher about the dos and do nots of the community during the fieldwork exercise. Sometimes, one of them would prepare the way for the team, by going ahead to ensure everything was as the team had planned. Without these young people, their encouragement and their local knowledge, the researcher could not have collected as many valuable data in the field. Informants were not paid but given small gifts, such as tobacco or a drink. Sometimes, people were happy to talk without even a drink. They understood the subtle ways in which Karamojong was being spoken. The young men facilitated Focus Group discussions, helped with translating interviews, and they also gave the researcher invaluable advice. They helped with going to NGOs' resource centres and with collecting reports and other sources of written data. Both research assistants had experienced and seen traumatic events in their lives, and were not shocked by the narratives.

In Gulu too, the researcher 'hired' research assistants, including a graduate of Gulu University, and two younger students. As in the north east, they would help her with logistics, and with planning meetings in the villages. However, she did encounter a scenario where one of the LRA's former commanders was really uncomfortable with one research assistant, Obwona Byron, a 28 year old linguistic graduate from Gulu University, claiming he was (too) young. In his own words:

> *"People will not tell the truth, they will tell you what they assume you want to hear. These people are young, they don't know the implications of some information. They will go out there and just begin talking faa-faaa, and then someone will be in trouble"* (Annoymous, Former LRA commander, 25/01/2015 Bungatira, Subcountry, Gulu District).

He hesitated to give the researcher an audience, and postponed the meeting. The next time the researcher came around to see him as scheduled, he warned her about involving young research assistants in

509974-L-bw-isimon
Processed on: 1-5-2017

such sensitive research topics. He was abducted at tender age and injured in a crossfire in Sudan, and having returned home, he was definitely conscious of whom he discussed certain issues with.

The researcher made friends too, and had causal drinks and conversations with local community members, elites, elders and NGO employees, among others[30]. She made contact with the staff of local organisations, with whom she had great and meaningful conversations, and even after her departure from the field these connections have played a significant role in allowing her to follow-up on a number of questions that arose during the write up process.

2.8 Data analysis, interpretation and reporting

After the field study, the field notes and recordings from interviews and a considerable number of the interviews and focus group discussions were transcribed. This was followed by the development of thematic summaries which allowed the researcher to sort and arrange the data meaningfully. This enabled her to identify a general structure in the data, hence simplifying the identification of patterns and she started to recognize the puzzles presented by the data analysis.

With the help of the investigative structure proposed by conflict analysis frameworks, the researcher created thematic sections in each phase of these conflicts highlighting the underlying causal factor, the key sources of tensions, and the actors and factors that altered the course of the conflict. Connecting these elements enabled the researcher to establish the complexities and interlinkages between these conflicts.

The study extracted meaning from the perceptions of the target populations, then constructed themes which guided the layout of interpretation and reporting of the field findings[31]. Issues such as identity were highlighted by both the target groups in Karamoja and northern Uganda. Several causal conversations were held between the researcher and acquaintances in the field to cross-check ideas that seemed to be

[30] Van der Haar et al. (2013:33), notes that "even more casual conversations might be taken as research encounters in which the researcher might 'test' the resonance of his/her interpretations and engage the other person in meaningful exchange of ideas".

[31] See Spencer et al. (2003:217)

509974-L-bw-isimon
Processed on: 1-5-2017

lacking. These interactions were helpful in the acquisition of several views of interpretations with regard to the events in these regions.

The primary data were combined with secondary data from a range of academic publications, government ministries' reports, international and local organisations' publications and several local newspapers.

The UCDP datasets were used to highlight problems of how civil war has been defined in the case of northern Uganda in relation to how communal violence was defined and measured in north eastern Uganda. Furthermore, this study aimed at generating rich descriptive as well as explanatory accounts of these events. So, quotes from interviews and FGDs were used to provide descriptive and explanatory evidence derived at the level of meaning[32]. Throughout the write-up, the researcher endeavoured to synthesise the field findings with some conceptual and theoretical underpinnings about conflict, in order to arrive at relevant conclusions from the study.

2.9 Conclusion

As described above, working with interviewees, FGDs and research assistants, and preparing for the field, meant the researcher was able to conduct this academic study in reasonable security and safety. The research subjects (local population), the local organisations, and the research assistants were all vital in the whole fieldwork exercise. The fieldwork experiences were significant in their own way, specifically in understanding the realities of the local target population in these post – conflict settings. The study strived at maintaining space for participants' voices and perceptions. At the same time, the research process influenced the research design and prompted the researcher to modify the questions or focus, from time to time, in response to interview experiences. The realities and perceptions of interviewees were seen as very relevant to understanding underlying tensions around the conflict case studies. What emerged was a clearer appreciation of the actors and dynamics involved in each conflict situation, and the roles of different causal dynamics in the perpetuation of each conflict. From the epistemological stance of interpretative methods, the methodologies adopted were able to influence the researcher's choice of relevant theories used later in this study for

[32] See Snape and Spencer (2003:4)

509974-L-bw-isimon
Processed on: 1-5-2017 PDF page: 58

analysis of these two distinct cases of intra-state conflict categories. The conceptualisation of these two distinct conflict categories is elaborated upon in the following chapter.

3 Conceptualisation of Violent Conflicts

3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the debates surrounding the conceptualisation of civil war and communal violence, the implications of the definitions and their relevance to the study. The conceptualisation of intra-state typologies of conflict has raised a lot of debate and has been challenged in academia. Authors hold diverging views and make varying claims in relation to what a civil war and communal violence is. This is elaborated upon below, and this is followed by sections discussing theories on the causes of violent conflicts and the nature of the actors involved.

As some key words will be used throughout this thesis, it is important to understand their meaning. First, the term 'conflict' can be defined as a situation involving dissenting parties, with diverging interests, goals and/or ideologies. It is fair to say that most conflict scholars would agree with this broad definition (Galtung 1969: 167-91, Mitchell 1981:17, Kriesberg 1998: 2).

Of course, the notion of violent conflict differs from conflict because it involves openly 'hostile interactions' between opposing groups that involve physical coercion, maiming or even death. Unlike conflict, violent conflict is almost always a collective phenomenon. It is characterised by the intention of destroying, injuring or causing harm to opponents; gaining control of available resources and institutions that others may depend on, such as land, minerals and even government offices (Nel and Righarts 2008:161, Mack and Snyder 1957:218, Gurr 1980:2). The term violent conflict can refer to armed combat between states, between government forces and rebel groups, or to more 'horizontal' group-to-group violence among non-state actors as well as riots, pogroms and other forms of

509974-L-bw-isimon
Processed on: 1-5-2017
PDF page: 60

violent action (Demmers 2012:7-8). Therefore, this term is used in this thesis to refer to the two cases being researched. This will be elaborated upon in relation to civil wars and communal violence in the rest of this chapter.

3.2 Conceptualising and Coding Civil war: Debates

According to the Uppsala Conflict Data Project (UCDP), a civil war is an internal armed conflict based on a political disagreement that concerns the government or territorial issues where warring parties use armed force and where this leads to at least 25 battle-related fatalities. The Uppsala Conflict Data Project categorises intra-state warfare into three sub-sets: minor, intermediate and war intensity levels.

For minor cases, a minimum of 25 battle-related fatalities annually should be registered, but fewer than 1,000 throughout the whole course of the armed conflict. For intermediate intensity level, at least 1,000 battle deaths should be registered throughout the course of the war, with an annual battle death toll of at least 25. For the case of full intensity civil war, at least 1,000 deaths annually should be registered (Gleditsch et al. 2002:615-19, Harbom and Wallensteen 2010:508). These three thresholds were introduced because researchers of the UCDP found the 'old' high death threshold of 1,000 to be too high and disadvantageous because it would exclude smaller conflicts that were historically significant to some regions but less significant to the international community (Gleditsch et al. 2002:617).

Furthermore, UCDP researchers note that whether the rebels are based within or outside the state territory they are considered party to the conflict if they challenge a particular government. The government has to be internationally recognised or controlling undisputed territory (Gleditsch et al. 2002:619, Sollenberg and Wallensteen 2001:631-633). This implies that the rebels do not necessarily have to be within the state boundaries. This differs from the view held by other conflict scholars such as Sambanis (2004:828-831), Small and Singer (1982:210), who have suggested that rebel factions should be based within state boundaries for a violent conflict to be called a 'civil war'. UCDP researchers also note that the civil war is over once a certain one side of the party is victorious, when there is a peace agreement and a ceasefire period of time has elapsed without a battle taking place (Kreutz 2010:243-250).

509974-L-bw-isimon
Processed on: 1-5-2017

The UCDP also distinguishes the conflict typologies and notes that armed conflict between two or more states is an interstate armed conflict, while an armed conflict between a state and rebels outside the state's territory is an extra-state armed conflict. However, an armed conflict involving international support from other states to the state and the rebel faction is referred to as an internationalised internal armed conflict (Gleditsch et al. 2002:619).

As discussed above, UCDP researchers have their own definition of "internal armed conflict", what most other conflict scholars refer to as "civil war". There seems to be no consensus about the different definitions and some debates that have centred on death thresholds will now be considered in more detail. Different scholars have provided varying criteria for coding civil wars based on the numbers of battle-related fatalities recorded within a specific period of time.

The Correlates of War dataset (COW) was started at the University of Michigan in 1963 by J. David Singer, and codes international and civil violent conflicts. It does not include group-to-group violence. These scholars define civil war as an armed conflict within the confines of state boundaries, involving the national government as the primary party and rebel factions as the secondary ones. There must be effective resistance on both sides with a 'reasonable' ratio of fatalities of at least 1:20, i.e., the stronger forces must at least suffer 5% of the number of fatalities of the weaker opponent, whether that is rebels or government forces. More importantly, according to COW, to be a civil war the confrontation should result in at least 1,000 battle-related fatalities per year throughout the course of the armed conflict. COW scholars also note that the subject of contestation is usually related to changes in state policies, overthrowing the government or regional secession (Small and Singer 1982:210-11, Sarkees and Schafer 2000:126).

In the light of the above, Fearon and Laitin (2003:76) make further clarifications in terms of inclusion and exclusion related to civil wars between 1945 and 1999. They developed secondary criteria with the following specifications: the commencement of the civil war is the initial year in which 100 fatalities are recorded as an outcome of armed conflict and a new war is coded if a key party withdraws but battle carries on. They thus define civil war in ways that are somewhat similar to the COW dataset definition, but with lower thresholds of fatalities.

509974-L-bw-isimon
Processed on: 1-5-2017
PDF page: 62

For these authors, an end to the armed conflict is coded if victory is gained either on the part of the insurgent or the state, or if there is extensive demobilisation of armed forces, for instance once negotiations lhave led to a peace treaty. If this results in two or more years of peace, the conflict is said to be over (Fearon and Laitin 2003:75-90). These researchers have a broader definition of civil war, which can include cases of external support in the form of foreign troops, as well as multiple wars that can be coded if a state is battling dispersed rebel groups with different aims at different geographical locations within the country. Finally, if a state succeeds in conquering a territory outside its borders, and armed struggle continues afterwards, this is also coded by these authors as civil war (Fearon and Laitin 2003:76).

In a critique of COW datasets, Sambanis (2004: 829-30) contributes the suggestion that armed conflict should be defined as a civil war if it occurs within a state territory of 500,000 or more people, recognised as part of the international system. For Sambanis, the confrontation should also be between parties that are politically and militarily organised with openly stated political goals. The ruling government should be the main party and the weaker side must be able to inflict on the stronger opponent a minimum of 100 deaths, most of these in the initial year of the combat. If the violence become more one-sided, the civil war is over, according to Sambanis, and the incidents should be coded differently. Sambanis suggests that the first year of the war be coded as civil war only if the fatality count amounts to 500 to 1,000 deaths. Even if there is a low death count in the first year, if the cumulative death count reaches 1000 with three continuous years of violence, then this too can be coded as a civil war. Furthermore, he notes that despite a certain degree of external involvement, the insurgents should be recruited locally and should have bases at home of which they have control, though they may be operating from neighboring countries.

Sambanis suggests that to code an end to a war; a peace agreement must generate peace for at least six months after a ceasefire or no battle for at least two years or more. Another condition that would lead to coding the end of war is military victory by the insurgents leading to creation of a different government. Should there be continued armed conflict against the new regime, then another civil war may be coded with new parties involved. If the same parties continue to fight over the same issues, then this is coded as continuation of the old civil war (Sambanis 2004:829-30).

509974-L-bw-isimon
Processed on: 1-5-2017

Closer analysis reveals that Nicholas Sambanis replicates the COW dataset and makes what amounts to a few modifications to what he considers are ambiguities in the COW. His emphasis is on the status of government, population size, war onset and definitions of termination of civil war.

Conflict issues that divide scholars range from the significance of taking over central government, government policies, territorial disputes, and identity politics, to mention a few. Some issues have been used to distinguish and categorise civil war in the conflict literature. Some existing definitions view civil war as aimed at deposing the government in power (Fearon and Laitin 2008:280, Cederman et al. 2013:59, Sambanis 2004). Not all civil wars, however, are carried out by rebel factions. Fearon and Laitin (2008) also cite leaders of armed forces of the state itself who may generate extensive defections within the military, and reflect ethnic divisions within the state, or newly-made militia organisations backed by parts of the army (Cederman et al. 2013:60).

Furthermore, separatist civil wars are a specific form of civil war aimed at attaining greater autonomy or independence (Fearon and Laitin, 2004:291). Cederman et al. (2013:59) argue that groups that have been politically and economically marginalised, or sometimes are economically privileged (e.g., have oil resources on their territory) are the ones most likely to seek independence through secessionist wars. Fearon and Laitin (2004:277) argue that secessionist movements can be related to incompatibilities over explicit disputed territories that have nurtured enmities between groups, which can culminate in secessionist movements.

Conflict scholars have used these conflict traits to distinguish among conflicts depending on the nature of the incompatibility. As described above, scholars have defined and given varying criteria for identifying what is referred to as civil war. However, the most significant issues used to identify them are: the parties involved, the space within which the conflict occurs, death thresholds, the nature of state institutions and the armed forces. All these will influence how the onset and end of civil war are coded.

The most problematic source of disagreement for this research has been that of the casualty thresholds. These are especially problematic in contemporary Uganda, given the unreliable nature of battle-related death statistics and the disastrous war-related effects that can claim numerous lives, such as famine and disease. The datasets, whether COW or UCDP, are not able to allow for such variations in the accuracy of data. Another

509974-L-bw-isimon
Processed on: 1-5-2017
PDF page: 64

problem is the fluctuating intensity levels over time of these wars (Francis 2006:71), which will be something returned to in northern Uganda's civil war.

Besides issues surrounding the features of what defines a civil war, there are different typologies of civil wars. These are defined based on the objective of the study. There are different objectives as to why rebel factions engage in violent interactions with the government and these variations have been used to distinguish between typology of civil wars. There are a number of issues that have led to incompatible interests between the government and rebel factions and some of these issues are related to taking over the central government, government policies, territorial disputes and identity politics, to mention but a few. Some of these issues have been used to distinguish and categorise civil war in conflict literature. Some of the existing categorisations are: civil war aimed at deposing the government, separatist civil war, ethnic civil war, decolonisation civil war and new-old wars.

According to conflict literature, civil wars that aim at deposing the government mainly involve rebel factions that challenge the government and publicly state their objectives of toppling the government with the aim of taking over the state. These mobilised political and military organisations or non-state actors usually challenge the government's right to sovereign rule and are also referred to as coup-related civil wars (Fearon and Laitin 2008:280, Cederman et al. 2013:59). These types of civil wars tend to be situated nearer to the capital city unlike ethnic or secessionist civil wars that are usually situated far from the capital city. However, James Fearon and David Laitin note that these types of civil wars are not only carried out by rebel factions but also by leaders of armed forces of the state who generate extensive defections within the military and using violent strategies such as coups and peripheral insurgencies to pursue their intentions to take over power. Cederman et al. (2013:60), in the same light, note factions in the army as challengers, but go ahead to point out others as well such as ethnic groups and newly made political or militias' organisations.

In addition to the separatist civil wars mentioned above, there is a type of civil war that aims at attaining greater autonomy or independence (Fearon and Laitin 2004:291). Cederman et al. (2013:59) argue that groups who have been politically and economically marginalised or economically privileged usually seek independence through secessionist wars. In the

509974-L-bw-isimon
Processed on: 1-5-2017

same light, Gurr (1993:188) and Brass (1991:238) attribute political horizontal inequality and collective history of lost autonomy by some ethnic groups to the cause of civil war. This is related to incompatibilities over explicit, disputed territories that have nurtured enmities and have culminated in to secessionist movements. This issue has been used by conflict scholars to distinguish separatist civil wars from others.

Ethnic civil war is another classification used in distinguishing civil wars and according to Fearon and Laitin (2004:277), these have been popularly labelled as 'ethnic' conflicts as they mainly involve groups organised and fighting along ethnic lines. They also refer to them as 'sons of the soil' civil wars where dominant ethnic groups who usually are in power support their members against minority groups, which breeds grievances resulting in ethnic conflicts. A number of conflict scholars have attributed a number of factors to the cause of this type of war such as natural resources, identity politics and state repressive policies. Many other scholars have attributed these types of civil wars to competition for access to power as a result of exclusionary/discriminatory policies directed towards other ethnic groups in a country. These cases have been documented in countries where ethnic majority or minority were undermined or in situations where previously privileged groups enjoy an advantaged position (Cederman et al. 2013:58, Rothchild 1981:217, Gellner 1983:1).

Since the excluded groups experience what Cederman et al. (2013:59) refer to as 'alien rule' from 'foreign' ethnic groups, the aggrieved ethnic groups tend to protest through violent means, hence resulting in an ethno-nationalist civil war. However, Williams (2003:150) notes that these wars are also waged by 'included' groups who have full access to state resources but are still dissatisfied due to the state's inability to fulfil their policy preferences.

Another classification used is that of the wars of independence or decolonisation wars. These have been regarded as extra-systemic wars (Small and Singer 1983:210, Sarkees and Schaffer 2000:124-127). These wars that transpired against the former colonial empires have been dismissed as intra-state wars for operational reasons, there are similarities with civil wars (Sambanis 2004:828). Although colonial states were not regarded as proper sovereign states, and since a civil war is between state and non-state actors within state boundaries, Fearon and Laitin (2004:281-2) note that some of the anti-colonial wars of the 1950s and 1960s can be

509974-L-bw-isimon
Processed on: 1-5-2017
PDF page: 66

categorised as civil wars as they meet some of the criteria for a civil war classification.

Some contemporary conflict scholars have devised ways of classifying civil wars of the post-cold war era from previous wars using terms such as 'new' and 'old' wars (Kalyvas 2001:99). According to Mary Kaldor, the nature of warfare has evolved, "characterized by a different mode of warfare involving different types of military forces, different strategies and techniques, different relations and means of warfare" (1999:15). Post-cold war era wars have been mainly referred to as intrastate, internal, civil, or as 'privatised' or 'informal' wars (Keen, 1998).

A number of scholars argue that these new wars possess unlawful features, are personalised, destructive and based on greed (Kalyvas 2001:100). Additionally, the violence involved in these civil conflicts has been described as horrific, senseless and barbaric, owing to the warfare techniques (Kaplan 1994:35-40, Enzensberger 1994:22-30, Lacina 2006:276-277, Allen 1999:369). They have been noted for avoiding direct confrontation and rather employing techniques of coercion, involving economic, political or psychological acts of massacre, rape and mutilation, among others. This has been attributed to the advancement of technology in terms of weaponry and communication, which can cause extreme destruction (Kaldor 1999:8). Another distinctive trait of the contemporary civil wars is that they are heavily dependent on resources to sustain their activities; the looting has become more vital than the ideologies behind the war or battle victories because a lot of the war lords' interests are directed towards resources (Hironaka 2005:152). Claims about war lords developing business links and getting involved in export business with overseas companies have also been made (Allen 1999:371-72). In relation to the above, the scale and duration of civil wars of the contemporary times cannot be understood without reference to the international community, international processes and resources (Hironaka 2005:149, Kaldor 1999:2-4).

In contrast, old wars are labelled as those whose aims were clear, had articulate boundaries, had popular support, were handled in a legitimate manner, and were based on well-defined beliefs and ideologies about society contrary to the new civil wars that lack motive (Kalyvas 2001:100, Voigt 1949:68-69). Nettleship & Givens (1975) note that in ancient times, pre-colonial states did not have or use 'civilised' armaments that could bring about large scale destruction to villages, nations or the whole world.

509974-L-bw-isimon
Processed on: 1-5-2017

Kaldor (1999:9) notes that in previous eras the war economy was centralised, and that the new war economy is decentralised and sometimes referred to as 'globalised', since these new wars are dependent on external funding and support. Conventionally, civil wars were considered to be an issue to be handled by a sovereign state by law, a matter that has been undermined by the huge level of decisive external intervention in the affairs of sovereign states by the international community (Brownlie 1963). However, Newman (2004:173-4) dismisses these claims arguing that all these so called 'new war' characteristics were clearly evident in many civil wars that occurred in previous eras before the end of the cold war and these notions are an exaggeration.

Overall, these distinctions are very significant for the study, as identifying which types of civil war have occurred in Uganda is of essence to the study in examining the conditions that can explain the emergence and persistence of the armed conflict. This is so because sometimes during the course of a conflict new issues arise and the existing conditions are significant in mapping a conflict and understanding the dynamics involved. And though civil war has been conceptualised with neatly demarcated boundaries from communal violence, this researcher now argue that sometimes an armed conflict may overlap such boundaries and get embedded in or become an extension of smaller or narrower conflicts. This alters the politics and dynamics of a conflict, especially with the emergence of new actors or stakeholders that influence the form and direction of the conflict.

3.3 Conceptualisation of communal violence

According to Sundberg and colleagues, a non-state conflict involves: "the use of armed force between two organized armed groups, neither of which is the government of a state, which results in at least 25 battle-related deaths in a year" (Sundberg et al., 2012: 352-3). The deaths should be the result of combat between warring groups and not the result of only one group attacking the other, which would be termed one-sided violence. Non-state conflicts are grouped into two categories: formally and informally organised groups. The definitions have separate elements that clarify the criteria of coding a non-state conflict. According to Sundberg et al. (2012), organised groups consist of:

509974-L-bw-isimon
Processed on: 1-5-2017
PDF page: 68

> "(3.1) formally organized groups: any non-governmental group having announced a name for their group and using armed force against another similarly formally organized group, or
>
> (3.2) informally organized groups: any group without an announced name, but who uses armed force against another similarly organized group, where the violent activity meets the following requirement:
>
> (3.2.a) there is a clear pattern of violent incidents that are connected an in which both groups use armed force against the other" (Sundberg et al. 2012:353, UCDP Non-State Conflict Codebook version 2.4-2012:1-3)[33].

Furthermore, they note that these warring groups can only fight groups within their own level of organisational capacity. At organisational level 1 (formally organised groups), rebel factions or any group with an equivalent level of organisation usually with pronounced names or military factions, clashes between such groups is regarded as "fighting between highly organised rebel groups". However, the UCDP non-state conflict code book (2012:1-3) also notes that these groups should target other groups within the same level of organisation. However, should they attack or target individuals or civilians not of the same level of organisation, such an attack will be referred to as one-sided violence.

At organisational level 2 (informally organized groups) are groups affiliated to political factions and contestants which are usually not permanently created for combat but do on certain occasions use their structures for such commitments which usually results in to what is referred to as electoral violence.

At organisational level 3 (informally organized groups) are groups along identity lines such as religion, ethnicity, clan, tribe, who are not permanently organised for combat but can organise themselves along these lines to engage in combat. This results in what is commonly referred to as communal violence (Sunderburg et al. 2012, UCDP Non-State Conflict Codebook version 2.4-2012:3).

[33] The same conditions are maintained in other versions as well. See UCDP Non-State Conflict Codebook version 2.5-2014

509974-L-bw-isimon
Processed on: 1-5-2017

Communal violence has been mainly defined as a hostile interaction that involves communal groups. This occurs between identity groups or different sects within a community or nation with incompatible interests. These differences can be based on i.e., religion, ethnicity, tribe and race (Tadjoeddin 2004:02).

Brosche and Elfverversson (2012:33) define communal violence as violent confrontation between non-state actors arranged along a shared common identity. This aspect of communal identity is derived from common historical background and cultural values. However, conflict literature also notes that what forms the basis for communal identity can vary over time and is dependent on the environment (Gurr 2000:4-20).

The Uppsala Non-State Conflict Codebook (2012:3) defines communal violence as a category of non-state conflict that involves armed confrontations between non-state groups that share a common identity such as i.e.., ethnicity, religion, race and tribe. Notable cases mentioned in the Codebook include Hindus and Muslims in India, Christians and Muslims in Indonesia and Nigeria, or pastoralist herders and settled farmers in the Sahel region and the north eastern parts of Uganda (Sundberg et al. 2012:351).

In relation to non-state violence between informally organized groups, some communal violence forms is of this type. In this case, arms used are either manufactured or home-made and result in battle-related deaths between the warring groups. Furthermore, the UCDP Codebook (2012:2-3-4) points out that these groups are not always ready for battle, but at specific times can become united along communal lines, and prepare themselves to take part in armed combat. This is different from a formally organized group which involves non-state groups with recognized names, who are already armed and prepared to fight.

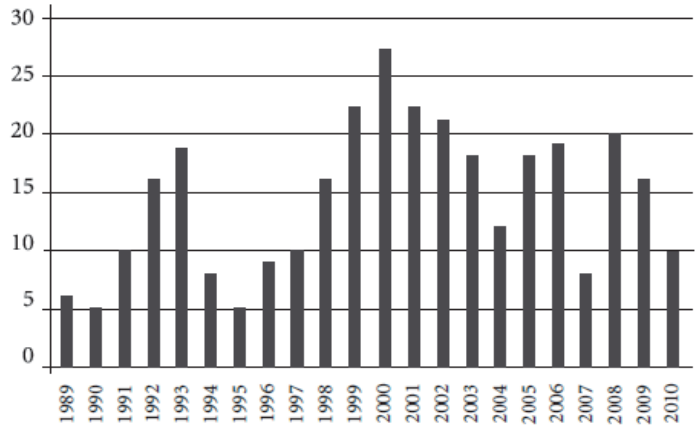
To code the beginning of a period of communal violence, the start date is taken as the first year in which battle-related deaths reach the number 25. This start date applies even to those conflicts that have been active for a while. The end of the conflict is coded when lethal violence has not taken place for a year (UCDP Non-State Conflict Codebook 2012:5). For violence or warfare to be coded as non-state violence (which includes communal violence) it is generally agreed that the state or government and the national army should not be involved at any level, nor be the main target (Sundberg et al. 2012:353, Small and Singer, 1982:216-217, Sarkees and Schafer 2000:217). All these studies agree that the groups

509974-L-bw-isimon
Processed on: 1-5-2017
PDF page: 70

should have no alignment with state institutions, whether armed or not. As suggested earlier, when referring to the cases of Somalia and Sudan, this study proposes to question such an assumption of state non-involvement, despite this being a widely agreed upon characteristic of communal violence.

Sundberg et al. (2012:353) note that the level of organisation of communal violence is low and informal compared to civil war and in cases where they may be highly coordinated, they usually lack a formal military group. Furthermore, some scholars note that communal violence has a tendency of being short-lived or characterised by a few days of intense clashes, which results into significantly less fatalities, apart from a few exceptional cases that have been more lethal (Petterson 2010:190-191, Brosche and Elfversson 2012:43, Sundberg et al. 2012:353). Communal violence do not usually spread across the whole country but occurs in a more localized environment and are 'episodic in nature' However, some cases of communal violence have been protracted and spanned decades such as in Nigeria, India and Sudan (Sundberg et al. 2012:351).

Figure 3.1: Global Active Communal Violence from 1989 to 2010



Source: Uppsala Conflict Data Program, Non-state conflict Dataset V.2.3-2011

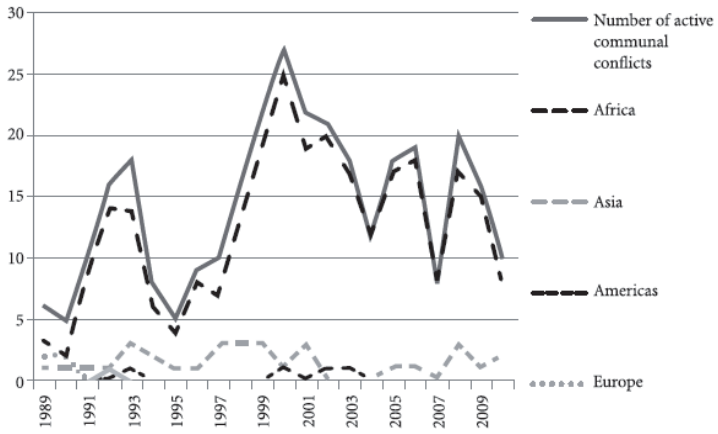
In addition to the above, The UCDP non-State conflict dataset (2011) reveals that in the year 2000, most communal violence took place in Africa. Out of the 27 communal violence conflicts in the year 2000 (in

509974-L-bw-isimon
Processed on: 1-5-2017
PDF page: 71

Table 3.1), seven were situated in Uganda, five in Ethiopia and four in Nigeria. The data set also reveals that, between 1989 and 2010, the countries most affected by communal violence were Somalia, Nigeria, Ethiopia, Sudan, Kenya and Uganda.

Regional trends, as shown in Figure 3.2, also illustrate that the highest number of active communal violence conflicts, from 1989 to 2010, were in Africa. Although the communal violence phenomenon is not confined to Africa, of the 316 conflict years coded in the UCDP non-state conflict dataset, the majority of non-state conflicts (275) were situated in Africa, 32 were in in Asia, 4 in Europe and America and 1 in the Middle East[34]. With regard to long-duration conflicts that recur for more than one year, 193 were recorded in Africa, 19 in Asia, 4 in America, 3 in Europe and 1 in the Middle East (UCDP, 2011).

Figure 3.2: Active communal violence by year and region, from 1989 to 2010



Source: Uppsala Conflict Data Program, Non-state conflict Dataset V.2.3-2011

As will be explained below, communal violence has been depicted as a significantly different intra-state warfare category than civil war. It differs at the level of the parties involved, at the level of organisation and

[34] A conflict year is coded every time a communal clash results in a minimum of 25 fatalities (UCDP, 2011).

509974-L-bw-isimon
Processed on: 1-5-2017

coordination, with regard to the space within which it occurs, in how long it lasts and in death threshold. This has been highlighted as significant for locating the typology of one conflict in relation to another.

However, the criterion used in aiding the conceptualisation of communal violence does not tackle the complexities and dynamics that emerge during the course of this type of violent conflict. The distinguishing factors are too simplistic because some communal conflicts are transformed into narrower or wider conflicts. Some communal violence conflicts have continued to be defined as such even though new actors emerged that alter the politics and dynamics of these conflicts contributing to their protraction. This study intends to examine conditions under which such conflicts change form and direction with the aim to make a contribution to the debate on the conceptualisation of communal violence.

3.4 What are communal groups?

In the contemporary world, there are very few states comprising a mono- or broad-based ethnic administrative community, which can be labelled as 'nation states', with the people simply identifying with one another as a nation and with the reigning government as theirs (Etzioni 1992). This is because of the existence of multiple communities within a state, possessing different cultural values and norms. Within these communities are histories of reciprocal antagonism towards one another and profoundly rooted differences evident in the dialect, beliefs and physical appearance (Connor 1994). These partially explain why conflict is not a new phenomenon among communities within self-labelled 'nation' states.

According to Ted Gurr, communal groups are "cultural or religious identity groups that do not have recognized states or institutionalized political status" (Gurr 1993:161). He further notes that they share a common identity which is important to them and the people they relate with. In the light of this, Stewart (2000:246) defines them as collections of people who for various reasons and similar interests identify with each other against other groups. The group's organisation may be informal but the group has self-defined interests and within it a level of agreement about the roles and activities of its members.

Some observers, such as Geertz (1963) and Stack (1986), depict communal groups as ancient social entities founded on hereditary,

509974-L-bw-isimon
Processed on: 1-5-2017

cultural, linguistic and religious principles. However, some scholars argue that group identities are not constant; they are situational and subject to change (Gurr 1993:162, Stewart 2000:255). To add to that, Gurr argues that communal identities when faced with external challenges become more significant, but weaken when the utility of amalgamation into larger communities increases (Gurr, 1993:162), implying that the homogeneity or heterogeneity of groups has implications for their internal cohesion. However, identities that are overlooked and weaken can only be revived by new leadership sensitive to pressures to their identity and status (Gurr 1993:162-3).

Although communal violence is an under-researched area, with the exception of South Asia where it has been the most dominant and widespread form of social violence since the 1990s, it is not a new phenomenon and is attributed to hundreds of fatalities (Varshney et al. 2004, Sundberg et al. 2012:351). Understanding the nature of groups involved in communal violence is significant for the study and the following sections will therefore explore the classical and contemporary debate surrounding the causes of communal violence, and its impact on communities and actors involved.

Table 3.1: Summary of features of civil war and communal violence

Features	Civil war	Communal violence
Parties	Government of a state vs. non-state actors	Non-state actors vs non-state actors i.e., communal groups
Fatality	25 battle-related deaths in a year	25 battle-related deaths in a year
Issues of Incompatibility	Government, Territory	No issue of incompatibility
Level of organization	High level of organisation	Formally organised groups (organisational level 1). Highly organised, i.e., rebel faction Informally organised groups (organizational levels 2 and 3). Low level of organization, i.e., communal groups, political contestants or factions

Source: Gleditsch et al. (2002), UCDP Non-State Conflict Codebook version 2.4-2012

509974-L-bw-isimon
Processed on: 1-5-2017
PDF page: 74

In conclusion, all these different criteria are used for coding and categorising armed conflicts into types of conflict. From a quantitative point of view, different criteria are used by different datasets. However, it is important to note that this study focuses on UCDP definitions and measurements. The UCDP data programme, besides raising the need to review the relationship between communal violence and other conflict categories, makes available datasets for both group to-group violence and for civil wars. Given the study objective of understanding the interlinkages between these twodistinct categories of violent conflict, the UCDP is an important one for this study. Even so, such definitions and measurements do little to reveal the complexities and changing dynamics and interconnections between civil war and communal violence, taking the example of Uganda. The qualitative interpretative approach adopted is aimed at examining the dynamics involved over time, and draws on local understandings of what a civil war is and what communal violence is, and how these evolve and inter-connect. The next section reviews theories of the causes of these violent conflicts and the actors involved. This will contribute to opening up a discussion on the complex interconnections between these conflict categories.

3.5 Conceptual strands in explaining causes of violent conflict

The theories on the causes of violent conflict are grounded in specific ontology and epistemological traditions (Demmers 2012:15-17). A proper understanding of these traditions underpinning the theories enables the researchers to position the relevant theories they are using, as shown in Table 3.2.

There is a divide in social science research with regard to explaining what motivates human action: agency or structure. The agency-based theories (individualism) attribute the source of violent conflict to an individual level emerging as an outcome of 'action and interaction of individuals' (Elster 1989:13, Hollis 1994), while structure-based theories (structuralism) trace the causes of violent conflict to the way the society is organised and influences human action (Hollis 1994).

509974-L-bw-isimon
Processed on: 1-5-2017

Table 3.2: Theorising causes of violent conflict

Ontology/ Epistemology	Explaining (Positivist)	Understanding (Interpretative)
Structuralism		**Political economy** • Contradictions in the organisation of the modern state system, global capitalism and global governance
Structuralism		**Constructivism: Identity based explainations** **1. Ethno-symbolism/Culturalism: Mass driven** • **Ethnic conflict is socially meaningful** **2. Elite theory/Instrumentalism: Elite driven** **Ethnic conflict is politically functional**

Source: Demmers (2012:52, 76).

This highlights the significance of assessing the power of structures and their influence on human action, in line with the interpretative approach that the study has adopted. These specific notions, which centre on the structure-based traditions of explaining violent conflict, are elaborated upon in the sections below. These sections also review schools of thought from political economy and identity-related theories of violent conflict, which the study mainly focuses on during the analysis of the research results. Specific theories selected are those most suited to to be used in the analysis of the multi-ethnic features and conflicts characterising Ugandan society and reflecting the recent history of the country (Nzita, 1995).

3.5.1 Political economy: Structure-based approaches

Structure-based approaches are basically about the political economy of violent conflict. It focuses on the interconnectedness between organisation of modern state system, global capitalism, governance and local, contemporary violent conflict (Demmers 2012:54-55). This approach highlights the issues surrounding the state-making paradox, effects of forces such as neo-liberalism, global governance, and how they have contributed to conditions that have brought about violent conflict in countries such as Uganda.

509974-L-bw-isimon
Processed on: 1-5-2017

Conflict literature suggests that – historically - the causes of civil war were social, economic and political and arose in a context within which violence occurred. Each phase had its own features and specific dominant forces that shaped the specific environment within which the conflicts occurred and changed. Specific historical phases involve changes in the nature of the conflicts in each phase, and its causes and extent. From phase to phase of the conflict, some causal dynamics continued, persisting into the next phases, while other causal factors lost their significance over time (Hironaka 2005:01, Bujra 2002:28).

Some conflict scholars claim that the 'crisis' of state formation and nation making is the source of most contemporary violent conflicts in the developing world (Demmers 2012:64, Ayoob 2007). According to Van Goor et al. (1996:1-28), the colonial experience and decolonisation process had serious implications for the domestic politics in many African states, characterised by instability and armed struggle throughout into the 21st century. Though some countries realised a peaceful power transfer, countries such as Algeria (1954-62), Angola (1961-74), Guinea Bissau (1962-74), Mozambique (1964-75), Zimbabwe (1965-80) and Namibia (1966-90) attained their independence through armed struggle (Francis, 2006:72). Fearon and Laitin (2003:88) argue that decolonisation gave birth to weak states with inefficient administrative systems and economies lacking the resources and the organisational capacity to ensure smooth operation of the government and the civil service sector, hence bringing about instability.

The argument of the state-making paradox notes that the expectations of post-colonial states were unrealistic since the developed states had taken centuries of long bloody wars to establish themselves (Ayoob, 2007). While referring to Mohammed Ayoob's work, Jelle Demmers notes that:

> "The imaginary of the socially cohesive, political responsive and administratively effective nation-state of the developed world became the standard ideal type. Post-colonial countries who failed were at risk of international ridicule and permanent peripherality within the system of states. Their states were labelled as 'failed', 'fragile' or 'collapsed'" (Demmers 2012:65).

The desire for a western set of standards definitely aggravated the crises in many post-colonial states, as noted above.

509974-L-bw-isimon
Processed on: 1-5-2017

Furthermore, the Cold War politics and intervention characterised by ideological conflict and competition were instrumental in laying the various platforms that served the interests of the two blocs and later continued to undermine the stability of the continent. According to some scholars, the wars of liberation were understood as communist/socialist against the capitalist west. These were 'proxy wars' in the sense that they attracted allies concerned with powerful ideological discourses. Once a local violent conflict was viewed through the logic of the Cold War, there was immediate polarization by these super powers.

As a result of this kind of interpretation, political, military and economic support was rendered to anti-colonial struggles, newly independent states and various factions within a state (Francis 2006:72, Hironaka 2005:104-128, Gaddis 1997, George and Smoke 1974). These authors further note that even after their independence some countries and factions continued to receive support from these blocs based on the ideologies with which they were aligned. Such cases of socialist alignment were noticeable in Angola (MPLA Government), Mozambique (FRELIMO), Guinea Bissau (PAIGC) and Algeria (FLN), which partially explains why the armed conflict in these countries dragged on for decades into the twenty first century; after all, both the insurgents and the state received support (Francis 2006:72, Hironaka 2005:104-124). This political and military support cultivated autocratic leaders who owed their loyalty and existence to the two blocs. However, after the end of the Cold War, puppet regimes collapsed and conflicts that had been 'contained' by the proxy war detonated into violent conflict with some dragging on into the twenty first century (Wallensteen and Axell 1994:334-337, Wallensteen and Sollenberg 1999:593, Francis 2006:74, Van de Goor et al. 1996:1, Fearon and Laitin 2003:77, Hironaka 2005:104-149).

Conflict literature suggests that, after the end of the Cold War, the scene of political conflict shifted and transnational ideologies such as democracy and capitalism took over at a rate that was unanticipated in the early 1990s (Hironaka 2005:126-127). These rapid changes had serious implications for the political stability of various states, and often led to violent conflict (Adejumobi, 2001:149). The rapid transformation from local to global destabilised the traditional social, economic and political structures of the third world societies, using the imposition of neo-liberal economic policies – the development paradigms known as 'Structural Adjustment Programmes' - which had been adopted and used by western

509974-L-bw-isimon
Processed on: 1-5-2017
PDF page: 78

economies and the IMF/WB for many decades in third world countries. The doctrine of neo-liberal globalisation that swept the world in the 1980s, and has since become hegemonic, tends to encourage new and durable forms of division, inequality and instability. These policies have produced unexpected and at times unwanted outcomes, including violent conflict. They have deepened poverty, increased economic inequality and have exacerbated the division of the world into a 'core' and 'periphery' i.e., 'metropolitan' and 'borderland' (Colletta and Cullen 2000:88, Newbury 1988, Castells 1996 and 1998, Demmers 2012:66).

They were instrumental in bringing about state collapse in countries such as Sierra Leone, Liberia, the DRC, Somalia and Côte d'Ivoire. The weakened economies failed to respond to the basic, crucial duties of a state and maintain institutions that would preserve law and order and promote economic development. This sparked off uprisings against the government in many African states that had adopted the Structural Adjustment Programmes (Ali and Mathews 1999, Francis 2001). The instability in countries such as Angola, Algeria, Burundi, Congo-Brazzaville, Ethiopia, Mozambique, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Somalia, Rwanda, Sudan, the Central African Republic, Zaire and Uganda was – at least in part – the result of these policies (Allen 1999:368).

