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Evaluating local, national, regional and international interventions in
northern Uganda using a human security approach

by

Davis Lubwama Kawooya

A thesis submitted to The University of Notre Dame Australia to fulfil the partial
requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

School of Arts and Sciences
The University of Notre Dame Australia

2019
Author’s Declaration

I, Davis Lubwama Kawooya to the best of my knowledge, declare that this is my original work and has not been submitted for a degree or a diploma in any other university. The content material has not been published or written by another person apart from quoted information where due reference is made and acknowledged in this thesis.

Davis Lubwama Kawooya
Abstract

Since gaining independence from Britain in 1962, Uganda has been beset by conflicts, the worst of which took place between the Ugandan government and the Lord’s Resistance Army in northern Uganda (1988-2006), causing a massive humanitarian crisis. The central argument of the thesis is that the government’s programmes in response would have been more successful if they had been people-centred, directly responsive to the suffering of the people, rather than centralised in the hands of a small Kampala-based elite, which controlled access to funding and political power, without transparency or accountability. This research uses human security as an umbrella concept to examine the interventions undertaken by actors during and after the violence. While the specific concept was not applied in northern Uganda, its core characteristic, people-centred policy making, was used, particularly by (I)NGOs. I use it here as a test against which the government’s actions in the conflict through which northern Uganda suffered, can be analysed and understood. The research focuses on the physical, emotional, psychological, structural and cultural violence committed by both the LRA and government forces during the conflict and the resulting catastrophic consequences for the people of northern Uganda. By examining the conflict in northern Uganda, the thesis contributes to a broader discussion on how a human security approach can be applied in relation to the problems people face during and after conflicts.
Acknowledgements

The outcome of this nature of study is generally a collective contribution. In this regard, I am thrilled to acknowledge the remarkable intellectual, moral, financial and material assistance that I have received from various people during the period I was doing this doctoral programme.

At the outset, it is important to say that since many people played a role in different ways for the final outcome of this research, it will be very difficult to mention all in this acknowledgement. However, special thanks goes to the University of Notre Dame, Fremantle Campus for the Scholarship offered to me to fulfil my dreams. I thank the Research Office headed by Dr Marc Fellman for all the assistance accorded to me especially when things were becoming tough and unbearable.

My first debt of appreciation is extended to my main supervisor Dr Tanya Lyons, whose guidance, comments and oversight were of paramount importance to this research. Dr Lyons’ comments, which were at times critical, encouraged me during some difficult times since I was an international student. My gratitude also goes to my co-supervisor Dr John Rees, for his scholarly guidance at the beginning of my study and proposal development which shaped my research. In addition, my special thanks go to my co-supervisor Dr Cheryl Lange, who helped me to improve on my writing skills and the general flow of my arguments to match Australian academic standards. Also, I would like to thank Prof Joan Wardrop who worked closely with me to address the examiners comments and tidy up the whole thesis to match the academic standard.

I would also like to thank other University departments, for example the Academic Enabling Services particularly Richard King and Jackie Stevens from the library for all the assistance extended to me which was crucial in shaping the outcome of this research. I am also
grateful to Lorraine Mayhew for providing administrative support throughout my entire period of my study at Fremantle.

Many thanks to my fellow research students especially Jacqui Francis-Coad, Vivienne Travlos and Ashley Crisps for all the support and directions extended to me in our office. I am particularly indebted to my former colleague at Caritas Uganda Emoi Henry Gidudu for all the information you sent to me when I needed it.

I am sincerely grateful to my mother Teddy Nagadya for her vision and sacrifice during my early years of education. Without you, this research wouldn’t be possible. I will never forget the love and humility you accorded to me, Mum. I totally acknowledge the responsibility for any failings and limitations of this research.
Dedication

I dedicate this thesis to my children Teddy, Samuel and David who endured years without me but continued to pray for my successful completion of the research.
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<tr>
<td>ACF</td>
<td>Action Against Hunger (humanitarian agency)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACF</td>
<td>Action against Hunger</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ADF</td>
<td>Allied Democratic Forces</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AIDS</td>
<td>Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome</td>
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<tr>
<td>AMREF</td>
<td>African Medical Research Fund</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ARC</td>
<td>American Refugee Council</td>
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<tr>
<td>ARLPI</td>
<td>Acholi Religious Leaders Peace Initiatives</td>
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<tr>
<td>AU</td>
<td>African Union</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AVSI</td>
<td>Associazione Volontari per il Servizio Internazionale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CA</td>
<td>Central African Republic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CMS</td>
<td>Church Missionaries Society</td>
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<tr>
<td>CoHA</td>
<td>Cessation of Hostilities Agreement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COOPI</td>
<td>Cooperazione Internazionale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CP</td>
<td>Conservative Party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CRS</td>
<td>Catholic Relief Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSOPNU</td>
<td>Civil Society Organization for Peace in Northern Uganda</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSOs</td>
<td>Civil Society Organisations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DP</td>
<td>Democratic Party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DRC</td>
<td>Democratic Republic of Congo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FDA</td>
<td>Federal Democratic Army</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FGM</td>
<td>Female Genital Mutilation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FOBA</td>
<td>Force Obote Back</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FRONASA</td>
<td>Front for National Salvation Army</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FUNA</td>
<td>Former Uganda National Army</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GBV</td>
<td>Gender Based Violence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GoU</td>
<td>Government of Uganda</td>
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<tr>
<td>GUSCO</td>
<td>Gulu Support the Children Organization</td>
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<td>HDI</td>
<td>Human Development Indices</td>
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<tr>
<td>HIV</td>
<td>Human Immunodeficiency Virus</td>
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<tr>
<td>HPI</td>
<td>Human Poverty Indices</td>
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<tr>
<td>HSM</td>
<td>Holly Spirit Movement</td>
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<tr>
<td>ICC</td>
<td>International Criminal Court</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICRC</td>
<td>International Committee of the Red Cross</td>
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</table>
IDPs  Internally Displaced People
INGOS International Non-Government Organisations
IRC  International Rescue Committee
KICWA Kitgum Concerned Women’s Association Rehabilitation Centre
KIDDP Karamoja Integrated Development Programme
KY  Kabaka Yekka
LRA/M Lord’s Resistance Army/Movement
MSF Medecins Sans Frontieres
NAADS National Agricultural Advisory Development Services
NGO Non-Government Organisations
NOM Ninth October Movement
NRA/M National Resistance Army/Movement
NRC Norwegian Refugee Council
NS  Nodding syndrome
NUREP Northern Uganda Rehabilitation Programme
NURP Northern Uganda Reconstruction Programme
NUSAF Northern Uganda Social Action Fund
OPM Office of the Prime Minister
PCRP Post Conflict Reconstruction Programmes
PPT Presidential Peace Team
PRA Peoples Redemption Army
PRDP Peace Recovery and Development Programme
PTSD Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder
RCs Resistance Councils
RRC Sr. Rachelle Reception Centre
SCiU Save the Children in Uganda
SGBV Sexual and Gender Based Violence
SPLA/M Sudan Peoples Liberation Army/Movement
SUM Save Uganda Movement
TPDF Tanzanian Peoples Defence Forces
UN United Nations
UNDP United Nations Development Programme
UNHCR United Nations High Commission for Refugees
UNICEF United Nations International Children Emergency Fund
UNLA/F Uganda National Liberation Army/Front
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
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<tr>
<td>UNRF</td>
<td>Uganda National Rescue Front</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNSC</td>
<td>United Nations Security Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNSG</td>
<td>United Nations Secretary General</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UPA</td>
<td>Uganda People’s Army</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UPC</td>
<td>Uganda People’s Congress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UPDA</td>
<td>Uganda Peoples Defence Army</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UPDF</td>
<td>Uganda Peoples Defence Forces</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UPE</td>
<td>Universal Primary Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UPM</td>
<td>Uganda Peoples Movement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USA</td>
<td>Uganda Salvation Army</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WFP</td>
<td>World Food Programme</td>
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<td>WV</td>
<td>World Vision</td>
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### List of Key Terms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kadogo</td>
<td>Underage young fighters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mato Oput</td>
<td>Acholi traditional justice system</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moyo kum</td>
<td>Acholi people traditional ceremony of cleansing the body</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moyo piny</td>
<td>Cleansing of an area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gomo tong</td>
<td>Another Acholi traditional ceremony meaning bending of the spear which is supposed to take place after a community mediated process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boo-kec</td>
<td>Armed robbers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kacoke madit</td>
<td>An Acholi word meaning a big meeting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bodaboda</td>
<td>Motorcycle riders using them as a means of transport</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KIRIMUTTU</td>
<td>A rebel group in Buganda fighting for a federal government system</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KabakaYekka (KY)</td>
<td>A political party ethnically based in Buganda which supported only the King of Buganda</td>
</tr>
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Chapter One