The implications highlighted here are that neo-liberalism led to an erosion of state structures worldwide, undermining the political (centralized modern state structures) and economic (shifted from the state to the market) decision-making powers of these developing countries. Consequently, the inability of states to impose rules and policies to regulate their markets has posed problems for independent political legitimacy and accountability. This has left the cultural field as the main battleground and fostered the emergence of identity-based politics, exclusionary discourses for political constituency building (Castell 1996, Cox 1995) and network wars (Duffield 1999, Keen 1998). This levies the motion of neo-liberalism to bringing about ethnic conflicts (Appadurai 2006, Kaldor 1999).

Furthermore, besides contributing to the emergence of identity politics, neo-liberalism has also triggered a new form of resource competition referred to as 'War economies' (Keen 1998). The illegal trade in i.e.., arms, drugs, diamonds, oil and timber, perpetuated by war lords, local business men, global network producers and corporations, has been referred to as 'network wars'. This has also been linked to globalisation

509974-L-bw-isimon
Processed on: 1-5-2017 PDF page: 79

and liberalisation, which have fostered the development of multiple centres of authority other than the state (Duffield 1999, Keen 1998). The structural violence brought about by the way society is connected to global systems is organised in several ways and linked to conditions that lay ground for direct violence. It seems that structure-based approaches are ontologically grounded in a more interpretative epistemological stance (Demmers 2012:73-76).

3.5.2 Identity and violent conflict

Most countries in Africa are multi-ethnic societies and social identity is a significant factor that has shaped the politics of developing countries. Social identity is about "categorical characteristics – such as nationality, gender, religion, and ethnicity – that locate people in social space" (Demmers 2012:21). Identity factors have been attributed to bringing about violent conflict and some of the theories looking into ideas about the connection between identity groups and violent conflict draw their arguments from Primordialism and constructivism views.

According to Fearon and Laitin (2000:848) primordialists have belief in the naturalness of social identities such as gender, race, ethnicity and religion among others. In relation to ethnic conflicts, ethnicity has been regarded as a natural, hereditary communal bond. The primordialist approach to violent conflict rests on the premise that groups are essentially different, so ethnicity breeds violence and identities are inherently conflictual (Demmers 2012:25). And since this approach focuses on predetermined human action, it has been highlighted as the positivist approach to understanding causes of violent conflict (Demmers 2012:35). This has been greatly rejected by some scholars (King 2004:435, Brubaker and Cooper 2000), in favour of the constructivism theory.

Unlike the primordialists, constructivists argue that ethnicity is not inborn, hence fixed, and should be understood as dynamic and changeable. They further claim that ethnic groups are constructed from social interaction and processes of boundary drawing; hence, they are contextual (Smith 1996, Baumann 1999, Barth 1998, Eriksen 1993). There are two explanatory approaches to ethnicity and violent conflict under constructivism, namely: the ethno-symbolism/culturalism approach and the instrumentalist or rational action approach.

509974-L-bw-isimon
Processed on: 1-5-2017
PDF page: 80

The culturalism/ethno-symbolism approach stresses the significance of emotional power of ethnic attachments and the depth of their historical meanings, which is at the core of culture-oriented approaches relating ethnicity and violent conflict. In this strand of thinking, it is argued that ethnicity identities are socially meaningful, hence significant on their own terms, and that this naturally draws people to their ethnic group and culture. Groups, by drawing on these deep ethno-symbolic resources, in turn have high mobilization capacity (Kaufmann 2006:47, Smith 1996:446-7, Smith 1986:13).

In contrast, the instrumentalist/rational action approach argues that ethnic identities are politically functional and they are mainly used as political purposes to acquire power by manipulative elites. This theory places emphasis on the role of violence and how violence is strategically instigated to create or affirm boundaries between groups of people. This is said to be masterminded by predatory elites that instigate collective fears and aggressive mass attitudes (Demmers 2012:29).

This approach further argues that elites use ethnic violence to build support for themselves, which has the effect of constructing more antagonistic identities, which favours more violence. Some of the scholars note that group making here is effectively done because people are afraid of violence. As soon as people are targeted because of their alleged identity, they start to act and feel collectively (Fearon and Laitin 2000:853, Gagnon 1997:138).

As discussed above, ontologically the instrumentalist theory is an individualist rational actor approach. The individual agent in pursuit of his or her strategic interests is the source of conflict. Ethnic identity is essentially viewed as influential, as a means to rally a support base, or as a cover up of strategic private interests. In contrast, ethno-symbolism and culturalism place the actor as "the sum of his roles in the normative structure of society" (Demmers 2012:34-36). All in all, these social constructivist theories argue that violent conflict is usually a political strategy to make and maintain group boundaries which are essentially political purposes and are socially significant.

With that in mind, other theories of violent conflict that the researcher would like to briefly highlight are the grievance and greed thesis, which have a lot of debates on the causes of contemporary violent conflicts.

509974-L-bw-isimon
Processed on: 1-5-2017

According to Frances Stewart, what motivates groups to engage in violent interaction are horizontal inequalities. As she aptly notes: "inequalities among groups in political, economic and social dimensions provide the basis for inter-group animosity" (Stewart 2000:245). Using this unequality as a point of departure, various studies have been undertaken to explain violent conflict (Stewart 2000, 2002, 2008, Cederman et al. 2013). Consequently results have shown that uneven distribution of resources, and services and opportunities fuels processes that lead to violent confrontations.

However, proponents of the motive-oriented 'greed thesis' argue that opportunistic/materialistic motives driven by greed are a key issue for the instigation of violence in Africa (Collier and Hoeffler 2004:589). Proponents of the greed theory have disregarded the role of grievances emerging from inequality as a key factor in bringing about civil war (Collier and Hoeffler 2004, Collier and Hoeffler 1998). This notion has been related to natural resource control by the state or rebels in various studies (Ross 2004, Dunning 2005, Franke 2007, Duffield 2001:14).

The argument is based on the claim that the presence of abundant natural resources in a country increases the risk of war, and combatants in civil war are driven by the desire to do better for themselves. Natural resources can be a looting target for rebel groups, and can also be used by the state to finance its operations. Some of the civil wars linked to natural resources between 1990 and 2000 were in countries such as Angola (1975-2002), the Congolese Republic or Congo Brazzaville (1997), the Democratic Republic of Congo (1996-99), Liberia (1989-96), Sierra Leone (1991-2000) and Sudan (1983) (Collier and Hoeffler, 2004:565, Ross 2004a: 337, Ross 2004b:48). However, Addison et al. (2002) argue that both greed and grievances as a motivation for conflict are inseparably intertwined in fuelling it.

There are scholars who claim that these structure-based traditions of explaining violent conflict independently are not statisfactory in shedding light on the causes of violent conflict (Jabri 1996:01). Furthermore, it is noted that:

> "… structuralist approaches are seen as too static. They leave out a theory of individual action, and fail to explain how inherent contradictions eventurally transform in to actual violence" (Demmers 2012:119).

509974-L-bw-isimon
Processed on: 1-5-2017
PDF page: 82

They claim that structure and agency traditions complement each other, they have a dialectical relationship to one another in explaining violent conflict, and as they stand opposed to the others, they are inadequate (Giddens 1984, Demmers 2012:120). With regard to the individualist approach, it is accused of being:

> "…mono-causal, and as too objective regarding human rationality. It fails to examine the origins of people's desires and beliefs and does not explain how social sturctures condition actors to choose war" (Demmers 2012:119).

Demmers further suggests that a researcher can take up these ideas, acknowledging their underlying differences in perceptions, and use them in "finding your own voice" (Demmers 2012:142).

Nonetheless, the theories discussed above, mainly the political economy and Constructivist identity based theories on the causes of violent conflict, will be used to examine the causes of the civil war and communal violence in Uganda. These theories not only provide lenses with which to look at these conflicts, but also help in understanding conflict development, as mapping the causal factors can highlight the interest in the actors involved and their role in conflict development. This brings us to the section that elaborates more on the actors in violent conflicts.

3.6 Theoretical strands on actors in violent conflicts

The nature of actors in violent conflicts plays a significant part in the politics of classifications. And as conflicts emerge and evolve, various actors get drawn into these conflicts for various reasons. According to Howon Jeong, these actors have goals, motives, interests and values; tangible goals may include territorial, political and economic advantages, whereasless tangible ones include prestige, honor and respect (2008:24-26). Whatever their goals may be, these actors play a significant role in how conflicts come about and get protracted. There are various theories about the nature of actors involved in violent conflicts. And some of the ones highlighted below are drawn from a collection of theories on the causes of violent conflict.

According to Mail (1992), parties to a conflict always have incompatible interests and objectives in a conflict. Primary parties have

509974-L-bw-isimon
Processed on: 1-5-2017

been defined by their objectives/interests, especially the non-state parties. Conflict literature notes that the disadvantaged groups or formerly privileged groups in a country usually led rebellions against the government for the injustice inflicted upon them (Stewart 2002, Cederman and Girardin 2007, Cederman et al. 2013). There are different categories of those who are relatively advantaged or disadvantaged, and can easily indulge in violent conflict. Stewart (2002:3) quotes them as the "backward groups in backward regions, advanced groups in backward regions, backward groups in advanced regions, and advanced groups in advanced regions".

In addition to the above, Cederman and Girardin (2007:176,178) use a classification to highlight this issue when they refer to the privileged as the "Ethnic Group in Power' (EGIP) and the marginalised as the 'Marginalized Ethnic Groups' (MEG). The same is noted by Cederman et al. (2013:58), who refer to them as "included or incumbent" groups and "excluded or marginalised" ethnic groups with the latter being the ethnic groups that are systematically excluded from power structures, while the former represent the privileged ethnic groups with unlimited access to state opportunities and resources and full representation in government decision making organs. Since the excluded groups experience what Cederman et al. (2013:59) refer to as 'alien rule' from 'foreign' ethnic groups, the aggrieved ethnic groups tend to protest through violent means, thus resulting in an ethno-nationalist civil war.

Stewart 2008 and Cederman et al. (2013:117) also point out that both disadvantaged (poorer) and advanced groups are more often involved in violent conflict compared to groups closer to the country's average. This is because the advanced struggle to retain their status quo while the poor struggle to overturn the injustice inflicted upon them.

In relation to the 'included' groups, Williams (2003:150) notes that wars are also waged by 'included' groups who have full access to state resources but are still dissatisfied due to the state's inability to fulfil their policy preferences, or fear to lose their privileged positions to the unprivileged. So, the privileged indulge in state terrorism and sponsor violence to suppress opposition groups, especially if the privileged group is a minority (Stewart 2000:248-50 and 2008:20). This has occurred in countries where an ethnic minority is in power, undermining the majority, and vice versa (Peterson 2002:51-52), or in situations where a previously

509974-L-bw-isimon
Processed on: 1-5-2017 PDF page: 84

privileged group has lost power to another group (Rothchild 1981:217, Gellner 1983:1, Cederman et al. 2013:205-7).

The characteristics of a rebel group (disadvantaged or formerly privileged) matter because some scholars argue that larger, disadvantaged groups are more likely to pressurise the government to come up with acceptable offers for their demands or otherwise resort to violence and large groups are known for fighting longer wars (Cederman et al. 2013, Cederman and Gleditsch 2009:493). However, in most cases, governments are reluctant to negotiate with rebel groups (Harbom et al. 2006:622, DeRouen et al. 2010:334).

Smaller, but well-organised groups can also put up a good fight but usually engage in brief conflicts and are much more likely to yield to concessions by the government much faster than larger groups. These rebel groups usually stop fighting if given a 'legally accepted political wing', which they often view as a channel for better future negotiations (Cederman and Gleditsch 2009:493). Apart from the size of the excluded group, history also matters, especially history related to the number of previous conflicts. This is said to have a positive influence on conflict risk, as history can influence the direction of present events, especially if the involved parties are strongly linked to it (Cederman et al. 2013:205).

Political elites, above all, have been highlighted as the most significant actors in relation to disadvantaged/excluded groups; their actions are instrumental in manipulating or highlighting grievances and fostering group identity, thus enabling effective mobilisation against the 'other' group (Stewart 2000, Gurr 1993, Cederman et al. 2013). Frances Stewart also further emphasizes that in these groups there are leaders and followers, i.e., those who initiate conflict, construct group identity and mobilise members, and those who actually engage in the physical fight, though there could be intersections between them (Stewart 2000:246). Some scholars who attribute group militancy to group inequality due to limited peace or economic opportunities also note that there are two categories of participants: the rich and poor, the perpetrators and looters. The indirect participants are usually the 'rich' who fuel the tensions by funding the direct participants, the 'poor'. This suggests that even within the disadvantaged groups there are people with different roles (Mitra and Ray 2010:721, Esteban and Ray 1994:849).

Apart from the above, civilians in the local territory are actors as they can support the rebels if the conflict is popular locally, which would feed

509974-L-bw-isimon
Processed on: 1-5-2017 PDF page: 85

the conflict especially if they regard themselves as disadvantaged and view the conflict as a solution to their deprived situation. However, Murshed (2002:392) notes that these civilians are usually targeted by rebels and governments as well, especially those in rebel areas who are targeted and terrorised by governments with intentions of weakening rebel armies.

To be added to the picture are warlords and militia groups; they remain major actors in aggravating civil wars in many war-torn countries. According to Hills (1997:36), warlords control certain territories and the people within those territories. They are present in conflicts and strive to ensure the continuation of volatile situations in a state or region for exploitative interests, using personal militias. These characters flourish and operate in a state of chaos rife with corruption, inefficiency and opportunistic looting, by seizing resource-endowed regions possessing diamond, gold, copper and timber and by levying taxes in the territories they control (Hironaka 2005: 152). Collier and Hoeffler (2004:589) attribute it to 'greed' as an opportunistic factor. Furthermore, globalisation has facilitated and opened up opportunities for trans-border legal and illegal trade between warlords, national elites, multinational corporations, mineral industries, weapon traders and drug dealers (Francis 2001, Allen 1999:371, Keen 1998, Reno 1993) in countries such as Sierra Leone, Liberia and the DRC. This has perpetuated civil wars in many African states.

Militia groups have also been noted for their role in drawing out violent conflict. According to Hill (1997:40), 'militias' is a term "applied to recognisably armed mobile groups operating either under the umbrella of a factional leader, clan or ethnic group, or on their own after the break–up of previously recognised forces". Militias operate in a fragile state and their existence is largely attributed to waning state power and its institutions that cannot avail security to the communities and their property (Salih and Harir 1994:188, Mazrui 1986:11-18, Hills 1997:36). There are three types of militias' categories: (i) the personal militias, who operate under the command of an ideological leader or warlord, clan or ethnic group: (ii) the group militias, who watch out for the interests of their members or communities; and (iii) The freelance militias, who loot and bring about instability, with opportunistic interests. Though militias are not directly defined in relation to warlords, they operate and multiply in most conflict-ridden situations. Warlords such as Charles Taylor in Liberia and General Aideed in Somalia were some of the people noted for

509974-L-bw-isimon
Processed on: 1-5-2017
PDF page: 86

their role in perpetuating violent conflict, using private militias (Hills 1997:40-41).

According to Ali and Mathews (1999:217), Liberia and Sudan officially legalised the existence of militias. In Sudan, militias were granted legal status to fight alongside the army under the Popular Defence Act of 1989 (Salih and Harir 1994:186-202). Militia groups have been very instrumental in perpetuating civil war and communal conflicts in Burundi, Sudan, Liberia, Rwanda, Somalia and Sierra Leone, to mention but a few (Hills 1997:39).

At an international level, conventionally, intra-state conflict was a phenomenon handled by a sovereign state by law. But this has been undermined by the huge level of decisive intervention in the affairs of independent states by the international community (Brownlie 1963). Their interventions have led to the infiltration of the state structures and institutions from below and above. This has resulted in suppression and erosion of state autonomy, which has serious implications, and exacerbated violent conflict in these states. According to Hironaka (2005:126-149) and Kaldor (1999:2-4), contemporary local conflicts cannot be understood without reference to international and regional intervention. The international presence is evident through international reporters, international organisations such as the United Nations, non-governmental organisations such as the Red Cross, continental organisations such as the African Union (AU) and regional organisations such as the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD) (Omeje 2008:81-85).

Diplomatic peace missions from the United Nations have been launched in war-torn countries such as Somalia (Adam 1999:169) and Sierra Leone (Gberie 2005) and regional organisations in Africa have intervened in civil wars in Liberia, Guinea, Sierra Leone, Sudan, Somalia and Uganda (Omeje 2008:81-85). During these interventions, peace process agreements, comprehensive and partial agreements, in which parties to the conflict agree to hold negotiations covering all issues or just a few issues surrounding their incompatibility, have been pursued (Harbom et al. 2006:622). These peace accords usually contain military, political, territorial, and judicial implementation provisions and their content determines the success or failure of the whole intervention (DeRouen et al. 2010:334).

509974-L-bw-isimon
Processed on: 1-5-2017

3.7 Conclusion

Though conflict scholars have tried to propose 'flexible' definitions to capture what a civil war and communal violence is, the researcher argues that there are some contextual limitations to their acclaimed flexibility. Though the quantitative aspects of these definitions are significant for mapping conflict intensity and the typology, they are of little use in revealing the dynamic nature of some of these intra-state conflict categories. This study hopes to shed some light on this matter.

The theories of the causes of and actors in violent conflicts discussed above offer insights on how the complex dynamics and interlinkages between these violent conflicts can be examined. These theories try to offer a rationale for the birth of these conflicts and their continuation. The theoretical strands highlighted above will be taken into consideration in the research data analysis in this study, to assess whether they are relevant in explaining the violent conflicts in north and north eastern Uganda. The following chapters will contextualise the violent conflicts in these regions.

509974-L-bw-isimon
Processed on: 1-5-2017
PDF page: 88

4 Civil War and Beyond in Northern Uganda

4.1 Introduction

This Chapter presents the historical background and field findings which highlight a conflict with deep historical connection to the political upheavals that engulfed Uganda since its independence. The Chapter covers the colonial era, the post-independence era, and the rise of the NRA government and the emergence of rebel factions that later all levelled the ground for the establishment of the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), a rebel group led by Joseph Kony which fought the Government of Uganda for over two decades. Contextualising the civil war is significant as it highlights issues that will be used to establish the interconnections with the communal violence in the north eastern region.

4.2 The Colonial era

Many participants could not explain their realities without relating to the history of the northern region, including that of the colonial era. According to field findings, the British colonial administrative policies are still to blame for the fragmentation of society in Uganda, and the political instability that later emerged across the country during the post-independence era. As a former LRA rebel commander stated:

> *"The war started a long time ago. If you want to get the real picture of the history of this Conflict, you will have to refer back to the colonial era. War started a long time ago"* (Anonymous Former LRA Commander, Bungatira, Gulu District, 25/01/2015).

To some of the participants, the tensions between northern and southern Uganda were initiated when they were divided into economic zones, and the colonial policies favoured the development of the southern region. People from the south and centre were selected to work in industries,

509974-L-bw-isimon
Processed on: 1-5-2017
PDF page: 89

involved in cash crop growing, and a majority of them were employed in the civil service or in other white collar jobs. The northern region, however, was treated as a labour reserve and those that were hailed from the region were employed mainly in the uniformed or security services (Mazrui 1975, Doom and Vlassenroot: 1999:7-8).

> "The Acholi were mainly soldiers, perhaps because they thought they were strong and like fighting, not fighting as such, but because of their physical appearances as strong men" (Mrs. Christine Langol, Former Gusco Reception Centre Administrator, 2/12/2014).

During the colonial era, the British massively recruited them for policing and army jobs. They were considered strong and meant for tough jobs, and according to some participants' claim that was the reason the majority of the soldiers recruited in the King's African Rifles to engage in World War II combat were from the northern and eastern parts of the country. This is reaffirmed by Omara Otunnu in his 1987 publications "Politics and the Military in Uganda in 1890-1985", when he notes that:

> "…the African sector of the Army was not very representative of the ethnic composition of the country as a whole. The largest contingent was recruited from the north, especially from the people of Acholi… By 1914, Acholi had become the main recruiting ground for the KAR (King's Africa Rifles), a pattern which was continued in the post-colonial period (Omara Otunnu, cited in Gersony 1997:6).

And when asked what the implication of this strategy was, a former LRA rebel commander said that it was the origin of conflict among the people of Uganda-

> *"By giving that attitude to the people, you know people begin feeling…oh we are strong. That is where the war started from. Most of the people recruited in the army were from the north and east"* (Anonymous Former LRA Commander, Bungatira, Gulu District, 25/01/2015).

This may imply that it created a mentality of superiority over other ethnic tribes in the country. One respondent was very proud in saying:

> *"Yes, most of the Acholi of those days were energetic, you would just see a lot of energy. They were tall and they had this rough kind of nature. That is why the Acholi are called 'Kodi pa lyeci', which means "seeds of elephants", "descendants of elephants". That is why our emblem or totem is an elephant, you see the Lango have rhinos, but for the Acholi it is the 'Lyeci', and that is why you always see that in the district council hall there is this big elephant. And then you go to places like*

509974-L-bw-isimon
Processed on: 1-5-2017

> *big hotels, like Bomah in the Acholi sub-region, and you will see elephants statues. That is our emblem, that is our tribe!"* (Solomon Okongo Oola, 8/12/2014, Gulu District).

As a proud son of a father who participated in the Second World War, Oola was keen to point out that, as a show of gratitude for their hard work in the World War II, the colonialists built Pece Stadium for the people of Acholi.

However, these policies had repercussions as they brought about economic discrepancy between the North and the South of the country, with the South becoming relatively more developed. This is because the Southerners later dominated the civil service and generated more elites than other ethnic groups, while the Acholi and other northern and eastern tribes dominated the army; this brought antagonistic sentiments between the South and the North, as the Baganda, who are Southerners, were used as colonial agents in the North and other parts of the country. This further widened the divide between the North and South, laying a foundation for tensions among the ethnic groups in Uganda (Pratt 1961, Mamdani 1984, Mazrui 1975, Omara-Otunnu 1987). Apart from the economic policies that fostered uneven development, the distribution of schools was disastrous as well to the development of the northern region:

> "As colonial education was dominated by missionaries, areas with more schools (and often better schools), leading to uneven access…of the 36,850 children in school in Uganda between 1909 and 1910, 26,890 were in Buganda, 7,395 in northern and western Uganda and 2,565 in the eastern part of the country" (The Monitor, 20 June 2012)

The article in The Monitor further noted that the figures for the northern region had to be combined with those from the west of the country because on their own they were too insignificant. In 1920, Buganda had 368 schools, the western region had 44, and the northern region (including Karamoja) had none.

4.3 The early post-Independence era

As noted above, these divisions came to be reflected in the country's politics, with politicised cleavages emerging among groups from the north, the north west (West Nile), the south and the south west. According to Mathew Kustenbauder, the "militarisation of politics" in Uganda was

509974-L-bw-isimon
Processed on: 1-5-2017

started in 1966 by a Luwo-speaking Langi prime minister from the North, Milton Obote, after he had ousted the first president, Kabaka Muteesa II, when power sharing arrangements had failed. This introduced a political philosophy where violence was central, as he points out, and where:

> "…the battle for control over public life in Uganda was increasingly waged with the understanding that the political kingdom suffers violence, and violent men take it by force" (Kustenbauder 2010:458).

Violence had come to be a prime tool in politics from at least the time of colonisation, and when the Buganda regional council for the central government ordered Milton Obote to leave Buganda soil after he had ousted Kabaka Mutesa II, this marked a turning point.Since he had taken over as head of state and commander-in-chief of the national army, Obote responded by dispatching military forces that killed a number of palace guards and civilians and burnt down the Kabaka's palace, forcing Kabaka Muteesa II into exile. After this, Obote enacted a new Constitution that dissolved the federal state, forcing all kingdoms in the country to come under central rule. From then onward, the post-colonial leaders of Uganda increasingly resorted to military coercion in the settlement of private and state disputes. A series of military coups and persecutions followed, in 1971, when Idi Amin Dada ousted Milton Obote, in 1979, when the UNLA ousted Idi Amin Dada, in 1985, when Milton Obote was ousted by Tito Okello Lutwa, and in 1986 when the NRA ousted Tito Okello Lutwa and replaced him by Yoweri Kaguta Museveni (Kustenbauder 2010:455-6, Byaruhanga 1998:186-187, Karugire 1980).

There were events the elderly community was not able to forget, such as the persecution of mainly Acholi and Langi soldiers and elites by Idi Amin when he took power in 1971. The Paramount Chief of Acholi claims that:

> *"… in Acholi especially, there was a targeted killing of the most prominent people of Acholi, whether it was someone employed in the government, someone doing their own business, or someone popular within the community – an opinion leader or anyone who was prominent was targeted"* (Rwot Onen David Acana II, Gulu Municipality, 09/01/2015).

He further goes on to say that, after the incident, Idi Amin went ahead to recruit a large number of new soldiers from the West Nile region, where he hails from, into the national army. Omara-Otunnu (1987) affirms this

509974-L-bw-isimon
Processed on: 1-5-2017

when he notes that the West Nilers replaced the ethnic Acholi, especially the Kakwa and the so-called Aringa people from the northern part of the Arua District, who were believed to be of Sudanese descent but had settled as migrants in Uganda.

Participants stated, however, that Idi Amin, in his pursuit, claimed the life of a very prominent religious leader, Bishop Luwum, who was the head of Church of Uganda. Bishop Luwum was accused of treason and aiding rebels in exile:

> *"Now there was some recruitment that those who went outside were doing internally here using the churches because there were some people who were taken from here to Madiple, then from Madiple they would just go as missionaries, as people of the church so that they could be transported outside. They had been carrying out that illegal recruitment just to come back and fight the Amin regime"* (Anonymous Former LRA Commander Bungatira, Gulu District, 25/01/2015).

In 1980, when Obote II came back to power, many Northerners who were persecuted by the Idi Amin regime rejoined the army. At the same time, there was widespread outrage over election malpractices. Some candidates who lost in the 1980 presidential elections to Dr. Milton Obote decided to fight against the government, and one of them, Yoweri Kaguta Museveni, launched a guerrilla war in the Luweero triangle.

According to a report by Caryle Murphy, "New Ugandan Crackdown said to Kill Thousands", on 5 August 1984, the UNLA had little support among the local communities in the Luweero triangle, and the NRA was paving a way ahead of them. In retaliation, the UNLA is said to have exerted pressure on the unarmed local communities who were mainly of ethnic Bantu origin, the 'Baganda'. This was done through mass murders, destruction of farms aimed at starving the communities, looting, execution of prisoners and NRA collaborators, and abduction and rape of civilians. The report stated that, by 1984, "between 100,000 and 200,000" people had been killed in the Luweero triangle. The U.S. Ambassador, Alan Davis, in his text "An Assertive Public Denunciation and the Human Rights Advocacy", is quoted to have lamented that:

> "...the UNLA conducted its operations with little regard for the rules of warfare. As a result, terrible human rights abuses occurred against pro-NRA communities in the Luwero Triangle. In January 1983, Obote launched "Operation Bonanza" in this area, during which

509974-L-bw-isimon
Processed on: 1-5-2017

> UNLA troops destroyed small towns, villages, and farms and killed or displaced hundreds of thousands of civilians...After the war ended in 1986, the International Committee of the Red Cross claimed that at least 300,000 people had died in the Luwero Triangle and that officials had failed to account for almost half to a third of the region's population" (Ofcansky 1996, cited in Gersony 1997: 6).

It is important to note that, according to several scholars, the public considered the UNLA forces as predominantly Acholi, which was, however, not the case because the army was comprised of many other ethnic groups from within Uganda as well. But in public opinion, the Acholi were responsible for the atrocities in the Luweero triangle (Otunnu 1987, Ofcansky 1996, Gersony 1997).

Robert Gersony notes that those who acknowledged responsibility always offer explanations and some allege that some of the atrocities were committed by NRA forces disguised as UNLA forces. He also highlights that, despite the one-sided view of blame, the UNLA was composed of many ethnic groups, and the powerful and influential officers in the security apparatus were largely from other ethnic groups, such as Chris Rwakasisi, and many prominent Lango officials were from Obote's ethnic group. He notes that;

> "Acholi forces in the army appear to have been generally subordinated to senior officers of President Obote's Lango tribe, a source of continual friction within the military" (Greyson 1997:9-10).

In the situation existing at that time, further tensions developed within the UNLA army. There were rumours that President Milton Obote wanted to do away with General Tito Okello Lutwa, an Acholi and replace him with a Langi. The Local Council chairperson II of Iriaga Parish, Ouma P'olum, claimed he was part of the meeting that was called in Acholi Inn in Gulu where a coup against Milton Obote was planned and agreed upon.

In July 1975, President Milton Obote was overthrown and President Tito Okello Lutwa took over. This complicated the relationship between the Langi and Acholi, and shattered the military alliance they had maintained between them for decades. When Tito Okello Lutwa took power, there was various armed faction fighting against the government of Milton Obote, which pushed him to call for peace talks. President Tito Okello was successful in convincing some rebel factions such as the UNRF (Uganda National Rescue Front), the FUNA (Former Uganda

509974-L-bw-isimon
Processed on: 1-5-2017
PDF page: 94

National Army), mainly comprised of ex-Idi Amin's soldiers, anti-Obote elements and the Federal Democratic Movement, comprised mainly of Baganda combatants, and the NRA from the Luweero region, into joining his government. Within that period, peace negotiations had been initiated by President Moi of Kenya. The NRA, however, was still at large within the Luweero Triangle. The peace negotiations culminated in an agreement in December 1985, holding the signatures of President Tito Okello, President Moi of Kenya and NRA leader Yoweri Museveni.

According to Robert Greyson (1997:12), the agreement comprised the installation of a "17-member military council", with 7 members from the UNLA and NRA and representations of other, smaller factions that had agreed to work with Tito Okello's government. This arrangement would see NRA leader Yoweri Museveni serve as Vice Chairman. He further notes that the army would have 44% soldiers from the UNLA (3,700 soldiers), 42% from the NRA (3,600 soldiers) and 14% from other factions (1,200 soldiers).

However, despite having agreed on the above arrangement, NRA leader Yoweri Museveni abrogated the power sharing agreement and overthrew the government of Tito Okello Lutwa after it had been in power for six months, in January 1986. This led to combat between the former UNLA soldiers and NRA forces, pushing them out of the capital city towards the north. (Nsubuga 1999, Otunnu 1996, Jackson 2002).

What is significant to note is that this loss of political and economic power by the Acholi is said to have had implications that led to the flow of events leading to resistance against the NRA government. The Acholi, though they were the back bone of the army, had, according to Gersony (1997:14), for decades endured subordination to the Lango senior officers in the army, throughout Obote's regimes. So, when the first Acholi President, Tito Okello Lutwa, was put in power, they were overjoyed as they:

> "…had finally begun to enjoy some power and privileges of more senior rank, political and civil service appointments – and the homes and vehicles which attain to them" (Gersony 1997:14).

This partially explains why the former LRA commander claims that his former boss Kony does not take peace talks with Museveni's Government seriously. In his own words:

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Processed on: 1-5-2017

> *"That is why you see Kony telling people that it is a 'peace joke', not peace talk, that people are doing in Uganda. Because he was blindfolding people through the peace talk and yet on the other hand he had a different plan" (*Anonymous Former LRA commander, 25/01/2015).

After realising what Museveni had done, the UNLA soldiers withdrew as the NRA captured the capital city, and thousands of Northerners, including the Acholi, fled back home, with their guns, fearing any act of vengeance that may be inflicted upon them by the new government. Jackson (2002:37) notes that the NRA was mainly composed of Southerners, due to its operations that were based in the Luweero Triangle, which possibly made the Acholi feel very uncertain about their situation after the takeover. Ouma P'olum claims he was in Kampala in that chaotic moment when the NRA captured the capital city, and said:

> *"… all of us ran, I was in Kampala. If you were found in Kampala and you were an Acholi: 'no survival'. So we took the direction of Jinja …we found there the blood of people who were butchered. A lot flowing on the road. So…all of us became military men" (*Ouma P'olum, LC 2 Iriaga Parish, 22/01/2015).

According to Robert Gersony, this "…was the largest single source of cash employment, the equivalent of a major industry", throughout the northern region of Uganda (Gersony 1997:15). An estimated 10,000 Northerners had lost their jobs almost overnight with the take-over of by NRM in 1986, as most of them fled their posts as soon as the NRA took control. And that is why a friend and visiting professional at the International Criminal Court, hailing from Lango, claims that the Acholi will never trust Museveni: "They always view Museveni as a betrayer because he did not live up to his gentleman's agreement" (Tom Ogwal, Executive Director SUTCO, Lira district – Interview in The Hague, 3 April 2016). An informant mirrors this:

> *"So we had to fight to make sure that we are not dominated by such a weakling kind of tribe. So basically that gave us the impetus to start fighting Museveni. So we felt our jobs were being taken. I talked about our descent, how far we have come…look at us from world war; our ancestors were fighting the world wars and the rest. Acholis were the guards! They had the guns! Now how do you come and want to take away our jobs? So the Acholi also fought to protect. They wanted their jobs as guards to remain with them" (*Solomon Okongo Oola, Abera, Aswa, Gulu District 08/December/2014).

509974-L-bw-isimon
Processed on: 1-5-2017

However, as noted above, even though the NRA forces were composed of numerous tribes, as a national army, it was viewed in tribal and ethnic terms by ex-UNLA soldiers, as Solomon recounts.

Some key informants claimed that what triggered the rise against the NRA in the northern region was a combination of fear and panic, mixed with feelings of regret on the part of ex-UNLA soldiers. This view is shared by various scholars who have written about the conflict (Jackson 2002, Gersony 1997:16, Behrend 1999). They attribute this to the history of ethnic violence and settling scores that perpetuated distrust, escalated conflict, and put the Acholi on the defensive. After the NRM ousted Tito Okello, the propaganda on the radio and the print media levied all the country's troubles on the Acholi. This propaganda may have served the interests of the ex-military leaders in panicking the public into joining them in exile. Besides, Gersony (1997:16) notes that the former Acholi UNLA soldiers may have feared the reoccurrence of what Idi Amin did to them in 1971 and may have also feared that the NRA soldiers might revenge the atrocities committed against them during the insurgency in the Luweero triangle. In relation to that, Heike Behrend notes that:

> "The bloodshed and violence of Uganda's post-independence decades made many Acholi fear that it was kill or be killed: if Museveni was not overthrown, they believed his soldiers would destroy the Acholi" (Behrend 1999:19).

This argument is also noted by Jackson (2002:37) when he suggests that out of fear of retaliation witnessed in the past by other ethnic groups, the UNLA soldiers fled home northwards. What is significant is that he suggests that the rebel factions that emerged in that period did so out of fear. The Acholi 'feared their own extinction'. These fears were confirmed when the local communities began being mistreated by the NRA forces, notably the 35th Battalion, that was posted to the region, and was comprised of Buganda soldiers from the FEDEMU faction that had formed an alliance with the NRA government after it had seized power. In relation to the above:

> "…the struggle initiated by the NRA in Luweero in the early 1980s has never been concluded. It continued in Luweero through 1985. In early 1986 it was fought in Kampala and has continued in Guluand Kitgum since that time" (Gersony 1997:17).

509974-L-bw-isimon
Processed on: 1-5-2017

Proud of their identity as fierce fighters and able professional soldiers, the ex-UNLA soldiers proceeded to wage armed struggle against the government of Uganda. The field findings reveal that many of the ex-UNLA soldiers felt terrible about having surrendered and withdrawn from the capital city prematurely. They expressed the view that if had they exerted a little more resistance, they could have overrun NRA forces. They assumed NRA soldiers were an ill-prepared and alien group of unprofessional military, who had humiliated the ex-UNLA, and taken control of their home areas. Because of this: "A profound sense of military humiliation pervaded the Acholi, especially among the professional soldiers" (Gersony 1997:14).

That is why some Acholi soldiers and leaders even believed that, with their forces combined, they could easily flush the NRA out of the northern region within 30 days. This indicates, however, that they certainly underestimated the military ability of the NRA, overestimating their own (Gersony 1997:16). As Mrs. Christine Langol aptly notes:

> *"…a Munyakore from western Uganda took over power, the Acholi over-rated their strength and under-rated the strength of the Banyankore. They thought they were stronger and these were weak and could not fight like them…so they thought they would fight them to the end and just crush them"* (Mrs. Christine Langol, Former Gusco Reception Centre Administrator, Gulu District 2/12/2014*)*

4.4 The rise of the NRA

In addition to the above, Gersony (1997:13) notes that, while the earlier phases of NRA occupation of Gulu and Kitgum were mostly peaceful, with NRA forces reported to be very respectful of civilians, and civilians surprised by the new army's peaceful nature, soon tensions arose. In particular, an identity conflict arose within the NRA forces themselves, when the NRA/FEDEMU 35th Battalion of the NRA, comprising mainly Baganda combatants, was integrated into the NRA units that had fought in the Luweero triangle. The Baganda had been part of FEDEMU (Federal Democratic Movement) and were now integrated with troops that had committed a lot of atrocities when they were dispatched to the Acholi region. This Battalion was seen as acting and looking suspicious according to residents of Namukokora from where Tito Okello hailed. This particular unit's conduct was seen as much more ill-mannered, and they were reported to be recklessly killing civilians and looting private property,

509974-L-bw-isimon
Processed on: 1-5-2017 PDF page: 98

among others things. Robert Gersony notes that, "Most people understood that FEDEMU was at that point an integral part of the NRA, but also appeared to recognize that it had a previous separate identity" (Gersony, 1997:22). Ruddy Doom and Koen Vlassenroot also noted that some actions resembling those of previous regimes put the ex-UNLA Acholi soldiers on the defensive:

> "…the undisciplined behaviour of parts of the NRA in both Gulu and Kitgum districts during the first months of the NRA takeover, served only to fuel this anxiety. When the NRA High Command issued a directive over Radio Uganda urging all former UNLA soldiers to report to Mbuya army headquarters within ten days, the memory of a similar order after Amin's coup, that had resulted in the massacre of many Acholi soldiers, convinced many UNLA (Doom and Vlassenroot, 1999:13).

Developments like these encouraged several civilians as well to join the rebel factions against the NRA forces that began launching attacks in Mid-August of 1986. Caroline Lamwaka notes that:

> "Some former UNLA soldiers were arrested and mistreated, and torture was alleged to be widespread. Killings were reported, although the number of those who died is not known. Some former soldiers were taken away for 'political re-education' and never seen again. Fears in Acholi land were further fuelled by the order on 10 May 1986 for all former soldiers to report to NRA military headquarters in Kampala. Few could forget a similar order during the Idi Amin era that led to the massacre of Acholi soldiers. Many believe that the NRM Government was determined to victimize the Acholi people and some began to mobilise to fight the Government. Many Acholis supported them" (Lamwaka 2002:28).

According to the participants, such events reminded them of what Idi Amin had done to them in the past, raising suspicion among the former soldiers and the populace.

> *Some of them withdrew to places like Karuma, Kamdini, along the Gulu-Kampala highway. And when Museveni moved and intercepted some of those groups from areas of Minakulu then the people had to withdraw and started operating as militias* **(**Reverend Canon Wilson Obura (Retired), Bungatira Sub-county, 23/01/2015).

509974-L-bw-isimon
Processed on: 1-5-2017

Since the NRA was said to be targeting families of former UNLA soldiers, those who had settled back in the villages took up their arms against the new government. Without proper co-ordination, they mobilised themselves in groups of 5 or 6, according to their location at the initial stages, and began defending themselves and their communities against the NRA soldiers. This is said to have marked the beginning of armed conflict between NRA and armed factions in northern Uganda as well as in other parts of Uganda. The Paramount Chief of Acholi noted:

> *"…that made the soldiers who had run and who had been defeated, and had settled in the villages [come out again]. You know they had gone with their guns, they had hidden them there and when this havoc started, and looting of people's property, like the things that were looted in the past started happening. Then this former UPDA organized themselves into fighting forces in 1986"* (Rwot Onen David Acana II, Gulu Municipality, 09/01/2015).

Some participants claimed that the havoc the NRA soldiers were causing in the communities in Acholi was an act of revenge, as they were torturing civilians or former soldiers to a point of them being paralysed or to death, killing all livestock, defecating in food stuff, raping both men and women, among other things. (FGD 3, 7 elderly men, Bungatira, Gulu district, 14/01/2015). Furthermore, to inquiries aimed at establishing why it was perceived in this way, a Former LRA commander's response was that immediately after the NRA soldiers arrived in Gulu they began persecuting everybody:

> *"Those who were sent to the North came and started doing (committing) atrocities. Immediately you see that it was revenge, because they were saying during the operation of UNLA in their area, the UNLA were killing people, raping people, they were a lot of atrocities. And that is what they came and started doing after defeating the UNLA. They started raping people …when they got information that one of the members of this particular family was a UNLA they would come and arrest all the family members. They tortured them. That brought to the mind of those ex-soldiers the thought that this was revenge and they went to the bush and started fighting immediately in 1986"* (Anonymous Former LRA commander, 25/01/2015).

509974-L-bw-isimon
Processed on: 1-5-2017

However, amidst the anxiety, the local communities and elders back home made it difficult for the former UNLA soldiers to settle in, as they mocked them over their loss and branded them as cowards. This was because the:

> "Generational conflict between Acholi elders and young men (soldiers) and the failure to incorporate ex-soldiers into civilian life created a situation of internal terror" (Kustenbauder 2010:457-458).

According to the elders, they believed the atrocities that had been committed made them unclean and the spirits of those communities would be dragged into their communities.

This brought about internal strife between the elders and the ex-soldiers, as some soldiers are said to have resisted undergoing important cleansing rituals (Van Acker 2004:339-340, Doom and Vlassenroot 1999:10-12, Branch 2007:155-158). Important rituals had to be conducted to cleanse the ex-UNLA soldiers of spirits of those they had killed to be able to be welcomed back in to society. However, Heike Behrend notes that with tensions in the region, soldiers turned into 'internal strangers' within Acholi society because of their reckless behaviour. Many soldiers refused to submit to purification rituals carried out by Acholi elders, and this left the '*cen'* unreconciled. He notes that:

> "They had become alien to those who had remained at home. During the civil war, they had plundered, tortured, and murdered, primarily in Luwerp, and had become of 'impure heart'. Because they had killed, they brought *cen,* the spirits of the killed, to Acholi, thus threatening the lives of those who had stayed at home" (1999:28).

This caused villagers to fear and shun such people who had not been cleansed ritually. Amidst internal strife within the Acholi community, many ex-soldiers felt they had little option but to take up arms, as many people in the community blamed them for the mistreatment by the NRA. Army abuses were interpreted as revenge for atrocities committed by the ex-UNLA soldiers who in turn were blamed for the calamity befalling Acholi society.

The former LRA commander noted that amidst all these tensions, those that were in exile began recruiting not only the ex-UNLA soldiers but civilians as well to join since the NRA had not yet taken full control of the countryside. They formed a faction known as the Uganda People's

509974-L-bw-isimon
Processed on: 1-5-2017 PDF page: 101

Defence Army/Movement (UPDA/M), with a political and military wing, and locally known as *'Cili',* which means 'go and tell'. They lobbied for help from the Sudanese government, which offered military support, and had the support of the local population as well (Behrend 1999:26, Branch 2007:156).

4.5 The rise of rebel factions vs the NRA in the Acholi sub-region

There were several phases of insurgency within the period between 1979 and 1985. Some conflict scholars claim that the defeated Uganda National Liberation Army (UNLA) re-organised itself into the Uganda People's Democratic Army (UPDA) rebel faction (Lamwaka 2002:28-33, Jackson 2002:37, Branch 2005:10-11). However, Jackson (2002:37) suggests that this UPDA was composed of several 'anti-NRA elements' such as "the defeated UNLA, some of Amin's West Nilers, and former supporters of Obote". Jackson notes that some of the attacks on NRA detachment points at the initial stages even enjoyed some popular support from local people.

It was around the same time that Alice Lakwena Auma emerged, claiming to be possessed by the Holy Spirit and in possession of spiritual powers in Kitgum. With several volunteers and absconding remnants of the UNLA that joined in willingly, she created the Holy Spirit Movement (HSM) (Doom and Vlassenroot 1999:16-19, Lamwaka 2002:28, Behrend 1999). The Paramount Chief of the Acholi, Acana David Onen II, claims that Alice must have identified the weaknesses among the UPDA commanders who regularly consulted her as a witchdoctor about the future of their struggles, and thus decided to take advantage of the situation to lead the people against the NRM government using her claims of possessing spiritual, supernatural powers.

Alice Lakwena was defeated in November 1987. Some of Alice Lakwena's followers fled to exile in Kenya with her, others decided to join the NRA, while others joined the Severino Lukoya's Lord's Army, Alice Lakwena's father. After Alice was defeated, Severino Lukoya took it upon himself to complete his daughter's mission. He absorbed the remaining HSM soldiers and took up command in January 1988. He established continuity of the daughter's activities with promises of healing and spreading the word of the spirits earning him over 2,000 followers

509974-L-bw-isimon
Processed on: 1-5-2017

(Behrend 1999:175-7). Behrend further notes that his supreme position within the community was well known evident with the limited number of patients in medical hospitals:

> "He purified the people by drawing crosses on their foreheads with a mixture of shea butter oil and ochre, and he declared that those who refused to receive this sign would not be spared at the last judgement day" (Behrend 1999: 175).

He further notes that:

> "Like Alice, Severino was also possessed by the holy spirit Lakwena, who claimed leadership of all the other spirits. But while Alice's spirit called himself God the spirit, Severino called himself God the father" (Lukermoi 1990:62 – Quoted in Behrend 1999:176).

According to Okumu –Alya (2009:5), Severino Lukoya referred to himself as "*Rubanga Won*", which means "God the Father" and he decided to take over the mantle of the struggle after his daughter's defeat. Okumu further notes that Lukoya, after joining forces with Kony, was captured by the NRA in 1989. The result of a face-to-face interview with Severino Lukoya by the researcher at his prayer venue in Gulu town tallies with what is noted above, in that he repeatedly referred to himself as "God".

On the 18th March 1988, when trying to capture Kitgum Town, Severino Lukoya and army were defeated by the NRA (Behrend 1999:176, Gersony 1997:29). Some participants highlighted tensions between the HSM and the UPDA, as some commanders declined to merge their forces with those of Alice Lakwena. The ones who declined did not believe in Alice Lakwena's war strategies or tactics. As a result, both parties declined to join hands. The HSM and the UPDA are said to have clashed on several occasions when they met. They would generally unite their forces to fight NRA soldiers but sometimes their mutual belligerence would persist even when faced with the NRA, as one informant pointed out:

> *"So some of them took their forces and surrendered them to Lakwena and they started together under the command of Alice Lakwena, but those who refused to*

509974-L-bw-isimon
Processed on: 1-5-2017 PDF page: 103

> *join Lakwena remained like that… whenever they would meet, when each of them was going for their operation because they called themselves enemy; that is where the clashes would come in. Alice was not supporting the UPDA and the UPDA also did not support the work of Alice Lakwena. So those commanders kept on clashing whenever they would meet. Even when they encountered the NRA they would clash…the operation continued like that"* (Anonymous Former LRA commander, 25/01/2015).

After a series of clashes with the NRA, some UPDA members surrendered to the government on the 17 March 1988 after signing the Peace Agreement in Gulu. Caroline Lamwaka noted that this called for "cessation of hostilities between NRM and the UPDM/A, integration of the UPDM/A into the NRA/NRM, and release of prisoners of war" (Lamwaka 2002:32, also noted by Doom and Vlassenroot 1999:15, Gersony 1997:26). She further notes that, however, not all of the UPDA forces surrendered; some of them stayed at large and continued with their operations.

Though some UPDA commanders, such as Col. Ochora Walter and Okello Okeno, signed a peace accord with the NRM government, not all of them surrendered. Some UPDA commanders, such as Vincent Otti and Odong Latek, stayed and later merged with Kony's army, due to the pressure the NRA soldiers were exacting on them (Timothy Kalyegira, The Monitor, 12/12/2012).

Jackson (2002:38) notes that, although Alice Lakwena was in exile, her warfare style remained significant to the development of the LRA. The field findings suggest that Kony was more into his healing and prayer missions which attracted a lot of people to him. This was pointed out by many elderly participants. Several participants strongly believed Kony had supernatural powers and was indeed led by a spirit. How he obtained that spirit was quite interesting, as one respondent claims that:

> *"It all started when Kony went to bathe in some well or spring "kulu". So he started hearing some sound like drums and voices coming from around the spring. …, some birds came forth in great numbers. …He has healing powers, so people would come to him, seeking for that healing power, and they would get healed. These are real stories. They would use oil and water to sprinkle on people and people would get healed instantly. And these people, instead of going away, they wanted to serve the gods and decided to join him..at a certain point they were supporting him because of*

509974-L-bw-isimon
Processed on: 1-5-2017
PDF page: 104

> *that healing power which they believed he inherited from his sister Alice Lakwena. …he is capable of sitting right next to you and you would not even know* (Margaret Rose Oyela, (aged 90+), 22/01/2015, Gulu District).

According to Paul Jackson (2002:41), in earlier phases, the nature of Kony's activities was mainly spiritual. Jackson notes: "Kony donned white robes and spoke in tongues for the initiation of recruits. This process involved the familiar shear butter oil, sprinkling with holy water and cleansing sorcery and witchcraft" (Jackson 2002:41).

Some scholars claim that Kony's aim for war against the NRA government was ambiguous (Jackson, 2002:41, Van Acker 2004:349). However, in a special report, The Monitor newspaper published a statement made in June 2006 by the Lord's Resistance Movement (LRM), the political wing of Joseph Kony's LRA, spelling out its reasons for taking up arms against the Museveni Government. This gave a background to the atrocities committed by the NRA in Acholi in 1986 as a reason for their struggle as noted below:

> "Many defeated UNLA soldiers were tricked and lured to hand over their guns and surrender to the NRA with a false promise of amnesty, while in fact, there were well-coordinated plans to arrest and kill all of them. When the pattern of killings and disappearances became clear, shock waves and fear spread among the soldiers, who had no alternative but to save their own skins by running away…. When the UPDA [Uganda People's Democratic Army] led by Lt Gen Bazillio Okello was finally destroyed, the NRA continued with atrocities, which they carried out with arrogance and a sense of revenge. The marauding NRA soldiers killed our fathers and mothers, raped our sisters in the open, and sodomised our brothers while we looked on… As if these were not enough, our homes were torched and razed, livestock and produce looted. This has been one of the most miserable periods in our history and many people were greatly terrified" (Timothy Kalyegira, The Monitor, 12/12/2012).

This could possibly explain why a considerable number of the returnees spoke with so much confidence against the Government of Uganda. To them they were fighting rebels as well. The NRA was considered a rebel faction that overthrew the government of Tito Okello.

509974-L-bw-isimon
Processed on: 1-5-2017

*"The government refers to us as rebels, we also refer to them as rebels" (*Former LRA CommanderBungatira, Gulu District, 25/01/2015). Similar sentiments and views were shared by some participants who were ex-rebels.

The former LRA commander also noted that due to the great resemblance of Kony's work to Alice Lakwena's previous work he was attacked by the NRA soldiers while he and his people were praying, forcing Kony to abandon his original prayer base in Lacekocot and move to Cwero. Since he had been joined by remnants of the HSM and the UPDA who had some guns with them, they were forced to fight back marking the beginning of warfare between Joseph Kony and his followers and the NRM government. The former LRA commander claims that at this point "Kony said the spirit had given him power to start fighting the government" (Anonymous Former LRA commander, 25/01/2015).

After this statement, he started his faction as the Holy Spirit Movement IHSM), while others say it was founded as the Uganda Christian Democratic Army (UCDA), and later retitled the Lord's Resistance Army as well. After the attack, he was forced to return to Lacekocot, and later to the Gulu District. In 1988, Kony began launching attacks on army detachments to obtain guns and ammunitions. He also began abducting people from villages (Okumu-Alya 2009, Jackson 2002). According to the former LRA commander, this was solely because government soldiers were torturing families whose relatives had voluntarily joined the faction:

> *"What they were saying was that of those who had been joining them voluntarily the family members were being arrested by the government and tortured seriously to go and bring back their sons. So they put in place for that matter, a new mechanism of enlisting, meaning that if they wanted to recruit they would do it forcefully, so that those who remained at home would not be held accountable for the situation. This would also sway the government into abolishing the torture meted on them. They abducted so many people, they started recruiting them and they started attacking the government forces, not the civilians. They went and attacked these NRA where they gather and took some guns*" (Anonymous Former LRA Commander, 25/01/2015).

During these earlier phases, the LRA is said to still have had the support of the local populace, and recruitment was the only reason for any abduction. This was even more due to the brutality of the government that

509974-L-bw-isimon
Processed on: 1-5-2017
PDF page: 106

involved torturing the local population into cooperating with them (Jackson 2002:41).

Some Acholi participants were of the view that, within that same period, the state masterminded the impoverishment of the Acholi people, using the Karamojong indirectly to raid their cattle. They believe, even to this day, that this was done with the help of senior government officials. Thus, Solomon is again furious as he notes in his own words that:

> *"Museveni never liked the Acholi. If you read Museveni's book 'Sowing the Mustard Seed'. …and how he narrates how the Acholi lost their cattle, you would see clearly that Museveni purposely wanted it, because our cattle were taken within a duration of about six months. Six months and the region was swept! How do you explain that? That is crazy! Museveni says that he was too busy trying to fight these other rebels groups. And before he could realise our cattle were gone and he could not protect them! That is a total lie. How do you not see Karamojong moving with cattle when you are able to know where Kony or Alice Lakwena is? The government used the Karamojong. They know what they did. But it was the government of Museveni and the Karamojong. And of course they must have connived… Yes! Museveni wanted the Acholi to be punished, to be incapacitated because he knew that if the Acholi still had wealth and the rest, it would always be hard to deal with them. Get them poor, get them desperate, then he could stay long in power. But if they are not poor, they are not desperate, they will fight you and you go, you cannot stay for long, (banging the table)"* (Solomon Okongo Oola, Abera, Acwa, Gulu District, 08/December/2014).

Much academic research notes that the Karamojong were allowed to own guns by the incumbent, new government and were indeed, as Solomon claims, offered more guns by the NRM government. After 1986, these extra guns were ostensibly meant to protect themselves from cross border raids by hostile ethnic groups (such as the Turkana and Pokot) from Kenya (Gersony 1997:15: 27, Doom and Vlassenroot 1999:12). As Solomon also claims, the Acholi did have a lot of livestock and much of their wealth and savings had been invested in cattle and other livestock. They were therefore vulnerable to cattle rustling. Between 1979 and 1985, the Karamojong could not so easily access livestock in Acholiland, as the Police Tracking Force was still in place to monitor the border between the Kitgum and Karamoja districts.

Robert Gersony notes that this Force was removed in 1986. Between 1979 and 1986, after the Barracks had been abandoned and the Karamojong had got guns, there was some cattle rustling by the

509974-L-bw-isimon
Processed on: 1-5-2017 PDF page: 107

Karamojong, but once the NRA took power in 1986, gun ownership in Karamoja was sanctioned, and the Acholi – as Solomon reports – soon had little to no livestock left and found out that farming was their last resort (Gersony 1997:15, Doom and Vlassenroot 1999:12).

In the interview, Solomon referred me to a book, *Fate of the Banished,* by Ugandan author Julius Ocwinyo. In this book, the author claims that government officials were killing civilians after 1986, and the book also recounts how cattle in the region were stolen and ferried using TATA Lorries. This kind of account was accepted by most Acholi informants. One informant suggested that Karamojong cattle rustling usually involved only a few cattle, not the whole herd as had happened in 1987-90. The interviewee believes state agents and government soldiers, must have been involved, directly or indirectly, in the rounding up and disappearance of Acholi livestock, and not the Karamojong on their own:

> *"The Karamojong could not have done this! Karamojong have always been with us in the region, they are in the north eastern part. This people had been living in the same region for long. Not even at any point have we found it recorded that the Karamojong were capable of taking…even a quarter of the cattle in Acholi [of the]…livestock that we had. This could be like a miracle which could not happen without proper backing by a force. Because Karamojong had guns but the Acholi were in power and had guns as well. So this was a different case that we witnessed Museveni actually backing them up and using them to take as they were taking their part. But maybe also who knows where those cattle ended up"* (Onen Nelson, Kitgum District, 18/January/2015).

4.6 The brutal campaign against the Acholi and the move towards peace talks

In 1991, the NRM government launched "Operation North", under the leadership of the – then - State Minister for Defence and NRA chief military strategist, Gen. Tinyefuza, to eliminate the LRA Operation North was unsuccessful. However, according to the participants, the initiative by the Minister for the North, Betty Bigombe, and other local and government officials, to create 'arrow groups' or local defence forces to protect the communities, greatly upset Kony. This campaign was designed to deny the LRA support in the North and to arm the civilian population

509974-L-bw-isimon
Processed on: 1-5-2017

with bows and arrows, known then as the Arrow Group. According to Adam Branch, Betty Bigombe was the brainchild of this arrow group. She:

> "…spearheaded the most significant aspect of Operation North which involved the formation of new expanded system of militia known as "Arrow Boys" to assist the NRA in fighting the rebels…Thousands of men, armed with arrows, spears, machetes, and sticks, were mobilized against the rebels with the support of the RCs. The Arrow groups reaching much further than the LDUs (Local Defence Units) ever had, were seen by the rebels as an intensified grass roots paramilitary extension of the NRM government" (Branch 2007:178).

The local population decided to take up this initiative against Kony and went armed with pangas, knives, axes, bow and arrows. This angered and upset Kony as he felt he had lost the support of the local population. He believed that the local people were now collaborating with the government, and included government spies. In retaliation, he sent out his forces to set villages ablaze, amputate limbs and kill anyone found with a bow and arrow, machete or axe. His forces also started to abduct civilians (OCHA/IRIN 2004:10, Finnstrom 2008:90, Doom and Vlassenroot 1999:26, Gersony 1997:38-44)

Still the operation failed (Dagne 2011, Barbara Among 11/08/2008, The New Vision), because, according to Sverker Finnstrom, after they were mobilised, the NRA forces withdrew leaving the Acholi population unprotected as the LRA intensified their attacks, as a form of collective punishment. The LRA switched from having battlefield confrontations with the NRA forces to abducting civilians and mutilating them by cutting off their ears, lips, mouth, nose, hands, among other body parts (2008:90-91).

A significant number of former rebel participants denied any claims of deliberately killing innocent civilians. A former LRA commander was bitter when he narrated how a boy who escaped from the rebels straight back to his parents was instead hacked to death by his own parents, highlighting why the LRA levied atrocities on its own people.

> *"…some people who had instructed the civilian to hold spear, arrow, and knife simply because they were told that the rebels that are moving around with empty guns. So they were told that whenever they see a rebel, they should kill him and*

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Processed on: 1-5-2017

> *bring the gun or bring the report. So Civilians involved themselves in fighting the rebels"* (Anonymous Former LRA commander, 25/01/2015).

Some of the former rebels claimed their search for more manpower and for food left them with no option but to attack IDP camps and homes, not to kill but to acquire food and get new recruits. Starvation would force them to attack camps and the problem was that they found it hard to distinguish a soldier from a civilian, hence the mistaken killings. According to them, the government was using civilians as human shields by putting army detachments units in the middle or centre of an IDP camp. To reach the army unit the soldiers had to first encounter frightened civilians whose reactions and alerting response would give the rebels no option but to kill them since their response would automatically alert the government soldiers in the vicinity:

> *"To get food, there was a camp and before food there are soldiers. What could we do when there was a soldier but we wanted food? What could we do, but we needed the food! It was difficult. Before you fought the soldiers, there were very many civilians fighting together with the soldiers. Even running, the civilians ran together with the soldiers. Now how could you tell the difference? What could we do? The gun does not know the difference between a soldier and a civilian. It does not know. The rebels needed food only"* (Former LRA fighter (anonymous), 24/01/2015).

He strongly emphasized that civilians were victims of the circumstances, caught in the crossfire. With the proverb "When two elephants fight, it's the grass that suffers" he illustrated his point. No reckless killings were committed even at their bases. In fact, he attributed some of the killings to the government soldiers, who would use them as a strategy to make the LRA unpopular. Since some of the civilians were in camps, those that went out into their villages to search for food would also be caught and detained by soldiers or even killed under suspicion of being a spy. In other instances, when trying to follow-up on an abductee who had escaped, they entered ambushes that would have them killed in large numbers, out of vengeance. They would trace where you were abducted from, and retaliate by killing all your family members and neighbours. Killings were used only as examples to teach others not to do what their fellow people had done, such as acting as a government spy or escaping captivity. Those who defected and were recaptured were caned

509974-L-bw-isimon
Processed on: 1-5-2017
PDF page: 110

200 strokes, for instance, so that they could not sit on their buttocks for a couple of days or even weeks.

According to some arguments, this brutality had political aims and it provided Kony with the opportunity to continue as a significant power or image in this armed conflict. Doom and Vlassenroot note that Kony's activities "…seem to be based on blind terror. They appear, at first glance, counterproductive and unrelated to long-term political aims (Doom and Vlassenroot 1999:390), but were very significant, and had political aims. A report by Amnesty International notes considers several factors to explain this violence:

> "LRA leaders appear to regard violence as a way of purging society of impurity; those who die, whether civilians, Government troops or LRA child soldiers, are those who are believed to have broken spiritual or religious commands" (Amnesty International report, 17 September 1997).

The report further elaborates on why the LRA had institutionalised violence:

> "The LRA has institutionalized physical and psychological violence, including killings, rape and other forms of torture. The effect on civilians is to breed fear and force acquiescence; the consequence of being found to have informed the authorities about LRA activity is simple and brutal. However, the violence is not just directed "outwards" at the civilians' population or captured UPDF soldiers. It is also used in a calculated and deliberate way to enforce discipline within the LRA itself. The abuses described below are a fundamental method of organization aimed at the destruction of individual will and morality. It begins with forceful abduction to be a soldier or porter" (Amnesty International report, 17 September 1997).

In the same light, Kamper Olsen argues that the LRA's violence against the people regarded as their own has several purposes, as this violence served:

> "…as a form of threat to the population designed to scare the civilian populace away from working against LRA interests…This population threat is exercised both against individuals and against whole

509974-L-bw-isimon
Processed on: 1-5-2017

communities as a form of "collective punishment". As such, the violence of the LRA serves specific purposes in the group's attempt to avoid defeat in a highly asymmetrical war" (Olsen 2007:01).

In line with the above, some participants argued that Kony turned against his own people because they were betraying him, and had withdrawn their support, which made him very angry. So, by brutalising them, he would be effectively punishing them.

> *"Sometimes when something is done and you are blamed for it, there is a feeling that... I could say, the LRA felt they were being betrayed by their own people. Because we agreed on this and now we realize that when we move around, government soldiers are following us promptly, which could probably mean that someone is tipping them off"* (Obwona Byron, a teacher, Bungatira, Gulu District, 02/11/ 2014).

According to Doom and Vlassenroot (1999:26-28), despite the LRA having no clear and sustained articulation of political demands, the use of violence against civilians indirectly had a "political rationale", directed ultimately at self-preservation. This was made possible through terrible abduction tactics that forced the abductees to kill, or witness the killing of, friends and family members, identifying them with murder and preventing them from leaving the LRA. The threat of violence was also used by the LRA to expand its ranks from within, by strategically abducting and indoctrinating young people, and training them to be part of a whole new society.

> *"They had that thought that they would win, and many of the ladies I must say those who were given to Kony, did not see or find any fault in Kony and whenever we were talking to them they would refer to Kony as the "the boss", the boss is innocent, the boss had nothing to do (in an imitating tone)…it was "Weri" referring to Yoweri, the president. It is "Weri" to blame. So they were indoctrinated while in captivity, first of all to hate the president and the government, as much as possible. Second] they were prepared to fight to the bitter end. Because they used to say, the boss used to tell us that "our bodies are like leaves of trees, once they fall down they get dry, so why should you worry? And then [thirdly] they believed Kony had some magic. And they would cite examples that Kony would talk to them that "tonight, some foreigners are coming to attack us, so we had better move". So they would move and those that would stay behind would confront government soldiers"* (Mrs.

509974-L-bw-isimon
Processed on: 1-5-2017
PDF page: 112

Christine Langol, Former Gusco Reception Centre Administrator, Gulu District, 02/12/2014).

Furthermore, the threat of violence was used to control the majority of the population in Acholiland where over two million civilians were living in the so-called "protective villages" or IDP camps. Importantly, the result was not only fear of the LRA, but also widespread criticism of the government's inability to provide security for its citizens (Branch 2007:40). There were claims that the state disguised itself as the LRA and committed various atrocities, and laid blame on the LRA so as to win over the Acholi people since they had lost trust in the NRA government:

> *"Being a young government at that time, the government wanted to win people over, and of course killing people cannot win people over. But at the end of the day, they used propaganda. They would kill and say your brothers have done it. Your brothers are killing you. That is what is being said. People strongly believe it happened…staged as a form of propaganda, why not our men dress in their uniforms and kill them. After all, they are all Acholi. Then tomorrow they speak the same language, so it is very easy to play a trick....some foul play on them. They believe that that happened. And so people started saying...oh...our own brothers...why our own brothers...this is different from what we agreed on. This is not what we thought would happen. We thought you would help us, but if you have turned against us. Then I think this has to stop. So people started saying, we are not going to support this, this needs to stop. This is madness. That is the way, yes, the government tried to win over the Acholi through foul play"* (Obwona Byron, a teacher, Bungatira Sub-county, Gulu District, 02/ 11/ 2014)

Many claim the state was also involved in committing atrocities, throughout much of the course of the armed conflict. Others emphasised that both were involved in committing atrocities against the civilian population:

> *"If Kony comes, it is the same thing. If UPDF comes it is the same thing. If Kony comes you have to hide. If UPDF comes you have to hide. Because if Kony passes here and the UPDF asks "Did they pass here? If you said yes, they would come back and kill people in the whole area. The UPDF soldiers also did exactly the same things. If they came to a place Kony has attacked, they also do the same thing whether to rape or steal. It is the same thing"* (Ajok Alice, Naguru Suburb Kampala, 30/01/2015).

509974-L-bw-isimon
Processed on: 1-5-2017
PDF page: 113

According to Pham et al. (2007:4), the Berkeley-Tulane Initiative on Vulnerable Populations, compiling information on formerly abducted persons, noted that the numbers of people abducted usually shot up during and after massive campaigns against the rebels. According to triangulated data from UNICEF, Community Canvassing Database and Reception Center Databases, about 24,000 to 38,000 children and 28,000 to 37,000 adults (estimations as of April 2006) had been abducted by the LRA, as clearly illustrated in the figure below.

These figures do not account for the whereabouts of those still in captivity; their number is estimated to be close to 1,000-3,000. The figures also exclude those who died attempting to escape and those who returned in their thousands but never reported at reception centers for registration (Pham et al. 2007:22). The Berkeley-Tulane Initiative based their conclusions on database information from eight reception centers in northern Uganda which collaborated with the database project, excluding those who declined. A report by Amnesty International recounts numerous incidents in schools:

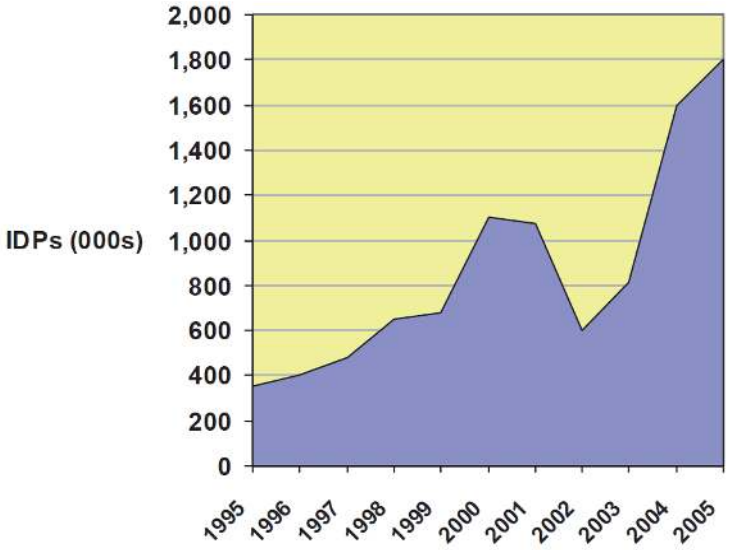
> "Between 1993 and July 1996, 70 teachers were killed by the LRA in Kitgum District. In Gulu District, in July and August 1996, 11 teachers and over 100 children were killed, 250 primary school children abducted and 59 primary schools burnt down, leading to the closure of 136 out of 180 primary schools. On 25 July 1996, 23 girls were abducted from St Mary's College and on 21 August 39 boys from Sir Samuel Baker School, two secondary schools in Gulu. On 10 October 1996, in an incident that has since galvanized public awareness of child abduction, 139 girls were abducted from St Mary's College, at Aboke in Apac District" (Amnesty International Report, 17 September 1997:07).

The continuous violence led to an unprecedented rise in the numbers of IDPs within Acholi land, with hundreds of thousands of people moving to the camps. IDP research in northern Uganda revealed that there were 202 IDP camps in northern Uganda, with actual figures estimated to be close to 2 million IDPs, which represented over 90% of the Acholi population and about 8% of the national population, according to CSOPNU (2005:7:11). This made northern Uganda, according to the Global IDP Project (2005), the world's fourth largest IDP calamity after Sudan, the DRC and Colombia. Chris Dolan argues that this counter insurgency strategy was "…a form of comprehensive retribution for atrocities the Acholi

509974-L-bw-isimon
Processed on: 1-5-2017
PDF page: 114

were alleged to have carried out in the early 1980s, particularly in Luwero triangle" (2009:109).

Figure 4:1: Internally Displaced Persons in Northern Uganda



Source: CSOPNU (2005:11)

Of the 202 IDPs, over 75% were located in the Kitgum, Pader and Gulu districts of Acholi and others were located in other districts in Teso and Lango in the northeastern part of Uganda, which were also later affected by LRA incursions (Pham et al. 2007:14, Boas and Hartley 2005:12-16).

Much earlier, in 1993, Betty Bigombe made contact with the LRA, which had expressed interest in negotiating with the government of Uganda. On 25 November 1993, at Pagik in Palaro sub-county, Aswa County, Gulu, the two sides held their first meeting, attended by members of the LRA's high command, the LRA director of religious affairs, Jenaro Bongomin, Jackson Achama, Kony's personal secretary and LRA commanders, Yardin Tolbert Nyeko and Cirilo Jurukadri Odego.

509974-L-bw-isimon
Processed on: 1-5-2017
PDF page: 115

> "In this first meeting the LRA declared that it was ready to return home and did not want to be referred to as rebels but as people. They demanded that a cessation of hostilities be declared to allow it gather its troops in Kenya and Europe. They also demanded that the Government treat their sick under joint supervision. Bigombe in-turn promised them that the existing general amnesty and presidential pardon would cover them. Such was the confidence built by the initial meeting that the LRA later sent their representatives to the Gulu army barracks, where Bigombe lived, to discuss the steps forward. At the second meeting, a month later, Kony explained his reasons for fighting. In a four-hour speech, he held the Acholi community largely responsible for the war that had backfired with horrendous results that everyone now blamed on him.Two months later on February 2, 1994, a larger meeting took place at Tegot-Atto, Gulu. Senior LRA commanders and NRA's Col Wasswa and Lt Col Tollit attended. A ceasefire deal was signed, but soon, the rebels broke away from the negotiations, claiming that theNRA was trying to trick them" (Barbara Among, 11/08/2008, The New Vision).

There were even reports, during this period, of LRA troops mingling with government soldiers (Jackson 2002:41, Doom and Vlassenroot 1999:24, Branch 2007:180). However, Kony withdrew from the peace talks in 1994. Some scholars attribute it to the 7-day ultimatum issued by President Museveni to the rebels, to capitulate or face the danger of being wiped out. President Museveni made some utterances that angered Kony. He called the war "a senseless war" and gave Kony a 7-day ultimatum to surrender or risk being dealt with. Kony retaliated by giving the government 3 days to come and attack him. This and a number of other threats were announced by the President and senior military army officials, in vain (Doom and Vlassenroot 1999: 24, Gersony 1997 34-35, Branch 2007:181).

Apart from these threats in public, some inner issues greatly upset and escalated tensions within the LRA. According to the former LRA commander, Betty Bigombe secretly convinced Otti Lagony, who was third in command, and flew him to the state house without Kony's knowledge (he later learnt about it). During the peace talks, LRA leader Kony had sent an envoy of representatives to lobby for support from the government of Sudan. They were able to establish some contacts and granted conditions which they had to fulfil to be able to acquire a base in

509974-L-bw-isimon
Processed on: 1-5-2017 PDF page: 116

Sudan. One of the conditions was that they should fight the SPLA rebel faction and dislodge them from certain locations, to take over the base. So, when the crossfire between government soldiers continued, Kony and his forces shifted and established their base in southern Sudan in 1994.

4.7 The LRA in Sudan

According to several scholars, serious allegations of aiding rebel factions were levied and revealed against the government of Sudan and Uganda. Uganda was accused of aiding the SPLA rebel factions against the Sudanese government and, vice versa, the Sudanese government was accused of aiding the LRA rebels against the Ugandan government (Branch 2007:182, Dolan 2005:77-89, Greyson 1997:68, Dunn 2000:53). Furthermore, according to The New Vision newspaper "*If you support my enemy, I will support your enemy"* (President Museveni has never supported the SPLA), by an anonymous writer from the East African Advisory Board, 16/06/2010, The New Vision), Sudan offered to help the LRA in retaliation for Uganda's support for the SPLA rebel faction in southern Sudan. The war resumed with renewed intensity, with hollow mistrust between the parties and a new dimension to it: a regional one. A report by Amnesty International noted that:

> "In 1994 arms were reported to be channelled through the SPLA-United, an SPLA breakaway faction led in Eastern Equatoria by William Nyuon Bany. However, by August 1994 Sudan army regular soldiers were directly involved. Children abducted in 1996 and 1997 report seeing Sudanese soldiers off-loading arms and ammunition from army vehicles at the LRA base camp in Aru. The weapons included AK47 and G3 assault rifles, anti-tank weaponry (including B10 recoilless guns), 81mm and 82mm mortars and landmines, which were not a common feature of the war until the Sudan Government began to support the LRA" (Amnesty International report, 17 September 1997: 8-9).

This simplified attacks on civilians in protected villages as the rebels would retreat to their bases in Sudan. This frustrated national army efforts to contain the armed conflict. With support from the Sudan government, the LRA continued its ambushes and surprise attacks on villages and town centres. In the Atiak massacre of 20 April 1995, over 200 residents were killed and hundreds abducted. On 12 and 13 July 1996, an LRA unit

509974-L-bw-isimon
Processed on: 1-5-2017

attacked Sudanese refugees' camps at Agago and Achol-Pii in the Kitgum District, killing more than 115 refugees. Seventy-eight Ugandan villagers were killed in Kilak County on 28 and 29 July 1996. In January 1997, during the Lokung and Palabek massacre between 7 and 12 January 1997, with no government troops within the vicinity, many villages in Lamwo were combed through by the LRA. An estimated total of 412 children, elderly, men and women were hacked and clubbed to death (Gersony 1997:38-42). Because of the endless attacks, the UPDF requested all civilians to vacate their homes and live in central camps as a protective measure, and even went ahead to use aggression on those that declined. In 2002, due to the increasing levels of violence, the UPDF gave an ultimatum of 48 hours to civilians to vacate their homes and move to camps or risk being labelled as rebels or collaborators of the LRA (Gersony 1997:48-50, Dolan 2005:77-85, Branch 2007:200, Jackson 2002:43).

One of the key informants during the field exercise claimed that even before the peace talks, Kony had been trying to establish contact with the Sudan government. According to him, that happened in 1993, when the Arabs in Khartoum got a chance to fight SPLA leader, Garang, towards the border with Uganda. Those alongside him, like Riek Machar and Lam Akol, surrendered to the Sudan government. They were put as militias on the side of the Sudan government, to fight the mainstream SPLA. This breakaway faction was referred to as 'SPLA Uunited. It was with this breakaway faction that Kony was able to establish contact with the Sudan Government through Lit. Col. Paul Omoya an Acholi of Sudanese origin, under the command of Martin Kenyi. Their first contact was through Riek Machar, through whom they were able to acquire audience with the Sudanese Government. In Machar's words:

> *"Now Kony sent those 3 commanders to Sudan so that they could collaborate and get grounds to continue his operation.Those ones went and penetrated the SPLA United and the SPLA United took them to the Khartoum Government… So the Khartoum Government agreed to give support, they agreed to work with Kony… the SPLA United. And they were the ones feeding them and they were the ones giving them arms*" (Anonymous Former LRA Commander, 25/01/2015).

509974-L-bw-isimon
Processed on: 1-5-2017

> *"When I was in Sudan, on the 15th of every month Kony would get supplies from the Sudan government. Sometimes they would bring oil in drums; they would even bring flour, uniforms and guns"* **(**Okello Charles, ex-LRA, Awach, Gulu District 26/01/2015).

This event triggered fighting between the UPDF andSPLA against the LRA and the Government of Khartoum. In The New Vision of 10/17/2005, in an article entitled '*Uganda, SPLA Fight Kony',* Frank Mugabi noted that the Ugandan national army (UPDF) and the Sudanese People's Liberation Army (SPLA) had launched a combined operation against the LRA rebel group.

However, after a series of clashes and accusations in 2000, a peace agreement was signed between the Ugandan and Sudanese government. They signed the 'Protocol for Operation Iron Fist', meant at levelling out LRA activity. This cross-border cooperation crippled LRA'S military capacity and led to the loss of a base for the LRA rebels, as the peace deal granted the Ugandan government permission to pursue the LRA in Sudan. And in 2002, a joint operation entitled 'Operation Iron Fist' between Uganda and Sudan was launched to expel the LRA out of Sudan (IRIN, UPDF clashes with LRA inside Sudan, 04/06/2002*).*

The operation was termed as atrocious, as many abducted civilians were killed, including soldiers at the LRA bases in Sudan. However, neither Kony nor his senior commanders were captured. The operation led to unprecedented attacks and abductions, as well as intensified violence and insecurity in the region, resulting in the displacement of thousands of people who sought refuge in Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) camps.Consequently, the LRA retaliated by committing horrendous atrocities on civilians in both Sudan and Uganda (Dolan 2005:89, Atkinson 2009:8, Okumu-Alya 2009:6-7). However, the defeated groups were usually quick to retaliate, so as to make theirs enemies victory symbolic and short-lived (Tainter, 2007:77). In 2003, the LRA incursions in the neighbouring districts of Teso and Lango began again, as they prepared to proceed and reposition themselves in the Garamba forest in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

509974-L-bw-isimon
Processed on: 1-5-2017

4.8 LRA Incursions back into Teso and Lango

According to Lomo and Hovil (2004:51-59), in June 2003, the LRA were disorganised in Sudan, but they launched well-coordinated, simultaneous attacks in eastern Uganda, in the districts of Lira, Apac and Katakwi, on what has been referred to as "their September 11" by the Itesots. Other areas, such as Adjumani, were also attacked, and the assaults intensified further, especially in Kaberamaido and Katakwi in the Teso region, as well as the Soroti districts, leading to the abduction of hundreds of children, especially school children (Ebong Patrick, The Monitor, 25 June 2003, "*Uganda: Rebels abduct 100 lwala girls"*. Some participants had various reasons to explain why the LRA decided to cross over to Teso and Lango:

> *"If it is just the Acholi fighting and the whole group is predominantly Acholi, then it becomes a very simple thing and other people will of course say the Acholi are killing themselves. I think they got other ethnic groups involved because they felt they would actually make it a wider concern, a national concern. If Lango and Iteso have joined, then it is not just the Acholi so it becomes a bigger concern for the government. So I feel that…raises dust and it is not referred to as only Acholi because they are more than Acholi only. But I also think they needed more recruits, so they felt the Acholi alone may not be enough, let us get more people"* (Obwona Byron, a teacher, Bungatira sub-county, Gulu District, 02/11/ 2014).

The civilians were aware of the location of the LRA rebels but could not do much, and despite the fact that the UPDF was informed by them about the presence and location of the rebels, nothing was done to protect them when attacks were launched eventually. This situation led to the initiation of para-military factions in Teso and Lango. In Teso, led by Musa Ecweru, more than 2,000 veterans of the defunct rebel faction UPA (Uganda People's Army) formed a local militia known as the 'Arrow Boys' and in Lango the 'Amuka (or Rhino) Boys' (Lomo and Hovil 2004:50-57 Atkinson 2009:7).

Among the paramilitary groups who volunteered, the Arrow Boys were much more effective in resisting the LRA than the Rhino Boys. This was due to inadequate military equipment of the Rhino boys. However, rather than operate as independent militias, the Arrow boys were deployed alongside the UPDF to fight as "zonal forces", to protect civilians in rural areas (Lomo and Hovil 2004: 54-56).

509974-L-bw-isimon
Processed on: 1-5-2017

After Operation Iron Fist, the LRA repositioned themselves in the Garamba forest in the DRC, which gave the conflict another international dimension, as it had shifted from being situated in Uganda and Sudan to being a regional conflict covering the DRC and the Central African Republic too. This setting led to the Juba Peace talks in 2006, which went on for two years, hosted by the Government of South Sudan. Though a compromise was reached for a possible peace accord, the LRA leader thrice declined to appear for the official signing of the accord. When Joseph Kony declined to turn up, on the 14 December 2008, the UPDF, SPLA and DRC army forces merged in an operation labelled 'Operation Lightning Thunder', apparently meant to kill or capture him and force him to sign the peace agreements. However, this operation also failed to achieve its objectives (Atkinson 2009:6-13, Okumu-Alya 2009:15-24). The LRA and their leader Joseph Kony are still out there, somewhere.

4.9 Conclusion

As described above, the conflict has a series of events that are linked to the historical background, throughout the post–independence era and the political upheavals of the country. This created conditions that helped shape the course of events that unfolded in the post-independence era, leading up to the civil war in northern Uganda. The armed conflict, as shown above, evolves, taking on local, national, regional as well an international dimensions, and bringing in new issues and new actors throughout its course. The next Chapter (Chapter 5) contextualises the communal violence in the north eastern part of Uganda. This will later be followed up by Chapters assessing both conflicts to critique their categorisation and also to establish any inter-linkages between them.

509974-L-bw-isimon
Processed on: 1-5-2017

5 Communal Violence and Beyond in Karamoja

5.1 Introduction

This chapter contextualises the communal violence in the north eastern region of Uganda, popularly known as 'Karamoja'. It presents a historical overview of how conflicts in this region morphed from the colonial era through the post-independence era and the time periods of successive governments of Uganda. This presentation combines the empirical field findings with views of conflict scholars and reports from local and international organisations that have written about the conflict in the region. Contextualising the communal violence in Karamoja is significant as the dynamics involved in the development of conflicts in this region will be used to examine its complex connection with the civil war in northern Uganda.

5.2 The origin and development of conflicts in Karamoja

The Karamoja region of north eastern Uganda has suffered a variety of conflicts among different groups in the region. Violent conflict in this region dates back to the pre-colonial and colonial period and has been present during the time periods of the successive governments of Uganda (Muhwereza and Otim 2002:160-163, Gray 2000:408-412, Knighton 2003:433-439). The groups living in the region have been involved in cycles of cattle rustling and counter-raids, not only against neighbours across the border, but also among their own groups and other ethnic groups across other districts, and the conflicts have involved the state army as well.