Introduction

The LRA fighters began a killing spree. They killed women and children who failed to walk with them due to fatigue. Young children who were born in the bush whenever they started to cry was killed immediately. One boy from my village failed to walk and was killed right before our very eyes. Other people the rebels came across especially the elderly and the disabled were also killed.

(survivor account, Amuria camp 2005)

Since Independence in October 1962 from the disruption of the colonial power (the United Kingdom), Uganda has experienced violent political conflicts in one region after the other. This has led to widespread human suffering. Uganda is a landlocked East African country which shares its borders with Kenya to the east, South Sudan in the north, Tanzania and Rwanda to the south, and the Democratic Republic of Congo to the west. The country has experienced many problems, ranging from widespread poverty, increasing urbanization, gender inequality, a lack of unified nationalism, weak institutional capacities, political instability, internal threats emanating from poor leadership, to intractable violent ethnic conflicts and political fragmentation, all of which still pose a fundamental problem to the wellbeing and security of Ugandans.

The most enduring conflict suffered by Ugandans is that between the Lord’s Resistance Army (LRA) and the government of Uganda, which started in 1988, and did not end until the Juba peace talks began in 2006. This thesis has developed from my own experience as a senior aid worker in northern Uganda for the Catholic-based Caritas Uganda from 2001 to 2010. The intense suffering, I witnessed in the Internally displaced people (IDP) camps both in towns and in the bush, as well as in UN-based mediation secretariat assembly areas, led me to this research. I worked in around 60 of nearly 100 such camps, from the very small in Soroti camp (Teso region) (260 - 270 people in two acres) to the largest Pabbo (Acholi in Amuru District) which
crammed nearly 70,000 people into approximately seven acres. The camps were overcrowded and, at times chaotic, especially when the monthly food delivery from World Food Programme was due. Residents also had to queue for water pumped from bore holes, and cooking was done over three stone fires on the ground inside the individual huts (constructed of mud walls and woven grass roofs). Inevitably, fires often occurred, sometimes with devastating results, including the destruction of whole camps.

Within these contexts, and in order to record and analyse the impacts of the LRA conflict within the context of the human security approach, I am reflexively positioning ethnographic experiences on the ground within the broader social research literature. In doing so, I unpack the reasons behind the emergence of the LRA, the connections between the social, political and economic, and the local, national, regional and international peace building and conflict resolution in the region.

The central argument of the thesis is that the government’s programmes would have stood more chance of success if they had been people-centred, and so directly responsive to the suffering of the people, rather than centralised in the hands of a small Kampala-based elite, which controlled access to funding and therefore to political power at every level, without transparency or accountability. To build the capabilities of stakeholders at the grassroots level and reduce the opportunities for corruption and mismanagement would have represented a people-centred programme such as that offered by the human security approach, which offers possibilities for exploring how insecurities in communities might cause physical conflict. The concept came to prominence after being used in the 1994 Human Development Report (UNDP, 1994), and its feasibility as a strategy to alleviate suffering has been debated by scholars, policy makers, humanitarian agencies, and human rights and peace activists (Christie, 2010).

While the specific concept of the human security principle was not applied in northern Uganda, Numbers of what came to be its core characteristic such as people centred policy
making, were consciously used in post conflict northern Uganda. I use it here as a reflective mirror, as a test against which the government’s actions in the conflict through which northern Uganda suffered, can be analysed and understood. In doing so, I offer an analysis of the approach itself.

Principles aligned with human security had varying degrees of relevance to the post-conflict peace-building phase as applied by international non-government organisations (INGOs) and local NGOs in northern Uganda. Both its limited success during the conflict and its applicability were evident, for example, in the setting up of health and educational services, the provision of temporary housing facilities and the construction of boreholes in IDP camps. As the government lacked the capacity to handle the situation unilaterally, these initiatives suggest that the human security/people centred approach as used by INGOs and local NGOs in northern Uganda was an important corrective to state security approaches.

**Research inspiration**

I am a Ugandan, born in the 1970s during the economic hardships of Idi Amin’s regime. Before beginning my PhD studies in Australia, I lived and worked in Uganda all my life, except for two years (1995-97 when I went to the United Kingdom to pursue a Master’s degree in Development Studies at the University of East Anglia, Norwich. From 2001–2010 I was Research and Advocacy Coordinator for Caritas Uganda in the northern town of Gulu, immersed in the humanitarian crisis caused by the conflict in northern Uganda. The turmoil resulted in widespread poverty which led to many local and international organizations offering relief and development assistance.

A large part of my role with Caritas Gulu was involved with identifying threats affecting people in their communities, referring identified issues to relevant authorities, and carrying out workshops and community meetings aimed at sensitising people as to how to
identify advocacy issues and then advocate for themselves. The field visits I undertook with Caritas Gulu staff, people’s testimonies and personal observations, my involvement in the Juba peace process and my direct contact with the Lord’s Resistance Army fighters over a long period of time (2006-2009) during this process, ensured my ongoing interest in this region and its people, and so in this research. Although it is difficult to acknowledge, I still have nightmares caused by the trauma of the difficulties and the harrowing stories I was confronted with when working with Caritas in northern Uganda and South Sudan during this period.

Caritas Uganda is the humanitarian arm of the Catholic Church in Uganda. It was founded in 1970 by the Uganda Episcopal Conference (UEC) as their main development agency. Its emphasis is on the provision of social services to vulnerable people, advocacy and development, provision of relief and emergency aid in disaster hit areas, promotion of good governance and peace building. The Caritas Uganda structure involves the 19 diocesan Caritas offices working in partnership under the UEC. I worked on a peace building programme in conjunction with Caritas Gulu, which operated in one of the dioceses of the UEC that was affected by the conflict. Caritas Gulu had branches in the districts of Gulu, Pader and Kitgum (www.caritasgulu.org).

Caritas’s work during the conflict was impartial and both the LRA and the government of Uganda had confidence in Caritas’s humanitarian work. It is because of this faith that during the Juba peace process Caritas was entrusted by the United Nations-based Mediation Secretariat, the Government of Uganda (GoU) and the LRA to advise on and provide any humanitarian assistance needed by the assembled LRA combatants. I was fortunate to be appointed the Caritas Liaison Officer at these talks.

During the Juba peace talks, observing them from close inside, I began to realize that it was the multiple causes of the northern Uganda conflict that might in themselves have enabled the conflict to persist for almost twenty years. The structural, psychological, emotional,
physical, and cultural violence committed by both the rebels and government forces during the conflict were signs that fundamental issues in post-colonial Uganda needed to be addressed if lasting peace and stability were to be accomplished in northern Uganda. As a result, there was a need for scholarly study to be undertaken in order to understand the conflict.

This research uses human security as an umbrella concept to examine the interventions undertaken by different actors during and after the conflict. While there have been various research studies and publications related to the northern Uganda conflict, there has been no investigative research and documentation relating the northern Uganda conflict from a human security perspective. This research is intended to fill that gap. The human security approach, as explored further in chapter two, is used to refer to those insecurities and threats to the individuals and communities which prevented comprehensive, multi-sectoral and collaborative designs from being developed to alleviate the misery of the people in northern Uganda.