509974-L-bw-isimon
Processed on: 1-5-2017
PDF page: 122

The Karamojong are the inhabitants of the north eastern region, occupying the former Karamoja District, which, after independence, has over the years been partitioned into seven districts, i.e., Abim, Amudat, Kaabong, Kotido, Moroto, Nakapiripirit and Napak. However, field findings suggest that the inhabitants of these districts are not all referred to as Karamojong. According to the Chairman of Local Council Five, the traditional Karamojong sub-groups are the Matheniko, the Bokora and the Pian, referred to as the 'three cooking stones'.

> *"Traditionally, the Karamojong are the three main groups: the Matheniko, Bokora and Pian. These are the ones traditionally known as the 'NgiKaramojong'... Now Karamoja is a concocted name that was made up by colonialists to bring in all the people living in north eastern Uganda, who have similarity in language, are generally homogeneous in nature, but may have some differences in cultures and even intonation. Therefore, Karamoja is the name/noun that has been used to bring together all the 8 or 7 ethnic groups that occupy the extreme north eastern Uganda"* (Mark Aoel Musooka, LC 5 Moroto District, 10/10/2015).

The elderly participants emphatically confirmed this as well. In his book *"The Karamojong, some aspects",* Father Augusto Pazzaglia also notes that the term '*Karamojong'* means the tribal group of the *'Ngikaramojong',* who are distinct from any other groups living in the region such as the Jie, Dodos and Labwor, among others (Pazzaglia 1982:13). According to the field findings, the Karamojong trace their origin to Nakandanya on the Apule River, which they refer to as their cradle land and from where they dispersed to occupy their present locations. The local council chairman further noted:

> *"…that is why you note that everywhere where you see people who identify themselves as Karamojong when they have a function or when someone is being buried. They have to locate the direction of Apule, because that is where Nakandanya is, where we came and dispersed from to the present sub-counties that we now occupy"* (Mark Aoel Musoka, LC 5 Moroto Ditrict, 10/10/2015).

How much they hold dear this ancestral land is also highlighted by Pazzaglia (1982:15) when he points out that:

> "…peaceful years at Apule led to territorial initiatives which in the long term effected some change in the inner consistency… For this

509974-L-bw-isimon
Processed on: 1-5-2017

> reason they have always thought nostalgically of it, and in their ceremonies, always face north…to turn towards it as their dispersal point and sacred centre" (Pazzaglia 1982:39).

According to field findings, they were forced to migrate from Nakandanya due to population pressure as a result of high birth rates and an increase in the size of their herds as well. Besides that, they experienced pressure from cattle rustlers, the Turkana, who possessed more sophisticated weapons:

> *"There was a gun that was passing behind the mountains. It ambushed us at Apule, it entered and began killing people"* (Elderly man, Moroto Municipality, 24/09/2014).

They claimed they could not match up to the weapons of the cattle rustlers since they themselves were using clubs, spears, bows and arrows. This forced them to disperse. The tribal sub-groups moved forward, but in more recognizable ways, and scattered all over the Karamoja region. This movement is said to have had a decisive impact in Karamojong territorial and political history. As tthe Matheniko (Maseniko, Mogos, Kosowa) settled in what became Maseniko county, the Bokora (Bokora, Tome, Mosingo and Muno) settled in what was later named Bokora county and at the same time, the Pian settled in another area, then known as Pian county (Pazzaglia 1982:39, Barber 1968).

Despite their re-settlements, they still had pressure from enemies. The participants claimed that they had constant attacks from 'traditional' enemies, with some emphasising a specific enemy and others highlighting a number of them;

> *"Am now 55 years, I was told the enemies of the Karamojong were the Jie, the Turkana, the Pokot and the Yala. The Yala are the people of the mountain, the Sabiny"* (Bishop Abura, Moroto District, 2/09/2014).

In a Focus Group Discussion, elderly men insisted they had one specific enemy:

> *"We always had one enemy, and those were the Turkana"* (FGD 2, Elderly men, Rupa sub-county, 24/09/2014).

509974-L-bw-isimon
Processed on: 1-5-2017
PDF page: 124

These elderly men claimed that, even after they had been dispersed and had resettled, they were still united and used to organise raids as one unit. They would meet at the River Omaniman, and each group would send a kraal leader to represent them. Two elderly women, who were in their nineties, also confirmed this, aptly noting that *"we were one"* (Two elderly women, Rupa sub-county, 25/09/2014). When they would organise cattle raids, there was always a purpose attached to it. The elderly men in Rupa sub-county noted that the raids were done for re-stocking cattle after loss from cattle diseases, phenomenal drought or famine, and, most importantly, as a cultural practice that involved acquiring cattle for dowry, prestige and their tradition of warriordom.

The two elderly women cited above, with their failing memory, nonetheless strongly emphasised that the original relationship between the Karamojong sub-groups was one of togetherness. This togetherness is said to have lasted until December 1973 when the Lokiriama peace accord was signed between the Matheniko and Turkana. As allies, the Matheniko were used by the Turkana to raid the other sub-groups, creating resentment and animosity among them. However, before drowning into what the implications of this alliance were, it is important to note that, some scholars claim that the successive governments of Uganda, from the colonial era onward, were also responsible for the tensions in the region.

5.2.1 Colonial era (1894-1962)

The relationship between the successive governments of Uganda and the Karimojong has been noted as one of isolation and hostility, explaining the communities' resistance towards state policies. This mistrust is said to have originated from the colonial government, which had a significant impact on the Karamojong's social and political lives (Odhiambo 2003:27-8, Gray 2000:408-9, Muhwereza and Otim 2002:118-122, Markakis 2004:7-10).

Anyone who is not a Karamojong is referred to as a stranger, in the local language known as *'Aryan'* and in plural' *Ngaryanya'* (Bishop Abura, Moroto District, 02/10/2014). Currently, these terms are also used to describe fellow elite Karamojong. Father Pazzaglia goes on to point out that:

509974-L-bw-isimon
Processed on: 1-5-2017

> "Under the Protectorate Government, this meant its officials, including African collaborators, chiefs, and other office bearers. After independence, it meant, and means, the Ugandan Government." (Pazzaglia 1982:16).

In 1952, under the British conservation policy, huge chunks of pastoral land were converted into game reserves for tourists (Kidepo national park, Matheniko game reserve). This is said to have disrupted rotational grazing systems and restricted the endogenous people from hunting for survival. Hostility towards the colonial government was mainly due to the fact that the focus of the governments of Uganda since the colonial period had been on the development of commercial livestock ranching. This disregarded the significance of the traditional livestock production sector (Muhwereza 2001:100-124, Muhwereza and Otim 2002:119, Markakis 2004:02). They were of the view that the ways and practices of the traditional pastoralists are environmentally and economically unsustainable. Mkutu (2006:61) also claims that colonial and post-colonial governments gazetted large tracts of pastoral land, which forced the pastoralists to compete over smaller areas of pasture and scarce sources of water. As John Markakis notes:

> "Freedom of mobility over large tracts of land is essential to pastoralist production, and it was a prized prerogative of the people in the pre-colonial period…Colonialism deprived pastoralists of autonomy and freedom of movement by enveloping them within the boundaries of states established in a new geopolitical pattern" (Markakis 2004:02)

The Karamoja areas, which were used for dry-season grazing, were given to the agricultural Teso people of Katakwi, Soroti, Amuria and Nakapiripirit, because they were considered suitable for agriculture. The implication is that, even before demarcations were made, the Karamojong did not settle on that land but used it during the dry season, and because of this use, the Karamojong believe they still have some ancestral claim on that land (Muhwereza and Otim 2002: 164, Markakis 2004:02). Mamdani et al. (1992:23) alleged that the Karimojong lost an estimated total of about 5,000 square kilometres in all. This, in turn, heightened the conflict between the different groups within the region (Muhereza and Otim 2002:119, Gray 2000:408).

509974-L-bw-isimon
Processed on: 1-5-2017

Territorial boundaries, both internal and international, were drawn during the colonial period, and these boundaries denied claims to specific territories by each group in the country (Muhwereza and Otim 2002: 163, Gomes 2002:254-5). Hence, the movement of people was constrained by the informal restrictions of strong ethnic identities and formal restrictions of national (and internal) borders. According to Leftwich (2008:218), there was almost no indigenous definition of geographical boundaries, nor were any major 'national' movements, or 'nationalist' sentiments, involved in establishing the boundaries of modern African nation-states. Collier et al. (2008:343) note that, as Africa is sub-divided into ethnic identities, these borders have created barriers to movement of people even within a country, which is the case in Uganda, where district borders have been drawn according to dominant tribal identity at the moment of demarcation, ignoring historical precedents.

The marking of the boundaries around the region included the marking of internal boundaries. This, as elsewhere in Uganda, was done along perceived tribe or clan claims. The marked-off areas were to become counties, in which the land and the administration thereof was allocated to particular groups. Although the Karimojong local system of herding was characterised by non-formal institutions for sharing resources, the government demanded that the herders get written permission from the pastoral chiefs to move from one area to another. These boundaries interfered with the seasonal movement of the Karimojong that enabled them to access water and pasture within their region (Muhwereza & Otim 2002:119). Earlier studies among the Karamojong indicate that grazing was a tribal right, that one was free to graze anywhere within the tribal land, subject to mutual agreements (Rhada & Dyson-Hudson 1969:79).

For the Karamojong these restrictions were not livelihood-sustainable because they ran out of the resources necessary for the survival of the herds, such as water and pasture during the dry seasons (Muhwereza and Otim 2002:163). Collier et al. (2008:343) affirm this when they note that, in most of Africa, land rights still reflect some ancestral claim. Gray (2000: 408) further suggests that the territorial boundaries of these districts were both ambiguous and inconsistent with the geo-political realities of pastoral people. From the outset onward, colonial governance was at odds with the ecology and politics of subsistence pastoralism, and by 1921, the range of seasonal migrations had been contained within newly delineated boundaries, a situation that may have had far reaching ramifications for

509974-L-bw-isimon
Processed on: 1-5-2017 PDF page: 127

the evolution of violence in Karamoja after the 1950s. This may have played a role in changing the structure and function of violence in the region.

The creation of administrative units/counties under the divide and rule policy, where counties bore the names of sub-groups, was completed in 1910 (Barber 1968: 19, Pazzaglia 1982:59, Muhwereza and Otim 2002:116). This restricted human as well as cattle mobility and instilled a sense of belonging between the groups, erasing the larger Karimojong consciousness, according to Benedict Lokiru (Employee of Danish Aid, Moroto, interviewed on 16/10/2014). At the district level, the creation of boundaries caused the loss of access to vital grazing land in Teso and Sebei, and also disrupted trading relations.

Though the main aim of the Protectorate Government was to do away with the ivory hunters and merchants, who were considered poachers. Pazzaglia (1982:59) notes that in 1911 Karamoja became a closed district on orders of Sir Federick Jackson and a special permit was required to visit it. This prohibited the Karamojong from interacting with their neighbours. This was also highlighted during the field findings, where many informants claimed it would be difficult to explain the flow of events without tracing it to the colonial era, as one respondent noted:

> *"…they carved this place out as a 'Human Zoo'. So first of all for anyone to get inside here, you have to get a permit or visa. Now that was the beginning of neglecting Karamoja"* (Benedict Lokiru, NGO Danish Church Aid, Moroto District 16/10/2014).

The rulers were very harsh and enslaved the locals. Father Pazzaglia notes that the colonial government, notably District Commissioners Tufnell (1912-1916) and Turpin (1916-1919), were harsh in the administration of the Karamojong. He signals:

> "…recruiting porters and other labourers compulsorily, fining those who resisted, demanding large numbers of cattle, and even setting villages on fire and ordering the execution of particular individuals" (Pazzaglia, 1982:61).

The Karamojong, apart from being subjected to forced labour, were also forced to pay taxes, and failure or delay in doing so would lead to

509974-L-bw-isimon
Processed on: 1-5-2017 PDF page: 128

confiscation of livestock, which stirred high emotions and led to the murder of colonial government representatives by the warriors (Pazzaglia 1982:72). He further notes that they confiscated livestock under the pretext of curbing cattle rustling and also attempted disarming the Karamojong. These policies are said to have affected these communities' attitude towards a 'foreign' government and successive governments of Uganda, laying a foundation for hostility towards government actors.

The Protectorate Government appointed chiefs as they believed that the elders in Karamoja were an obstacle to progress and civilization. When the chiefs proved ineffective, the blame was levied on the elders, and to curb their influence initiation ceremonies were banned in effort to undermine the continuity of the age grade system that initiated elders within Karamoja. However, after independence the age grade system was revived immediately (Quam 1997, Dyson-Hudson 1966, Barber 1968).

5.2.2 The Obote 1 era (1962-1971)

From the early 1950s onwards, the Karamojong were frequently raided by the Turkana, Toposa and Didinga and even after independence, cattle rustling among the Karamojong and their neighbours continued (Gray 2000:409-11, Knighton 2003:433-6, Muhereza and Otim 2002:120,163). However, some scholars claim that even the successive governments of Uganda did little to curb violent conflict between the Karamojong and their neighbours. This only further deepened the mistrust the Karamojong had towards the state (Muhereza and Otim 2002:113-114, Knighton 2003:427, Odhiambo 2003:28-29).

According to Odhiambo (2003:29), the post-independence governments of Uganda treated Karamoja as an unstable zone in which only crisis management policies but not policies based on democratic principles of governance were applicable. This situation can explain why hostility and resentment continued to characterise the government's relations with the Karamojong, and why government efforts to transform society over the years, largely failed.

He further notes that this unfair treatment and isolation of the Karamojong by the political leadership has created a feeling of bitterness in the Karamojong communities. This feeling projects itself in the way they relate to the communities living in the neighbouring districts: "These communities treat the Karamojong as if they originated from a different

509974-L-bw-isimon
Processed on: 1-5-2017

country" (Odhiambo 2003:29). Odhiambo notes that the widespread rumours about the Karamojong as a community consisting of marauding warriors, have left the Karamojong with little regard for their fellow countrymen, and for their nationality as Ugandans. One of the informants, Lokiru Benedict, noted that the local people have a tendency of referring to a journey to the next district as a trip to a foreign land when they say *"I am going to Uganda"* (Benedict Lokiru, NGO Danish Aid, 16/10/2014), as though they are not part of it.

Ben Knighton in the same light also reveals the level of distrust and disassociation the Karamjong have towards Uganda and its government when he also says: "Indeed…Karamojong have never identified themselves as Ugandans nor trusted the government of strangers *(ngimoe)* (2003:448-9). And indeed, Sandra Gray agrees that neighbouring districts in Uganda: "Karimojong were regarded as illiterate and brutal savages" (2000:410). Harsh treatment and disregard of the communities meant they felt insecure, as the state could not protect them from their enemies, the 'Turkanas', on top of having little regard for their voice as a community within a state. This could partially explain their effort to protect themselves later by acquiring guns and ammunition.

The participants said that, during the Obote I regime, they were severely terrorised by the Turkana who left them with virtually no livestock at all. The government, instead of providing them with the necessary support and protection, disarmed and imprisoned them. According to the Resident District Commissioner of the Moroto District:

> *"When one was got with a spear, he would be jailed for 4 years. And if 2 or 3 Karamojong were got together, they would be imprisoned because they are planning a raid or are from one"* (Sam Abura Pirir RDC, Moroto District, 09/09/2014)

In addition to the above, a group of elders remember that period as "the year of the spear" or '*Ekaru a mukuki'* (FGD1, Elderly men, Moroto Municipality, 19/09/2014). They said they remember that period so vividly because, as Obote's soldiers were disarming them, they raped their women in the process, and that is how venereal diseases such as gonorrhea were introduced in the region. One of the participants in the FGD, remembered how one day soldiers stopped besides them when they were

509974-L-bw-isimon
Processed on: 1-5-2017

young boys and ordered the eldest among them to climb onto the vehicle *'Panda Gari'*, and that was the last they ever saw of him.

The participants also mentioned the harsh tax collection procedures, which also involved the confiscation of livestock. And since a lot of mistrust existed towards the state, the forced vaccination of livestock was also not welcomed by the Karamojong. They believed the government-ordered vaccination was meant to harm their livestock. This created even more mistrust towards the government and this mistrust was ultimately cemented by Idi Amin's regime.

5.2.3 The Idi Amin era (I971-1979)

After Obote 1 was overthrown, Idi Amin took over. The participants, especially the older generation, spoke of this era with so much bitterness, recalling how the government forced them to take their children to school against their will. The participants said that the forced introduction of formal education by the government of Idi Amin was not received well by the Karamojong community because they felt it would disrupt their social-cultural way of life.

The 1971 Dress Up Decree was mentioned by many participants because those who resisted were shot at Nawaikorot in Kangole. These executiones are widely remembered by the Karamojong community as what the Bishop Abura of Moroto Diocese referred to as the *"Nawaikorot massacre",* after which those killed were buried in a mass grave. The LC 5 Chairman of the Moroto District referred to the victims as *"Martyrs of their Culture*", who deserve to be remembered on a specific date in the calendar, every year (Mark Aoel Musooka, LC 5 Chairman, Moroto District, 10/10/2014). As some participants pointed out: *"Amin removed our clothes and gave us these leaves. He undressed us, took our beads. We had naked necks"* (Two old women (aged 90+), Rupa sub-county 25/09/2014). And: *"Our parents never put on clothes, why should we"* (Mr. Oputa Paul, DEO Moroto District, 13/10/2014).

509974-L-bw-isimon
Processed on: 1-5-2017

Photo 6: Photo showing the researcher and the guide beside the mass grave of the 1971 incident at Nawaikorot, Kangole, in the Napak District.

The victims' traditional attire which was skins and hides were set on fire and their beads forcibly ripped from their necks. Women were forced to remove their special wedding bands and break them. The traditional hairstyles comprising of heavily fortified clay head gears decorated with feathers was forbidden as well and their heads were shaved. One of the members of the Karamoja Cultural Association in an informal conversation noted that to President Idi Amin, the dress code of the Karamoja was a disgrace to his idea of a modern Ugandan State. So most of those who marched to seek audience with the County chief at Nawaikorot to protest against this decree were gunned down.

509974-L-bw-isimon
Processed on: 1-5-2017

The District education officer Mr. Oputa Paul also noted that Amin's regime deployed military people as chiefs, as district commissioners, and yet they were indisciplined and recklessly killing people. They would behead cattle rustlers in front of their own people, i.e., at the county headquarters in Kangole. This was also highlighted by one of key informants, the Bishop of the Diocese:

> *"Now when Amin came, he deployed military people even as chiefs, even as district commissioners and these people were so much indisciplined. And again this caused our people to be killed, as cattle rustling warriors were beheaded before their own people. You are just arrested and taken to the district headquarters in Kangole. That is where most of them were killed with bayonets. There was an assistant DC who would kill and even lick blood, to show them that he was not an easy man* (Bishop Abura, 2/10/ 2014, Moroto District).

As noted earlier, amidst all this turmoil, the Karamojong also experienced continuous attacks from neighbouring ethnic groups. The participants claimed that the Karamojong were forced to locally manufacture guns, due to the continuous raids by the Turkana, Jie and Pokot. According to the participants, especially the Turkana continued to exert a lot of pressure on the Karamojong. The proximity of the Matheniko was disadvantageous to them, forcing some of them to disperse and abandon their sub-counties, scattering to other counties. The LC 5 chairman claimed that, after he was born, according to his parents, the Lotisan sub-county was abandoned completely, due to Turkana cattle raids. In this precarious situation, the Karamojong were forced to upgrade their weaponry, from clubs, spears, bow and arrows to one-bullet, locally manufactured, guns, *'Amatida',* made out of wood, a pipe and a string.

> *"The Turkana terrorised virtually the whole region, and as it happens, when somebody meets a challenge, the person tends to think a lot and look for ways of mitigating this. Ten years later, that is in 1973, and by the God's grace I had attained the age of reason, some people in Rupa concocted a locally made gun, known as 'amatida'. It was made was made out of these water pipes, like these ones leading water to the sink. Some tyre tube, some rod which would be made into a trigger. I even do remember the name of the man who invented it , 'Lodukamoi', he concocted Amatida and the technology was adapted very fast, virtually by the whole region, and this Amatida operated in such a way that you put a bullet in, then you shoot, then you add a small rod, the size of this pen to remove the cartridge. Then you put*

509974-L-bw-isimon
Processed on: 1-5-2017

> *another bullet. Suprisingly, 5 years later, by 1978, this Amatida has reached some level of automation..."* (Mark Aoel Musooka, LC 5 Moroto District, 10/10/2015).

Barber (1968) claims that gun ownership and gun-related violence in the region are nothing new. The Karamojong were already armed by the time Europeans scrambled to control Africa. They had previously bartered ivory and cattle for weapons from gun owners operating from the sprawling gun market in Maji, in south-western Ethiopia. An even earlier source of guns were the Arab and Swahili slave traders coming from the East African coast.

Barber (1968) further notes that early, armed violence was the result of raids among and between the Karamojong and their neighbours and the presence of private armies erected by competing traders in ivory. Abyssinian merchants competed with Swahili traders coming from the East African coast and both trained and armed elements of the Turkana, and Karamojong. These were to protect ivory caravans moving through the Karamoja Cluster from their commercial rivals and local populations that might attack them. These private armies were quite sizable and, in some cases, were deemed to pose a threat to the British who in 1911 sent military expeditions to defuse the tension caused by their presence on the border of Turkana land, Sudan and Ethiopia.

According to Sandra Gray, in 1973, the Matheniko concocted their Amatida and the technology was adapted very fast. The Karamojong repulsed the Turkana, and by the autumn of 1973, on 18 September, the Matheniko and the Turkana signed a peace accord, popularly known as the Lokirimia peace accord, with which they promised each other never to fight again (Gray 2000: 411, Muhereza and Otim 2002:120). This was also highlighted in an interview with Mark Aoel Musooka, the LC 5 of the Moroto District on 10 October 2014. Some other participants claimed that gradually the Matheniko and other sub-groups managed to acquire some guns as well, which affected the balance of power. The Turkana saw this as a danger and decided to ally with the Matheniko. After they had allied, the Turkana used the Matheniko against the other sub-groups in the region as well as in neighbouring districts.

> *"The little cattle that was left in Nakapirit, the Pian, the Bokora people, the Matheniko brought the Turkana …and then they finished the cattle. This partially*

509974-L-bw-isimon
Processed on: 1-5-2017

> *explains the divisions, because one of our brothers in the family has decided to ally with an enemy. That enemy was attacking all of us, but now they have decided to ally and that explains the exclusion of the Matheniko; we began calling the Matheniko: Turkana."* (Benedict Lokiru, NGO Danish Church Aid, 16/10/2014).

With these divisions created, violent conflict emerged between the Karamojong sub-groups. However, since one of them, the Matheniko, had decided to ally with the enemy, it as well was branded an enemy.

Participants claim that, in 1979, following the fall of Idi Amin's regime, it was mostly the Matheniko who looted the armoury, carrying away all kinds of ammunitions. According to Paul Wangoola, the Karamojong had suffered suppression and oppression from the state for a long time, and, finally, they also had a say in the conflict when they acquired guns:

> "Their chance of a lifetime came with the defeat of Idi Amin's army in 1979. The army fled, leaving unattended armoury of sophisticated weapons, which Amin had been proud of. It took weeks before UNLA and TPDF reached Moroto; by which time the armoury had been emptied. All together 12,000 guns (mainly G3) are estimated to have been looted. (Wangoola 1999:03).

The looting of the barracks, police and prison armoury provided guns and ammunitions to the Karamojong, which completely altered the situation in the region; the Karamojong were now well-armed and this led to a different kind of relationship with their neighbours and even among themselves. Michael Odhiambo notes that:

> "With the gun, these conflicts have assumed a different dimension by reason of the violence, loss and destruction that come in their wake. In this connection, the gun may be said to have its greatest impact on cattle rustling, dramatically changing the character of a cultural activity that is as old as the pastoral system itself" (Odhiambo 2003:40).

5.2.4 The Obote II, Tito Okello Lutwa, regime (1980-1985)

The Moroto District Information Officer noted that the result of this shift in armament was a chaos:

509974-L-bw-isimon
Processed on: 1-5-2017

> *"They vandalised everyone…vandalised the whole region, even crossing over to other districts …since they had an upper hand of acquiring these guns, with lots of ammunitions, they now become terrorists of the neighbours… people were traumatised, there was a scare. They did not only torture the Bokora, but also any other neighbours like the Pian because they had guns and they were the superpowers. So they even extended the torturing to the Pian, even the Jie, even everywhere, even beyond to the neighbour districts like Teso, because they had guns and all these people did not have guns"* (Mr. Mike Kidon, District Information Officer, Moroto District, 11/10/ 2014).

And since the other groups had no acquired guns, after the looting of the armoury, the Matheniko exerted a lot of pressure on the other groups in the region, mainly the Bokora, forcing a large number of them to migrate to Iganga, Mbale, Masindi and Busia, among other places:

> *"The Pian and Bokora suffered most out of this… the Bokora were splashed out, they went to Teso, they went to Mbale, Jinja, Busia, Tororo…the Bokora were everywhere.* (Eko Edward, Assist. CAO, Moroto District, 05/10/2014).

According to Mzee Juma, those onto whom pressure had been applied were forced to flee, and those who stayed behind were forced to buy guns from the Matheniko. He remembers that *"1 gun was exchanged for 30 to 40 cows"* (Mzee Juma, Businessman, Moroto Municipality, 11/10/ 2014). It should be remarked that, between 1979 and 1986, the political unrest that prevailed in Uganda under the successive regimes provided further opportunities for the acquisition of guns.

The acquisition of firearms gave a new dimension to the conflict in Karamoja (Gray 2000:410-412, Muhereza and Otim 2002:163-164, Kaduuli 2008:4, Odhiambo 2003:40-41). It sparked off massive and unprecedented cattle rustling, which intensified and altered the nature of the conflict, as each sub-group fought against the other. Indiscriminate killings of both young and old took place. The aim would be to kill twice the number of relatives killed and more (Kidon Michael, DIO Moroto District, 11/10/2014).

> *"Reckless killing when these people would come to raid, someone would come to inform them…, and what they would do is to shoot towards that house. Killing*

509974-L-bw-isimon
Processed on: 1-5-2017
PDF page: 136

> *everybody, even if there are about 6 or 7 people inside"* (FGD 1, elderly women, Rupa –Lorikumo Village, 24/09/2014).

In the old days, killing a fellow Karamojong was not allowed and highly punishable by the elders. Taboos concerning the killing of unarmed vulnerable groups were understood and respected. There was minimal loss of life as cattle raids would be announced in advance, and preparations involved moving the women, children and elderly to safety (Stites et al. 2007:57). Two elderly ladies in their late 90s shared their views about clashes in earlier times.

> *"Those days when they would fight in the bush with spears, and if they had killed like 2 of them they would stop, because they would say: if we continue fighting like this, the women will become widows, so the moment they saw 2, 3 people had died, they would stop the fight. The group would split, depending on who had raided the other"* (Two old women (aged 90+), Rupa Sub-county, Lorikumo Village, 25/09/2014).

However, as the historical back ground and field findings suggest, other groups also struggled to acquire guns:

> "The contest finally was equalized in the early 1980s. When the Bokora also acquired automatic weapons in an ambush on Ugandan military transports sent to Karamoja in response to an outbreak of hostilities with the Teso. Between 1983 and 1994, Karamoja experienced recurring outbreaks of violence that far surpassed levels of brutality observed since the colonial era" (Gray, 2000:411).

After acquiring guns. Then they also repulsed the Matheniko as Bishop Abura notes;

> *"And so after these people had got enough guns, they revolted against the Matheniko and fought them back…The Matheniko were the enemy of the Bokora, and the Bokora were the enemy of the Jie, of the Pian, and of the Pokot and of the Dodoth….everyone!. Everyone was fighting everyone else"* (Bishop Abura, Moroto District, 2/09/2014).

There was a lot of insecurity, as *'guns became walking sticks'* (District Education officer, Mr. Oputa Paul, 13/10/2014). Every corner of Karamoja acquired guns. This era was characterised by raids and counter-raids among the Karamojong, other ethnic groups across the districts and across the border as well. It was an unstable period in Uganda,

509974-L-bw-isimon
Processed on: 1-5-2017

characterised by a lot of insecurity. The proliferation of guns was linked to political instability in the country in the early 1980s.

Curtis Abraham notes that, with the proliferation of guns in the region, the the power of the elders, who could control unnecessary and reckless cattle raids in the region, was undermined. Without their power, there was no control in the region at all. This is illustrated by the following quotes:

> "The gun has also caused a dramatic shift in the political and economic authority of Karamoja's elders, the decision makers, and their sons, the warriors who traditionally executed the decisions made by their fathers. For example, in the not so distant past custom dictated that when planning a cattle raid, warriors had first to consult with a diviner or receive the blessings of some of the very important elders. In contemporary Karimojong society, however, the gun has made the warriors both the decision makers and executors" (Curtis 1997, quoted in Odhiambo 2003:44).

> *"The other thing is the elder, what we call an elder ceased to be an elder because the elder who would say "do not do this" would be pointed a gun at by these young people and even killed. Women were killed by these young people. The elders lost power completely. Their hands were like tied behind, they had no authority at all."* (Mr. Oputa Paul, District Education Officer, 13/10/2014).

In relation to the above, the traditional power structures had been eroded, social norms that once moderated raiding were dissolved. Conflict scholars who have written extensively about the region noted as well that, previously, raids were controlled by elders, and the raids were used for the benefit of the community such as for the acquisition of a dowry, or for obtaining food in times of scarcity. But with the emergence of the gun, the youth increasingly took on the raid practice for personal gains. With the gun, the character of the conflict in the region changed, not only among the Karamojong themselves, but also between the Karamojong and their neighbours, within and outside Uganda (Gray 2000:411, Odhiambo 2003:40-45, Muhereza and Otim 2002:120-164, Mkutu 2006:61).

Some scholars blame the elders as well for the violence that engulfed the region. In the old days, the elders organised and blessed the raids, and would even participate in them as well. Their role was so significant that

509974-L-bw-isimon
Processed on: 1-5-2017

no raid would be carried out without their blessings. They as well through their tales of bravery and youthful adventures during the old days they encouraged the younger generation to engage in raids, with the hope of maintaining that prestigious tradition of bravery. Stories of bravery were passed on, but this, according to Augusto Pazzaglia, had huge consequences:

> "…without sufficient care for the consequences of their words. The elders, telling tales of their youthful adventures, how their spears were drenched with blood, incite the younger ones. Perhaps, the latter, listening to them with awe, and never tiring of hearing such stories, are absorbing them in the hope of imitating them and maintaining the tradition of bravery" (Pazzaglia 1982:74).

Furthermore, cultural practices that brought prestige to the people, such as the warrior phenomenon and high bride prices were also highlighted as some of the reasons for raiding and killing the enemies, the *'ngimoe'*. Indeed, during the field exercise the youth warriors spoke of bravery and prestige as some of the major drives for them to engage in cattle rustling.

The alarming years, during which the elders lost their authority, were the 1980s and 1990s, all the way through to the 2000s, up to the point of disarmament (Mr. Oputa Paul, District Education Officer, Moroto District 13/10/2014). This era introduced new major players, who were youth under the leadership of kraal leaders, according to the field findings. With so many guns in the hands of the community, the customary restraints against unnecessary or excessive raiding and violence could not be dealt with. The elders lost their voice (Odhiambo 2003, Gray 2000). The elders lost their place in society, which ushered in reckless violence:

> *"When an elder wants to talk to a youth, they would just point a gun to him…if the elder tells a youth to stop raiding, the youth would say, I have not killed someone, I have not got any cow and now you are telling me…for you, you already have your cows.They would challenge the old men"* (FGD 3, elderly men, Rupa subcounty).

Even the mayor of the Moroto Municipality shared this view. He said that whenever an elder would caution the youth, all they would do was put a gun to his head and ask him *"what are you saying?"* The elder would then just let them be (Alex Lumu, Mayor of Moroto Municpality, 19/09/2014).

509974-L-bw-isimon
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Nevertheless, the elders played a significant role in passing on traditions, educating the communities about their traditions and blessing raids.

The omnipresence of guns also brought about new forms of conflict, manifesting themselves in robberies and roadside thuggery. The District Information Officer of the Moroto District claimed that all this road side thuggery was out of lawlessness and some of the youth would just do it to *"practice target shooting"* (Kidon Mike Onyang, District Information officer, Moroto District, 11/10/2014). He said he had survived several attacks and had endured as the only journalist in the region who had chosen to stay and document the flow of events. He stressed that the violence was bizarre, as it even occurred within a family unit:

> *"If… the brothers and father is shot dead, the brother can shoot the other brother! What next [they move] to the neighbouring villages, the neighbouring whoever… They [considered themselves] superpowers because they had guns, so they were free to go anywhere, to do anything, [wreak]…any havoc. If all was to be considered, they were actually becoming rebels in a way, except their only interest was in the animals… What pushed them was to exercise that power, because they had got the guns."* (Kidon Mike Onyang, District Information officer, Moroto District, 11/10/2014).

Ochieng Odhiambo also in the same light notes that:

> "…raids and counter raids have persisted, and in recent raids, the warriors on each side have ended up killing their own kin, including sisters and brothers in-law. It is when relatives cross over to 'enemy territory' to bury their kin that the absurdity of these killings sinks in" (2003:54).

The field findings reveal that, apart from the multiplication of guns, drought and famine were responsible as well for the intensification of violence in the region. The participants said that they had nothing much to eat, and the recurring famine and drought seasons would claim their livestock, leaving them with no choice at all but to try and survive through cattle raiding. These findings are supported by conclusions reached by the Mercy Corps (2011:06), which noted that the majority of the locals in the region claim that hunger and poverty left them with no alternative throughout the years:

> *"After 1979, when the guns were raided, the worst hunger in the history of Karamoja hit the region and killed so many people. The 1980 hunger, people who*

509974-L-bw-isimon
Processed on: 1-5-2017

> *are living now are remnants of that hunger. If you ask the elders they will never forget this event, that thing (famine) finished people. Now it is because of the Turkana having finished all the livestock of the people. And the Matheniko also decided to migrate, part of them to join the Turkana since they had already allied And remember this was a time of takeover, there was no functional government. But at that time for the Turkana the government of Kenya was distributing food to them, it is anyway throughout the year, those people depend on relief food. Our people survived on local herbs, roots, but many also migrated to Sironko…Teso and so on."* (Benedict Lokiru, NGO Danish Aid, Moroto District 16/10/2014).

Famine and drought were also highlighted as major factors in the cattle rustling between the Karamojong and their neighbours. Cattle was used for meat, milk, cheese and blood as well; "…their whole economic and social life centres on one reality only, that of cattle" (Pazzaglia 1982:15). During famine periods, blood could be extracted from the cows and mixed with milk (the researcher witnessed this during the field work). "When famine strikes, the women go into the bush looking for fruits and vegetables, from which to make a soup on which to survive" (Pazzaglia 1982:15). Pazzaglia talks extensively of several droughts in the 19th century that were so severe and even threatened the very existence of the people. Theyled to an estimated loss of 70% to 90% of the cattle (Pazzaglia 1982:42, Gray 2000:411, Stites etal. 2007:35-36).

The region is a semi-arid area and is, as such, prone to severe droughts. Such droughts have frequently occurred (Muhwereza & Otim 2002:119). Mkutu (2006:61) also notes that pressure on land and other resources had increased in pastoral regions since the independence, partly because of the regularity and severity of droughts which the people had to endure within the territorial dry lands marked out for them during the colonial era. The State of the Environment report (2008:73) acknowledges that indeed the rains in this part of the country have become more unreliable, heavier and more erratic, affecting agricultural production and causing destruction. The dry seasons have become hotter, causing severe drought and famine. Although the governments of Uganda, since the colonial era, have been against pastoralism. They have labelled it backward and primitive, but they have over the years been unable to offer an alternative sustainable means of livelihood according to the field findings.

509974-L-bw-isimon
Processed on: 1-5-2017
PDF page: 141

Some scholars argue that the Karamojong are pastoralists out of necessity rather than by choice and that pastoralism is the most appropriate land-use system in the region (Odhiambo 2003:35, Markakis 2004:2). They also note that no change has taken place in the region because, though the intentions of the governments of Uganda had been good, ready-made solutions for the Karamoja region have not been successfully applied. The reason for this is that they have been manufactured without taking the local people's values and perceptions into account and, worst of all, were meant to be implemented by foreigners. As Odhiambo Michael notes, these ideas are: "…conceived outside the region without much consultation with the local population, and then brought to Karamoja to be implemented by non-Karamojong" (Odhiambo 2003:36). This failure of letting the Karamojong own their own development could further explain why the region has lagged behind, leaving its inhabitants with no option but to engage in cattle rustling.

Some informants claimed that these solutions were not implemented because of utter laziness on the part of the Karamojong, especially the men. According to a business man in Moroto town:

> *"The Karamojong are very proud, they dislike cheap labour jobs such as attending to a shop. Their work is sleep under a tree, bathe for 2 hours, plan raids and sell the loot, polish their gum, drink and eat. Even to date, it is the women who do most of the workload of burning charcoal, building tents and huts and doing domestic jobs to earn something to feed the family"* (Business man, Moroto Municpality, 11 October 2014).

However, some participants were of the view that women were to blame as well for the violent conflict in the region. Bishop Abura argues that:

> *"The role of women has been indirect, but in one way or another they could be the initiators of the fire. You know fire, if you want to make a fire here you get sticks, so in one way or another they have been the fuel that makes the fire…The woman can coax you when they say: 'why are you here, others are there. For you, you are here looking at me all the time, here on me all the time, when your fellow men are out there', and when the man hears such a thing from his own wife he would rather disappear and die there, other than being riddled. Women indirectly have ridiculed men and sent them off"* (Bishop Abura, Moroto District, 2/09/2014).

509974-L-bw-isimon
Processed on: 1-5-2017

Some participants noted that rivalry over a girl would sometimes lead to murder. Some youth also cited instances in which the elders snatched a young man's wife and that this created rivalry. One of the youth participants claimed that: *"…if a woman has produced more girls, in the future, these girls will get him more cows"* (FGD 4, youth, 19/09/2014, Moroto Municipality).

Some elders would – afterwards - double a woman's original bride price, especially if she had produced many girls, in the hope that the bride prices for these girls would bring him more cattle in the future. The field findings revealed that women would indirectly coax a man to go raid, especially in times of famine or droughts. The male participants claimed that the women/wives would bless their sons/husbands before they would depart for raids, and would even prepare meals and pack them some food for the journey such as maize, sorghum and local alcohol brew. When their sons or husbands were away, they would put on special beads or clothes and when they returned from the raids, they would ululate, dance and sing praises in celebration. The women, however, stressed that such festivities were only meant to celebrate their return alive and not to encourage them to go raid cattle.

Some participants noted that during periods in time when the region was extremely insecure, their relatives, who were married to people in other clans, would act as spies and help locate the cattle. However, in consultations with the women participants, the majority of them denied any involvement in such matters and some claimed they would be kept in the dark about their spouses' plans. At times, they would get to know their husbands went for a raid when those who return from cattle raids tell the wives that: *"your husband remained behind or the cows have killed the man"* (Akol Anne, 18 September 2014, Moroto District). This usually meant that their husbands or sons had been killed during the mission. Sometimes they would only tell his from a raid when he returns home with cattle.

Some women participants insisted that they had never encouraged their husbands to go on raids and if raiding came up in a woman's conversation with her husband, she would forbid him to take part in it, and hold on to him tightly (literally). She would not let go of him, even if beaten up by him. According to the women, the reason for this behaviour was that some had lost partners and sons and would be afraid to lose another, hence they held on to them. Gray et al. (2003:s7-s8) states that, more than 70% of male between the ages of 30 and 39 had died as result

509974-L-bw-isimon
Processed on: 1-5-2017

of raids. They further note that, between 1998 and 1999, more than 300 women in Karamoja had lost a male child or a husband due to the violence involving cattle rustling within the region.

Instability continued in the region, providing more opportunities for the acquisition of arms. Some Karamojong joined the various armed factions, and then from them, returning home with the guns. Mkutu (2006:52) notes that further acquisition of SALW occurred in 1985, when Karamojong warriors were recruited into the Uganda National Liberation Army (UNLA) to fight for the failing Obote II regime. When the National Resistance Army defeated the UNLA in 1986, the demobilised Karamojong soldiers fled back to Karamoja with all their arms. Lokiru Benedict remembers that when he was a young boy in fifth grade of primary school, his elder brother was taken for training by the government and later taken to fight the NRA government:

> *"Karamojong were taken there in their thousands to help fight. In thousands, I am telling you, and when they had to come back, they came back with their guns. I could see them in every village"* (NGO Danish Aid Employee, 16/10/2014).

Thousands of Karamojong are reported to have joined the UNLA in 1985, after the overthrow of Obote II. The NRM/NRA took over, and the Karamojong withdrew, this time with even more modern weapons, particularly AK47 guns. In the meantime, there were other opportunities as well to get hold of small arms: from the Lord's Resistance Army, from the SPLA, during the the insurgency in Teso among others. It is estimated that, in 1998, some 15,000 – 35,000 guns were in civilian hands in Karamoja (Wangoola 1999:03).

From 1980 onwards, the raids intensified and crossed over to other districts, like Sebei, Teso and Lango. These communal clashes and cross-border / cross-district raids continued throughout the time of the regime of Tito Okello Lutwa regime (which, in 1985, lasted only 6 months) (Mkutu 2006). During this era, the number of arms in Karamoja increased further, as soldiers deserting the army sold their guns to the Karamojong.

Since the Matheniko had exerted a lot of pressure on the other sub-groups, they too were forced to acquire guns from soldiers desserting the army and neighbouring tribes, or getting hold of them by ambushing

509974-L-bw-isimon
Processed on: 1-5-2017
PDF page: 144

soldiers. This exacerbated the conflict in the region, as revenge raids and counter-raids were carried out.

A study carried out by the Mercy Corps (2011:05) concluded that the cattle raids during that era were mainly driven by economic interest and were conducted for the raiders' own personal needs. However, during the field exercise, the youth warriors cited a number of other reasons for which they raided cattle, not only form neighbouring ethnic groups or clans but also from within their own clan. Apart from the ubiquitous presence of guns, which gave them a motive to raid whenever they wanted to, they cited reasons such as 'petty' unsettled quarrels, jealousy/envy of wealthy relatives, and inability to pay debts or dowries.

If, in cases of murder, the murderer would fail to pay a fine of 60 cows ('blood cows'), the relatives would demand compensation and a failure to give this compensation would lead to raids on even the closest relatives of the murderer (Youth warriors, FGD, Moroto Municpality, 19/09/2014). Some elderly women noted that these youth would go out of their way for various reasons, such as vengeance or retaliation for stolen livestock;

> *"Since they have also stolen cows from my father, what am I doing? I should also go and steal and revenge… The youth of those days would get angry because if the cows are stolen, the calves would die, forcing them to go and raid* (FGD 3, women, Rupa – Lorikumo village, 25/09/2014).

5.2.5 The NRA/M - Museveni era

Participants claimed that, when the NRM took over, the government allowed them to keep their guns for protection against other ethnic groups and for protection of their livestock. Since gun ownership had been authorised, the sale of guns as well as bullets was done openly, and even missions to raid were discussed openly without fear, leading to increased tensions in the region. During this period, traditional authority, hijacked by the gun, further collapsed. So, also the time period of 1987 to 1999 was one of total chaos, characterised by lawlessness, reckless killing and insecurity, until NRM government launched the disarmament (Muhereza and Otim 2002:120-164, OPM 2007:7, Mkutu 2006:63-64, Mkutu 2008:103-104).

The majority of the participants trace the emergence of intra-communal violence to after Amin's downfall from 1979. After the acquisition of guns, lawlessness prevailed. This worsened the local security level as raids

509974-L-bw-isimon
Processed on: 1-5-2017

reached the level of sub-county versus sub-county. One respondent said that it was safer for a stranger to move about than for a native of the region. The participants also highlighted that the violence at the community-level was not of just recent times, but that with the introduction of the gun it was reshaped in nature and lethality.

As discussed in earlier sections, the relationship between the Karamojong and the successive governments of Uganda has been one of mistrust – with the governments opposed to their pastoral way of life and its implications. However, judging from the participants' views, the conflict between the governments of Uganda and the Karamojong has not had a political agenda. One of the key respondents noted this, when he said;

> *"…the Karamojong have not had a political agenda against the Government of Uganda at any one time. But they are only provoked to war when their stakes are challenged. For example, when you want to grab their animals or when you tend to be a stranger who is aggressive to them"* (Bishop Abura, Moroto District, 2/09/2014).

Any coercive approach/policy from foreigners that infringes on their usual, everyday life, putting them or their livestock at stake, meets resistance. Over the years, this contributed to the failure of the Karamojong to identify with the successive governments of Uganda. This was also influenced by coercive disarmament approaches that were adopted by the state actors and forced the communal groups to retaliate. During an FGD in the Napak District, in Lokopo Sub-county, one of the participants shared his experience during the disarmament:

> *"They tied me to a tree using my hands and legs. My stomach was facing the ground. I just wanted to die. For the whole day! Some people, the ropes cut off their hands and legs.They are lame now"* (FGD 2, Papa Abia, Napak District – Lokopo sub-county, 7 October 2014).

The participants constantly referred to the soldiers as *'snakes'* and attacking them was *"going were the snake is"*. Participants claimed they would clash with the soldiers so as to get their guns and uniforms, to be used during raids, as one participant noted. They also mentioned that, whenever community members would hear of a clash between soldiers, they would run towards them, in the hope of acquiring a gun during times when guns

509974-L-bw-isimon
Processed on: 1-5-2017
PDF page: 146

were scarce: "*One bullet, one head. Aim to shoot the head so that the combat outfit is not destroyed"* (FGD 4, youth 4, 19/09/2014, Moroto Municipality).

With the disarmament programme, meant to help curb the insecurity in the region, the NRM government significantly increased its engagement in the region. The state violence against the Karamojong, during the implementation of its coercive disarmament strategy known as 'cordon and search', has been cited in the region as alleged human rights violations by the UPDF. During these exercises, UPDF soldiers took part in unlawful killings, random detention and torture, and theft and destruction of civilian property. A report by Human Rights Watch noted that:

> "…in December 2006 and January 2007, UPDF soldiers shot and killed 10 individuals, including three children, as they attempted to flee during cordon and search operations. Only one of the individuals killed was reported to have fired on the soldiers… In four armed confrontations with Karamojong communities between October 2006 and February 2007, at least two of which were preceded by cordon and search operations, dozens of civilians were killed, while the lives of an unknown number of UPDF soldiers were also claimed" (HRW, September 2007: 3-4).

Furthermore, the UPDF was noted for randomly shooting at unarmed civilians, according to that same report by Human Rights Watch:

> "I heard the army vehicles and just ran out. I was trying to run but I saw that the soldiers were already there surrounding the (homestead). I didn't even know I was shot until I laid down and saw the blood" (B.P., young girl shot during the disarmament operation, Kaabong District, December 2006; quoted in HRW, September 2007: 2).

Ben Knighton also criticizes the actions of the UPDF in Karamoja. He claimed that the crude disarmament approach: "…will accomplish the ethnocide of the nomadic pastoralist culture of his forefathers, if not their genocide" (2003:450).

> "…an army contingent went in to all the homes to flush out the whole population with batons, including a woman whose umbilical cord had not yet been cut from childbirth. Children were beaten; small girls, a harmless, mentally-ill girl, the old, the blind, the lame, and infirm bore the scars nineteen days later. Bones and skulls were

509974-L-bw-isimon
Processed on: 1-5-2017

> broken. Tweleve women were raped. A six –year old-boy was killed, but hidden with grass on the hill. A young man was bayonetted and hidden under a rock at the top of the hill…A youth was stabbed in the groin. The army stopped the LC5 Chairman, the senior locally elected representative, from going there. All were made to lie in the dry-season sun from 6 a.m to 4 p.m" (Knighton 2003:440).

Tracking the state policies and actions of government troops in Karamoja from the Protectorate Government to the current NRM Government. Ben Knighton concludes that that the UPDF army, views the Karamojong as "an old enemy unworthy of respect" (Knighton, 2003:449). He also notes that some elements within the army were using the disarmament exercise as "an opportunity to exact revenge on the feared and despised pastoralists, taking their cattle, persecuting, and killing" (Knighton 2003:447), because of the distress they had inflicted on the neighboring ethnic groups of Lango, Acholi, Teso and Sebei among other. This distress has been as a result of cross district conflicts for decade's involving series of cattle raids, looting, rape, reckless killing and consequent displacement of thousands of people in to IDPs in these regions (Global IDP database report 2005:42-5).

5.3 Conclusion

In conclusion, this historical account and the field findings reveal that the region experienced various kinds of conflict; conflict between the Karamojong and cross-border ethnic groups such as the Turkana and Pokot, conflict within Karamojong ethnic groups such as the Bokora, Matheniko, Pian and Jie, conflict between the Karamojong and state actors as well as cross-district conflict between Karamoja and neighbouring-district ethnic groups such as the Iteso, Sabiny, Langi and Acholi. The following chapters will synthesize both cases to understand the interconnections between the communal violence in Karamoja and civil war in northern Uganda.

509974-L-bw-isimon
Processed on: 1-5-2017
PDF page: 148

6 A Critique of the Conceptualisation: Civil War and Communal Violence

6.1 Introduction

The structure of this chapter is as follows. The next section revisits the UCDP conceptualisation of civil war and communal violence. This is followed by a discussion on how this conceptualisation aligns with conflict progression models, in relation to the course of the armed conflict in Northern and North eastern region of Uganda. This, in turn, is followed by a discussion of the interlinkages and direct spillover effects of either type of conflict on the other. Finally, this is followed by a discussion about state intervention in communal violence, an issue quite significant as the state is one of the key differentiating features in the conceptualisation of these conflict typologies.

6.2 A critique using UCDP datasets

According to the UCDP conflict data programme, the conceptualisation of civil war and communal violence is specific, simple and clear. What is important to note is the distinction in the specific features of each conflict typology. These two conflict categories are both intra-state typologies of conflict, but differ at various levels, as discussed in Chapter 3.

As defined earlier, the way 'civil war' has been defined, it involves the state while 'communal violence' does not at any level. What is also significant to note is that, these definitions assume a sort of linear conflict staging, which, however, does not capture the dynamics involved as these conflicts become protracted, and change form and direction over time, as highlighted in Chapters 4 and 5. These violent conflicts have various variations in their development as well as in the actors involved. They do not

509974-L-bw-isimon
Processed on: 1-5-2017
PDF page: 149

evolve with a clear series of proceeding stages as suggested by the linear conflict progression model. The pathways of these conflicts are full of uneven, transformative, non-linear events. Their transition from one stage to the next cannot be subjected to predictable models and conceptualisations that suggest a specific form, direction and duration for each stage. Each stage has varying degrees of complexities as the conflict unfolds. These diverse 'passages' do not follow a prescribed trajectory. The violent conflicts, in all their messiness, do not fit into a simple stage-by-stage model that is within any particular actor's control. These conflicts advance from stage to stage with varying markers signaling a change in form and direction. These complexities engender numerous variations from a straight progression model.

As earlier noted, conflict progresses through a number of phases. From a latent stage, they can be triggered off by particular events leading to the beginning of violent conflict. As presented in the historical background and field findings, cattle rustling was a cultural practice by the Karamojong since the pre-colonial era, so clashes with neighbouring pastoral groups were nothing new. Even after the resettlement of the Karamojong in the Karamoja region within specific/recognisable counties such as the Matheniko, Pian, or Bokora County, they still continued to experience and practice cattle rustling from and to neighbouring, cross-border ethnic groups within the vicinity (Barber 1968, Muhwereza and Otim 2002:160, Gray 2000:408-412, Knighton 2004:433-9). The communal clashes between the Karamojong and the neighbouring groups can be categorised as communal violence, which falls under the non-state conflict category.

In the northern region, the latent stage from which tensions emerged is traced to 1986, when panic and fear among ex-UNLA soldiers triggered off rebel activity under the UPDA against the NRA, after the latter took over power in 1986. This happened when NRA forces, deployed in Acholiland, began committing atrocities against the Acholi population (Gersony 1997:22, Lamwaka 2002:28). These were the early phases of both conflicts. However, the nature of the traditional conflict between the Karamojong and their neighbours changed significantly after the overthrow of Idi Amin in 1979, as the historical account and field findings suggest as discussed in details in Chapters 4 and 5.

Attempts to resolve the conflicts in their initial stages were made; a case in point is the 1988 Pece Peace Agreement in Gulu between some

509974-L-bw-isimon
Processed on: 1-5-2017
PDF page: 150

UPDA rebel faction members and the NRA government. However, not all faction members gave up; people like Vincent Otti, and Odong Latek proceeded to join forces with the LRA and continued to fight against the NRA government (Lamwaka 2002:31-33, Doom and Vlassenroot 1999:15). Even in the Karamoja region, when the Turkana from Kenya exerted a lot of pressure on the Matheniko, the latter were literally forced to betray their fellow tribesmen and ally with the Turkana in 1973, in what is still celebrated as the 'Lokiriama Peace Accord' (Gray 2000:411, Muhereza and Otim 2002:120), but – instead - worsened the tensions in the region among the Karamojong. Even when violence further engulfed the region, peace meetings were held between elders, but those were never binding and always short-lived and would be broken whenever the need for cattle would arise.

As noted above, in the absence of immediate resolutions, these conflicts dragged on and escalated further. This negatively affected the relationships between the conflicting parties and shaped their next moves and actions. As noted earlier, the escalation point of the communal violence in north eastern Uganda is traced to the overthrow of Idi Amin in 1979, when the armoury was looted in the Moroto Barracks. The acquisition of guns and ammunition from the armoury triggered an open sub-group conflict amongst the Karamojong (Mkutu 2006:61, Odhiambo 2003:40, Muhwereza and Otim 2002:163-164).

The field findings gave the impression that, after that incident, all hell broke loose as retaliation led to counter-raids and reckless killings among and within the Matheniko, Bokora, Pian and other ethnic groups in the neighbouring districts and across the border in Kenya and Sudan – sparking off massive, unprecedented cattle rustling and indiscriminate killings of both young and old within the region (Odhiambo 2003:54, Kaduuli 2008:4, Gray 2000:410-12).

The looting of the armoury evolved into clashes between the Karamojong and cross-border ethnic groups, conflict between the Karamojong and neighbouring ethnic groups; cross-district conflicts, conflict among the Karamojong sub-groups and conflict within specific sub-groups (Gray 2000:411, Odhiambo 2003:51-58). Nathalie Gomes refers to the clashes between the Karamojong themselves and other ethnic groups as intra and inter-ethnic conflict (Gomes 2002:245).

509974-L-bw-isimon
Processed on: 1-5-2017

Table 6.1 UCDP non-state conflict dataset for communal violence in north eastern Uganda

SIDE A	SIDE B	Year	Best Fatality	Low Fatality	High Fatality	Location
Karimojong	**Pokot**	1998	134	134	134	Uganda
Bokora(K'jong)	**Matheniko**	1999	352	352	572	Uganda
Matheniko (K'jong)	**Pokot**	1999	36	36	36	Uganda
Jie	**Turkana**	1999	40	40	40	Kenya
Karamojong	**Pokot**	2000	60	60	60	Uganda
Dodoth	**Turkana**	2000	70	70	70	Uganda
Bokora(K'jong	**Jie, Matheniko**	2000	48	48	48	Uganda
Bokora (Kjong)	**Jie, Matheniko**	2000	213	213	213	Uganda
Bokora(K'jong)	**Matheniko**	2000	60	60	60	Uganda
Dodoth	**Jie**	2000	135	135	135	Uganda
Dodoth	**Toposa, Turkana**	2000	43	43	43	Uganda
Dodoth	**Jie, Matheniko**	2000	33	33	33	Uganda
Iteso	**Kara-mojong**	2001	32	32	32	Uganda
Pokot	**Sabiny**	2003	30	30	50	Uganda
Bokora(K'jong)	**Pian (K'jong)**	2003	30	30	30	Uganda
Bokora (K'jong)	**Jie**	2003	102	102	102	Uganda
Karamojong	**Pokot**	2003	53	53	53	Uganda
Pian(K'jong)	**Pokot**	2003	34	34	34	Uganda
Jie	**Matheniko**	2005	26	26	26	Uganda
Dodoth	**Jie**	2005	30	30	30	Uganda
Bokora(K'jong)	**Pian (K'jong)**	2005	28	28	28	Uganda
Bokora (Kjong)	**Jie**	2007	34	34	34	Uganda
Jie	**Turkana**	2008	57	57	57	Kenya
Dodoth	**Jie**	2009	38	38	38	Uganda

Source: UCDP Non-state conflict dataset v2.5-2014

http://www.pcr.uu.se/research/ucdp/datasets/replication_datasets/

509974-L-bw-isimon
Processed on: 1-5-2017

All these violent conflicts, involving the different groups mentioned, encompass what the Uppsala conflict code book classifies as non-state conflicts, or more specifically, communal violence. However, the reckless killings of unarmed civilians within the Karamojong sub-groups and against other ethnic groups, that later emerged, take up the classification of one-sided violence. Though this is highlighted by the key informants and several scholars who have written about the conflict in the region, it is not noted and coded in the Uppsala conflict data programme for non-state conflicts.

Tables 6.1 and 6.2 show the various conflicts among the Karamojong, with other ethnic groups from neighbouring districts and with groups from across the border in Kenya.

With regard to the course of the armed conflict in northern Uganda, the escalation and entrapment phases were characterised by the LRA as well as the NRA forces launching campaigns of one-sided violence against the local population of Acholiland from 1989 onwards. This brutal campaign involved abducting civilians, setting villages ablaze, ambushing vehicles, and mutilating people by cutting off their lips, nose, arms and legs, etc. (OCHA/IRIN 2004:10, Doom and Vlassenroot 1999:26, Dolan 2009:57-63). What is important to note is that the UCDP one-sided dataset codes one-sided violence by the government of Uganda only in 1990/91 and codes the LRA against the civilians from 1989 throughout the whole course of the armed conflict. It codes high and low fatalities varying over the years committed by solely the LRA against civilians in Uganda, southern Sudan, and later stretching out to the DRC and CAR (UCDP One-Sided Violence Dataset v1.4-2014, 1989-2013, see also Table 6.2). Yet, according to the field findings, the state was one of the main perpetrators of violence against unarmed civilians throughout the course of the armed conflict in the north (Dolan 2009:61-62).

As noted in Chapter 5, some of the participants mentioned that the number of people who died as a result of attacks from rebels and UPDF soldiers did not match up to the number of people who died as a result of insufficient services provided by the government in the camps in which they were concentrated.

509974-L-bw-isimon
Processed on: 1-5-2017

Table 6.2 UCDP one-sided violence in Uganda

Actor Name	Year	Best Fatality	Low Fatality	High Fatality	Location
GoU	1990	80	80	80	Uganda
GoU	1991	59	59	59	Uganda
UPA	1990	40	40	40	Uganda
LRA	1989	26	26	36	Uganda
LRA	1990	63	63	63	Uganda
LRA	1991	102	102	102	Uganda
LRA	1995	275	275	285	Uganda, Sudan
LRA	1996	586	586	666	Sudan, Uganda
LRA	1997	452	452	452	Uganda, Sudan
LRA	1998	105	105	105	Uganda,Sudan
LRA	1999	33	33	56	Uganda, Sudan
LRA	2000	94	94	104	Uganda, Sudan
LRA	2001	60	60	69	Uganda, Sudan
LRA	2002	1054	1054	1077	Uganda, Sudan
LRA	2003	635	635	922	Uganda, Sudan
LRA	2004	957	916	1050	Uganda, Sudan
LRA	2005	304	304	308	Uganda, Sudan
LRA	2006	47	47	62	Uganda, DRC, Sudan
LRA	2007	62	62	62	Sudan, Uganda
LRA	2008	732	732	1065	DRC, Sudan, CAR
LRA	2009	1352	1316	1422	Sudan, DRC, CAR
LRA	2010	434	424	462	Sudan, CAR, DRC
LRA	2012	64	64	64	CAR, DRC, South Sudan
LRA	2013	45	45	49	DRC, CAR, South Sudan

Source: UCDP one-sided violence dataset v1.4-2014
GoU – Government of Uganda
LRA –Lord's Resistance Army
http://www.pcr.uu.se/research/ucdp/datasets/replication_datasets/

509974-L-bw-isimon
Processed on: 1-5-2017

Chris Dolan argues that the state should be held accountable for the enormous number of people who died in the IDP camps, which he refers to as *'social torture"* and likens these 'protected villages' to concentration camps (Dolan 2009:109-110). He notes that for the people of northern Uganda with the alarming number of death these so called protected viallages, "…were nolonger just a feature of the war zone for the majority of the population, they were the war zone" (Dolan 2009:109). The architecture of IDP camps put civilians more at risk, with poor living conditions and diseases; the number of deaths documented were higher than battle-related ones. Jan Egeland, the United Nations Chief Humanitarian officer, after touring the camps, described the situation as "the biggest neglected humanitarian emergency in the world" (The Guardian, 22 October 2004).

The "*Health and Mortality Survey among Internally Displaced Persons in Gulu, Kitgum and Pader District, Northern Uganda*", carried out by the World Health Organisation and the Uganda Ministry of Health argue that it was an extreme case of structural violence. According to their findings, an estimated 1,000 excess deaths a week, was due to the appalling conditions in the camps and diseases such as cholera, Ebola and Aids (WHO, MOH 2005). In an Unobtrusive way, these situations produced far greater number of deaths compared to those caused by the LRA.

Another survey, carried out by a team of British and Ugandan psychiatrists from the London School of Tropical Medicine and Makerere University's Faculty of Medicine, established that "the prevalence of post-traumatic stress disorder in northern Uganda is higher than that ever recorded anywhere in the world" according to the New Vision Newspaper article *"Northern Uganda has Most Depressed in the World"* (Saturday Vision, 16 August 2008). The report noted that IDP conditions produced traumatic stress rates among the people that were much higher than those registered in Darfur or Iraq. And were attributed to the lack of essential basic services such as food, water, and shelter. Such indirect deaths are not captured by the UCDP, as they do not fall in the categories of direct battle fatalities.

After the unsuccessful peace negotiations in 1993/94, the armed conflict acquired yet another level, when it moved beyond the borders of northern Uganda into Sudan. The LRA obtained support from the Sudanese government and a base from which to continue its activities. With the loss of formal communication channels, the parties to the conflict got entrapped in a retaliatory and counter-coercion cycle, which deepened the

509974-L-bw-isimon
Processed on: 1-5-2017 PDF page: 155

conflict. The LRA and UPDF were entrapped in an action-reaction cycle. The LRA also engaged in battle field confrontations with other rebel factions such as the SPLA and also carried out attacks on villages and town centres in southern Sudan and northern Uganda. After a series of clashes and accusations in 2000, a peace agreement was signed between the Ugandan and Sudanese government. This agreement culminated in a joint operation of the rebel faction SPLA and the Ugandan army (UPDF) against the LRA (Atkinson 2009:8, Okumu-Alya 2009:6-7, Kustenbauder 2010:468). This event introduced different conflict categories within what was a single conflict. The LRA and SPLA were highly organised rebel factions and the combat between them is in a non-state conflict category: Organizational level 1 (Sundberg et al. 2012: 353). As the conflict progressed, both rebel factions were receiving support from their allies, state actors Sudan and Uganda.

The conflict transformed to an inter-state conflict since both governments deployed active troops to engage in combat alongside the rebel factions that were fighting against their respective governments. In addition to that, the situation could also be categorised as an extra-state armed conflict, since the Ugandan army was fighting the LRA outside its own territory (Gleditsch et al. 2002:619). However, though events unfolded the way they did, according to the field findings, only a civil war was coded in northern Uganda. And it was not until 2005 that any internationalised conflict wass coded by the UCDP data programme, as shown in Table 6.3 below.

As noted earlier, this cross-border cooperation crippled the LRA's military capacity and led to the loss of a base for the LRA rebel faction. The peace deal granted the Ugandan government permission to pursue the LRA into Sudan. In 2002, a joint operation, entitled 'Operation Iron Fist', between Uganda and Sudan, was launched to expel/level-out the LRA from Sudan. Consequently, the LRA retaliated by committing horrendous atrocities on civilians in both Sudan and Uganda. This ushered in unprecedented attacks and abductions as well as intensified violence and insecurity in the region, which led to the displacement of thousands of people who sought refuge in Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) camps (Lomo and Hovil 2004: 53, Atkinson 2009:7, Okumu-Alya 2009:15-24).

509974-L-bw-isimon
Processed on: 1-5-2017
PDF page: 156

Table 6.3 Uppsala Conflict Data on armed conflict in northern Uganda

Year	Parties	Intensity Level	Type
1986-1989	Government of Uganda vs HSM, NRA, UPDA, UPA, Lord's Army, LRA	war	Internal armed conflict
1990– 1995 *1992 UPA only	Government of Uganda vs LRA, UPA	Minor	Internal armed conflict
1996	ADF, LRA, WNBF	War	Internal armed conflict
1997 – 2001 *1999 ADF	ADF, LRA	Minor	Internal armed Conflict
2002	ADF, LRA	War	Internal armed Conflict
2003	LRA	Minor	Internal armed Conflict
2004	LRA	War	Internal armed Conflict
2005	LRA	Minor	Internationalised armed conflict
2006	LRA	Minor	Internal armed conflict
2008 - 2014	LRA	Minor	Internationalised armed conflict

Source: UCDP/PRIO Armed Conflict Dataset, V.4 – 2015, 1946 -2014

http://www.pcr.uu.se/research/ucdp/datasets/replication_datasets/

In 2003, the LRA incursions into the neighbouring districts of Teso and Lango in the northern and eastern part of Uganda, in the districts of Lira, Apac, Katakwi, Soroti and Kaberamaido, resulted in several hundred deaths and abductions of (mainly) children, and also pushed thousands into IDPs (Lomo and Hovil 2004:51-58). Due to the UPDF's inability to cope with the events, this development led to the formation of paramilitary groups / local militias, known as 'Amuka' or 'Rhino Boys' in Lango and 'Arrow Boys' in the Teso region.

The UCDP non-state conflict datasets code only Arrow Boys vs LRA as seen in the table 6.4 (below). The government, against the idea of them operating as independent militias, for security reasons, since most of the recruits were former rebels from the Teso-based defunct Uganda people's

509974-L-bw-isimon
Processed on: 1-5-2017

Army (UPA), opted to deploy them with UPDF units, to protect civilians. The spread of the war was articulated by many as occurring along ethnic lines; it created antagonism as well along those lines, since it was regarded as 'an Acholi war' (Lomo and Hovil 2004:58). However, the clashes between the LRA and these paramilitary groups are classified as a non-state conflict: organizational level 1(Sundberg et al. 2012:353), and this was before they were assigned to fight alongside the Ugandan army.

Table 6.4 UCDP non-state conflict between LRA and SPLA

Side A	Side B	Year	Low Fatality	High Fatality	Best Fatality	Location
LRA	SPLM/A	1995	36	36	36	Sudan
LRA	SPLM/A	1996	152	152	152	Sudan
LRA	SPLM/A	1997	100	100	100	Sudan
LRA	SPLM/A	1998	58	58	58	Sudan
LRA	SPLM/ALRA	2004	142	142	142	Sudan
Arrow Boys	LRA	2003	71	71	71	Uganda
Bangadi Militia		2008	27	36	27	DRC

Source: UCDP Non-state conflict dataset v.2.5-2014

http://www.pcr.uu.se/research/ucdp/datasets/replication_datasets/

In addition to the above, after the Operation Iron Fist and its incursions in the north eastern districts of Uganda, the LRA relocated to the Garamba forest in the DRC, which gave the conflict another international dimension, as it expanded from Uganda and Sudan to the DRC, and to the Central African Republic as well (Atkinson 2009:13, Dunn 2010:50).

With regard to the escalation-entrapment phase of the conflict in the north eastern region, the field findings suggest that the violence, combined with insecurity, lasted throughout the 80s and 90s, until the sixth parliament, on 15 March 2000, passed a resolution to disarm the region. This was after about 400-500 warrior deaths had been registered among the Bokora and the Matheniko, between July and September 1999. These killings had been masterminded and perpetrated by Bakora and Matheniko warlords (OPM report January, 2007:9-12).

509974-L-bw-isimon
Processed on: 1-5-2017
PDF page: 158

After phase one and two, a disarmament phase three, was launched in March 2006, which involved military intervention in a bid to clear the region of illegal weaponry. However, due to the militant and crude disarmament approach used, many civilian deaths occurred as a result of occasional combat between government soldiers and the warriors. These occasional clashes were found to be the result of self-defence, or of an effort to recover the weapons or confiscated cattle, or of retaliation for harsh treatment leading to deaths on both sides (HRW 2007:36-64, Safer World 2010:39). The region had experienced what was referred to as communal violence, but later the presence or intervention of the state and its army as well as paramilitary forces that engaged in combat with local warriors, leading to deaths, presented a whole new feature of the conflict in the region.

The UCDP data programme emphasizes that non–state conflicts should be between groups of the same level of organisation and no state or government should be involved at any level or be the main target. The national army is of a higher organisational level than the informally organised groups within Karamoja. When a highly organised group like the national army engages with a relatively unorganised armed force, this can be problematic in so far as it leads us to question what forms of conflict issues are considered in the definition of such encounters.

During the disarmament phases, events occurred of one-sided violence, conducted by the army, which led to the killing of unarmed civilians, and caused deaths on the side of the army as well. In a newspaper article entitled "900 killed during disarmament", in the Daily Monitor, it was noted that:

> "…according to a report released…by the UPDF, 623 civilians and 269 soldiers were killed either in crossfire or ambushes, which brought the army under the spotlight over alleged human rights abuses as they carried out disarmament" (Kolyangha 2011).

Despite how events were recorded in the north eastern region and how the conflicts unfolded, the UCDP did not code any incidences of clashes between the army and the local warriors, nor did it code the one-sided violence inflicted on the people of Karamoja through the disarmament exercise carried out by the UPDF. This phase of the conflict was intended to be the de-escalation phase, involving the disarmament of

509974-L-bw-isimon
Processed on: 1-5-2017 PDF page: 159

an armed population, but, quite unique from what usually ensues round-table peace agreements, combat was part and parcel of it.

The final stage of a conflict is the de-escalation phase, which is usually composed of peace talks and resolutions leading to settlement[35]. When the LRA re-positioned to the DRC, the Juba peace talks were set in motion. The initiative for these peace talks was taken in 2006 by the LRA and the NRM; the talks went on for two years, hosted by the government of South Sudan, but hit a dead end when LRA leader Joseph Kony three times in a row refused to turn up and sign the agreement. This led to the merging of forces; the UPDF, SPLA and DRC armed forces, in an operation entitled "Operation Lightening Thunder", tried to capture him but failed. With no victory declared by either side, the LRA and its leaders are still at large, while in the north eastern region disarmament resulted in the collection of a massive number of guns, which brought some 'peace' to the region (Atkinson 2009:13, Dunn 2010:50).

As illustrated above, these two conflict categories, evolved displaying traits of different conflict types throughout their course. These conflicts were not static, as depicted by how they have been conceptualised and categorised. They evolved into narrower and wider conflict categories and ran the course of numerous conflict progression models back and forth. As the study reveals, the rigidities applied in the definition of these conflict types should be checked and questioned, because the dynamics of some violent conflicts, such as those in North and North eastern region of Uganda, cannot be captured in these rigid definitions. It is also important to note that the failure to acknowledge the role of significant local and external actors involved in these conflicts undermines their role in perpetuating them. The way these conflicts are coded and categorized plays a part in casting blame on other actors involved.

[35]Ho-won Jeong argues that, if no agreement is reached, the conflict may escalate again, or de-escalate. He further notes that if peace efforts between the opposing sides fail, re-escalation may occur, hence creating a stalemate", with none of the sides victorious and with none willing to compromise, the situation can endure for long as one of the parties is optimistic of victory (Jeong 2008:98-99).

509974-L-bw-isimon
Processed on: 1-5-2017
PDF page: 160

6.3 The complex "spill over effect" between these conflicts.

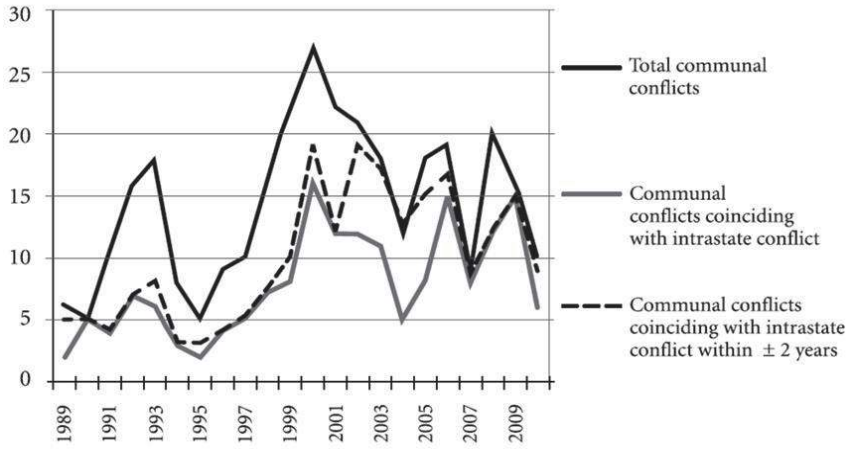
These violent conflicts spanned on concurrently for decades. It is important to understand the complex dynamics and connections between these conflicts; how the pathways of either conflict impacted on the course of the other.

This is significant because, since the launch of the Uppsala Conflict Data Project, the first of its kind to provide systematic global data on group-to-group violence (Sundberg et al. 2012:351-361), attention has been given to the need to understand the relationship between communal violence and civil war. According to Brosche and Elfversson (2012:47), this has been the case especially since the UCDP non-state conflict data and state-based conflict data combined showed that, between 1989 and 2010, over 55% of active communal violence coincided with an ongoing civil war. They also noted that within that very same period, on average, 68% of all communal violence erupted in countries that had experienced civil war within two years after or before the outbreak of communal violence. Furthermore, they noted that, on average, 81% of all communal violence was witnessed in countries that were experiencing civil war at the same time. This has been the case with Uganda, which has had different types of violent conflicts, running concurrently for decades.

The spill over effects of concurrently running conflicts is an issue that a number of scholars have endured to understand especially in relation to the onset of wider or smaller conflicts as well as its contribution to the protraction of a conflict (Jeong 2008, Murdoch & Sandler 2002, Millett 2002). Khadiagala (2006) notes that most of the conflicts in Africa have been ignited and reignited by instability in neigbouring states. This is the case because such occurrances can impact on the dynamics of other conflicts. This can also be the case for conflicts within the same country, "The simultaneous occurrence of multiple conflicts can generate unexpected effects in the course of each" (Jeong 2008:126). This is because, "As conflicts do not often have clear temporal and spatial boundaries, they are interlocked in terms of their impact on each other's dynamics" (Jeong 2008:117, See also Murdoch & Sandler 2002).

509974-L-bw-isimon
Processed on: 1-5-2017

Figure 6.1: Communal violence and civil wars, 1989-2010



Source: Brosche & Elfversson (2012:47) – UCDP Non-State Conflict Dataset v.2.3-2011 and UCDP/PRIO (Peace Research Institute Oslo) Armed Conflict Dataset v.4-2011

http://www.pcr.uu.se/research/ucdp/datasets/replication_datasets/

According to the field findings, the communities in these conflict-affected regions had similar structural conditions, tracing back to the colonial era. These conditions as discussed in earlier Chapters, played a huge role in how tensions unfolded in the two regions. The identities of the communities had been shaped by the administrative policies of the Protectorate Government, and this had important implications for the way events unravelled in both regions.

With that in mind, the role of politics and political struggles at the national level, and how they affected both regions, should be taken into consideration. What is significant to note is that, the group to group violence in Karamoja had spanned decades. And the political upheavals at the national level affected this conflict through out. Later, as the field findings reveal, state policies in relation to Karamoja besides the obvious effect of constant military coups and political instability, affected Karamoja which in turn had implications for neighbouring districts notably Acholiland and Teso. The effect the group to group violence had on the armed conflict in north Uganda is traced even before its onset.

509974-L-bw-isimon
Processed on: 1-5-2017

The onset of hostilities after 1979, when Idi Amin was overthrown, and the recurring coups that characterised the political scene, affected both the northern and north eastern regions. For the Karamoja region, this led to the proliferation of guns and ammunitions, which played a huge role in redefining the nature of the conflict. This proliferation came about because, as noted earlier, the military barrack was abandoned by the army and looted by the local communities within vicinity. This is because the acquisition of guns and ammunitions by the local people, who had previously been using mainly bow and arrows plus spears, armed them to the teeth, and drastically changed the nature of the conflict in the region[36]. Such connections between the tensions at the national level and the way in which the conflict in the north eastern region evolved should not be underestimated, because that played an important role in the history of the violence in Karamoja.

In addition, the political instability that followed the overthrow of Idi Amin in 1979, led to the guerrilla warfare, from 1980 to 1986, in the Luweero triangle. This guerrilla war was fought by the Obote II government against numerous rebel groups such as Dr. Kanyira Andrew's Uganda's Freedom Movement/Army(UFM/A), Brigadier Moses Ali's Uganda's National Rescue Front (UNRF), General Lumayo's Former Uganda National Army (FUNA) (Kutesa 2006, Nsubuga 1999).

These political upheavals provided another opportunity for the Karamojong to acquire weaponry and ammunition. As noted earlier, when Tito Okello Lutwa took over government in 1985, he recruited, trained, armed and transported some Karamojong to the Luweero triangle to help the government fight the rebel factions[37]. However, when the NRA took over power in 1986, these Karamojong fled and returned home with their guns, just like the ex-UNLA soldiers. This one-way shift in the possession of guns and ammunition not only affected the Karamoja region, but the entire northern region as well (Otunnu 1987, Ofcansky 1996)

Furthermore, when the NRA took over power in 1986, it officialised the ownership of guns in the Karamoja region, and even provided the Karamojong with extra guns to protect themselves and their cattle. This disastrous move worsened the situation of gun proliferation in the region,

[36] Interview with LC 5, Moroto District, Mark Aoel Musooka (10/10/2015)

[37] Interview with Benedict Lokiru (16/10/2014)

509974-L-bw-isimon
Processed on: 1-5-2017

and intensified cattle rustling and insecurity in the region and neighbouring districts (Gray 2000:410-412). Some participants suggested that the government took this decision, because they had a lot of rebel factions to deal with and did not want an additional ethnic group to worry about. Sverker Finnstrom writes:

> "Within two years of Museveni's takeover, some twenty–seven different rebel groups were reported to be resisting the new government…In effect, the battle zone simply shifted location, from central Uganda toward the north and the country's other peripheries" (Finnstrom 2008:69).

It appeared as though the violent conflict in Karamoja was insignificant to the NRA government that had just taken power. But, it would also make sense to argue that the Karamojong were fighting a proxy war for the state by indirectly distabilising the neighbouring rebel communities of Acholi and Teso, which were fighting the NRA government (Doom and Vlassenroot 1999:12, Henriques 2000:47, Knighton 2004:447-449). Besides encouraging the Karamojong to own guns, after he was sworn in, Museveni disbanded all the tribal militias which guarded the borders of the districts neighbouring Karamoja against Karamojong cattle rustlers. Most of the ethnic groups neighbouring Karamoja from the north and eastern Uganda were the dominant groups in the UNLA that was fighting the NRA in Luweero. This action was interpreted as a sort of punishment by the NRA government[38].

Since cattle were a major economic and cultural commodity, providing dowries and day-to-day necessities, they were a symbol of prosperity and wealth in these communities (Henriques 2000:47, Gersony 1997:15, 27, Doom and Vlassenroot 1999:14). The turning of a blind eye by the government to what the Karamojong were doing to these 'enemy groups' was a deliberate policy to intimidate and impoverish the Acholi.

With no security structure at their borders, the Karamojong entered and raided the eastern (Teso) and northern (Acholi) region clean of livestock, to an extent never experienced before, and with no state intervention to calm the situation (Henriques, 2000:47). Doom and Vlassenroot in line with that note that:

[38] Interview with Obwona Byron (02/12/2014)

509974-L-bw-isimon
Processed on: 1-5-2017

> "The Karamojong turned towards the government in Kampala and obtained weapons for 'self-defence'. In 1987, however, the Karamojong suddenly launched massive raids through Kitgum and eastern Gulu districts, and removed almost the entire herd" (1999: 12).

In spite of the argument raised above, President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni argued that demobilisation of these combat forces was in the interest of fairness. According to him:

> "During the Obote II regime, UPC politicians complicated the problem (cattle rustling) further by creating tribal militia in Acholi and Teso which, in turn, raided Karamoja and counter-plundered" (Museveni 1996:58).

To shield himself from compensation claims from these ethnic groups that lost their cattle in raids by the Karamojong, President Museveni argued that for his new government, military resources were limited, bearing in mind, especially, the alarming number of insurgency groups that had cropped up (Museveni 1996:177). Within months after the NRA takeover, livestock in Teso had been cut down from 452,563 heads of cattle in 1980 to 35,000 in 1989. Only 7% of the estimated total was left (Oxfam 1993:13). The northern region was said to have been swept clean of almost all its livestock. Doom and Vlassenroot note that:

> "As of 1997, both districts (Gulu and Kitgum) combined no longer owned more man 2 percent of the original stock. Economically, this was a catastrophe. In an already backward area, it represented a capital loss of nearly 825 million, a vast economic blow" (1999: 12).

For the people in the northern region who had lost their jobs in the uniformed services, the subsequent loss of the cattle that had formed the basis for much of their livelihood must have added greatly to their bitterness and grief.

In July 2005, leaders from the Acholi sub-region formed the Acholi War Debt Claimants Association (AWDCA), to seek compensation from the government of Uganda for the property and livestock lost during the NRA rebel insurgency. According to the Uganda radio, " The war debt claimants said they lost property and livestock, valued in billions of shillings, stolen by officers of the National Resistance Army between 1986 and 1989" (Alex Otto, 13 February 2015, Uganda Radio Network, "Acholi War Claimants Appeal Ruling in Battle for Compensation").

509974-L-bw-isimon
Processed on: 1-5-2017

Represented by Kampala Associates Advocates, the government, in an out-of-court settlement, agreed to compensate the AWDCA with an estimated 1.4 trillion shillings. This was to compensate over 20,000 war debt claimants who had lost property and especially livestock in the Acholi sub-region[39] (Ronnie Layoo & Cissy Makumbi, 13 June 2013, The Daily Monitor, "War debt claimants faint over cash compensation").