The concept of human security emerged from the formulation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948 (together with the Genocide Convention). It was then promoted in the UN Development Report 1994. Advocates of the concept (Debiel & Werthes, 2006), argue that since there were no more large-scale international threats faced by the world because of the ending of the cold war, emphasis should be placed on how to protect individuals from the emerging civil and ethnically-based conflicts which were causing humanitarian crises around the world.

The conflict in northern Uganda, discussed in more detail in subsequent chapters, is an example of the new human security threat to which Debiel and Werthers (2006) referred. The extent to which the conflict destroyed the infrastructure, targeted innocent civilians, especially young boys and girls, increased poverty and violated extensively people’s human rights, cannot be overstated. As Human Rights Watch (2005) referred to the people of northern Uganda, as “isolated, ignored, unprotected, uprooted and forgotten” (2005).
In subsequent chapters this thesis, for the first time, applies the concept of human security to the northern Uganda conflict as a means of analysing it in detail. In doing so the human security approach is positioned within the wider context of global neo-liberalism as it became a political force during the late 1970s and 1980s. Nonetheless, while recognising the impacts of neo-liberalism and its intertwined economic, political and military effects, this thesis is focused on a detailed ethnographic and historical analysis of events, policies and significant actors on the ground in northern Uganda in the two decades between 1986 and 2006.

Further, this research contributes to understanding the practicability of the human security concept in a conflict situation and to the literature on the extent to which human insecurity causes/prolongs civil wars (Fouinat, 2004; McCandless & Karbo, 2011). It also potentially contributes to the development of policies which can enhance people’s security in any conflict situation.

The research has been directed by the following questions:

What impact did key stakeholders’ different perspectives on approaches consonant with human security principles have in the northern Ugandan conflict; and

How did those differences contribute to the ineffective implementation of those approaches in the period 1988-2016?

The research questions generate two hypotheses:

1. The failure to address the politically-based ethnic and socio-economic divisions was a major contribution to the longevity of the conflict in northern Uganda; and

2. The shifting and multiple meanings of security and human security principles and the ways that concepts such as empowerment and people centred policies contributed to the socio-economic reconstruction of northern Uganda.

By examining the conflict in detail, this research seeks to contribute to a broader discussion on how a human security approach can be applied in relation to opposing political
and non-political actors in a conflict situation. It entails a consideration of how the main elements of a human security approach as an umbrella concept to throw light on the causes of conflict and provide an insight into the issue of conflict resolution: empowerment, effective multilateralism, state ownership of security matters, long-term development, intelligence gathering, civilian and military coordination, state building, sustainable development, gender equality, good governance, human rights, all focused through a people-centred approach (Gasper, 2005). For example, while a range of interventions have been suggested or applied to reduce human insecurities in Uganda and northern Uganda in particular, most policy makers and scholars have not paid attention to the possibilities of the human security approach in dealing with the human insecurities which have ravaged Uganda since independence. In addition, it is argued that approaches by various regimes since Uganda attained its Independence, tended to marginalise the rights of many Ugandans. Using northern Uganda as a case study then, this research

- identifies the causes of the civil conflict,
- evaluates the potential of human security to achieve its goals of promoting context-specific, people-centered, comprehensive, and prevention-oriented measures that seek to reduce the likelihood of conflicts,
- explores the interrelated factors which influenced human security, such as political, economic and social inequalities, and analyses how such factors affected the relationship between peace, development and human rights, and
- uses northern Uganda as a case study and demonstrates what the human security issues were and what could have been done differently.
Structure of the thesis

The thesis is ordered into eight chapters. This first chapter introduces the thesis and explains the methodology used. It focuses on the genesis of the research and the reasons behind the researcher’s motives for doing the research. It draws attention to the lack of human security in northern Uganda during the conflict period and provides a brief introduction to what constitutes a human security agenda.

Chapter two focuses on the concept of human security. It discusses a range of definitions and arguments for and against the concept. It also discusses details about the emergence of the term and its relevance to the analysis of the situation in northern Uganda.

Chapter three discusses the numerous civil conflicts in Uganda since attaining independence. It argues that the colonial legacy left by the British and the failure by subsequent leaders to address those ethnically based socio-economic divisions following independence contributed to the country’s political instabilities and the emergence of the LRA in northern Uganda.

Chapter four concentrates on the politically-based ethnic and socio-economic divisions which were a major contribution to the longevity of the conflict in northern Uganda. It analyses the emergence of different rebel groups, discusses their rise and their effects on the security of the people of that region.

Chapter five details the consequences of the conflict in northern Uganda. It argues that, because following Independence there was a lack of appropriate governmental responses to address the ethnically-based socio-economic disadvantages of the northerners, their humanitarian situation worsened. This led them to demonstrate their dissatisfaction by taking up arms to fight the government. In the process, it resulted in both the LRA and the Uganda People’s Defence Forces (UPDF) committing atrocities which led to catastrophic consequences for the people of that region.
Chapter six analyses the peace initiatives aimed at ending the conflict and the contribution of international, regional, national and local bodies in that process. It argues that international interventions like that of the ICC, which emphasized revengeful justice, were unsuccessful in stopping the conflict. Rather, they undermined regional, national and local efforts to end the conflict peacefully, which directly affected the security of the people.

Chapter seven discusses the relevance of the human security approach and the ways that concepts such as empowerment and people centred policies contributed to the socio-economic reconstruction of northern Uganda. It argues that if INGOs had not withdrawn their support in the preliminary stages of the recovery process, local organizations and the Ugandan government would have been better able to undertake more people-centred recovery initiatives.

Chapter eight summarizes the findings and states that the causes of the northern Uganda conflict were produced by factors associated with politically-based ethnic and socio-economic divisions. It further shows that the lack of consensus on the meaning of the human security concept by different actors, and its application as a form of analysis of the northern Uganda conflict, were hampered by influential political and non-political actors who were opposed to and frequently sought to impede its successful application. It concludes that the socio-economic divisions between southern and northern Uganda played a significant role during the conflict. The conflict in northern Uganda ended in 2006. Yet, since then it has been exported to the neighboring countries of South Sudan, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Central African Republic (CAR) where the LRA are still abducting, killing and maiming people. In focusing on one case study, northern Uganda, can offer a more in-depth analysis of the difficulties of implementing elements of the human security approach. The research does not cover current LRA operations in neighboring countries.
Methodology

This thesis uses a qualitative multi-disciplinary approach, both historical and ethnographic, drawing on and analysing in detail both primary and secondary sources. Primary sources include Ugandan government official documents, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and United Nations Security Council (UNSC) reports, World Bank country indicators, Transparency International reports; and similar publications from other corruption watch think tanks, Amnesty International and; Human Rights Watch reports, documents and reports from NGOs which operated in northern Uganda during the conflict, and media sources, where appropriate. Secondary sources include peer-reviewed sources such as journal articles, scholarly papers and monographs, and other published research, as well as newspaper articles.

Because of my own long involvement in the region and its events, I have also been able to draw on an additional methodological strategy, autoethnography. Autoethnography is a method used by researchers to retroactively and selectively write about the researcher’s past experiences (Bruner, 1995; Denzin, 1989; Freeman, 2004). The advantage of using autoethnography in this northern Uganda case study is that I am able to draw reflexively on my own understandings of the cultural practices, values and beliefs of the main ethnic group affected by the conflict, the Acholi, (Maso, 2001) which I gained, despite being an outsider, through my shared experiences, as a classic insider/outsider (Clifford & Marcus, 1986; Rabinow, 2007), with them. Although Warren (2009) (among others) criticizes autoethnography for possibly fictionalizing aspects of lived experiences, this is not a criticism that

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1 According to the *Human Rights Report* (January 10, 2016) the “Uganda[n] government and ruling party officials [have been] … intimidating and threatening journalists in an effort to limit criticism of the government”, therefore the media in Uganda may be either censored or self-censored thus limiting its ability to print accurate and unbiased representations of relevant issues.
can be sustained in this case: my personal experiences during the conflict can be and are reflexively tested against and validated by written reports and other literature. In a conflict situation like that in northern Uganda, auto-ethnography enables the researcher to provide real life glimpses of the political – and the human - situation during the conflict (Pace, 2012). I make no claim to absolute objectivity, but I have endeavoured to be as neutral as possible in assessing and analysing both the literature and reflections on my own experiences, to maintain academic integrity.

At the outset, it ought to be acknowledged that this research took place in less than ideal conditions. First, it was undertaken outside Uganda in Perth, Western Australia, at the University of Notre Dame, Fremantle Campus, where I have been based for five years. While additional fieldwork in Uganda would have been ideal to gather interviews and raw data from those affected by the conflict, for a number of personal and practical reasons, this was not possible. In particular, conducting fieldwork on issues such as current and sensitive security situations, including the role of the police and the army in protecting or not protecting peoples’ safety in the country, was considered to be unacceptably risky for a Ugandan researcher. However, the research presented below is not invalidated by this limitation. Indeed, its focus on human security provides a unique perspective that may not have been achievable in the field, yet through directed recall and photographs and other relics of that time, the field has continued to shape my questions and my thinking, enabling me to purposively position my roles as aid worker/practitioner then and researcher now.

The thesis uses a qualitative single case study methodology to examine the impact on human security of the northern Ugandan conflict. Critics of the case study argue that it is not a reliable basis on which to draw general conclusions. However, as Creswell (2013) points out, “[t]he study of more than one case dilutes the overall analysis; the more cases an individual studies, the less the depth in any single case” (2013, p. 101). Moreover, a single-case study can
often illuminate the linkages between causes and consequences more effectively than can be done where multiple cases are used. Accordingly, this Ugandan case study will be valuable for testing the utility of a human security approach and for how different perspectives held by key stakeholders contributed to the ineffective implementation of people centred policies and practices in the period 1988-2016. If the human security framework could be shown to be useful in this way, the analysis would ideally encourage the use of the framework in the initial stages of a conflict, rather than as a post-conflict afterthought. In addition, by delivering an in-depth investigation of the causes and circumstances of the conflict in northern Uganda, this thesis is well placed to contribute to potential solutions to policy makers and relevant NGOs aiming to contribute to peace and security in other African states.

Although there is general agreement between authors that the crisis in northern Uganda was one of the worst in modern times, these same authors have described the humanitarian crisis between 1988 and 2006 in northern Uganda with rather different emphases. For example, Brown (2006) has it as the most severe in the world; Dolan (2013) refers to it as a social torture; Bernstein (2009) refers to it as social suffering; and Ssenyonjo describes it as “one of the world’s most vicious rebel wars” (2005, p. 406). What is common to them all is a sense of the devastation caused by the conflict.

My first encounter with its realities was when I visited Gulu Town and the surrounding Internally Displaced People’s camps (IDPs) in 2001 while I was working with Caritas Uganda as their Research and Advocacy Coordinator. Over a period of 20 years up to 2006, an estimated 1.6 million people in northern Uganda were internally displaced, and others had fled to the capital Kampala or neighbouring districts which the people deemed to be safe. The main rebel group, the Lord’s Resistance Army (LRA), was killing many civilians and forcibly abducting many people a practice which is an exemplar of a type of modern-day war in which civilians, especially young boys and girls, become the main targets. The catastrophic results of
this conflict, which are discussed in the following chapters, have been attributed to a lack of protection by the government and to the slow response of international institutions to mediate between the two warring parties (Mukwana & Ridderbos, 2008). An additional complexity has been that the government of Uganda and the LRA defined security using military means whereas humanitarian organisations defined security using concepts which can be seen as human security principles.

Further, because of this conflict, basic social services were scarce, many people lost their livelihoods and many were forcibly separated from even extended family members. Both LRA rebels and the government forces failed to pay attention to and respect people’s dignity, leading to human rights abuses. Indeed, Nannyonjo points out that the civil and social infrastructure was destroyed, creating a “paralysis in economic activity, and a general social and cultural breakdown” (2005, p. 473).

Necessarily then, an examination of politically-based ethnic and social divisions, and how they hampered the application of a people centred approach during the conflict in northern Uganda is embedded at the heart of the thesis.

**Ethnic composition of Uganda - a catalyst for conflict**

Uganda is a country of great ethnic, religious and linguistic diversity. In terms of ethnicity the Bantu-speaking majority live in the western, southern and central parts of the country and the non-Bantu speakers occupy the north-western, northern and eastern parts of the country. These ethnic groups are further sub-divided into Central Sudanic peoples and Nilotic. The first category comprises the large and historically centralized kingdom of Buganda, the smaller western Ugandan kingdoms of Nkore, Bunyoro, and Toro, and the Basoga states to the east of Buganda. The peoples in the second grouping comprise the Madi, Jie, Iteso,
Karamojong, Alur, Acholi, Langi, and Lugbara in the north and a number of other smaller societies in the eastern part of the country (Uganda Bureau of Statistics, 2005).

According to the latest National Bureau of Statistics report (2014), the population of Uganda was estimated to be 34,634,650 million. For the purposes of this thesis, the ethnic groups of particular concern are the Baganda 16.5%, Banyankore 9.6%, Iteso 7.0%, Langi 6.3% and Acholi 4.4% (Uganda Bureau of Statistics, 2014)(Uganda Bureau of Statistics, 2014)(Uganda Bureau of Statistics, 2014)(Uganda Bureau of Statistics, 2014)(Uganda Bureau of Statistics, 2014). There are also a number of religions practiced in the country, of which those of significance of the thesis are: Roman Catholic 39.3% and Anglicans 32.0%. English, which is the official national language, is used in schools, courts of law and by national newspapers and some radio broadcasters. Ganda or Luganda is the most widely used language and is preferred for native language publications and taught in schools. Other languages are Nilo-Saharan languages and Swahili. The literacy rate is 72.2% (Uganda Bureau of Statistics, 2014).

In regional terms, Uganda can be divided into North, West, East and South, with each region having specific ethnic groupings. Lango and Acholi are the two northern sub-regions greatly affected by the armed conflict between the Government of Uganda and the LRA. People from these two regions are almost entirely ethnic Acholi and Langi and are at the center of this research. The two regions before the conflict comprised almost 3.63 million people.

The pre-colonial history of the Acholi depicts them as being fighters involved in battles with their southern (Langi), eastern (Karamojong), and western (Madi) neighbors, as well as there being regular conflict between the Acholi clans themselves. Although not particularly mentioning the Acholi and Langi, Kisseka-Ntale (2007) argues that such a condition was not unusual for pre-colonial ethnic groups in Africa, living independently but often in conflict with their neighboring communities.
As with other ethnic groups in Uganda, the Acholi and Langi are patriarchal societies where men traditionally dictate the life and activities of the community including women’s’ participation in community activities (Finnström, 2001). Moreover, there are institutional and social aspects that favor men in family matters. Men are regarded as the head of the family, overseers of their lineage and breadwinners for their family. Due to these important culturally-based roles, decision-making authority within the family and society principally lies with men. They also control economic resources. Although these practices are embedded in the Acholi/Langi culture, they have more recently come to be considered by local people themselves as problematic because of their inherent gender inequalities (Cagney, 2011). Continuous sensitization and an understanding of the need to develop new acceptable collaboration between men and women, for purposes of development, has helped to solve this problem. Community-based sensitization workshops mainly conducted by NGOs such as Caritas Gulu have helped to minimize the gap and foster gendered cooperation (Wamala, 2015). As will be demonstrated below, men’s willingness to cooperate with women and enable gender equality is important if the human security approach is to thrive.