According to the Uganda Bureau of Statistics, the Uganda National Household Survey 2005/2006 observed that the northern region (north and north eastern Uganda as a whole) which was expected to have the highest number of livestock, had the least number of cattle, pigs, goats, except for sheep, compared to other regions of the country (UNHS 2005/2006:69-77). According to the report, the central region had the highest with 2 million (31.5% of the country's total number of cattle) indigenous cattle and 198,000 (15.7%) exotic cattle, the eastern region had 1.6 million (25.5%) indigenous cattle and 151,000 (12%) exotic cattle, the western region 1.4 million (22.6%) indigenous cattle and 890,000 (the highest number of all 4 regions) exotic cattle (70.5%), while the northern region had the fewest, with 1.3 million (20.3%) indigenous cattle and 22,000 (1.8%) exotic cattle (UNHS 2005/2006:69-77). The survey also noted that: "…the northern region, which was expected to have the highest number of cattle, had the least" and further noted that this could have been due to the civil war in northern Uganda and to cases of underreporting in Karamoja (UNHS 2005/2006:69).

As clearly noted in Chapter 4, key informants were convinced that the NRA government was behind the drastic loss of cattle in the northern region. The economic crisis was caused by the widespread cattle rustling in Teso, which demoralised the Teso-based insurgency group UPA (Uganda People's Army) that had risen up against the NRA Government. The Acholi were provoked by the circumstances to join insurgency groups in the region. Cattle raids impoverished the region, and the situation was compounded by atrocities and human rights abuses by the state forces (Doom and Vlassenroot 1999:12). These conflicts had connections, especially in relation to the economic and political impact the Karamoja raids had on both the Acholi and Teso people. Such events were noted

[39] The Daily Monitor, 23/11/2011, "Government compensation to Acholi war claimants not enough" by Luke Moffett. Two trillion shillings were promised to 30,000 Acholi war claimants instead of the 6 trillion shillings requested

509974-L-bw-isimon
Processed on: 1-5-2017
PDF page: 166

for disgruntlement among the Acholi and consequent voluntary barking of insurgency groups against the NRA Government.

Furthermore, these conflicts were also connected by external conflicts. Ho-won Jeong examines this intricate complex web and concurs with how significant connection to other conflicts can be for local conflicts, "In a long series of struggles, actors, issues, and tempora contexts are intricately linked to each other. The course of a particular conflict is affected by an unpredictable series of circumstances connected to other conflicts" (2008:117). The alliance between the LRA and the government of Sudan, combined with the instability in the Horn of Africa, i.e., in Sudan and Somalia, had its impact on both conflicts. In the Northern and North eastern regions, access to more guns was made easier. In the northern region, the instability in the horn of Africa provided the LRA with an ally, the Sudan Government, which provided support to the activities of the LRA, thus perpetuating the war and also, indirectly, fuelling tensions in the Karamoja region with human trafficking (Atkinson 2009, Mkutu 2008:100, Bevan 2008:1-2).

In addition to the above, the connection and implications of the course of these conflicts were also found within state management of both conflicts. Although a disarmament programme was launched in Karamoja in 2001, the constant and abrupt redeployment of UPDF troops to fight the LRA in 2002 undermined the government's ability to successfully continue disarming the Karamojong and protecting those who had been disarmed from those still armed. A report in the national newspaper The New Vision, under the title *"UPDF leaves Karamoja*", noted that three or four battalions were withdrawn from the Karamoja region:

> "…an estimated 3,000 UPDF soldiers in Karamoja have been withdrawn and re-deployed under Operation Iron Fist to fight Kony in the Pader District" (E. Allio and Wokorach-Oboi, 25 July 2002).

This did also have implications for the armed conflict in the north, because the Ugandan government was unable to use its army to the full capacity to curb the armed conflict in the north. Thus, indirectly, contributed to the longevity of that conflict. Although every conflict may be equally important, simultaneous engagement in several conflicts cuts down on the available time, efforts and resources to be devoted to each of them. Selective, prioritising focus on one particular conflict leaves little regard for the other(s).

509974-L-bw-isimon
Processed on: 1-5-2017 PDF page: 167

Some scholars argue that the government intentionally perpetuated these violent conflicts, as it was, despite the instability in the north, north eastern and western part of the country, still able to send troops on fighting missions in other countries such as Somalia, DRC (Mwenda 2010, Branch 2007, Reno 2002). This is elaborated upon in Chapter 7.

In conclusion, as seen above, there were direct and indirect impacts sustained by both conflicts on the other. These impacts partially contributed to the onset of the armed conflict in northern Uganda, and through their course, contributed to the protraction of group to group violence in Karamoja as well. These violent conflicts were affected by the political struggles at the national level. These struggles co-determined their course and protraction. These complex interlinkages problematise their conceptualization.

The linkages/spillovers of conflicts, as well as the role of some actors in them, such as the state in 'communal violence', tend to be overlooked. This important issue will be discussed below, using the case of the protracted violent conflicts in Karamoja region.

6.4 Communal violence and the state in Karamoja

The UCDP data programme emphasises that group-to-group violence should occur only between groups with a similar level of organisation, and there should be no state involvement at any level:

> "All conflicts in which the state is an actor are excluded from the definition of non-state conflict, regardless of the level of organization of the group that is opposing the Government" (Sundberg et al. 2012: 353).

This is quite questionable in relation to the case of the violent conflicts in Karamoja. As noted in earlier Chapters, group to group conflicts in the Karamoja region has been going on for decades. Though communal vio-

509974-L-bw-isimon
Processed on: 1-5-2017

lence is defined as excluding state involvement, state involvement is inevitable in managing communal violence[40]. The state can be involved in communal violence as a secondary actor, as a third party, or as a spectator.

Elfversson (2013:01) argues that state intervention in local communal violence can be selective (i.e., at certain times or in certain places) as well as strategic. She further notes that some communal violence threatens national and regional peace and may, as well, signal state failure. So states should have a robust interest in containing and resolving communal conflicts, especially since the state has control over, the national army, the national resources and governance structures. Hence, the state is expected to be a critical agent in striving at peaceful conflict resolution and in creating stability in such conflict-affected communities.

Some studies have shown that states can at times be reluctant to intervene, and even when they do, their type of response and intentions may be far from creating stability in the region (Johansson 2011, Fjelde 2009, Abdulrahman and Tar 2008). Other scholars note that a state might intervene in communal violence for different reasons, such as structural, motivational and humanitarian ones (Mullenbach 2005, Haas 2001). These authors also note that this is usually done through the deployment of security forces or peacekeeping forces, to calm the violence or disarm the armed conflicting groups, as well as monitor the situation until peace settlements are reached and implemented.

As discussed in the previous section, state policies by themselves may fuel group to group violence. State policies stemming from corrupt patrimonial political systems, that encourage tribalism, nepotism and sectarianism, and that involve favouring one group over the other, have been instrumental in cultivating grounds for communal violence[41]. First and foremost, the anti-pastoralist administrative policies of the colonial masters and post–independence governments of Uganda served to isolate and marginalise the Karamoja region from the rest of the country.

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[40] Abdulrahman and Tar (2008: 190) argue that "the state, including state institutions and officials, plays a strategic role in the management of domestic conflict… as *mediator* and *peacekeeper* or as *participant,* depending on the dynamics of the conflict"

[41] See Chabal (2009) and Fjelde (2009)

509974-L-bw-isimon
Processed on: 1-5-2017

The creation, in the 1910s, of administrative units /county boundaries, bearing names of sub-groups, restricted the mobility of people and cattle and instilled a sense of belonging to certain groups, erasing the larger Karamojong consciousness. The creation of ethnic and administrative boundaries restricted their seasonal movements. And at the district level, the boundaries created caused the loss of access to vital grazing land in Teso and Sebei, thereby disrupting trading relations. In 1911, Karamoja became a closed district; this prohibited the Karamojong from interacting with their neighbours (who branded Karamoja a 'Human Zoo')[42]. In 1940, large tracts of land were gazetted as forest reserves.

In 1950, in an effort to curb cattle rustling, large numbers of cattle were confiscated. In 1952, vast pieces of grazing land were demarcated as game reserves (British conservation policy). This disrupted the rotational grazing system and restricted the people from hunting for survival. This placed them in competition with their neighbours, the agro-pastoralists, i.e., the Iteso and Sabiny (Odhiambo 2003, Muhereza and Otim 2002, Gray 2000, Mamdani et al. 1992).

These policies had detrimental effects on the ways of life of the people in this region, as they greatly contributed to the isolation and marginalisation of this region that continued even into the post–independence era. These policies isolated a particular group of people from the influence and experience that politically, economically and culturally changed the rest of the country. Furthermore, the post-independence governments of Uganda maintained a military presence in the region and continued being coercive in their approaches to disarm the communities. This also contributed to further hostile relations between the successive governments of Uganda and the Karamojong (Odhiambo 2003, Gray 2002, Wangoola 1999).

Despite the insecurity in the region, the NRA, after they took over power, authorised the ownership of guns by the Karamojong for the protection of their cattle and themselves (Doom and Vlassenroot 1999:12, Henriques 2000:47). This escalated the tensions in the region, and the state did nothing about it[43]. It was only until March 2001 that the state launched

[42] Interview with Benedict Lokiru (16/10/2014)

[43] Abdulrahman and Tar (2008) note that the state can indirectly fuel local communal violence

509974-L-bw-isimon
Processed on: 1-5-2017

the disarmament of the region (OPM report, January 2007:07). Why wasn't the state interested in doing something about the tensions in the north eastern region and waited for 14 years to officially intervene?[44] The Ugandan state has been embroiled in political upheavals for decades. Thus, the decision of the government allowing the Karamojong to have guns must have been a strategic move, to avoid having another faction to fight against, as there were numerous rebel factions in various parts of the country that were fighting the NRA in 1986 when it took over power. There were the UPA in the Teso region, the WNBF in the West Nile region, the UPDA and HSM, and later the LRA rebel factions, that all needed the attention of the state (Gersony 1997, Behrend 1999, Jackson 2002).

As noted in the previous section, the reluctance to intervene was because the Karamojong were indirectly fighting a proxy war for the state by raiding cattle, and indirectly impoverishing rebel factions in the northern and eastern parts of Uganda. This is clearly noted in the previous section. However, President Museveni argued that he did not intervene in the cattle raiding practice because of the limited military resources at his disposal:

> "We did not have enough forces to deal simultaneously with the cattle raiding. As a result the Karamojong cattle raiding intensified..." (Museveni 1996:177).

Political attempts to try and ask the government to intervene were made. Ideas about how to disarm the Karamojong, how to provide relief programmes as well as suggestions for development projects for the provision of water and pasture were discussed at the Kampala conference centre in Kampala after the NRA take over in 1986[45]. Even elders from Karamoja were consulted and peace was promised if the government would take up the initiative to provide alternatives to the region[46]. However, these demands and suggestions were ignored.

In Chapter 4 it is mentioned that participants believed that the government supported the Karamojong in raiding cattle in Acholiland. Some

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[44] Tajima (2013:106) claims that it is an issue of priority for some states, depending on the level of threat a particular conflict poses to national peace and stability

[45] The New Vision (16/04/1987)

[46] The New Vision (14/05/1987)

509974-L-bw-isimon
Processed on: 1-5-2017

had even witnessed trucks full of cattle being driven out[47], although these claims have never been verified. However, from a political strategist's point of view, when insurgency groups cropped up in the northern and eastern regions, the NRA government must have been concerned about possible mergers between insurgency groups, which would have been a powerful threat to the NRA government. And indeed, LRA leader Joseph Kony and UPA leader Sam Otai from Teso met a couple of times and discussed the possibility of working together, according to one of the key informants, a former LRA commander[48]. Turning a blind eye to attacks of the Karamojong on these neighbouring districts, that were harbouring insurgency groups, definitely served as creating a buffer zone and deterred the insurgency groups from merging. And by 1992, the UPA, with the help of the Teso commission, resolved the conflict with the government (Gersony 1997:106, Lomo and Hovil 2004), while the LRA continued with its activities.

It should also be noted that the Karamojong are Nilohamites (Pazzaglia 1982), and their life style differs greatly from that of the Southerners. Some scholars' claim that if they would have been a group that was closely linked to the government, it would probably not have taken long to intervene. Likewise, if they would have had very significant patronage ties, which provided a significant political support base, intervention would have been prioritised. Furthermore, the conflict was about local issues such as cattle ownership, grazing land, water points, and these could be ignored as being a threat to the state. As one of the key informants, Bishop Abura, argued, the conflict in the region had no political agenda and was only about their culture and livelihood, and group to group violence only resorted to when these sources of livelihood were at stake[49].

As mentioned earlier, the NRA government decided to intervene in March 2001, as a third party, hoping to disarm the region. The first phase was comprised of the presentation of community awareness programmes by local political leaders and of rewards for those who would surrender voluntarily. Later, after many had not yielded to the call, coercive

[47] Interview with Solomon Okongo Oola (08/12/2014)

[48] Interview with an anonymous former LRA commander (25/01/2015)

[49] Boone (2012) claims contagious issues such as land can be easily politicized could to attract state intervention compared to local conflict issues such as the ones mentioned above about pastoral communities

509974-L-bw-isimon
Processed on: 1-5-2017
PDF page: 172

disarmament approaches were employed (Bevan 2008, Mkutu 2006). Intervention in this kind of conflict is usually viewed as an effort to manage internal security by the state, and does not require the consent of the local communities, whereas in normal peace keeping missions or settlements, the consent of the conflicting parties is required[50].

Nevertheless, in this case elders and local government officials were sensitised and in turn were asked to sensitise their communities about the need for surrender of their guns. They were encouraged to consider the rewards being given, such as hoes, ploughing tools and iron sheets (Safer World 2010). However, the disarmament went through other phases and was later carried out in a crude, militaristic force. A continued dialogue with the communities and sensitisation should have remained on the top of the agenda. This is because these people had no trust in the government and as Michael Odhiambo puts it:

> " When the Karamojong first acquired guns it was as much to protect themselves against the Government as against their neighbours…The people need to feel that the Government protects them, so that they can in turn see the need to support its initiatives" (Odhiambo 2003:32).

According to some scholars, the distrust towards the government was a major reason why the modern judicial system largely failed in Karamoja. These judicial channels were ignored by the local population because they saw such judicial institutions as foreign and against their traditions. Implicating a fellow Karamojong in a foreign court was unacceptable (Muhereza and Otim 2002).

Recent media reports note that the state only intervened after several kinds of minerals were discovered in the region. Mining companies were set up immediately, even during the disarmament programme. An article in The New Vision newspaper by David Lumu, entitled "Over 100 mineral companies in Karamoja", noted that:

> "…ever since the country's remotest area was pacified by disarming cattle rustlers, over 100 mineral companies have been set up by investors" (The New Vision, 1 May 2014).

[50] See Von Uexkull and Peterson (2013)

509974-L-bw-isimon
Processed on: 1-5-2017

This was after the Department of Geological Survey and Mines at the Uganda Ministry of Energy had discovered that the Karamoja region has over 50 different precious stones and minerals, such as gold, uranium, marble, limestone, iron, copper, tin, lithium, cobalt, nickel, graphite, gypsum and wolfram. The article also praised first lady Janet Museveni, who was then Minister for Karamoja Affairs, for championing the transformation of the region and attracting investors. However, though the poverty-stricken region was supposed to benefit from the exploitation of the mines, the local government officials and the locals claimed that they only saw trucks full of minerals leaving the region, and that no word about the mining or its yield had been given to the local population or to the local administrative offices. In a newspaper article, Joseph Miti mentions that the mining of minerals in this region started way back in the 80s, and:

> "…there are no clear records showing either the amount of resources extracted annually or the benefits the region has realised" (The Daily Monitor, "The hidden treasures in Karamoja", 21 November, 2010).

There has been no transparency and accountability with regard to the resources extracted toward the people from the region according to the field findings. Could this have been the reason the state took so long to intervene? Is it possible that it could have been extracting minerals secretly?[51]

In conclusion, the state was reluctant for several years to intervene and pacify the Karamoja region. Later, it did intervene (in phases) and managed to rid the region of guns and ammunitions and bring some peace to the communities. The Karamoja case proves that a state cannot be excluded from communal violence. The state was present through direct state policy and policy blindness "inaction" as well. So through direct state policy, and state inaction which had an enormous influence on the direction of the conflict in the region. This fact clearly contradicts the current definition of communal violence.

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[51] Terris and Maoz (2005:564), Touval & Zartman (2001) and Bercovitch (2011: 20-21) claim that state intervention can be strategic, i.e., to increase their influence in a particular conflict or region or to look after its own interests

509974-L-bw-isimon
Processed on: 1-5-2017

6.5 Conclusion

As shown above, in these two conflict categories, various complex conflict cycles occur, which are not systematic at all. They evolve, displaying traits of different conflict types throughout their course. As the field findings reveal, the rigidities applied in the definition of these conflict types should be checked, because the dynamics of these particular conflicts cannot be captured in these rigid definitions.

Further more, these conflicts reveal direct and indirect impact on the course of the other. Connected by political struggles at the national level and deliberate state policies, these conflicts had an enormous impact on the onset and perpetuation of the other. As is evident in these two cases, the power struggles and political unrest played a huge role in how events unfolded in both regions, were intricately linked to the conflicts and brought about unexpected effects to their course.

It is also evident that the state is a key player in both conflicts. The state is present indirectly by inaction, by not intervening, and directly by action, through state policies that nurture or pacify conflicts. The case of the two conflicts discussed proves that the state is a major actor local conflicts and their presence can not be easily detached from such phenomena. This demonstrates that there are causal and actor linkages between both conflicts, at differing levels and degrees. In the next Chapter, the causal and actor linkages between both conflicts are synthesized.

509974-L-bw-isimon
Processed on: 1-5-2017

7 Understanding the Causal Connections

7.1 Introduction

This chapter brings the two violent conflicts, i.e., the civil war in northern Uganda and the communal violence in Karamoja, together, synthesized at the level of causes and actors. The analysis is enriched by drawing on various views raised by conflict scholars who have written specifically about violent conflicts in both the north and north eastern regions of Uganda. The discussion also draws on some arguments raised in theories about the causes of violent conflicts and the nature of actors involved. This Chapter also refers to previous Chapters in which these violent conflicts have been contextualised.

7.2 Understanding the causal interconnections

According to the Uppsala conflict dataset, a civil war's issues of incompatibility are either to overthrow a government or secede (Gelditsch et al. 2002:619). For communal violence, the issue of incompatibility is not stated (Sundberg et al. 2012:353) This may be because it is assumed that groups usually fight over local issues.

As discussed in Chapters 4 and 5, a number of factors are responsible for the onset and protraction of civil war and communal violence. In Chapter 3, some conflict scholars of the political economy tradition argued that violent conflict is as a result of violent geo-political, socio-economic and cultural structures established as a result of the interconnectedness between the modern state and the global systems (Demmers 2012: 54-55). However, social constructivists, who highlight the significance of social identities such as ethnicity in bringing about violent conflicts. They argue that violent conflict is politically functional and socially meaningful, as it

509974-L-bw-isimon
Processed on: 1-5-2017
PDF page: 176

constructs and preserves social identities which are very significant to communities (Demmers 2012:21-36). These and other theories of violent conflict are used to examine the conflicts under scrutiny, to try and establish causal linkages.

7.2.1 Historical structural continuities

As highlighted in Chapters 4 and 5, both of these conflicts had similar structural conditions that shaped what became of the communities in these regions. As Ho-won Jeong argues, "A series of conflicts can be set off by the same structural conditions" (2008:128). And this was the case with the violent conflict in the north and north eastern Uganda. A good number of informants said that it would be impossible to explain the flow of events without tracing it to the colonial era. They highlighted the continued relevance of historical events that combined colonial stereotyping with divisive administrative policies that produced pervasive real-life patterns in these regions. According to Dinwiddy (1981:503), peace was kept in the protectorate by separating the various groups, rather than bringing them together, hence the divide and rule policy.

The Karamojong were stereotyped as primitive nomads and marauding warriors, while the Northerners were regarded as strong, tall and militaristic. The stereotype views of these regions were influential in the adoption of specific administrative policies that were thought suitable for the inhabitants, based on their nature. These policies were later carried on by Post-colonial Governments of Uganda. As Victor Azarya notes:

> "When a state action seems restrictive or oppressive rather than rewarding, certain groups may attempt to organize their life beyond , or at the margin of the state's influence, i.e. they may try to keep their distance or "disengage" themselves from the state" (1996:1).

For the Karamojong, these anti-pastoralist, administrative policies adopted by the successive governments served to politically, socially and culturally isolate the region's communities from the influences and experiences that transformed the rest of Uganda. They lost large portions of land vital for their survival and their herds of cattle. This laid the foundation for the continuation of communal conflicts over the allocation and use of resources in the post-independence era. For instance, the military occupation of Karamoja right from the start of the colonial era, and the decision to make Karamoja a closed district throughout the

509974-L-bw-isimon
Processed on: 1-5-2017

colonial era and part of the post–independence era was detrimental to the progress of this part of the country in all aspects, and more importantly, in the cultural sense. This marginalisation and isolation, along with the absence of an effective government and absence of a clear, consistent and enforced government policy on the insecurity in the Karamoja region, is to blame for how events later unfolded in the region. Since the time of colonialism, Karamoja had always been treated differently and separately from the rest of Uganda, and consequently the area had consistently lagged behind the rest of Uganda (Odhiambo 2003:28, Muhereza and Otim 2002:120, Wangoola 1999:3-5). And more importantly, this isolation meant a continuation of their tradition of violence through cattle rustling, which intensified later with the acquisition of guns and ammunitions.

For the northern region, the ethnic division of labour between north and south during the colonial period in the early 1900s led to the emergence of deep regional, economic, political and ethnic cleavages. These cleavages persisted even after independence, leading to political instabilities in the country. The most significant issue was the creation of a "military ethnocracy" (Mazrui 1975:336), with the Northerners dominating the uniformed services and the Southerners in the civil service. This gave the Northerners a lasting identity, shaped by these north-south cleavages, as a group of people within a society who regarded themselves as economically disadvantaged and yet constituting the backbone of the state's military (Kustenbauder 2010:454, Behrend 1999:19, Omara-Otunnu 1987).

As discussed above, both these groups felt excluded or marginalised. The Karamojong felt alienated, whereas, though the Acholi had been in the uniformed services for long, they compared to other ethnic groups in the south, always felt left out as well. Frances Stewart argues that the persistence of the deprivation over time and the trend in differentials (economic assets, political participation, incomes and employment, social aspects) is very significant. The narrower the gap between groups was, the less was the possibility of a violent conflict being initiated, but the wider the gap, the higher the potential for violent conflict (Stewart 2000:253).

From a political economy perspective, the link between structures and violence is through the state. The sources of violent conflict are at the level of structures, i.e., the way in which the society is organised. Structures are the starting ground for direct violence (Demmers 2012:74). This explains how the colonial divide and rule, and administrative policies,

509974-L-bw-isimon
Processed on: 1-5-2017
PDF page: 178

were instrumental in creating divisions along ethnic lines. A fragmented society is a pre-requisite for instability (Stewart 2000 and 2002, Cederman et al. 2013).

These divisions were carried on into the post-independence political system of Uganda. However, as ethnic differences, whether imagined or real, per se do not cause violent conflict (Demmers 2012:18-37), the manipulation of these ethnic identities does, as is discussed below, especially for the case of the civil war in northern Uganda.

7.2.2 Ethnicisation and militarisation of politics

Due to the extent of tribal loyalties and divisive politics among Ugandan politicians, Uganda acquired independence from the British Protectorate government with what G. F. Engholm regarded as "nothing to show for, in the form of a political struggle or nationalist movement". In relation to that, Jan Jorgensen noted that "…the ideology of tribalism was more than a threat to the unity of Uganda" (Jorgensen 1981:22). This was because there was no unity whatsoever, and the political system plus all the political parties was ethnicised (Engholm 1962:15, Mittelman 197:87). This absence of unity was also fostered by the ancient traditions of local nationalism among the tribes of Uganda, manifested in the various kingdoms and chiefdoms, for instance in Buganda, Bunyoro, Acholi and Lango. This is clearly echoed in these words: "…neither the leaders nor the sentiments…essential to internal stability were present in Uganda (Pratt 1961:158).

After 68 years of colonial rule, Uganda gained independence on 9 October 1962, with Milton Obote as Prime minister and Kabaka Mutesa II of the Buganda tribe as President. The choice for Mutesa was due to the elevated position of the Buganda given to them by the Protectorate government, in recognition of their services as colonial agents in the country, to its strategic location; it was the wealthiest of all tribes[52] (Mazrui 1970:1074). Mazrui further notes that the Buganda had enjoyed the privileged position of having a federal status, which was carried on to the post-independence era and ratified in the 1962 constitution. It is noted

[52] To get an impression of the unrivaled superiority of the Buganda tribe, see Mazrui (1970). The Buganda kingdom received enormous economic and political investments from the Protectorate government. To satisfy their separatist tendencies, they were awarded a federal status in 1955

509974-L-bw-isimon
Processed on: 1-5-2017

that other tribes were concerned about the domination of the post-colonial state of Uganda by the Buganda. To curb Buganda's prevalence, Milton Obote, on 15 April 1966, suspended the 1962 constitution and presented a new one. He went ahead and sent state forces to attack the palace of Kabaka Mutesa II on 24 May 1966 in "the battle of Mengo", under the leadership of army commander Idi Amin. Kabaka Mutesa II escaped to exile in London where he died in 1969 (Jorgensen 1981, Mittelman 1975). This move ushered in the militarisation of politics in Uganda. It is important to note that President Milton Obote denied Mutesa II a traditional burial ceremony, let alone allowing the return of his body into the country. This infuriated the Buganda tribe and positioned them collectively against President Milton Obote and the Northerners as a whole, since Obote was from the northern part of Uganda. In the 1968 constitution, Obote I abolished kingdoms and created independent new districts in his effort to deal with ethnicity and govern Uganda as a republic with a single central government (Byaruhanga, 1998: 186).

According to Kustenbauder (2010:458), after sidelining the Buganda, President Milton Obote redistributed power into the hands of the Northerners, away from the Buganda. The political landscape came to be dominated by politicians from the north and army as well. With the militarisation of politics, the army also assumed a pivotal role, as it increasingly began to be used to achieve political goals. This is aptly noted by E.F.Byaruhanga:

> "Ethnopolitical consideratiuons prevented him from disciplining the army, and finally led to the promotion of characters like Idi Amin... Obote Promoted and appointed Amin to head the army on ethnic grounds. With the demise of the UPC-KY alliance, the UPC finally allied itself with the army in the period 1966 -71" (1998:186).

This led to impunity and continued indiscipline of the army affecting the whole country. Consequently, this also led to a series of military coups and persecutions, when Idi Amin Dada ousted Milton Obote in 1971, when the UNLA ousted Idi Amin Dada in 1979, when Milton Obote was ousted by Tito Okello Lutwa in 1985, and when the NRA ousted Tito Okello Lutwa in 1986 (Kustenbauder, 2010:458). All these military coups were followed by military persecutions, as discussed in Chapter 4. The ousting of Tito Okello Lutwa marked the beginning of insurgencies in northern

509974-L-bw-isimon
Processed on: 1-5-2017 PDF page: 180

Uganda that culminated in to the armed conflict against the NRA government.

The ethnicised politics in Uganda served as a tool to gain political support by scapegoating other ethnic groups. This ethnicity card was also carried on and played by Idi Amin, who persecuted the Acholi and Lango soldiers, professionals and civilians at large, after he overthrew Obote I. E.F Byaruhanga further notes that:

> "During Amin's time, promotions were specifically from West Nile...Ethnicity during Amin's time reached a peak when thousands of Acholi and Langi soldiers were massacred for refusing to accept the change of leadership in the army and for being closely related to Obote"(1998:187).

He then replaced them with men from the West Nile and some Sudanese speaking tribes. When Obote II took over power, UNLA units took revenge on the West Nilers, looting and killing them (Leopold 2005). Obote II continued with the ethnicised politics, resulting in the Acholi comprising the largest number in the army, the Banyankore second largest and the Langi third largest (Kustenbauder 2010:456, Gersony 1997: 6-7).

It should be mentioned that, since the Acholi were the majority in the army, the atrocities committed by the UNLA were attributed to an individual ethnic group, the 'Acholi', ignoring that also other ethnic groups were present in the army. This characterisation was extended to the whole northern population but specifically to the Acholi. Some scholars note that, in fact, labels such as 'Bacholi' or 'Abacholi' were used by the NRA/M forces in the Luweero to refer to their enemies[53]. They further note that being blamed for the atrocities in the Luweero Triangle, despite the fact that other groups were in charge of making policies and laying out strategies for the UNLA army, was disturbing for senior Acholi army officers. This, in turn, partially explained the overthrow of Obote II (Kutesa 2006, Atkinson 2009).

Almost as soon as Tito Okello Lutwa took over, he was overthrown in 1986 by Yoweri Kaguta Museveni. This loss of political and economic power by the Acholi was interpreted along ethnic lines, 'Acholi vs NRA forces', as discussed in Chapter 4. The loss of government power made them feel deprived of what they had attained and they felt cheated or

[53] See Ronald R. Atkinson (2010:280)

509974-L-bw-isimon
Processed on: 1-5-2017 PDF page: 181

betrayed by NRA leader Yoweri Kaguta Museveni, who overlooked the Nairobi agreement that was discussed in Chapter 4, an issue that was noted by a good number of informants in the northern region. And even though the NRA forces were composed of numerous tribes, as a national army, it was also viewed in tribal and ethnic terms as the 'Banyankore", as highlighted in Chapter 4.

A history of ethnic violence and of settling scores by previous regimes was evident. The former Acholi UNLA soldiers may have feared a repetition of what Idi Amin and the NRA forces did to them in 1971, in revenge for the atrocities during the insurgency in the Luweero Triangle. And indeed, as expected, according to Adam Branch, the NRA, which was expecting an insurgency from the people of north, immediately after the takeover "launched a counterinsurgency without an insurgency"[54](Branch 2007:146). They committed gross atrocities against civilians and former UNLA soldiers, and as Branch notes they destroyed and looted property, and stole hundreds of thousands of cattle. The UPDA launched its attack from the 22 August 1986 in Gulu and Kitgum when they come in from Sudan. That is when the imagined insurgency became real (Branch 2007:146-147, Lamwaka 2002:28-33).

These scenarios, combined with the propaganda on the radio and in the print media, which imposed all the country's troubles on the Acholi, served to panic the public into joining insurgency groups in Acholiland and in exile, making an armed resistance inevitable (Gersony 1997:16, Doom and Kustenbauder 1999:13).

The constructivist-instrumentalism approach to violent conflict rests on the premise that ethnicities are functional and are used by elites to strategically construct antagonistic identities that they can rely on for support in acquiring power (Gagnon 2006:138, Demmers 2012:29). With its monopolised political authority, the state was used as an instrument to satisfy the interests of specific groups while excluding others. The ethnicisation and militarisation of politics by the leaders was used to acquire political power and access resources (Gagnon 2006:138). The leaders used the ethnicity card to mobilise ethnic followers, who, in turn, became a threat to other groups, leading to political persecutions whenever there was a military coup. From a political economy point of

[54] In some exceptional cases, commanders and their units were said to be disciplined and trying to relate with the Acholi communities

509974-L-bw-isimon
Processed on: 1-5-2017

view, the tensions leading up to the onset of violent conflict in Uganda can be linked to the state making paradox, i.e., the political, economic and social challenges of post-colonial states and their struggles to become an ideal, modern nation state.

The ethnicisation and militarisation of politics affected the north eastern region as well, but did not bring about the onset of communal violence in Karamoja. As mentioned in the previous Chapter, cattle rustling was a practice embedded in the Karamojong's way of life. What is significant to note is, even post-colonial governments continued to marginalise the Karamojong and maintained a mainly military presence in the region (Odhiambo 2003: 28-29, Gray 2000:408, Knighton 2003:434-5). The presence of the state forces in the region and political unrest in the country encouraged lawlessness among the national army members. Throughout the Obote I, Idi Amin, Obote II until NRA took over, the army assumed a dominant position over the political leadership of Uganda. One consequence was a sense of impunity that reigned among the armed forces (Byaruhanga 1998:186-7). The government soldiers molested the Karamojong communities during the tax collection process, confiscating the communities' livestock, raping women and unlawfully imprisoning community members, as discussed in Chapter 4.

This hostile relationship and the inability to provide security for the people of Karamoja by the State explained fairly well why they struggled to get guns and ammunitions. The acquisition of guns was interpreted by various scholars as resulting from a lack of confidence in government security structures and a lack of protection by the central government (Odhiambo 2003:32). The military coups created an opportunity for acquiring guns, which fuelled the violent conflict in the Karamoja region and beyond, into the neighbouring districts. For the Karamojong, attacking neighbouring districts to raid cattle could also have been a way of expressing their grievances about being marginalised. Jega (2000:25) argues that, in some fragmented societies, some groups are pushed to rely on identity politics to express their grievances and struggle to attain justice and fair distribution of political, economic and social opportunities and resources.

From an ethno-symbolism perspective, ethnicity is socially meaningful and attachments to ethnicity are very powerful (Kaufmann 2006:84, Smith 1996:54-6). Both types of conflicts can relate to this theory because ethnicised politics were evident in most of the communities in

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Uganda. The communities are attached to their ethnicity, which they have been socialised into through cultural meanings such as language, religion, history and beliefs, and this has created an affective sense of belonging. Much of the political history of Uganda shows how powerful ethnic attachments have been and how they have been used to rally masses behind politicians of their ethnicity and against the other ethnic groupings. One of the reasons given for the rise of insurgency in northern Uganda was the ethnic attachment of the Acholi, the cultural belief of how strong they were and claims of how they would easily defeat the NRA forces. Benedict Anderson argues that ethnicity offers answers to communities' existence, giving a sense of destiny and continuity (Anderson, 1991:11-12). The attacks on the Acholi civilian population and former ex-UNLA soldiers evoked strong feelings of the need to protect their ethnic group and led to the rise of insurgency groups.

For the Karamojong, what Verkuyten describes below can best capture the value they attach to their traditions as an ethnic group:

> "Cultural meanings that are related to ethnicity – such as language, history and values – develop into durable tendencies and an emotional and self-evident frame of reference. Social positions become dispositions and cultural meanings become personal beliefs" (Verkuyten 2005:86-7).

The extent of value the Karamojong attach to their culture and cultural practices is the root cause of the communal violence in Karamoja. The warrior phenomenon, the value attached to cattle and the high bride price allowed cattle raiding, making communal violence appear as a 'normal' phenomenon. The belief in these practices was passed on from generation to generation (Pazzaglia 1982:74, Odhiambo 2003:27), explaining the continuation of communal violence throughout the pre-colonial, colonial and post-independence eras.

As mentioned above, ethnicity and the ethnicisation and militarisation of politics were very significant factors in the conflicts in the north and north east. They were instrumental in bringing about the onset of civil war in northern Uganda and in fostering the continuation of communal violence in Karamoja (north eastern Uganda). However, as conflicts emerge and escalate, their root causes can evolve with time as the conflicts progress (Berdal and Keen 1997). Both these conflicts spanned decades and below are some of factors that explain why these conflicts persisted.

509974-L-bw-isimon
Processed on: 1-5-2017
PDF page: 184

7.2.3 Poverty, inequality and underdevelopment

According to the historical account and field findings, the issue of poverty is not seen as a robust argument for the taking up of arms in northern Uganda, nor does it explain the persistence of the armed conflicts. This is because, besides growing crops and rearing livestock, the majority of the Northerners were in the uniformed services, such as the army, police and prisons. It is also important to note that most of the heads of state, except Idi Amin, came from the northern region. Throughout the years, the Northerners had enjoyed prominent leadership positions.

In Africa, for ethnic groups in power, political power translates into economic benefits, through patrimonial and neo-patrimonial relationships (Chabal and Daloz 1999). In Uganda, ethnicity has always been associated with these economic benefits, and ethnic groups that were not in power often felt excluded. The first Acholi President, Tito Okello Lutwa, was in power for only six months when the NRA took over in January 1986 (Gersony, 1997:12). This disappointed the Acholi, as they knew they had lost their economic privileges combined with other pressures were forced to rise up against the NRA government.

However, for the Karamoja region, poverty definitely accounts for the group to group violence and its persistence because the region is a semi-arid area, noted for disastrous climatic events (Muhwereza & Otim 2002:119). With constant drought and famine around much of the time, farming was and is not an option, as opposed to pastoralism, hence the remark by Markakis (2004:4) that pastoral violence is a survival strategy. The poverty indices for the Karamojo region reveal that, out of the estimated 1.1 million people in the region, 82 per cent live below the poverty line, as compared to the national average of 31 per cent (World Bank 2006, UNOCHA 2008).

Key human development indicators paint a rather grim picture, as portrayed by the high maternal mortality rate of 750 per 100,000 live births, as compared to the national average of 435 per 100,000 live births (UNHS 2006). The infant mortality rate is estimated at 105 per 1000 live births, against the national average of 76, while the under-five mortality rate stands at 174 per 1,000 live births, as compared to the national average of 134 per 1,000 live births (UNICEF 2008). Other human development indicators portray an equally depressing situation in the whole region. In 2008, UNICEF and WHO estimated Global Acute Malnutrition (GAM)

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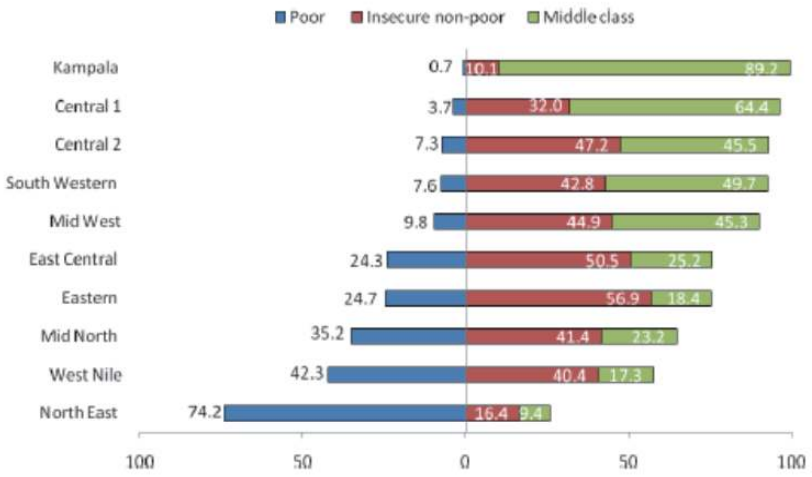
in Karamoja at 11% and rising, as compared to the national average of 6% (UNICEF/WHO 2008). Access to sanitation units was estimated at 9%, compared to the national average of 59%; access to safe water stood at 43%, against the national average of 67%. The literacy rate was at 11%, compared to a national average of 67%. According to Irish Aid (2007), an estimated 68% of 6-25 year-olds had never been to school, as compared to the national average of 13.8%, and approximately 44.8% of the children live in households that consume only one meal a day.

Figure 7.1 Sub regional Poverty Suitation in Uganda 2012/2013



Source: UNHS (2012/13:12)

With such poverty indices, many participants claim, they were trapped, and though cattle raiding was a cultural practice, its purpose evolved to be more of for survival.

Figure 7.1 below reveals the poverty status report of various regions in Uganda. The poverty status report 2014 noted that the highest number of poor people were in the Karamoja region, at 74.2% of the total population, followed by the West Nile region at 42.3% and then the Mid-

509974-L-bw-isimon
Processed on: 1-5-2017

North region (Lango and Acholi) at 35.2%. The lowest number of poor people were found in the central region (Central 2, central 1 and Kampala) (UNHS 2012/13:8-12).

In line with this, Stewart (2000:253) argues that the persistence of economic, political and social deprivation over time is very significant for bringing about conflict among groups. In the same light, Murshed (2010:78) also argues that relative deprivation of a group can enhance rebellious sentiments that become a unifying factor and enable collective action to alter the status quo. The ongoing poverty in Karamoja may very well explain the persistence of communal violence in the region.

7.2.4 The emergence of a war economy

There are some authors who argue that the war economy in Uganda was "imagined" compared to the one Sierra Leone or the DRC, which involved extraction of precious natural resources for looting by the state or rebel groups (Lomo and Hovil 2004:41, Reno 2000a:15). However, William Reno notes that for the case of Uganda especially involving the state - it was at a more sophiscated level (Reno 2002:425-432). The war economies features have been described as comprising of pillage, extortion, extreme violence against civilians, composed of highly privatised black markets and shadowy actors and mostly involved in trade of lucrative extracted natural resources among others (Reno 2000b, Ballentine &Nitzchke 2005:01)

For the case of Karamoja, as John Markakis notes, in pastoral communities, cattle rearing and raiding was purposely for:

> "…subsistence and not for the market. Even though pastoralists may engage in market transactions, they do not raise animals for the market" (Markakis 2004:31).

In Karamoja, the development of the illicit cattle trade and the rise of commercialised cattle raids was driven by attributed to economic interests of the young men who were involved, to meet basic needs and gain status under conditions of widespread poverty and limited economic opportunity. At times, cattle sales were planned in advance with businessmen who would ferry the stolen cows to markets outside of Karamoja (Stites et al. 2007). According to Mercy Corps (2011), some elements within the government, such as the UPDF, police and local officials were also involved in facilitating the raiding and selling of stolen

509974-L-bw-isimon
Processed on: 1-5-2017

cattle in Karamoja. With businessmen willing to buy and sell the stolen cattle in other markets, in Mbale, Lira, Gulu, Kitgum or Soroti, the continuation of communal violence was encouraged. Hence, materialistic tendencies contributed to altering the function of this cultural practice, leading to the protraction of communal violence in Karamoja. Some authors have regarded events surrounding loss of livestock as mere "cattle theft" by the local community and external actors such as army officials and politicians among others (Kinghton 2003, Doom and Vlassenroot 1999). And even though the case of Karamoja has been described as mere theft of cattle, the lucrative tendencies can be drawn from how the state benefitted from continued instability in the region which will be elaborated upon below.