It is pertinent at this point to state that Uganda’s demographic and cultural profile indicates that many people, including traditional elders and community leaders, still think of their ethnic identity first, and not their national identity. Indeed, according to Dicklitch:

A lack of 'unifying nationalism' undermined the creation of a viable nation state. What emerged from this pot-pourri of ethnic rivalry and conflicting nationalism was a 'fictitious state' which satisfied only the basic requirements of statehood – international recognition of territorial sovereignty - but lacked the most vital ingredient - internal legitimacy (1995, p. 106).
Okuku explains this lack of national identity further by noting that “… ethnicity has been detrimental to national unity, democracy and development … The central problem was and has been the politicization of ethnicity, that is, its use for purposes of group mobilization in social conflict that also involves the state” (2002, p. 7). In the same way, Bøås (2004) argues that “Uganda remains a deeply troubled and divided country in which cultural, political and economic divisions from the pre-colonial past, exacerbated by colonial and post-colonial projects, still have to be overcome if a Ugandan polity is to emerge” (2004, p. 285). As Dicklitch (1995), Okuku (2002) and Bøås (2004) have all argued, the complexities of Uganda’s ethnic divisions relate back to colonial divisions, and post-colonial rivalries. Not having a sense of national unity, and fearing continued marginalization, many disenfranchised Ugandans, especially those not benefitting from the so-called state, formed rebel movements. This thesis argues that this is what occurred in northern Uganda with the emergence of the LRA. Further, Omach (2011b) takes this explanation further, suggesting that the root causes of the northern Uganda conflict can be traced to the lack of appropriate state and nation building and the absence of sufficient means to integrate the various linguistic, religious, regional, ethnic and political groupings. In northern Uganda, this led to political disagreements which resulted in a violent struggle by people from northern Uganda aimed at controlling and capturing political power.

**Conclusion**

This chapter has introduced the problem and motivation of this research. It has provided background information on Uganda and its ethnic composition, and the country’s political circumstances which provided the basis for future political instabilities. Further, my justification for the methodologies used in carrying out the research is laid out. Previous studies on the conflict in northern Uganda have not taken into account differing notions of the people
centred/human security approach in dealing with the conflict so this research combines a human security approach, qualitative research, a case study, and auto-ethnography, in order to analyse the conflict situation in northern Uganda.

The main aim of this research is to examine the politically-based ethnic and socio-economic divisions and how they contributed to the longevity of the civil conflict in northern Uganda. It also examines the differing understandings of safety and security by key stakeholders in the conflict. An analysis of the use of elements of what can be defined as a human security approach in the northern Ugandan conflict will shed light on its usefulness in an era where conflicts are no longer mainly between countries, but increasingly occurring within countries. The next chapter discusses the emergence of the term, human security, and provides a background to the concept and definitions by different scholars who argue for its relevance in a conflict situation.
Chapter Two

The Concept of ‘human security’: a review of the literature

Introduction

In this chapter I discuss the emergence, usage and theorization of the term human security, accepting it as the development of an umbrella concept that includes a number of pre-existing people centered understandings and practices. I provide a background commentary on the concept and its varied definitions by scholars, using, so far as is possible, their own voices to portray and explore the wide range of understandings of its relevance in a conflict situation. In reviewing the literature concerning the human security approach, I contrast this approach with other security models and discuss its relationship to the wider fields of development and international relations. By examining the relevance of the human security approach and questioning its applicability as an analytical tool in the northern Uganda conflict, the chapter contributes to testing the second hypothesis of the thesis, which looks at the shifting and multiple meanings of security and human security principles held by key actors in the northern Ugandan conflict. The human security concept was developed as a policy framework to address emerging threats to humanity. It emphasises assessing human insecurities which are comprehensive, people-centred, context-specific and preventable: this focus on identifying and dealing with security threats to desperate communities has led to vigorous scholarly debates about its relevance (Christie 2010, Ewan 2007).

The former UN Secretary General Kofi Annan (2005) argues that historically human security has been linked more to nation states than to the security of their people. With other commentators, such as Liotta and Owen (2006), he suggests that the concept of human security has for too long been construed narrowly as safety of territory from outside antagonism, or as global security from the threat of terrorists or as safeguarding of national interests in foreign
policy. In contrast, the new definition of human security emphasises the individual’s security over state security (Edwards, 2016), a radical change from traditional concepts of security which stress the prevention of wars and external threats to a nation state, to an environment in which the legitimate concerns of a nation’s people, such as the provision of the basic needs of adequate food, water and shelter, are addressed. Further, human security principles also emphasise the promotion of human rights in dealing with development issues (Oberleitner, 2002). Human security then becomes a container for series of linked ideas as Gasper listed above.

The argument is that an emphasis on human security could promote ways and ideas relevant to tackle the changing nature of conflicts in the world today. The end of the Cold War marked the beginning of various ethnic and religious based conflicts within countries especially in Africa, for example in Biafra (1967-70) and Dafur (2003) and the site of this thesis, Uganda. These new types of conflicts (Leaning & Arie, 2000) are characterised by ideas of ethnicised human identity which promote segregation based on ethnicity and ideological thinking. Other people’s safety and recognition within the community are not considered a priority (Leaning & Arie, 2000). They have caused intense humanitarian crises and pose a great threat to the stability and peace of individuals and communities. The scale at which these conflicts affect humanity prompted human rights activists (from the 1980s onwards) to work on what were effectively human security agendas to respond to these new realities: a core focus was the international campaign, beginning in the 1990s, to ban landmines (Ewan, 2007) which were causing multiple deaths to innocent civilians in a number of former and active warzones, including that of the northern Uganda conflict. Other early international campaigns aligned with these human security principles were the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Children (1990) (CRC, CROC, or UNCRC) and the formation of the International Criminal Court (2002), which was aimed at punishing those who had committed crimes against humanity,
again directly relevant in northern Uganda. International responses to deter human threats can also be seen in the formation of preventative laws such as international humanitarian laws, which include the 1980 Conventional Weapons Convention and its five protocols; the 1997 Ottawa Convention on anti-personnel mines; the 2000 Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict. All these are aimed at protecting peoples’ safety and security, which is so often torn away in times of conflict (McRae & Hubert, 2001).

**The emergence of the concept of ‘human security’**

Here, in unpacking how scholars view its applicability, I further articulate the human security approach, and discuss its relevance in understanding the causes of various threats to humanity through reference particularly to the northern Uganda situation.

The first appearance of the concept of human security occurred in the 1980s when it was linked to the emergence of narratives of human-centred development (Acharya, 2008). However, during this period it was not given much attention. It was revived in the early 1990s with the rise in international interventions in peace-building (Shinoda, 2004), and in the 1994 United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Report, which laid the conceptual foundations for the human security approach and was the first to claim that because at times individuals are oppressed by their governments the individual’s security should be a priority over state security (UNDP, 1994):

> … although traditional security concepts focus on security of territory from external aggression, a human security approach focuses on the legitimate security concerns of individuals who seek security in their day-to-day lives which include threats of diseases, hunger, unemployment, crime, social conflict, political repression and

The Report powerfully referred to the possibilities of adhering to human security principles as beginning with preventing one child from dying, one disease from spreading, one job from being lost, ethnic tension from exploding in violence (1994, p. 22). Because a number of NGOs used the language of human security to intervene in order to reduce the humanitarian crisis which was exploding (Branch, 2009) in northern Uganda, the Report was particularly relevant to the region and its people.

The 2009 UNDP Report then went further, presenting a fresh method of thinking about the incorporation of security matters into thinking and discussion about human society and its organisation (Tsai, 2009). It defined seven components of human security: health, community, personal, political, economic, environmental and food security, and focused specifically on ‘people-centric’ security (1994, pp. 24-33). The failure of many governments to protect their citizens as a result of, for example, corruption, ethnic conflicts, human and arms trafficking, poor government administrative systems and denial of the rule of law, prompted the emergence of this human security approach. This new agenda then was proposed as a way of alleviating the suffering of communities by dealing with threats to people’s individual humanitarian, economic and social situations.