These motive-oriented tendencies were also evident in the course of the civil war in northern Uganda. Various scholars argue that the war in northern Uganda was prolonged because it became profitable economically as well as politically for the actors involved (Reno 2000a, 2002, Kustenbauder 2010). William Reno argues that state leaders are entrusted with the responsibility of providing social services to the population, but instead they use their status for their own privileged access. By doing so, they manipulate state institutions, which allows them to accrue a lot of benefits, which may be political, economic and military in nature (Reno 2002:417).

Some analysts note that the Ugandan government and its army claimed they could not do much, as they were poorly equipped, and that the only option was for the LRA rebels to surrender. Startled by such claims, the international community intervened in support, donating millions of dollars of donor aid to the cause (Mwenda and Tangri 2005, Atkinson 2010). However, it was expected of President Museveni, based on his background as a former successful guerrilla warfare leader, that he would be able to deal with LRA militarily. Far from containing the war in the north, in 1997, the Ugandan government offered troops to oust Mobutu Sese Seko of Zaire and replace him with Laurent Kabila. Yet, that very same year, in January 1997, when troops were sent to Zaire (DRC), the LRA massacred close to 400 people in a four-day raid in Kitgum and Gulu (Gersony 1997:42, Mckinley 1997). Despite claims of being unable to deal with the civil war in northern Uganda, Ugandan government forces of about 10,000 soldiers were occupying and controlling large chunks of territories in the eastern part of the DRC. They were also accused of

509974-L-bw-isimon
Processed on: 1-5-2017

looting resources at the same time (Reno 2002, Reno 2000a). All this is aptly noted below:

> "UPDF forces have since 1997 occupied significant areas of north-eastern Congo. The UPDF occupies Kisangani, a major trading city with river and air transport facilities. Other towns such as Isoro and Butembo host UPDF brigades. After the UPDF's falling out with Kabila, these towns, along with Kisangani, serve as points to train and aid forces of the Congolese Liberation Movement (MLC) of Jean Pierre Bemba and the Rally for Congolese Democracy (RCD-Kisangani) of Prof. Wamba dia Wamba" (Reno 2000a:10).

Although the state argued that their incursion into the DRC was to try and contain the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) rebels who were located at the western borders of Uganda (Africa Confidential, 1 August 1997, 4-5). In June 1999, one of the Ugandan army generals, James Kazini, created a province in the DRC and named it Kabali-ituri, and even appointed a Governor for it. In addition to the above, independent researchers and the International Court of Justice, seated in the Hague, found that between August 1998 and June 2003 massive human rights violations were committed by the UPDF in the territory of the DRC, including the training of child soldiers in UPDF camps, incitement of ethnic conflicts, and the killing and torturing of civilians. It is also noted that such activities were secondary to the primary enterprise of the UPDF, which was the economic exploitation of Congolese natural resources. This mostly benefited powerful members of the Ugandan elite, including Museveni's half-brother and former commander of the UPDF, Salim Saleh, and a close relative of the President's wife, Col. James Kazini (Reno 2000a:10).

According to William Reno, General Salim Saleh, the head of the UPDF, owned gold-dealing companies located in zones controlled by the UPDF. These companies were accountable for an estimated 60 million dollars of gold export to Uganda in 1996 (Sebunya 1997, Reno 2000a:10). Reno quotes the Background to the Budget of Uganda 1998/99 and the ministry of natural resources, highlighting the increase in gold exports, as a result of this violent incursion into the DRC, when he says:

> "Uganda became a more prominent exporter of gold. According to official Ugandan figures, the country's exports rose from $12.4 mil-

509974-L-bw-isimon
Processed on: 1-5-2017

> lion in 1994-95 to $110 million in 1996-97…By 1999, gold had become Uganda's largest non-coffee official export. There is scant evidence that gold is produced in anywhere near these quantities in Uganda itself according to industry journals" (Reno 2000a:10)

The claim that the Government of Uganda was unable to deal with a rebel faction of a few thousand people over a timespan of twenty years, even if Sudan's detrimental interference in the conflict is taken into account, while they were very able to exert substantial military power in the DRC, is raises a lot of questions. As noted earlier, a considerable amount of resources was diverted to support military operations in neighbouring Rwanda, Southern Sudan, and the DRC. Uganda's involvement in these regions reveals the obvious lack of political will to deal with the LRA rebels. It clearly shows that, to these ruling elites, the stability of northern Uganda was not on the priority list. The irony of the situation is highlighted by northern Ugandans, who asked:

> "How can the president support the SPLA, the RPF and Kabila, and still pretend that he is lacking the means to protect the Acholis from the LRA?" (Doom and Vlassenroot 1999:32).

The authors claim that this shows that, a set of complex interests, processes and organisational structures at the national level put a solution for the problems in the north low on the government's priority list. In addition, they claim that the political and military elites have little to gain and much to lose (revenues from resource extraction and small arms trade) by diverting troops from neighbouring conflict zones and concentrating them in the north. It seems that as long as the fighting remained in the outskirts of northern Uganda and did not pose a threat to the central authority, the Ugandan government was willing to continue to deploy military forces in neighbouring regions, outside the state boundaries, where lootable resources were in plenty. The role of the state is further elaborated upon in section 7.3.2 below.

In addition to political and military factors responsible for prolonging the northern conflict, the continued military presence and insecurity in the region gave rise to a low-level war economy. It was hardly surprising that various actors, those involved, came to rely on these new economic arrangements and did whatever was necessary to sustain them, which involved ensuring the continuation of instability in the Northern region. This is what Doom and Vlassenroot refer to when they note that: "Some

509974-L-bw-isimon
Processed on: 1-5-2017 PDF page: 190

government agents or officials are blocking the peace process in the pursuit of a private agenda" (1999:32). This was an issue that several participants highlighted during the field exercise. They noted that some high-ranking officers were benefitting through private business with the LRA rebels and local community as well, as noted in Chapter 4. Some participants noted that generals working in the conflict-ridden region were entitled to enormous privileges, and some were gaining promotions as well. They were, probably, not too eager to see the war come to an end.

Van Acker also aligns with the above issue and notes that a low-grade war economy cropped up around the civil war in northern Uganda, allowing senior officers to profit from allowances and from trafficking army fuel and supplies, among other revenue-generating practices (2004:354). For instance, as discussed earlier, some scholars say that it is an open secret that the army was heavily involved in cattle rustling in Acholiland, so that by the mid-1990s, almost all Acholi cattle, the bulk of their wealth, had been stolen (Doom and Vlassenroot 1999). They conclude that it is likely that Museveni made empty promises about putting an end to the LRA war while handing out private concessions, to retain the loyalty of key political and military officials, who might otherwise threaten his power to rule.

There are claims that political gains for the NRM government also played a huge role in its reluctance to end the war. Some scholars argue that the Acholi, specifically, were of little political significance to any incumbent government. They were just one of the many ethnic groups in Uganda. This meant that, though the conflict in Acholi land undermined Museveni's popularity in the north, he did not need the support of the Acholi to stay in power. As long as the violence was contained to the north, most Southerners were not bothered with the conflict, since it was perceived by many of them as an inter-Acholi war (Doom and Vlassenroot 1999:32). Hence, the southern provinces, that were beneficiaries of NRM policies, had little reason to pressure the NRM government into making a peace deal with the LRA.

In addition, some scholars argue that the horrific violence and weird spirituality of the LRA allowed the government to present the north as a kind of barbaric periphery. Although Museveni is from the south-west and not from Buganda, he presents himself to the people in the south as the most certain guarantee that the oppressions by the likes of former Presidents Amin, Obote and Okello will never re-surface. So, encouraging

509974-L-bw-isimon
Processed on: 1-5-2017 PDF page: 191

a situation of instability and insecurity in northern Uganda was an easy way for the NRM leaders to disenfranchise thousands of Ugandan citizens and effectively constrain the opposition. Well known for his hostility against multi-party democracy and opposition leaders, critics note that Museveni has often used the northern conflict to crack down on potential political opposition by associating the opposition groups with the LRA and attacking opponents who questioned the UPDF's actions in northern Uganda (Cline 2003:124). As Boas points out:

> "…the government's attempt to link main opposition politicians to armed rebel movements such as the LRA…is a message to the population at large about what constitutes the alternative to Museveni's NRM" (Boas 2004: 297).

It was noted that President Museveni's speeches showed a pattern of him using the armed conflict in northern Uganda as a cane to beat the masses and opposition into loyalty to the NRM. Lawrence Cline summarizes this point well:

> "Clearly, in various ways the continued existence of the northern insurgencies has been of some political use to the government in cracking down on potential political opposition." (Cline 2003:124).

Museveni's frequent criticism of grassroots organisations and non-governmental institutions (NGOs) working to negotiate a peace settlement only underscores the political benefits he has gained by perpetuating the conflict according to Doom and Vlassenroot (1999:23).

The fact that the war in the north lasted as long as it did, was also attributed to LRA activities and their leader Joseph Kony's insanity by several conflict scholars and by the participants in the field as well. This insanity theory was used by the Government of Uganda to explain why negotiations were cancelled in earlier course of the conflict. Frank Van Acker frames the LRA brutality as a product of 'religious fanaticism' and clearly emphasizes that it is definitely non-political since it's based on religiously driven actions. He further notes that this "religious terrorism" seems "morally justified, almost as a sacramental act" giving the violence a ritualistic meaning (Van Acker 2004:348-349).

Some scholars claim that the armed conflict went on for so long because the LRA had neither a clear political agenda nor a clear strategy. Robert Gersony, in his report, argues that the LRA rebel faction is

509974-L-bw-isimon
Processed on: 1-5-2017 PDF page: 192

"strikingly devoid of political content" (1997:103). Doom and Vlassenroot (1999:25-27) describe Joseph Kony as a "mad max" engaging in "auto-genocide". They nonetheless acknowledge that this 'blind terror' is produced unintended political results by traumatising the whole population, reinforcing the LRA position, hence creating a high impact with minimal effort. In the same light, Anthony Vinci also notes that "throughout the conflict neither Kony, nor any other member of the organization, has produced a clear and sustained description of the realistic goals of the organization" (Vinci 2007:342). And one of the former rebels note that as well when he said: *"…but the intention of his fighting no one knows up to now. No one knows the intention of fighting, or why Kony is fighting"* (John Komakech, 18/01/2015, Gulu District).

These descriptions of the LRA violence, likened to being illicit, awful, atrocious, barbaric, illogical and simply non-political, led by a self-proclaimed spirit medium leader, fits in the new war thesis of incomprehensible events in violent conflict that Robert Kaplan describes as "the coming anarchy" (1994:34-60).

However, some scholars disapprove of Robert Kaplan's "new barbarism thesis" and argue that there are political and economic motives for the atrocious acts perpetrated by rebel factions. David Keen argues in "The economic functions of violence in civil wars" that such seemingly senseless violence is in fact useful for reaching certain rational or strategic objectives, especially in terms of economic gain or function for those who use that violence, when he says: "Therefore tended to increase their efforts to accumulate funds from domestic sources - either for military purposes or for private gain" (1998:34). He further also notes that "Rebels lacking substantial resources may resort to brutality in a bid to create maximum impact with minimum funding, and to depopulate resource-rich areas." (Keen 1998:34). Here, Keen clearly offers an economic motivation as an explanation for violent conflict, as witnessed in the case of the armed conflict in northern Uganda.

Stathias Kalyvas, using the case of Algerian Islamic extremists, argues that these 'wanton and senseless' massacres or killings "are not irrational instances of random violence…instead they can be understood as part of a rational strategy" (1999:243). He strongly emphasises the political rationale behind violence in conflicts:

509974-L-bw-isimon
Processed on: 1-5-2017

> "To be efficient, terror needs to be selective; indiscriminate terror tends to be counterproductive. In a regime of indiscriminate terror, compliance guarantees no security…Disaggregating mass massacres into well-planned, individually targeted, and selective killings might thus be an indicator of a strategy initiated by insurgents to maximize civilian compliance (more precisely: to minimize loss of civilian compliance) by deterring defection; hence, extreme brutality can be instrumental" (Kalyvas 1999:251)

He clearly notes that massacres are aimed at "shaping civilian behaviour" especially that of defectors, as a warning. He notes that rebels invest in violence and reap compliance within their ranks and from the civilian population (Kalyvas 1999:251), as evident in the case of northern Uganda.

In line with the above arguments, Adam Branch believes that the LRA merits to be viewed as "a legitimate political force", because clearly it had a political position. He notes that the 'irrational and excessive violence' used was for strategic purposes (2007:43). He argues that firstly, this so called excessive violence was used to sustain the LRA through looting and abductions to fill their ranks within the faction. Secondly, he claims this violence was directed against government collaborators who were frustrating the LRA's activities by informing the government of their movements. Such collaborators, notably the 'civilians-turned-militias' group members, like the Arrow Boys, local defence units and home guards. The third argument was that the LRA aimed at establishing itself as "the effective political authority" by punishing those who went against their rules, restricting their movements on certain days, and forcing them to work on days like fridays. To Adam Branch, these restrictions had a symbolic effect and were also designed to show the Acholi population that the government cannot protect them. Lastly, using violence, a community within the LRA's ranks was created through "complicity in violence" (Branch 2007:40, see also: Paul Omach 2002). All these actions were aimed at terminating support for the Ugandan government and establishing its own authority.

Sverker Finnstrom aligns with Branch's arguments and notes that during peace negotiations, the LRA manifesto included the request for the national political integration - on equal basis - of the Acholi, a stop to state terror against the Acholi, compensations for the livestock and property lost by the Acholi and a multiparty status for Uganda (Finnstrom 2003:161-172). In 1996, the LRA were noted for taking part in the electoral politics and encouraging the Acholi population to vote for

509974-L-bw-isimon
Processed on: 1-5-2017 PDF page: 194

Presidential candidate Paul Semwogerere (The Sunday Vision article, titled "*Kony rebels hold political rallies*," 14 April 1996, Doom and Vlassenroot 1999:32), hence highlighting the political position of the LRA.

On the economic front, the LRA has also pursued what may be called economic strategies of personal benefit. Some scholars argue that one of the most basic explanations for the LRA's continuation of the conflict is that it served as a profit-making enterprise for those involved. The outcomes of interviews with various aid workers and local government officials in northern Uganda all pointed to the fact that the LRA's primary source of supplies was the yield of raiding operations in the region. Trucks carrying valuable goods were regularly looted, especially for anything that could easily be sold in the local trading centres, such as bicycle tyres or farm tools. Similarly, the LRA would loot villages and IDP camps. According to Vinci (2007:343), he notes that like other groups in the Great Lakes Region, the LRA learned that rebellion can be a legitimate and lucrative business and by prolonging the conflict, LRA members were able to make a better livelihood for themselves and for their families than would have been the case if they had returned to civilian life. These commercial activities were vital for the LRA's continued existence and, hence, prolonged the armed conflict in the northern region.

The above arguments show that a combination of factors were responsible for the persistence of violent conflicts in the north and north eastern Uganda. Besides the underlying factors responsible for the armed conflict, new factors emerged through out the course of these conflicts, influencing their course and leading to their protraction. And what is important to note is these violent conflict had causal linkages. As seen above, they were rooted in the structural historical continuities, the ethnicisation and millitarisation of politics, poverty and underdevelopment, and the raise of a war economy which prolonged these conflicts. Besides the underlying causal linkages between these violent conflicts, actor linkages are important as well for understanding the full interconnectedness of the conflicts.

7.3 Understanding the actor linkages

According to the field findings, a range of actors were involved in the civil war in northern Uganda and the communal violence in Karamoja,

509974-L-bw-isimon
Processed on: 1-5-2017

throughout the course of these conflicts. Stathias Kalyvas notes that violent conflict cultivates interactions among a range of actors who are "local and supralocal actors, insiders and outsiders, individuals and organizations, civilians and armies" (2003:837). These actors have different identities, motives and interests. David Keen argues that violent conflicts have multiple functions, and instead of defining violent conflicts as a challenge or failure, he suggests alternative ways of looking at them. According to David Keen,

> "…events, however horrible and catastrophic, are actually produced, they are made to happen by a diverse and complicated set of actors who may well be achieving their objectives in the midst of what looks like failure and breakdown" (Keen 2008:15).

The section below highlights their positions and role in influencing the course of these conflicts.

7.3.1 Local actors in both conflicts

According to the field findings, the groups involved in the communal violence in Karamoja and the civil war in northern Uganda were ethnic groups who felt systematically excluded from social, economic and political opportunities, as opposed to other groups, notably the Southerners. Unlike the Karamojong, the Acholi at least had a political relationship with the government, as they dominated the army, with a number of officials in high-ranking positions. Cederman's polity model is used to illustrate the positions of the ethnic groups chosen for the study.

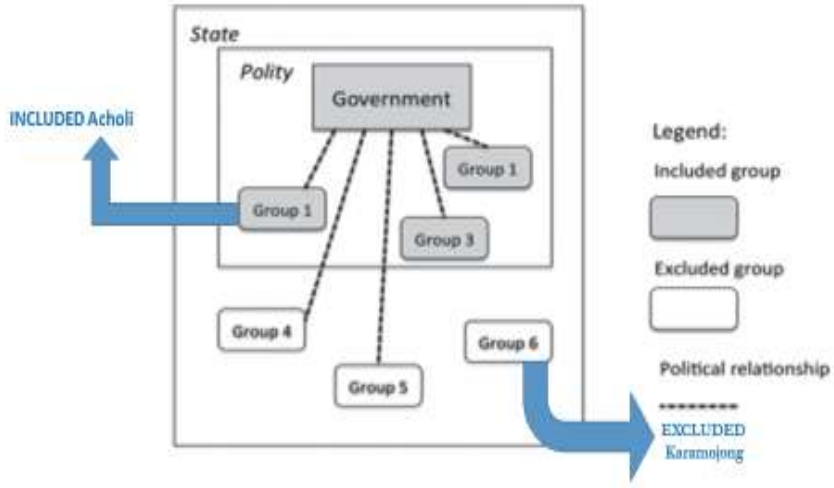
According to the field findings, the Acholi were among the included groups dominating the army ranks, which positioned them to feel as the 'Ethnic Group in Power (EGIP)' (Cederman et al. 2013:59, Cederman and Girardin 2007:183). This was especially the case after the army assumed a pivotal role in Uganda's political struggles, with the onset of the militarisation of politics (Jackson 2002, Gresony 1997, Branch 2005, Branch 2008). Although they dominated the uniformed services, which was seen as a 'privileged' position, it is noted by various scholars in previous chapters that they had limited access to other economic opportunities, as the Southerners were dominating the civil service sector of the country.

The Karamojong were worse off, as they were politically, economically and socially excluded, as mentioned in the previous chapters. They were a 'Marginalised Ethnic Group' (MEG) (Cederman et al.

509974-L-bw-isimon
Processed on: 1-5-2017 PDF page: 196

2013:58). They were, through the colonial and post-colonial administrative policies, systematically excluded from state employment opportunities and political representation to mention but a few. 'Alienated' as they were, they had no option but to continue their cultural practice of cattle raiding.

Figure 7.2: A Polity Model with Included and Excluded groups



Source: Adapted from Cederman et al. (2013:59)

Even with the current NRM regime of President Museveni, ethnic exclusionary tendencies towards the northerners especially has been noted. The NRM government has been accused of awarding multiple promotions to officials mainly hailing from the western part of Uganda. This is aptly notes below:

> "Of the 35 army officers promoted and published in the press, 23 are westerners. All of them speak Runyoro-Rutoro-Rumyankole-Rukiga, which was recently named Runyakitara, and live in one area, the west and south westerner parts of the country. Of the 23 western officers promoted, 18 are Banyankole, 16 of the Banyankole are Bahiima, who form only 20 percent of all

509974-L-bw-isimon
Processed on: 1-5-2017

> the Banyankole (Monitor, 16-19 August 1996). Quoted in Muhereza and Otim, 1998:199).

Besides that, additional exclusionary tendencies were evident in the allocation of ministerial positions. The Daily Monitor 10 July revealed that, in 1996 after the Presidential election victory, President Museveni's cabinet reshuffle was criticized, because:

> "…out of twenty one cabinet posts…the western region was well represented with ten posts and the north two…Overall, fifty-one ministers (cabinet and state) were appointed: eighteen from the west; fourteen from Buganda; while the north (Acholi and Lango) "took the crumbs" (Monitor, 8-10 july 1996) quoted in (Muhereza and Otim 1998:195).

This was evidence that indeed, the ethnic factor is still a protruding issue in Ugandan politics. This pinpoints the state as the cause of such discrepancies in opportunities among communities. And as highlighted in previous chapters, such tendencies involving the uneven distribution of opportunities may lead to tendencies of rebellion against the government. When the NRA took over power in 1986, for fear of losing their privileged position to what Cederman et al. (2013:59) describe as 'alien rule' by 'foreign' ethnic groups, the seeds were planted for the birth of violent conflict in the northern part of Uganda. This is in line with what Williams (2003:150) claims, when he says that not only disadvantaged groups but also included groups are involved in violent conflicts, usually to retain their own positions, which is a case that can be related to the Acholi in northern Uganda.

Furthermore, these groups taking part in these conflicts had some similarities with regard to the kind of actors involved. Even though each of these actors played different but significant roles in these conflicts. In the context of both conflicts, traditional leaders were significant figures. The traditional leadership system was respected by the people in the North and North eastern region. In an attempt to curtail their influence, Adam Branch notes that, immediately the NRA government came to power, they set up the Resistance Council system which had administrative and legislative power, and accountable to the state. Although it tampered with the role and influence of the elders in both regions, the Acholi were able to survive its negative effect on their influence (Branch 2007:166-170).

In the earlier stages of the insurgency in northern Uganda, the traditional leaders were blamed for making the ex-UNLA soldiers feel guilty

509974-L-bw-isimon
Processed on: 1-5-2017 PDF page: 198

about the atrocities committed in the Luweero triangle, forcing many to join insurgency groups, such as the UPDA (Gersony 1997:22, Behrend 1999:28)[55]. However, at the later stages of the conflict, the Acholi religious leaders were very significant figures in the lobby for peace between the LRA and the Government of Uganda. They were the link between the government of Uganda and the LRA, and were in touch with the LRA leaders and exhausted various avenues to find a peaceful solution that could bring the armed conflict to an end (Allen 2006).

In the case of Karamoja, the elders were special beings as well, respected and very central to the community's existence and culture. These elders were responsible for organising and blessing cattle raids, and would, at times, participate in them as well. Without their blessings, no raid would be carried out (Pazzaglia 1982:74, Stites et al. 2007:57). They were key players in promoting communal violence before the era of the gun, before the youth took over. From a social constructivism–culturalism and ethnosymbolism perspective, the roles and positions of traditional leaders in the conflict contexts highlight how the ethnic groups valued their culture and were embedded in their cultural contexts, in relation to how they understood and valued the leadership structures within their group. The strong cultural attachments these groups had later changed with the multiplication of guns that helped to erode the authority of elders. With the raise of Opportunistic and materialistic youth the nature of cattle rustling and its fuctions were altered. From being a traditional practice during the precolonial era, it became more commercialised. This explanation places the source of human action at the level of individual actors. Yet previously, the way in which young men behaved was defined from within a cultural context. This is what Kalyvas (2003: 481) refers to when he argues that

[55] However, Branch (2007:154-156) argues that the emphasis on the part of the traditional leaders for the ex-UNLA to get cleansed traditional was due to a leadership crisis. This internal political crisis had emerged as result of the millitary occupation of Acholiland and the introduction of the resistance council leadership system by the new government. In addition to that, the arrival of thousands of indisciplined armed idle young men was seen as "a threat to internal order and to their own positions" as well. So their only option was to use the only language they knew, which was to appeal to their traditions hence demanding that these ex-UNLA soldiers undergo cleansing rituals.

509974-L-bw-isimon
Processed on: 1-5-2017

local actors can go beyond being subjective followers to pursue their private objectives.

The Karamoja youth were known as the *'Karachuna',* and were usually between the age of fifteen and forty (Stites et al., 2007:56). According to Ocan (1992), youth became "Prototype Warlords" through raiding cattle for their own benefit, selling off the cattle and keeping the proceeds, and controlling who was entitled to the spoils after a raid. In this way, a role that was held by elders or parents in the pre-gun era came to be controlled by youth, which intensified the dynamics of armed conflict in the region.

In the case of the armed conflict in northern Uganda, the youth involved were mostly abducted and forced to fight. They became significant actors during the course of the conflict, and they did so involuntarily. According to Chris Dolan, boys and girls as young as 7 years old were abducted (2009:57). These children became vital, later on, to the existence of the LRA as Kony would use them to fill the ranks. Children were forced to maim and mutilate relatives after they had been captured. This would weigh on their conscience and made it less likely they would run away to return home. So, by having young boys – and also girls – as fighters or in support roles, Kony was able to loot food and other resources whilst keeping the LRA in motion as a fighting force (Olsen 2007:3-9).

Girls and women were significant parties in the conflict in both Karamoja and Northern Uganda. In Karamoja, women were significant actors in the communal violence that engulfed the region. According to field findings, a woman's position among other women in the community depended on the number of cattle a suitor paid for her dowry. Wives with a high bride price wore special bangles and beads. . For men, in the Karamoja culture, having more wives meant more prestige since it was taken as evidence of affluence (Pazzaglia 1982:16). To have more wives, one needed more cattle. Indirectly, women were said to encourage men to raid cattle for reasons such as hunger, basic needs or to pay the bride price. However, when interviewed, a good number of women denied any direct contribution to the conflict, since they did not settle the bride prices. They attributed this role to their parents, and mainly the father. It is he who determines the bride price.

The role of abducted girls and women in the northern region was vital to the LRA's continued existence. According to one Amnesty International report, girls and women were expected to cook food, collect

509974-L-bw-isimon
Processed on: 1-5-2017
PDF page: 200

water, wash clothes, and dig in the family gardens of the top LRA officials. Girls that reached the age of thirteen were allocated to male soldiers, to carry out domestic tasks and serve as wives to their "husbands". According to the Amnesty International report, this was "part and parcel of the military strategy of the LRA and the social order devised by the leadership" (Amnesty International Report, 17 September 1997). They also note that girls and women were treated as instruments, as a kind of incentive/reward for hard-working, male LRA soldiers and officials. They were a source of prestige and proof of status, because the higher the rebels' rank the greater the number of women or "wives" they had.

The civilian and business community played a huge part in both conflicts. Like the civilian community (discussed in Chapter 4), private sector actors provided support to the rebels. Business men sold goods and supplies to the rebels and collaborated as spies for the LRA and the UPDF (Jackson 2002:47, Van Acker 2004:354). Most of the civilian community withdrew their support from the LRA in the wake of a brutal one-sided campaign against local people.

In the Karamoja region, most young warriors emerged from within the community and they were the ones who raided cattle. The absence of restrictions by the state and the proliferation of guns were very significant factors in the persistence of violent conflict in the north eastern region. These factors played a huge role in transforming the violence in the region and in introducing other types of conflict, and crime as well. With the introduction of guns, the elder's authority diminished, and there consequently, the reckless cattle raids and killings as a result emerged. The power was transferred to the youth, who became the decision makers (Odhiambo 2003:44, Muhereza and Otim 2002:168). Later, with the gradual commercialisation of cattle raids, local businessmen came forward. Some studies reveal that businessmen were often aware that the cattle had been raided, and yet would go ahead and purchase them. It is also noted that some businessmen would connive with raiders to support them in raiding and selling the livestock (Mercy Corps, 2011:7). Not only the business community, but also local political leaders and some government individuals in the UPDF and other security agencies, were involved in buying and selling raided cattle. In the 1980s, according to Okudi (1992), some high-ranking government officials were found involved in taking huge numbers of cattle which had been caught in retaliatory raids between the Karamojong and the Iteso. Ben Knighton concurs with this view when

509974-L-bw-isimon
Processed on: 1-5-2017 PDF page: 201

he says, "The state is just another raider…a cattle raider" because elements within the UPDF were enriching themselves "taking cattle seized by force for their own herds or be selling them fro meat" (2003:449).

In both conflicts, local politicians contributed to a certain extent to how events unfolded in the conflict regions. According to the field findings, in northern Uganda, local politicians (mostly senior government officials) encouraged civilians to arm themselves against the LRA. Among these politicians was the minister for the Pacification of the North, Betty Bigombe (Branch 2007:181, Doom and Vlassenroot 1999:23). The civilians were encouraged to join defence units equipped with bows and arrows, kill or report any rebel in sight. Former LRA rebels noted that such acts were responsible for the brutal campaign against the people of Acholi. In the Karamoja region, according to Odhiambo (2003:46-47), the political leadership was characterised by loyalty to the various clans. And with competing interests they had sabotaged or intervened in actions against their clans, in connection with cattle raids. In certain cases, selective action against other clans was recommended, leading to retaliatory raids. These political leaders would indirectly act as clan leaders and some of the clashes between soldiers and communities were a manifestation of political power games among these political leaders.

Besides the role of the local actors, the state was noted for its actions and strategies, which reflected a lack of political will to contain these conflicts.

7.3.2 The state as an actor in both conflicts

As noted above, the state has been a significant actor in these conflicts. Scholars such as Ronald Atkinson note that President Yoweri Museveni had, since 1986, a very low opinion of the Northerners. Atkinson refers to him as describing the Northerners, and more specifically the Acholi, as 'primitive', 'backward' and 'ignorant', as documented in the The New Vision's article *"NRA to cover rebel areas*" of 21 August 1987 (2010: 289).

The lack of political will to end the war in the north is also reflected in the President's actions and words, for instance when he, in the middle of peace negotiations, gave the LRA a 7-day ultimatum to surrender, which accelerated the conflict further (Gersony 1997:34, Branch 2007:181). The President's obvious intentions of not ending this war are also noted by Caroline Lamwaka who quotes the President as dismissing

509974-L-bw-isimon
Processed on: 1-5-2017

any sort of negotiations with the LRA and describing an agreement to negotiation as "like giving first aid to a snake" (Lamwaka 1998:160). Because of such questionable actions, a parliamentary committee, set up in 1996 to investigate the causes of the protraction of the war in the north, summoned and heard General David Sejusa (also known as David Tinyefuza), one of the high command members of the UPDF and senior presidential adviser. According to John Kazoora, who was one of the committee members, on 29 November 1996:

> "Tinyefuza accused the Government of lacking political will to end the insurgency. He also talked of the mismanagement in the army like soldiers going into ambushes with saucepans, lack of necessary military logistics and other damning criticisms" (Kazoora 2012:154).

He noted that, because of these criticisms, David Tinyefuza was reprimanded by the President and accused of treason, forcing him to resign in December 1996, although his resignation was rejected at first (The New Vision, "*Tinyefuza takes army to court*", October 2009). Doom and Vlassenroot align with Tinyefuza's remarks and note that government troops were indeed in a sorry state and with a low morale to fight: "Rank and file soldiers are not properly fed, and war fatigue is high…The fighting, if possible, is left to the Local Defence Units, which are poorly equipped" (1999:31). They further note that this was the case since many non-Acholi government troops seemed unbothered as the civil war was viewed as an 'Acholi affair' and many were not willing to risk their lives in what they regarded as an alien war.

In his book, John Kazoora, a former Member of Parliament, also notes that President Museveni "…deployed troops in Congo without recourse to Parliament" (Kazoora, 2012:147). As discussed earlier, in section 7.2, although the Ugandan state claimed it could not contain the LRA rebels, it was able to dispatch soldiers to other countries, such as the DRC. In his articles "*War, Debt and the Role of Pretending in Uganda's International relations*" and "*Uganda's Politics of War and Debt Relief*", William Reno clearly highlights deliberate actions and strategies by the Uganda government aimed at acquiring political and economic resources (Reno 2000a:13-14, 2002:417). These actions and strategies used by the state to acquire entrepreneurial opportunities were part of what Bayart et al. (1999) described as "criminalisation" of the state.

509974-L-bw-isimon
Processed on: 1-5-2017 PDF page: 203

Having the capacity to occupy another state's territory – the DRC and extracting natural resources from that territory, while neglecting the internal strife at home, the state indeed must have had other priorities. Reno notes that the Ugandan state's strategies had a political and economic agenda and the incursion in the DRC was important because it had:

> "…an important political role in managing relations with Uganda's multilateral creditors. Second, significant increases in "non-traditional" [Congo] exports ameliorate Uganda's balance of payments difficulties. This assists creditors' efforts to portray Uganda as a successful example of neo-liberal reform. The strategic advantage in this for creditors lies in Uganda's superior performance as an early client of the Highly Indebted Poor Country (HIPC) initiative" (Reno, 2000a:11).

He notes that, due to these activities in the DRC, Uganda was able to earn itself debt relief from the Highly Indebted Poor Countries (HIPCs) program and acquire additional loans from the Paris Club (Reno 2000a:13, Reno 2002:428).

It should be mentioned that these commercial activities in the DRC did not only benefit the state but the UPDF officials involved as well (Reno 2000a, Reno 2002:422-3). Even those who were stationed in the northern region were indifferent towards containing the war and (falsely) pretended to be in favour of it, since the continuation of the conflict meant a continuous flow of operational allowances in the combat zones. In addition to that, some army officials profited by selling army supplies, such as fuel and food (Van Acker 2004:354, Doom and Vlassenroot 1999:31-2).

With regard to Karamoja, scholars such as John Markakis clearly point out the challenges that pastoral communities have endured from the governments of the countries in the horn of Africa and in eastern Africa. He notes that pastoral communities such as the Karamojong have been neglected by the government since the colonial era, when he says:

> "No investment or technological innovation was brought to the pastoralist economy, nor were any 'modernizing' processes such as communications, education, health care, transport or urbanization introduced into the pastoralist milieu. As a result, when independence came, pastoralism was isolated on the margin of the African state and

509974-L-bw-isimon
Processed on: 1-5-2017
PDF page: 204

> society. Independence did not halt the decline of pastoralism; it accelerated it… There was little more investment or technological innovation brought to the pastoralist zone in the postcolonial period than earlier" (Markakis 2004: 02).

Instead, the Karamojong's movement was restricted within new administrative boundaries. Their land was taken without notice or consultation and given to agricultural communities or turned into forest reserves and game reserves. This led to increased resource competition and communal violence among the pastoral communities (Gray 2000:408, Mamdani et al. 1992:23). Apparently, the colonial and post-independence, successive goverments of Uganda were focused more on the development of commercial livestock ranching (Muhwereza 2001:100-124, Muhwereza and Otim 2002:119, Markakis 2004:02).

After independence, Prime Minister Milton Obote, in 1963, after he visited the Karamoja region, was quoted by the NewsPaper Uganda Gazette as saying: "we shall not wait for Karamoja to develop". According to The Daily Monitor newspaper article "Waiting for Karamoja to develop: or Uganda's uneven development",

> "Those words capture the simple reality yet powerful inequity of development in Uganda. Obote is said to have uttered the words after a visit to Karamoja, then the least-developed part of newly independent Uganda, and decided the country had to move on. Fifty years later, Karamoja is still one of the least-developed parts of Uganda but it is not clear whether the rest of the country is (still) waiting for it" (The Monitor reporter, 20 June, 2012).

John Kazoora notes that, when President Museveni took over power in 1986, in the "Ten Point Programme" of the NRA government, the development of the Karamoja region (point 8b) was highlighted (Kazoora, 2012:209). However, as noted earlier, in section 7.2.3, the Karamoja region currently has the lowest human development indicator value and the highest poverty level compared to the rest of the country (UNHS 2006, UNHS 2012/13). A newspaper article by Steven Ariong and Simon P. Emwamu, titled "*46 dead as hunger pounds Karamoja, Teso*" (The Sunday Monitor, 17 July 2013), revealed that very few families could afford a meal a day and had to depend on relief from the government. Two years, later, the Observer News Paper (20 September 2015) also reported that "*Several dead as drought, famine hit Karamoja*".

509974-L-bw-isimon
Processed on: 1-5-2017

Such events reveal how neglected the region has been, even in very recent times. And yet Uganda, like many others states in East Africa, has pledged to protect and provide for pastoral communities, such as the Karamojong, who have been described as minority groups. According to John Markakis:

> 'The UN Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities (1992) requires states not only to protect 'all human rights and freedoms without discrimination' (Article 4), but to promote them through appropriate policies and legislation. The International Convenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966), the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (1965) and the African Charter on Human and Peoples Rights (1981) have similar provisions. All the states in eastern Africa and the Horn have formally adhered to them (Markakis, 2004: 30).

Despite such agreements, states like Uganda have only intervened in and recognised the issues affecting these communities as a result of external pressure. Markakis writes: "…it took external pressure to bring recent attention to their plight, geared by funding offers from international organisations and aid agencies" (Markakis 2004:30). Alhough there are claims of earlier attempts by the NRA-backed government to intervene and contain the conflict in north eastern Uganda after they took power (HRW, September 2007:21), evidence cited in the discussion in section 6.4 shows that the NRA government, instead of intervening in and pacifying the turmoil, authorised gun ownership in Karamoja and even provided the Karamojong with more weapons to protect their livestock and themselves from the neighbouring pastoral communities (which they did, and even did more by attacking and raiding cattle from the rebel communities of Teso and Acholi, that were fighting the NRA government) (Henriques 2000:47, Gersony 1997:15, Doom and Vlassenroot 1999:12). As Ben Knighton clearly notes that allowing such instability to continue was a strategic move by the state: "The government had been quite content for many years to let these sources of political opposition be weakened by the Karamojong" (2003:427). The Karamojong continued to engage in communal conflicts without much restriction and they managed to disorganise and displace "hundreds of thousands in the region", notably the Acholi, the Lango, the Teso, and the Sebei (Knighton 2003:427).

509974-L-bw-isimon
Processed on: 1-5-2017
PDF page: 206

The government deliberately ignored the course of events in the region. It was not until members of parliament originating from the Teso region pressured the government to intervene and contain the situation in Karamoja, that a disarmament programme was formally launched in December 2001 (OPM 2007:07).

Bearing in mind the recent discovery of minerals and the provision of funds by the World Bank for the development of the Karamoja region, some scholars have criticised the fact that the President after all these years decided that time had come to appoint his wife as the Minister for Karamoja Affairs in 2011 (Kazoora, 2012: 209).

All in all, as discussed above, the state and its institutions were very influential in determining the course of both conflicts. The state's approach in dealing with either conflict prolonged and even deepened it. Although there is emphasis on actor difference in the way these conflicts have been conceptualised, in both conflicts the role of the state is visible and paramount, which highlights actor linkages in both conflicts of which the state was a central actor.

7.3.3 External actors both conflicts

How-won Jeong argues that external players or allies provide different types of support that add complex dimensions to the internal conflict. They can either mitigate or intensify the conflicts with the different types of support they provide (Jeong 2008:121). In both conflicts, external intervention played a significant role in the perpetration of violence.

One frequently cited explanation for the protracted armed conflict in northern Uganda is regional and international involvement. The Sudan Government was accussed of supporting the LRA They provided the LRA with logistical and military support; food, weapons and communication equipment, in retaliation for the Ugandan government's support to the Southern People's Liberation Army (SPLA) in southern Sudan (Branch 2007:182, Gersony 1997:68, Doom and Vlassenroot 1999:28). According to a report by Amnesty International (1997), advanced kinds of armament, such as the AK 47, the G3 assault rifle, anti-tank weaponry, mortars and land mines were provided by Sudan. This military equipment enabled the LRA to upscale the levels of violence against civilians in both Sudan and northern Uganda. According to Robert Gersony, Sudan's support legitimised and professionalised the LRA's activities, as they became well-paid

509974-L-bw-isimon
Processed on: 1-5-2017 PDF page: 207

mercenaries fighting against the government of Uganda and the SPLA. With rear bases in Sudan, the LRA operated with a free hand, taking advantage of the protection, security and immunity offered by Sudan (1997:68). With this support, the LRA was able to continue its activities.

However, some scholars note that the role of international actors in Uganda's violent conflicts was strategically planned by the President of Uganda. Dominant narratives, which Sverker Finnstrom has defined as the 'official discourses' surrounding the brutality of the LRA and the abduction of children were used by the President Museveni to instil fear and nurture political support domestically and internationally. This is said to have earned him diplomatic and budgetary support from international agencies such as the World Bank and donor states such as the U.S. and U.K. for military purposes, among others things (Mwenda 2010:45-58). It also enabled him to convince the U.S. to include the LRA in the list of terrorist groups. As a result, making it possible for arrest warrants from the International Criminal Court in 2005 to be issued for the arrest of Joseph Kony and his top commanders (Atkinson 2009:9).

In relation to the role of humanaitarian intervention and its role in prolonging the war in northern Uganda.The violence inflicted on civilians by the rebels and the government troops was politically motivated. Several key informants noted that, the NRM Government, set up 'protected villages' or IDP camps, as a counter-insurgency approach. However, there are claims that that strategy was targeting humanitarian intervention from the international community. According to Adam Branch, there is an internal logic to humanitarian intervention by those who instrumentalise it. And it is a "vehicle for external political interests" (Branch 2007:2-3). And that were the objectives of Uganda's Government.

This IDP camp idea was strategically manufactured as it produced needy victims that were going to be dependent on outsiders for their economic and military aid as they were unable to help nor protect themselves. Adam Branch further notes that by 2003, the majority of the Acholi population were in IDP camps, as part of a counter-insurgency strategy, and the government knew that this strategy was "only sustainable because of the massive relief distribution system established by the humanitarian agencies" (Branch 2007:14).

He further notes that the counter-insurgency strategy opened the way for the Ugandan government to gain access to foreign material, political and symbolic resources, thus permitting it to go ahead with the war. He

509974-L-bw-isimon
Processed on: 1-5-2017

argues that humanitarian intervention normalised the situation of emergency in northern Uganda while providing support to the state and, hence, prolonging the conflict. This is because it created better political conditions that had implications on the dynamics of the conflict, and putting people at more risk: "…although purporting to save lives, reduce suffering, and resolve conflict, it can prolong conflict and intensify the suffering of those in whose name it takes place" (Branch 2007:12).