Innovatively, this approach emphasised individual rights and safeties which were often ignored by national governments and the international community. The new approach worked from the ground up, prioritizing the security of people within their communities and humanizing security issues. This also enabled it to offer a better alternative to transnational and cross border insecurities. In surfacing out of the need to make those in authority account for the political, economic and social misdeeds inflicted on the people they led (Shinoda, 2004), it became a concept that in the decade 1994-2004 influenced and changed politicians’ thinking.
on many aspects of global politics and governance (Oberleitner, 2005). Perhaps most vividly, the international development theorist Mahbub ul Haq (1995) illustrates its emergence:

from the dread of a woman that she may be raped in a lonely street at night, from the anguish of parents over the spread of drugs among their children, from the choked existence of prosperous communities in increasingly polluted cities, from the fear of terrorism suddenly striking any life anywhere without reason (Haq, 1995).

This then was an attempt to define and deal with the diversity of humanitarian, economic and social issues which affected people in both conflict and non-conflict zones through the following main areas (Axworthy, 2001; Fukuda-Parr, 2003; Kaldor, 2007; Owen, 2004):

- resources and environment
- health and development
- genocide and mass crimes
- armed conflict and intervention
- human rights and good governance
- organized crime and criminal violence

Both direct and indirect consequences of violence, for example, the consequences of the breakup of Yugoslavia (1991-92) and the genocide in Rwanda (1994) (Kaldor, 2007), demonstrated unmistakably the consequences of a lack of security, as millions of people were affected by violence stemming from terror, torture, ethnic cleansing and genocide and the lack of access to health care and shelter. Other, often less visible, causes of deprivation (Boyd, 2014) included extreme poverty, illiteracy, HIV infection, and forced displacement as a result of land grabbing (Boyd, 2014). As proponents of the human security approach (Cilliers, 2004; Kaldor,
2007; Newman, 2010; Tadjbakhsh & Chenoy, 2007) agree, people’s safety and security should be a primary concern: “the world can never be at peace unless people have security in their daily lives” (Dorn, 2001, p. 1). The development of the concept of a human security approach then was a direct response by activists, scholars, NGOs and international organisations to what was seen as a failed system of state-based security.

**Defining human security**

There is no collectively accepted definition of the concept of human security. Indeed, as Abass notes, neither academics nor states have been successful in finding such a definition (2010, p. 2), leaving it as an ongoing subject of discussion, particularly among scholars (Fukuda-Parr & Messineo, 2012).

In an early move towards definition, Gormely (1995) suggested a two-pronged understanding, of: “safety from chronic threats such as hunger, disease, and repression, as well as protection from sudden and harmful disruptions in the patterns of daily life, whether in homes, in jobs or in communities” (Gormely, 1995, p. 23). This definition effectively identifies three aspects which are vital for human beings to thrive: first, it emphasises the central position of people as far as security and development are concerned, and challenges orthodox approaches which emphasized the state; secondly, it addresses people’s dignity and material and physical concerns; and thirdly, it considers inequality and poverty as the main causes of individual vulnerability. These are picked up by Suhrke, who points out that the Canadian and Norwegian governments identify them as “associated with the pre-eminent progressive values of the 1990s: human rights, international humanitarian law, and socio-economic development based on equity” (1999, p. 266). In what has been a constant in the human security discussion, such attempted clarity about its core elements did not however go uncontested: King and Murray, for example, argue that “[d]espite articulated links to both the development and

Nonetheless, despite differences of emphasis in the literature, certain coherent elements can be seen. Thomas and Tow, for example, also define human security by identifying three related features: transnational fears about international norms arising from internal state problems, and the vulnerabilities this creates; the problems arising from attempts to confront these issues at a state and individual level; and the necessity for outside intervention, which is the major objective of human security (2002, p. 178). Tadjbakhsh and Chenoy (2007) however, offer a different emphasis. They define human security in psycho-social environmental terms in which individuals are able to live a life of safety and dignity. This is an understanding expanded by Benedek to mean the security of people against various diverse threats to their wellbeing (Benedek, 2008). What these all have in common is an understanding of the connection between communities and the state, an understanding further developed by Christie when she shows that human security appears to encourage greater opportunities for dialogue than when security is understood simply in relation to the state (Christie, 2010).

Alongside these, and also making an appearance early in the debate, are the ideas of writers seeking specifically to include other significant elements, in particular the economic. Axworthy for example, in an early definition, emphasized the interrelatedness and the mutually reinforcing nature of human security, arguing it combined economic security and a guarantee of fundamental human rights (Axworthy (1997), while Owen pushed this further and included not only economics as a broad category, but also environmental, food, health, personal and political threats (Owen, 2004).

When taking the core elements of this range of definitions into account, it is possible to form a general, and usable, definition, in which human security can be understood as freedom
from violence, and from fear of violence. It is about protecting every human being: its central intention is to make sure that the rights and freedoms of all individuals are not compromised.

As a consequence, one of the notable features of human security is the incorporation of issues which are not related to military operations. Human security, as Acharya (2001) argues, entails a focus on governments developing strategies to improve social and economic inequality and alleviating the traumas associated with violent conflict (2001, p. 442). Yet, in parts of Africa (and elsewhere, globally) the politics of exclusion, the problem of failed states, poor civil-military relations and a weak civil society pose a significant risk to the security of the people, while, underpinning these political and governance issues, lie their consequences: climate change, underdevelopment, famine, forced migration, poverty, drought and rising food prices (Mentan, 2014).

This is where human security as a policy-related concept, arising from issues affecting men, women and children within their own communities, has the capacity to change the ways policy makers look at issues affecting various communities, particularly in relation to initiatives which combine foreign and local security policies and actions. At another level also, it can be credited with changing citizens’ perceptions of security matters from state-centric to community-focused (Kaldor, 2007). Advocates of the concept contend that human security and national security go hand in hand. Human security helps to build security from the bottom up. Thus, a human security approach upholds the view that peace and security at national, regional and international levels is probable when its focus is the security of the people (Axworthy, 2001).

It is clear that in the last twenty-five years concepts of human security have become significant and that the term is now widely used by governments, international organisations and NGOs: it focuses on the security of individual human beings at the local level, secondly, it fosters the integration of non-state actors, such as NGOs and INGOs which operate locally as
fundamental pillars for the protection of human security, and thirdly, it impacts state security, in terms of both internal and external threats (Kapuy, 2004).

As can be seen from the discussion above, there has been no agreed definition of the term human security. Despite the lack of consensus on the definition, however, proponents of the concept contend that its inclusiveness, broadness and its holistic nature make it relevant to the current security threats facing the world. As the world is experiencing many insecurities, a global response to providing security to those threatened by massive refugee flows, failed and lawless states, ethnic cleansing, and genocide, the implementation of a human security approach seeks to assist individuals caught in these dilemmas.

The human security agenda: from definition to practice

Broadly speaking then, human security is a people-centred approach to security that promotes human rights and human development and integrates and strategically places the individual into the frame. Its applicability to all individuals in different circumstances makes it possible for it to be applied universally (Liotta & Owen, 2006).

That it is possible to be applied universally does not mean that agreement exists about how this could or should be done. At its core though, is the formulation of the UNDP 1994 Report, discussed briefly above, which emphasises that the paramount necessity to address the complications of insecurity is to concentrate on tackling ‘freedom from want’ and ‘freedom from fear’ (UNDP, 1994, p. 24), explicit recognition that “security and development are the two main components of human life and human dignity” (UNDP, 1994, p. 23).