Furthermore, Adam Branch also argues that western academics and policy groups deliberately refused to acknowledge the LRA as a political force, and were fixed on the violence being irrational and incomprehensible. Such attitudes led to the production of reports that favour the Ugandan Government's interest and military approach, which was adopted by the UPDF army (Branch 2007:34- 42). He further argues that prejudices against the LRA by Western Governments, international organisations and the aid agencies were based on moral issues due to the brutal campaign characterising the war, yet many informants highlighted the state as a key actor in this campaign. Extreme brutality against the Acholi and especially children made it necessary and morally correct to disqualify the LRA as a faction with a political agenda (Branch 2007:32-45, Dolan 2002:68-71). This position has been attributed to Uganda's close relationship with the U.S. and its war against terror, which has made this disqualification appropriate (Branch 2007:42, Atkinson 2009:9). Organisations such as the International Crisis Group recommended to have no peace negotiations with the LRA and, instead, lobby for continued donor support to Uganda from the U.S. and U.K. (ICG 2004:20). Adam Branch aptly notes this below:

> "… the demonization of the LRA by such groups as UNICEF and other humanitarian NGOs is supported by Western states and international financial institutions, who do not want to grant legitimacy to the rebels. The characterization of the LRA as a-political and their violence as fundamentally irrational and meaningless is in the interests of western media, western states, NGOs, international institutions, and the Ugandan government. The media sell gory images of incomprehensible barbarism in Africa; western states protect their East African ally; NGOs collect funds through marketing the plight of abducted children; and international agencies undertake humanitarian intervention while absolving themselves of the need to engage complex issues" (Branch 2007:43).

509974-L-bw-isimon
Processed on: 1-5-2017
PDF page: 209

Those that have written articles and reports against the political legitimacy of the LRA have been accused of pursuing their personal interests, because Western Governments and various non-governmental organisations fund various surveys and studies, and it is "predictable that there will be little divergence from this official line" (Branch, 2007: 43). Authors such as Robert Gersony, funded by USAID (Gersony 1997:1) and Frank Van Acker,employed by and involved in "NGO, academic, donor" work (Van Acker 2004:335) have written extensively about the illegitimacy of the LRA. To the writings of those who have openly declared the political legitimacy of the LRA, disclaimers have been added, stating that they are not backing the LRA rebel faction (Branch 2007:43).

This has been the case as well for the communal conflicts in north eastern region. Ben Knighton notes that relatively little has been written about the voices of the pastoralists, despite many planned NGO interventions (2003:431). Instead, there has been a focus on violence and guns. Over the years, certain terms have been used to refer to Karamojong warriors such as, 'clan elders to warlords' (Oloka-Onyango et al. 1993:17, Ocan 1994:140, Muhereza and Otim 2002:112,116). Although such terms have been used to portray the disintegration of culture and a social change in leadership from the elders to the unruly youth, they have had a huge influence on policy papers and planned interventions. Such descriptions of the Karamojong have been employed by various NGOs, international agencies and the Government of Uganda (Knighton 2003:431-2).

Michael Odhiambo noted that: "…the gun problem in Karamoja…it is through these borders that guns and ammunitions infiltrate into Karamoja" (2003:58-59). "These borders" are notably those between Uganda and southern Sudan. The instability in neighbouring states, such as Sudan, as well as the armed conflict in northern Uganda, undoubtedly contributed to the dissemination of small arms in the wider region. With the proliferation of arms, that have been trafficked from conflict ridden regions such as Sudan, Somalia and Ethiopia, and found their way in to Karamoja - the Karamojong have been referred to as "criminals" involved in 'transnational criminal networks', involving arms trade and thus posing as a threat to global peace and prosperity (Mkutu 2008:100, 2001:ii). This is aptly noted below:

509974-L-bw-isimon
Processed on: 1-5-2017
PDF page: 210

> "The last 25 years have seen the acquisition of modern firearms transforming raiding into large-scale armed conflict with outside actors. Beneficiaries have links to the market economy… Armed conflicts have moved beyond limited communal resource based conflicts and become embedded in wider criminal networks serving national and regional areas" (Mkutu 2008:100).

As a result, the U.S. government, through USAID, offered support to the Government of Uganda, to be devoted to conflict issues such as the disarmament of the north eastern region (Knighton 2003:430, USAID 2002 Performance and Accountability Annual Report, data for Uganda). The World Bank offered 100 million U.S. dollars for the reconstruction of the north and north eastern region through the "Northern Uganda Social Action Fund (NUSAF) Project". The New Vision reported that the Government of Uganda had received donor funds for anti-terrorist activities and the pacification of the Karamoja region respectively (The New Vision, 26 February 2003).

Consequently as seen above, as Ho-Won Jeon argues "Different motivations and power dynamics get involved in the formation of layers of conflict relationships" (2008:118). Through such facilitation, international community has indirectly facilitated the perpetuation of the armed conflicts in Uganda. These cases of violent conflict highlight how significant the international community and global processes have been in the protraction of violent conflict in Uganda. And as the discussion above reveals, the trajectory of these conflicts, and their change in form and direction was as a result of twists and turns embedded in the strategies, orientations and goals of the various actors involved.

7.4 Conclusion

In conclusion, as shown above, both conflicts was connected to the wider ways in which the local society and Uganda were organised and governed. Long-standing traditions of local nationalism divided communities along ethnic, linguistic and regional lines. The cases discussed show how identity-based explanation theories are significant in revealing the significance of cultural and ethnic attachments and how identity can be instrumentalized. Both these conflicts reveal how identity makes a conflict socially meaningful as well as politically functional.

509974-L-bw-isimon
Processed on: 1-5-2017

This study unravels the complex dynamics that characterise both sets of violent conflict. Issues such as colonialism, Uganda's post-independent political struggles, poverty and underdevelopment, the rise of a war economy and the role of external actors, can all be referred to as essential to the political economy of violent conflict, which are all evident as discussed above.

All in all, it is important to note that (and how) these two sets of conflict have both causal and actor linkages. However, what stands out is the state's involvement in both regions. These findings problematise the rigid definition of civil war as state based conflict and communal violence as a non-state conflict. As highlighted in the above discussions, exclusionary policies and a deliberate move not to intervene and contain the group to group violence in Karamoja by the state served to prolong the instability in Karamoja. How these conflicts are defined, influence how they are viewed, understood and approached. How policy makers design interventions in such conflict-affected regions is important, and this brings the researcher to the concluding Chapter (8), which provides some recommendations with regard to the general insights gained from this study, and lays out some suggestions for future academic research.

509974-L-bw-isimon
Processed on: 1-5-2017
PDF page: 212

8 Summary and Research Agenda for the Future

8.1 General research findings

The main research question of this study is: What are the complex interconnections between the civil war in northern Uganda and the communal violence in north eastern Uganda? In response to this question, this study as a whole has found evidence of causal linkages between civil war and communal violence. These conflicts are interconnected by virtue of their histories and the national political and economic context that were both instrumental in the outbreak of violent conflict and in its persistence over time. This finding is important for academic conflict studies, and more research should be undertaken in the future to better understand the complex dynamics of, and causal connections between, these categories of violent conflict: civil war and communal violence.

The study found evidence of interesting conflict dynamics of the civil war in northern Uganda and the communal violence in north eastern Uganda. The nature and dynamics of the violent conflict in each of these two regions impacted on how these conflicts should be conceptualised, measured and understood, separately and in relation to one another. The field findings clearly show that the connections between these two differently classified forms of violent conflict have in the past tended to be under-theorised, since each is seen as a distinct category of the overall phenomena of violent conflict. Each of the two conflicts displayed several interesting inter-linkages with the other, as shown in this thesis. Neither conflict was static in terms of the dynamics over time. Each conflict had its own longer-term cycles of violence and relative calm and both evolved beyond the simple classification of a civil war or a case of communal violence.

509974-L-bw-isimon
Processed on: 1-5-2017
PDF page: 213

It became apparent from close study, oral testimony and reading of the results of research in the field, that both conflicts – the civil war with the LRA in the north, and the so-called communal violence in Karamoja – were equally complex and multi-faceted. Each evolved in ways that echoed both the narrower and the broader typologies of conflict. Through the course of several decades, the two sets of violent conflict also intertwined, and each influenced the course of the other. This means that neither of the violent conflicts in this case can be understood within the rigid categorical definition used to measure and quantify them in the databases.

Even these conceptualisations are too confining to capture the dynamic spillovers between situations of violence that are adjacent, yet recorded separately. The way in which violence is measured thus needs to be re-visited in this respect at least. It should be possible in data collection to also take into account the transformation taking place over time in both civil war and communal violence. The interplay between these forms of conflict may even set up a scheme that can lead to the unnecessary prolongation of these conflicts. This can have a significant bearing on academic researchers. Those who wish to elaborate on such overlaps, spillovers and complex inter-conflict dynamics, may become better prepared for giving policy advice in future. Policy formulation and intervention may even become less data-driven and more evidence-based in the future. In this way, such protracted cases of - parallel and only apparently mutually exclusive - violent forms of civil and communal conflict can be avoided.

8.2 Specific research findings

Chapter 1 highlights the emphasis conflict scholars have put in differentiating these conflicts. The problem is that, by making these differentiations, the realities of these conflicts are overlooked. Such types of conflicts may not be easy to differentiate from each other, and are at different times linked to each other. This is argued with reference to cases of violent conflict in Sudan and Somalia. To be able to understand the interlinkages between the case of civil war and that of communal violence, the research focused on Uganda, one country among many conflict-affected countries in Africa.

To examine the complex interconnections, the main research question was broken down into several sub-questions:

509974-L-bw-isimon
Processed on: 1-5-2017

1. What were the underlying causes of the civil war in northern Uganda and the communal violence in north eastern Uganda?
2. Who were the main actors in the two conflicts?
3. What were their incentives and their role in influencing the direction of these conflicts?
4. Under what circumstances did the form, content and direction of these two conflicts interconnect and overlap?
5. What are the implications of the distinct and overlapping nature of these two conflicts for how civil war and communal violence are conceptualised and measured?

Based on these sub-questions, the section below will synthesise the field findings and reflect on the contribution of this study to conflict studies, and on the implications for theorisation and analysis of violent conflicts.

The study's major findings were presented and discussed in Chapters 4, 5, 6 and 7. In response to sub-questions 1 and 2, Chapters 4 and 5 contextualise the civil war in northern Uganda and communal violence in Karamoja. This involves an analysis of the history of these conflicts and the key sources of tensions that led to the onset of the civil war in northern Uganda and the continuation and redefinition of communal violence in north eastern Uganda. Drawing on empirical and secondary sources, these Chapters identified key actors and their role in influencing the direction of these conflicts from the colonial, post-independence era until the current NRM regime.

Chapter 4 reveals that the civil war in northern Uganda evolves taking a local, national, regional as well an international dimension. These developments come with new issues and external actors that shape its course. Chapter 5 reveals that the cattle rustling in Karamoja is an old tradition that later gets transformed with the multiplication of guns and ammunitions in the region. These developments are characterised by cycles of cattle rustling and counterraids, not only with neighbours across the border of Uganda, but also among the groups themselves, and with other ethnic groups across other districts, and later occasionally in combat with state actors. These transformative conflict situations concur with the argument presented in this thesis that these conflicts are not static, and may overlap and get embedded in larger conflicts or become an extension of smaller or narrower conflicts. The pathways of these conflicts have implications on how they can be conceptualised.

509974-L-bw-isimon
Processed on: 1-5-2017

In an unchronological manner, but aimed at making the researcher's arguments clear, Chapter 7 gives a response to sub-question 3, while, sub-questions 4 and 5 are covered by Chapter 6, which critiques the categorisations of these conflicts. The study reveals that the databases, through coding, play a big role in understanding the role of key actors in influencing the direction of these conflicts. The civil war in northern Uganda, led by LRA rebel leader Joseph Kony against the government of Uganda, evolved into narrower and broader conflict categories, involving atrocities against innocent civilians (which is coded as one-sided violence), and later involving battle field confrontations with not only the UPDF but with a highly organised rebel faction, the SPLA, in southern , as well. This scenario develops with continued attacks on civilians in Uganda and southern Sudan. Later, the LRA launches incursions into Teso and Lango in the north eastern districts of Uganda and clashes with ethnic paramilitary groups in these districts. This section critiques the coding of these conflicts, that understates the role of the Ugandan state and the role of external actors such as Sudan. The study notes that the civilians in northern Uganda have experienced terror from both the state troops and the LRA Despite this fact, the UCDP only codes the state's involvement in one-sided violence aginst the Acholi people in 1990/91. The atrocious role of the state is also revealed in the negligence of the IDPS Camps, the appalling conditions in which led to deaths of thousands of civilians, due to the lack of the necessary social services and the spread of deadly diseases.

The conflict in the north develops from civil war, to one-sided violence, to combat between highly organised millitias. Although the conflict was internationalised early on, the UCDP only later codes it as an internationalised armed conflict. The concern noted here with these conflict categorisations is that they understate the role of significant actors such as the state in the one-sided violence in northern Uganda. They also understate the role of external actors such as Sudan. In this case, the conflict was coded as an international one only in 2005, whereas the governments of Uganda and Sudan were supporting the SPLA and LRA rebels, sponsoring their activities and deploying active troops to fight alongside them against the respective governments, from as early on as in 1995/96.

Chapter 6 shows that the protraction and changing nature of the violent conflict in Karamoja were to a large extent due to deliberate anti-pastoralist administrative policies by the colonial and post–colonial

509974-L-bw-isimon
Processed on: 1-5-2017

governments. These policies served to isolate and marginalise the Karamojong from the rest of the country and fostered a resource competition that fed the continuation of the conflict. Later, when the NRA took over power, it adopted a non-intervention policy that favoured continued tensions in the Karamoja region. The case of communal violence in Karamoja reveals that there were different levels of conflict that emerged with time. There was conflict between the Karamojong and cross-border ethnic groups in neighbouring countries, conflict within Karamojong ethnic group itself, conflict between the Karamojong and ethnic groups from neighbouring frontier districts, and conflict between the Karamojong and the state actors. Karamojong warriors engaged in combat with state forces, and this is not recognised in the UCDP conflict datasets.

Chapter 6 reveals that the linkages between these two conflicts are predominantly in state policies and political struggles at the national level. It is important to note that the military coups fostered the proliferation of guns and ammunitions in the Karamoja region and also introduced a tradition of persecution of other ethnic groups, such as the Acholi, by incoming governments. Direct and indirect causal linkages between these conflicts are traced to the political instability and political struggles (that included several military coups), which characterised the political scene in post-independence Uganda and the subsequent rise of the NRA.

This tradition of persecution was adopted by the NRA government when they took over power in 1986, and especially the Acholi were affected by it. This led to the rise of rebel factions, not only in Acholi but also in Teso and the West Nile. In relation to the Karamoja region, the state authorised the ownership of guns by the Karamoja to protect themselves and their livestock against other cattle-rustling ethnic groups such as the Turkana and Pokot. Apart from allowing this free gun ownership, the state disbanded militia groups protecting the borders of neighbouring districts from cattle-rustlers. The study reveals that the state, through deliberate policies, used the Karamojong to impoverish the Acholi and other rebel tribes, such as the Teso, that were seen as a threat to the state. This free gun ownership policy fuelled the conflict in Karamoja in turn, and also contributed to the onset of the civil war in the north.

What is significant to note as well is the policy blindness employed by the state towards the Karamoja region. Much of the executive actions with regard to conflicts in the country were directed towards the LRA in northern Uganda, and not to the Karamoja region. This, as seen above, the thesis argues was a deliberate strategy of the state, aimed at disorganising rebel

509974-L-bw-isimon
Processed on: 1-5-2017

tribes. Even though finally, in 2001, a disarmament programme is put in place, minimal effort is put into it, as is evident from the constant redeployment of army troops from Karamoja to northern Uganda, whenever the LRA would strike.

In response to sub-question 3, Chapter 7 discusses causal linkages and shows that the colonial legacy that created a fragmented society and divisive politics was carried on by the successive governments of Uganda. It should be noted that it was the ethnicisation and militarisation of politics in Uganda that led to the civil war onset in northern Uganda and contributed to the continuation of communal violence in Karamoja. As these conflicts developed, other factors emerged that fostered their protraction. These factors were poverty and underdevelopment, and the emergence of a war economy. Against a backdrop of widespread poverty in Karamoja and the limited economic opportunities, the commercialisation of cattle raids took off and this contributed to the continuation of the communal violence. The study shows that, with regard to the northern region, it was mainly the government's lack of political will to end the civil war that led to its protraction.

The study shows that social identities of groups played an important role in the onset and protraction of violent conflict. In both the civil war in northern Uganda and the communal violence in Karamoja ethnicity played an important role. These conflicts show how significant the emotional power of ethnic attachments can be and how communities can draw on them to fight other groups. The constructivist–culturalism school argues that the socialisation of communities leads to the internalisation of cultural practices that create an affective sense and, consequently, a belief. This was the main reason for the cattle rustling among the Karamojong, a tradition embedded in their cultural system. This is also relevant in relation to the atrocities against the Acholi that were committed by the NRA forces in early 1986. The fear of group extermination due to the emotional value of ethnicity created a context in which rebel leaders used to mobilise masses to fight the NRA government. The constructivist–culturalism school of thought clearly highlights the significance of deep ethnosymbolic resources and culturalism by groups in both conflicts.

The constructivist–instrumentalism school's view can be related to both cases, but was much more relevant for the civil war in northern Uganda. This is becuase elite ex-UNLA officials, dwelling on the atrocities being committed by the NRA among other reasons, initiated rebel groups

509974-L-bw-isimon
Processed on: 1-5-2017
PDF page: 218

and rallied significant numbers of the Acholi population into joining them in fighting the NRA government. However, although this approach focuses on the predatory nature of the elites who manipulate the masses for their own selfish interests, the study reveals a combination of factors. The collective fears created were actually witnessed by the masses.

The study also shows that ethnic groups from the conflict-affected regions were discriminated against and had limited political and socio-economic opportunities. Violent conflict can be constructed in uneven, unfair and unrepresentative structures. The experiences of the Karamojong and the Acholi in north east and northern Uganda clearly illustrate that structural violence prepares ground for violent conflict, which the political economy school of thought argues is the major underlying factor responsible for unrest in the global south. The study concludes that the onset and continuation of these conflicts was as the result of a complex chain of causes, involving the state as the central actor alongside other local and external actors. Through lack of political will to end these conflicts and by diverting resources to pursuing alternative policies in foreign countries, the state contributed in the shaping of the conditions for, and sustenance of these violent conflicts. In relation to the above, the following section will highlight the implications of this study, and its contribution to conflict analysis.

8.3 Theoretical and methodological implications of the study for conflict analyses

8.3.1 Rethinking connections: State, ethnicity and sub-ethnic groups

These conflicts are interconnected by virtue of their histories and the national political and economic context that were both instrumental in bringing about the outbreak of violent conflict and in its persistence over time. This study shows that the classification of conflicts used in conflict databases significantly underrates the role of the state in violent conflicts.

The conflict databases underrate the role of the state in conflicts of which the agenda seems local and are referred to as 'communal', meaning that groups without a political agenda can be taken for granted.. The field findings reveal that the state deliberately neglected the Karamoja region in

509974-L-bw-isimon
Processed on: 1-5-2017

policy processes while attending more to the civil war in the north through strong executive actions, but with minimal will to actually contain it. These actions/inactions have been largely attributed to ethnicized politics, identity-based explanations and opportunistic motives by the state.

In conflict theorisation, debates have revolved around a number of issues related to the causes of violent conflicts (Zarkov and Hintjens 2015:10, Demmers 2012:01-17). According to one source (Zarkov and Hintjens 2015:04), classical methodological approaches in conflict studies principally refer to an array of qualitative approaches. This essentially means that theorising in conflict studies is derived from "…philosophy, history, and law, and that is characterized above all by explicit reliance upon the 'exercise of judgement', acknowledged as 'scientifically imperfect' " (Bull, 1966:361). Bull argues that this approach relies mostly on:

> "… 'Perception and intuition' rather than on '…strict standards of verification and proof…based either upon logical or mathematical proof, or upon strict, empirical procedures of verification" (Bull 1966:362).

The key debates on the explanations of the causes have been centered on opportunistic motives, identity-based explanations and 'new war theories' (Demmers 2012:01-17). This study contributes to the debate on how ethnicity was a persistent antagonistic force in Ugandan politics.

According to historical records and the field findings of this study, the multi-ethnic structure of Ugandan society and the rivalry among ethnic groups, exacerbated by the colonial masters, were the major causes of the problems in Uganda's politics, and led up to the post-independence political upheavals. Since the pre-colonial, colonial and post-independence eras, the ethnic dimension manifested itself, in explicitly negative terms, as a source of conflict instead of unification, since different ethnic groups had a high sense of local nationalism, i.e., identity to their ethnicity, rather than national consciousness. Through ethnicised politics, ethnic groups in Uganda have used the state as a means to meet political ends and determine the distribution of resources, which often led to the exclusion of other groups.

This has contributed to the history of ethnic violence through ethnicised political struggles in Uganda, and was a major factor in the onset of the civil war in northern Uganda and fostered the continuation of the communal violence in Karamoja. Also, the protraction of these conflicts has been attributed to structure-based issues. As noted above, the history

509974-L-bw-isimon
Processed on: 1-5-2017 PDF page: 220

of Uganda established its basic structures of violence through social, economic, political and religious processes that went on from the beginning of the post-colonial era until today. Contemporary Uganda still witnesses regional and ethnic cleavages, especially in the conflict-affected regions.

The study finds that the NRM government has deliberately fostered the protraction of the civil war in northern Uganda and the communal violence in Karamoja. The study also shows that, with the ongoing insecurity in the country, the state accrued economic and political benefits, as did the LRA. The study problematises the conceptualisation of these conflicts by focusing on the role of the state. It will, however, regard this as a contribution to conflict theory.

As discussed in previous chapters, the NRM government took advantage of its peripheral position in the world economy and of the framework and norms of global governance. With this argument, this study has been able to contribute to the global debate about predatory economic motivations for the protraction of violent conflicts that come with political benefits for state governments as well. In this broader structural context, the violent conflicts within Uganda increased the flow of resources in the form of aid from the World Bank and other multilateral agencies. With the help of these funds, the state was able to divert some of its resources to military expenditures, not only for trying to contain the war in northern Uganda and communal violence in Karamoja, as they claimed, but also for sustaining the occupation and violent commerce in the DRC.

Despite the predatory activities of the Ugandan military, the state was able to maintain its relationship with creditors. As discussed in Chapter 7, this was a manipulative strategy of global norms by the Ugandan state, showing how the structure of global governance can aid the protraction of violent conflict. Eventually, under mounting pressure, after threats of aid cuts aid from the international community, the Ugandan government was forced to contain the civil war in northern Uganda and the communal violence in Karamoja. The danger of loss of international aid was one of the major reasons the state intensified its requests for peace negotiations (Kustenbauder 2010:475-479).

8.3.2 Methodological contribution and implications

Besides problematising the rigid definitions that do not capture the transformative nature of these conflicts, this study shows how the politics

509974-L-bw-isimon
Processed on: 1-5-2017 PDF page: 221

of conflict classification plays a huge role in casting blame and responsibility to other actors while overlooking the role of significant actors such as the state and external actors. The study shows that the databases, through coding, play a big role in understating the role of significant actors in influencing the direction of the conflicts.

In the case of civil war, the study found that external actors and their role are underrated or neglected because of the conflict coding criteria, such as the role of Sudan, as discussed in Chapter 6. In Karamoja, the role of the state is absent. The study shows that low-intensity and 'non-political' conflicts, such as the communal violence in Karamoja, are deliberately neglected by the state through strong executive actions and policies that target and prioritise high-intensity conflicts, such as the civil war in northern Uganda. Such cases of communal violence come to mind when Schultze-Kraft and Hinkle (2014) say that violent conflicts are not just a mirror of social problems within the country but are closely linked to political processes within their settings. Through policy processes the state was central in the continuation of communal violence in Karamoja. The databases do not recognise this, and the interconnections between the role of the state and the perpetuation of the conflict go unnoticed.

Furthermore, these conflicts fed in to one another, reinforcing each other and providing conditions that contributed to their perpetuation. The civil war in northern Uganda led to suitations that were of help in the multiplication of guns in Karamoja, and also took up the lion's share of attention from the state. The common conceptualisation of these violent conflicts does not take their compound nature into consideration, which is interlinked, entangled and reinforces the other at different levels (Lind 2014:01).

The UCDP datasets and the conceptualisations of conflicts do not deal with these with interconnections between conflicts. Conflict scholars have noted that econometric and quantitative modelling has dominated much of the peace and conflict studies (Kalyvas 2008:397). This modelling has been facilitated by numerous dataset programmes that were created to allow conflict scholars and researchers to measure variations of conflict phenomena. Using the existing quantitative databases, conflict scholars have sought to identify causal patterns of violent conflict. This has raised criticism about relying on these dataset programmes (Kalyvas 2006, Kalyvas 2008, Tarrow 2007).

509974-L-bw-isimon
Processed on: 1-5-2017
PDF page: 222

Benedict Korf refers to the quantitative bias as "arm chair empiricism", in the sense that it would be easy to arrive at conclusions by just using the already available datasets, instead of also paying visits to the field (Korf 2006:459-476). Consequently, over the years, scholars who initially relied uniquely on quantitative methodologies, increasingly integrated qualitative research in the field into their research, and several scholars have recommended to increase the use of empirical narratives to supplement research based on quantitative datasets (Tarrow 2007:590, Kalyvas 2008:397).

This study adopts more of a qualitative approach and should be seen as based on a mixed-methods approach, which has been noted as the more credible approach of researching conflicts. As noted below:

> "Mixing quantitative and qualitative methodologies may be particularly important in conflict research. Not only do theoretical assumptions and methodological strategies need to be questioned, but the data too, as they are often collected from the media, and during conflict periods, thus sources of data are unlikely to be particularly reliable. Whatever the sampled population, in conditions where violence prevails, surveys are not likely to elicit full, open answers" (Hintjens and Zarkov 2015: 04).

In the light of the discussion above and the field findings of this study, there is a need to review the criteria used in defining some of these violent conflicts, especially when looking at the African context, its conditions and its nature. Conflict criteria have been globalised and made to be used as a yardstick across all continents, ignoring the local context and local dynamics of conflicts. They rely more on actual parties involved and on recorded death tolls than on conflict context. The study is not against a quantitative analysis but suggests the addition of evidence-based criteria to quantitative data-driven criteria when coding these conflicts. This will allow the capture of the underlying conflict dynamics and the complexities involved in conflict development.

Although communal violence has been defined as devoid of any state intervention, as opposed to civil war, in which the state is involved, this study shows that ethnicised politics within and by the state have been very instrumental in bringing about violent conflicts of either type and in fostering their continuation. Simply defining communal violence as devoid of state presence negates the visibility of the state in such conflicts. Based on the field findings, the state's presence in both conflicts shows how well

509974-L-bw-isimon
Processed on: 1-5-2017 PDF page: 223

the combination of a qualitative and quantitative approach can assist in understanding the complex connections and dynamics involved in these conflicts, and in enabling a comparison between these conflict categories.

Based on the above analysis, this study recommends the conceptualisation of conflicts using relevant factors of analysis, such as systemic political, economic and social-cultural discrimination that hamper the progress of one group in relation to another. This can be used as a basis for comparison among horizontal groups involved in different intra-state conflict categories. This, in turn, can be useful in understanding the sources of conflict and gauging the level of state involvement in these conflicts.

As noted in this study, ethnicized politics by the state was a central factor. Cederman et al. note that "ethnicity serves as the most important criterion of boundary formation" (2013:96). Furthermore, they note that groups exposed to more than one dimension of inequality are more likely to be engaged in violent actions. Thus, formulating criteria that examine state processes in social-cultural, economic and political dimensions can be very useful in enabling a comparison between intra-state conflict categories and in determining the role of the state in conflicts.

The groups seen in this study, the included and excluded ones, are defined in ethnic terms, as in the figure in Chapter 7 section 7.3.1, and their political relationship with the government. Some of the groups, which are referred to as the included, enjoy privileged access to power by virtue of being represented by its elite members in the government's executive organs. Other ethnic groups, which are referred to as excluded or marginalised ethnic groups, are excluded from power. The politically relevant, included groups such as the Acholi had access to political representation through their domination of the army ranks, whereas the Karamoja, who were a totally marginalized group, were irrelevant and played no explicit role in national politics. This kind of political marginalisation constitutes what Cederman et al. (2013:59) refer to as "…a direct violation of the principle of nationalism and self-determination". This is remarkable because the state has a role to ensure all groups within the state are represented:

> "Rather than being primarily a matter of the group's own actions, the central state's institutional and informal policies determine the power status of ethnic groups living within its borders (Cederman et al. 2013:61).

509974-L-bw-isimon
Processed on: 1-5-2017
PDF page: 224

Politically relevant/included groups that are active in national politics and are directly discriminated by the government (Cederman et al. 2010), can become operational by using their influence on a country's executive, by obtaining cabinet seats or by controlling the army in military regimes (Cederman et al. 2013:67). As for indicators of political influence, a criterion that involves a measure of a group's institutional access to power can go a long way in revealing conflict-related state processes, and may be useful for the comparison of different intra-state conflicts with one another. The same can be said for criteria for the evaluation of wealth/income (economic) differences among ethnic groups. Such criteria would also be helpful in assessing the contribution of state processes to conflicts among groups.

Political entrepreneurs can use ethnic boundaries for distributional purposes, in order to exploit and hoard wealth for the 'in'-group, leaving behind disgruntled 'out'-groups, with conflicts as a result (Tilly 1999, Gurr 1993). Hetcher (1978) notes that political dominance leads to uneven cultural division of labor, as shown by the political and economic history of Uganda in the lead-up to the political upheavals in the country. To measure economic inequality, national household surveys for poverty differences between groups in violent conflict with one another would be useful, as they might reveal the politics involved in the appropriation of state resources and opportunities.

These micro-meso level insights are very important in disclosing wider patterns of state processes at the macro level (Balcells and Justino 2014:1346, Kalyvas 2012:658). A criterion that can be used in establishing a theoretical link between political processes and local conflict dynamics.

8.4 Towards mixed evidence-based policies

Based on its field findings, this study recommends an evidence-based approach combining both quantitative and qualitative data in assessing conflicts and designing intervention policies. Conflict has been an interesting subject for academic and policy research. Studies of conflict and conflict databases form the basis for academic theorisation of conflicts, and this may serve policy makers as well. A mixed-methods approach, it can be suggested, might work best for evidence-based policy advice.

This study has examined Uganda's intra-state conflicts, in line with the global trends highlighted by conflict literature. It is interesting to note

509974-L-bw-isimon
Processed on: 1-5-2017

is that earlier studies found that several communal conflicts and civil wars in conflict-affected countries were running simultaneously or immediately one after the other, in a 'cycle' or series of interconnected conflict events. This study has been able to carefully reconstruct the narratives and examine the datasets in relation to understanding two such occurrences, and their interconnections. Using the case of Uganda, where these conflicts spanned decades, this study raises questions that are important for academic researchers when advising policy makers. Insight in the causal connections between different categories of conflict typologies may even affect the design of intervention policies and how they are taken up.

This study sheds light on the politics of classification used in conflict databases. The study found that groups whose issues appear not to be political can be ignored or taken for granted. In the case of Karamoja, participants stated that their conflict issues were not about politics but about 'domestic' things, such as cattle, pastures or grazing spaces, and water. For that reason, the conflict was regarded as 'communal'.

According to several studies, evidence should also involve different 'levels', if policy makers are to be fully and adequately informed prior to making crucial decisions about how to intervene in, manage or reduce violent conflicts (Balcells and Justino 2014:1346, Kalyvas 2012:658). The different, and sometimes contrasting, macro-micro and meso-level dimensions of violent conflict should be factored into research that seeks to advise policy-makers. In this way, insights from macro-level studies or micro-level studies can inform one another, and combined with meso-level mixed-method conflict research data, lead to a better understanding of the complex dynamics between different levels. This multi-level evidence base can provide important insights in state processes and their contributory role in communal violence and civil war onset and protraction, for academics and policy makers alike.

Policy makers should take into consideration the fact that a conflict within a country can, in various ways, affect other conflicts or have a spill-over effect. Direct or indirect interconnections do exist between them, so the same level of attention should be given to what they may consider 'significant' and 'insignificant' cases of violent conflict. This is because, as seen above, selective or biased intervention played a huge role in the protraction of violent conflict in the Karamoja region as well as the northern region.

509974-L-bw-isimon
Processed on: 1-5-2017
PDF page: 226

Protracted communal conflicts can cause enormous human insecurity. Such is the case in the Karamoja region, which has the lowest human development indicator values in the country and endures never-ending famine and hunger episodes that claim lives in their wake. Despite the existing peace, a number of people have died over the years due to hunger. Examining the origins of conflicts and understanding their interconnections can go a long way in avoiding their protraction and help in deriving proper intervention mechanisms.

However, even though a proper case analysis of a conflict may be done, there can be instances where intervention is shaped by other factors such as the local stereotype narratives, traditional and religious beliefs, local, regional, national and international politics. In some cases, politicians and policy makers have a tendency to choose the analysis of a conflict that suits their interests. Naturalization of conflicts may occur, such as in the case of the civil war in northern Uganda and the communal violence in north eastern Uganda, where ethnic groups in the neighbouring districts regarded these conflicts in inter-ethnic terms. The civil war in northern Uganda was regarded as an 'Acholi war' because the Acholi were dominant in the LRA ranks, and when they launched excursions into Teso and Lango, the local militias, the 'Arrow Boys' and the 'Amuka Boys', composed of local people from these ethnic groups, regarded the tensions as along ethnic lines. The same applies to the Karamojong, who have endured being labelled and stereotyped by neighbouring ethnic groups as 'marauding warriors'.This has definitely co-determined the nature of the policy interventions that have been designed to pacify the region.

8.5 Future directions and areas of research

This study has examined the complex relationship between two conflict categories and established that, in the case of civil war and communal violence, there are causal and actor linkages between them. The role of the state has been – unjustly - underestimated in both conflict cases. Improper coding and categorisation of conflicts is a serious political act with serious political implications that play a great role in the deliberate casting of blame and responsibility. Further studies should invest in the development of criteria that can be used for comparison in coding conflicts. Ideally, a qualitative–quantitative model for coding and categorising conflicts

509974-L-bw-isimon
Processed on: 1-5-2017
PDF page: 227

should be developed. Such a model should allow the understanding of how state processes are related to certain intra-state conflict categories.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Time line of the armed conflict in northern Uganda

- 1892 - Imperial British East Africa Company extends its control to southern Uganda and extends its assistance to the Protestant missionaries
- 1894 - Uganda is made a British Protectorate
- 1900 – The Buganda agreement is signed and Buganda is given autonomy as a constitutional monarchy
- 1958 - Uganda is awarded internal self-government
- 1962 – Uganda gets independence with Milton Obote as Prime Minister (Obote I)
- 1963 - Uganda becomes a Republic with Kabaka Mutesa II as President
- 1966 - Milton Obote ousts President Kabaka Mutesa II and promotes himself to the presidency
- 1967 - New constitution is made
- 1971 – Idi Amin topples Milton Obote
- 1972 – Idi Amin evacuates over 60,000 Asians from Uganda
- 1972-73 - Uganda clashes with Tanzania over border
- 1978 - Uganda invades Tanzania
- 1979 - Tanzania invades Uganda with the UNLA and topples Idi Amin. Yusufu Lule is made President, but is immediately replaced by Godfrey Binaisa
- 1980 - Binaisa is overthrown by the army

509974-L-bw-isimon
Processed on: 1-5-2017
PDF page: 229

- 1980 - Obote II wins contested elections and rebel factions raise up against his government
- 1985 – Tito Okello topples Milton
- 1986 - National Resistance Army rebels take over Kampala and Yoweri Museveni becomes President
- 1987 - Alice Lakwena launches an insurgency with the Holy Spirit Movement in northern Uganda, against the NRM government
- 1988 - Joseph Kony, Lakwena's cousin, emerges and forms a rebel faction that later is referred to as the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA)
- 1994 March - The LRA increases ambushes and abductions in the north of Uganda and the south of Sudan
- 1995 April - Uganda and Sudan end diplomatic relations over proxy war between the SPLA and LRA
- 1996 July - Thousands of people flee villages due to LRA violence in the Gulu District
- 1996 - Museveni elected as President in Uganda's first direct presidential election
- 1997 - Ugandans aid the overthrow of Mobutu Sese Seko of Zaire, who is replaced by Laurent Kabila
- 1997 January - About 400 people are massacred by the LRA in a 4-day raid in the Kitgum District
- 2001 April - The United Nations Human Rights Commission condemns the LRA for abductions and atrocities against humanity
- 2002 April - Uganda and Sudan diplomatic relations restored and the UPDF is granted permission to pursue the LRA in Southern Sudan
- 2002 – The army evacuates more than 400,000 civilians into IDP camps
- 2002 December - Peace deal between the Uganda National Rescue Front (UNRF) rebels and the Ugandan government after more than five years of negotiations
- 2003 May – Uganda evacuates UPDF troops from the eastern DRC. Thousands of refugees seek asylum from the DRC
- 2004 February – Over 200 people are massacred in an IDP camp by suspected LRA fighters
- 2005 April - Uganda denies accusations of looting and crimes against humanity committed by the DRC at the ICC in The Hague

509974-L-bw-isimon
Processed on: 1-5-2017

- 2005 October - ICC issues arrest warrants for five LRA commanders, including it's leader Joseph Kony
- 2006 July 14 - The Juba Peace talks begin in southern Sudan, between the Ugandan government and the LRA
- 2007 March – UPDF troops are deployed in Somalia as AU peace keepers
- 2008 February – A permanent ceasefire agreement is signed between the Ugandan government and the LRA
- 2008 April 10: The signing of a peace agreement is adjourned when Kony fails to turn up
- 2008 December 15: The Southern Sudan, Democratic Republic of the Congo and Ugandan armed forces join arms in a major offensive against the LRA rebels
- 2009 January – The LRA appeals for a ceasefire in face of a continuing offensive by regional countries
- 2009 March - Ugandan forces withdraw from the DRC after failure to capture LRA rebels
- 2011 December U.S. Special Forces arrive in the east of the CAR to aid the fight against the LRA
- 2012 March - U.S. charity Invisible Children releases a video about the LRA
- 2012 May 15 - Caesar Acellam, a top LRA leader, is captured in the Central African Republic

509974-L-bw-isimon
Processed on: 1-5-2017

Appendix 2: Time line of the communal violence in Karamoja

- 1910 - Colonial era. Divide and rule: creation of administrative units /county boundaries bearing names of sub-groups
- 1911 - Karamoja becomes a closed district; this prohibits the Karamojong from interacting with their neighbours (who branded Karamoja a 'Human Zoo')
- 1940 - Large tracts of land gazetted as forest reserves
- 1940 - Young men recruited to fight in World War II; a handful returned
- 1943 – Severe drought in Karamoja
- 1950 – Livestock confiscated under pretext of curbing cattle rustling, and attempted disarming of the Karamojong
- 1952 – Vast pieces of grazing land demarcated as game reserves (British conservation policy)
- 1961 – Severe floods in Karamoja and Teso
- 1962-71- Disarmament and Imprisonment of Karamojong. Reckless killings and mistreatment by soldiers "*Panda Gari*" – Get in the vechicle, no return/disappear
- 1963 – Seizure of cattle using helicopters
- 1965-66 – Severe drought and massive migration
- 1971 – Dress Up Decree and mass killings - "the Nawaikorot Massacre"
- 1971 -1979 Reckless killing and grabbing of livestock by government soldiers
- 1973 – The Lokiriama Peace Accord. The Matheniko make peace with the Turkana
- 1974 – The Matheniko raid the Bokora – Destruction of the Karamojong unity/alliance
- 1973/74 – First production of the 'Amatida', a home-made gun
- 1979 – Amin is ousted by the UNLA

509974-L-bw-isimon
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- 1979 – Moroto Barracks, Police and Prison armoury abandoned and looted by local communities
- 1980 – Severe drought; famine and cholera outbreak
- 1980 – Increased level of cross-district cattle raids
- 1982 – Apolaris, Matheniko Warrior and Kraal leader, is killed by the Iteso in a meeting in Wera. Leads to bloody revenge raids by the Karamojong in Teso
- 1983-5 – Karamojong recruited to fight for the UNLA
- 1984 – Uganda and Kenya joint disarmament programme, with Kenya para-military; characterised by indiscriminate bombing of homesteads and livestock in Karamoja
- 1984-5 – Famine and mass migration to Teso
- 1985 – Milton Obote ousted by Tito Okello Lutwa
- 1986 – The NRA seizes power
- 1986 - The NRA officialises the ownership of guns in Karamoja
- 1986 - 90 – Massive raids by the Karamojong in neighbouring districts
- 1987 – Panyagara – the killing of 200 soldiers
- 1991 – The NRM gives more guns to the Karamojong
- 1992 – Road ambushes and thuggery
- 1992 – Creation of Vigilante groups to curb criminal activities as well as cattle raids
- 1996 – Vigilantes supervised by the army
- 1996 - 2000 – Drought and massive migration
- 2001 – Voluntary disarmament
- 2002 – February – Forceful Phase interrupted by LRA incursions into Teso
- 2006 – Cordon and Search with human rights violations
- 2007/8 – Floods in Karamoja and Teso
- 2008 – Dramatic increase in NGO activity in Karamoja
- 2009 – Decrease in raiding

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Curriculum Vitae

Getrude Isimon is expecting to defend her PhD Thesis at the International Institute of Social Studies (ISS) of Erasmus University, the Netherlands, where she was admitted in April 2012. Getrude obtained an MA degree in Development Studies, Specializing in Development Research, in 2010, from the Institute of Social Studies, and a BA degree in Development Studies from Makerere University in Kampala, Uganda, in 2006.

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