Since the publication of that 1994 Human Development Report, varying initiatives and debates have aimed at building on and broadening the ideas underpinning the concept of human security. In attempts to find points of connection, Axworthy (1997) and King and Murry (2001), for example, suggest that the concept recognizes the complex and interrelated security issues.
For Collins, the debate is more subtle, since human security had drawn attention to “critical issues, especially, intra-state political violence, that are not included in the state-centric paradigm that presently dominates discourse” (2007, p. 91). At the same time, in pointing to the way that two second-rank but significant countries, “Canada and Japan have proclaimed it as the guiding principle of their foreign policies” (2007, pp. 1-2), Tadjbakhsh and Chenoy show how human security can be incorporated at the state level. Increasingly, the broadening of the scope of the concept and practice of security, is being analysed as being inclusive of the core ideas of the human security approach, the state, but also the values people live by, and making people the starting point of analysis and policy (Gómez & Gasper, 2013). In taking this people-centred approach, it enables the identification of and focus on the connections between the issues which directly impact upon human communities: armed conflict and interventions, resources and environment, organised crime and criminal violence, human rights and good governance, genocide and mass crimes, health and development.

Globally, the term is broadly connected to initiatives that aim at alleviating poverty and resolving the causes of conflict. Advocates of the human security approach, including Christie, see it as “representing both an important break from the previous state-centric security calculations and an opening of our eyes to the all-too-real security issues of peoples in the south” (2010, p. 174).

In both the literature and practice (Gasper, 2013), four elements of human security are particularly emphasised. The first places the individual as the target. The second focuses on how best to protect people. The third emphasises the well-being of people within their communities; and the fourth responds to people’s needs in dealing with the source of the threats (Gasper, 2013). These four elements are used in the subsequent chapters of this thesis as yardsticks to understand how the concepts such as empowerment, human rights, and people centred practices contained in a human security approach were applied or could have been
applied in post-colonial Uganda, in particular during the northern Uganda conflict. The next section elaborates on these four key elements of the human security agenda in order to better understand the northern Ugandan conflict and the insecurity experienced by the people of that region, the subject of this thesis.

The individual as the target

The first element of human security places an emphasis on the individual human as the primary object of concern, regardless of creed, nationality, ideology, religion, race, or colour. Marvin suggests that “[t]he universalizing aim of ‘human security’, is to lift all individual ‘human beings’ up to the level of the Human – that is, to secure the conditions for all individual ‘humans’ to realize the capabilities necessary for a ‘fully human’ life” (2013, p. 23). In a similar way, Hadingham explains human security as “assuring the basic, inalienable rights of each individual on the planet” (2000, p. 115). Tadjbakhsh and Chenoy widen the concept by including “values and goals such as dignity, equity and solidarity” (2007, p. 13), and Newman further expands its scope by noting that “Human security suggests that security policy and security analysis, if they are to be effective and legitimate, must focus on the individual as the referent and primary beneficiary” (2010, p. 78)

Although there is some disagreement on how threats to people could be addressed, supporters of the human security approach wanted to find something new which could help elevate the security of individuals to the similar level as that of the state (Ogata & Cels, 2003). The human security approach reinforces people’s freedom so that people can earn a living the way they want, study if they want to, have a family and feel their children are safe (Ogata & Cels, 2003). Thus, human security has the potential, through negotiations, and the use of peaceful means, to empower people to find ways protect themselves from threatening situations. As Schnabel argues, “if individuals and communities feel secure and protected from the threats
that emanate from direct and structural violence, that is, if their basic human security is guaranteed, then human suffering on an individual level, and conflict and violence on communal, regional and international levels, can be significantly reduced” (2008, p. 87).

At its most simplistic, the human security approach enhances people’s choices whereas a lack of human security limits human potential, which prevents people acquiring their basic needs. Human security “seeks to challenge attitudes and institutions that privilege so-called ‘high politics’ above individual experiences of deprivation and insecurity” (Newman (2010, p. 79) and offers the understanding that if individuals are at the centre of analysis, it is easy to assess, plan, implement and evaluate all security related risks and plan for better peace and development initiatives. Indeed, Khong argues that “[w]hen we securitize the individual, we are making the security of each and every individual on the planet the object of our concern” (2001, p. 233).

How best to protect people

The human security approach involves an attempt to understand human security/insecurity in terms of those who experience these situations (Conteh-Morgan, 2005). As shown above, continued threats to people’s wellbeing over the past decades were a catalyst for the international community to devise new ways to combat these threats. Government officials, scholars, INGOs, NGOs, and inter-governmental organisations working in conflict situations all helped develop a concept of human security which had as one of its focuses the issue of dealing with physical threats. As Oberleitner shows, this involves a complex approach which involves the relationship between human security for individuals and communities and humanitarian intervention on a large scale: it is a “humanitarian approach that understands human security as a tool for deepening and strengthening efforts to tackle issues such as war
crimes or genocide and finally preparing the ground for humanitarian intervention” (2005, p. 188).

The motive behind this focus is to improve the livelihood, survival and dignity of threatened peoples to achieve peace, development and human progress. An emphasis such as that needs to be comprehensive, multi-sectoral and collaborative: “human security’s focus on the security and prosperity of human beings, can address a variety of threats currently faced by the globalizing world” (Acharya, Singhdeo, & Rajaretnam, 2011, p. x).

**Well-being of individuals within their communities**

Using a participatory approach to analyse issues threatening well-being is intended to encourage people to devise local solutions to local problems. The argument, increasingly made in the first decade of the new millennium, is that the implementation of human security principles can lead to individuals and communities developing their capabilities for making informed decisions acting on their own behalf and eliminating threats to their and their community’s wellbeing (Oberleitner, 2005). It can also provide a framework for disparate communities to discuss their own security in ways was not possible when security was understood to relate directly to the state (Christie, 2010). Closely linked with this in addressing the widespread nature of threats stemming from conflicts and other extreme situations, the human security approach particularly emphasises development and human rights. The use of these ideas in a community-based approach then, intends to create “a situation/condition free of injury/threats to an individual's groups, or community's well-being, including freedom from threats and/or direct attacks on physical and psychological integrity” (Conteh-Morgan, 2005, p. 72).

An analysis of human security’s usefulness in societies today, and the discussion above, show advocates of the concept have addressed a wide-ranging number of threats to humanity,
like issues of the environment, pollution, homelessness and unemployment. However, they have forgotten the diversity which exists in the world today. For example, what is referred to as a necessity in one part of the world, could be seen as a luxury in another part of the world. Thus, there may be contradictions if the term is applied universally.

In order to promote a meaningful human security approach, there is a need to identify and build people’s capacity in those areas which can enhance their involvement. Empowering individuals to plan for their own wellbeing enables their potential to be developed, which helps them to protect themselves first, and then the community where they live (Tadjbakhsh & Chenoy, 2007): “[e]mpowerment is of intrinsic value; as well as having instrumental value; relevant at the individual and collective level, and can be economic, social, or political” (Oladipo, 2009, p. 120.). Communities which are empowered are more likely to be able to demand respect and dignity from those who threaten them.

Therefore, promoting initiatives which empower people within their communities, rather than relying on the government to provide everything, differentiates humanitarian activities from development work. Decision making is a key component of empowerment necessary to promote human security. However, during the conflict in northern Uganda, because of the insecure security situation, people lacked the freedom to make many decisions about their lives and livelihoods.

When people feel disempowered, they are more likely to feel threatened, whether the threats come from the environment, poverty, disease, poor leadership or ethnicity. Such threats can impact on people negatively, particularly the most vulnerable in society. People’s lack of empowerment in northern Uganda, meant that they felt as if they were not part of the social and political systems in Uganda, which affected their positive involvement in those systems.
Dealing with sources of threats

In the late 1990s and early 2000s, scholars and policy makers such as Axworthy (1997, 2001), McRae and Hubert, (2001), DFAIT (2003), and Ogata and Cels (2003), welcomed the human security approach because it emphasized the significance of protecting vulnerable people and because it broadened the relevance of security. The search for comprehensive solutions to protect those affected by conflict and other extreme conditions is at the centre of this approach because it recognizes the relationship between peace, development and human rights while dealing with specific threats to people in times of conflict. At its broadest, in the work for example of Suhrke (1999, p. 271), human security is essential for human development. He argues that without minimal stability and security in daily life, there can be no development. Broadening that argument, a human security approach to dealing with threats to individuals whatever the situation helps those concerned interpret the causes of the threat and can help a analyse people’s perceptions regarding that threat. As Newman and Richmond note, “[h]uman security provides a structure for the systematic and integrated interpretation of the relative impact of various threats to human needs” (2001, p. 18).

Proponents of the human security approach suggest that by identifying the different threats to people’s security, which can be internal or external, these impacts can be softened and, potentially, prevented (Ewan, 2007). Initiatives intended to prevent such threats can help to ease the direct and indirect costs of letting human security problems spiral out of control (Ewan, 2007). However, such initiatives which emphasize individual rights and interests are often ignored by the international community (Kaldor, 2007; Tsai, 2009). Yet, the issue of security is a global concern: threats cannot be confronted only at a state level. As Cilliers argues, “human development contributes to human security by tackling the long-term structural causes of conflict and by strengthening the capability of societies to deal with conflict in a peaceful manner” (2004, p. 12). Further, in demonstrating that “peacekeeping, peace
enforcement and peacebuilding cannot be successful without a human security perspective”, Boer and Wilde (2008, p. 11) show that human security as a program aims at protecting people from all forms of danger and at the same time strives to achieve peace and ensure sustainable development for all, irrespective of their colour, race, political affiliation or religion.

The argument which runs alongside this is that human security must also be approached from an individual and particularly, a community level. The security of individuals affects the security of the state and vice versa. In the case of northern Uganda and as is shown in more detail below, this was not the case: a core component of the argument of this thesis is the capacity for the misuse of these principles by those in power of their authority to dominate others, hence increasing human insecurities.

**The contrasts between the human security approach and the state security model**

The emergence of the human security approach in the 1990s brought a different emphasis to debates and models around security studies. Before discussing the significance of the human security approach as a security model, it is important to understand how it differs from the other two major security models: the state security model and the critical security model.

Before the 1980s, talking about issues of security implied the state defending its borders (Khong, 2001). Proponents of state security (Morgenthau 1960, Waltz 1979) gave existing institutions, especially the state, a privileged status on matters of security: issues of state security should be seen in terms of respecting the integrity of the country’s national borders and its institutions. However, as noted above issues of security have now been expanded to include economic, social, political, environmental, gender and ethnic threats (Jones & Read, 2005).
When defining state security, it is assumed that states are sovereign so “sovereignty is defined in terms of the state's ability to control actors and activities within and across its borders … The essence of sovereignty is the state's ability to make authoritative decisions in the final instance, the decision to make war” Thomson (1995, p. 213). State security regards political independence and territorial integrity as principles to be secured, which may mean that other values like freedom of movement and freedom of speech may be deemed unnecessary by some states.

However, in many developing countries, finding themselves reinventing governance in a post-colonial situation, the government’s security organs fall short of addressing issues of security in the lives of individual human beings. State approaches to security apply a top-down approach which cannot always address issues affecting people within their communities. The human security approach on the other hand always emphasises a bottom-up approach, involving people with issues affecting them in their own locality: “human security is about the security of individuals and communities rather than the security of states, and it combines both human rights and human development” (Kaldor, 2013, p. 182).

Following on from the impacts of the shift from overt colonial sovereignty to the post-colonial situation, the end of the Cold War brought this into sharp focus: people faced different forms of threats to their security, whether the threats emerged from local, national or international sources. Different countries and international organisations conceptualised and designed security according to their strategic motives and goals which resulted in greater interdependence between state security and the safety of individual communities. As Tadjbakhsh and Chenoy argue, in this period it was the inadequacy of the state security model and the acceleration of globalization that brought into focus the need to broaden the concept of security to include individuals and society (Tadjbakhsh & Chenoy, 2007).
Advocates of the human security approach argue that the post-Cold War period was tainted by both internal and external humanitarian security threats: “[g]reater complexity, uncertainty and unpredictability have become hallmarks of the world strategic situation in the new century” (Kenyon & Simpson, 2013, p. 118). For policy makers and academicians, the only way to define these threats was to have a broad definition of human security to link these threats, leading Ewan to argue that “[n]ot only does a holistic approach draw different specialisms together in the quest to understand better the interconnections between diverse aspects of human security, it may also bolster cooperation between international agencies in the fields of security, development and human rights” (2007, p. 184).

However, there is also a need to have a clear understanding of the concept and the practical implications for people’s wellbeing. This clarity will help to explain its effectiveness and applicability in various situations. A useful principle identified by Gómez and Gasper is that human security “requires understanding the particular threats experienced by particular groups of people, as well as the participation of those people in the analysis process” (2013, p. 2).

The differences between state and human security play out in specific ways in different societies. Nuruzzaman, for example, argues that not only do many countries fail to fulfil their security obligations, but some also put the security of their own citizens at risk (Nuruzzaman, 2006). So, in many developing countries (such as Uganda), state security is often invoked to protect the interests of the political elite. Those in power think only about how they can preserve themselves in power at any cost, even if it means persecuting those who oppose them. Differences between a human security and a state security model become visible: state security does not specify specific areas of threat, and yet for state security to be relevant, there is a need to specify which areas and whose values are to be secured.
In contrast to the state security model, the human security approach regards the state as simply one of the actors within the broader security perspective, its function being as the chief security provider. Its stability and acceptability are the key sources of safety for its citizens. In this model, security must extend downwards from nations to individuals. Thus, the security of individual citizens is its point of reference, not the security of territory (Suhrke, 1999, p. 269). Conversely, in a state security model, the state extends its relations upwards to influence the security of the international system (Liotta, 2002).

In practice, and in opposition to the human security model, state security tends to focus on increasing military spending to protect those in power. Although Archer and Willi (2012) do not specifically refer to Uganda, they argue that usually the implication of an increase in military spending is the militarisation of international relations, which in the long run can bring insecurity, a position which is directly reflected in Uganda.

Human security supporters make a number of criticisms of the state security model. For example, Krause and William (1997) emphasise the need to move from the militarization of state security where the state controls everything to one where individuals, groups and communities participate in matters of their security. In many African countries, such as Uganda, state security is always related to maintaining the status quo, in which people’s security becomes a non-priority issue. However, it can be argued in some circumstances, and as a division of responsibilities, that the state should focus on military threats because non-military threats can be dealt with using a human security model. Fox (2004) makes this case in pointing out that in some circumstances the norms and legal instruments of a country can only be handled by state structures. In other words, traditionally, the use of state security has been the best means of protection for most sovereign countries. Similarly, in criticising the human security approach, Walt (1991) argues that non-military fears like poverty or environmental
hazards would destroy the human security approach’s intellectual consistency and make it more problematic to formulate resolutions to such problems (Walt, 1991).

The maintenance of stability and unity in any country rests on the state’s ability to protect its citizens and/or its governmental structures. Here the distinction between state and human security approaches becomes obvious: the state security model is intended to protect those government allies who believe, accept and recognise a particular state’s political agendas (Cilliers, 1999), whereas the human security approach aims at protecting all citizens. Attempting to manage fears and eliminating forms of insecurity guarantees basic security which is essential for people’s wellbeing: the need is to make people, not the state, the central security concern, with the corollary however that national security does not ensure internal peace (Bastian, 2004). This was the case during the conflict in northern Uganda when the state did not promote the security of its people. Most of that work was left in the hands of INGOs and NGOs while the state used its machinery not to protect its people, but to monitor them and prevent them from exercising their rights and freedoms.

State security actions can limit people’s involvement by using brutal police and army tactics and other stringent controls which limit people’s involvement in determining their destiny: “state security in its narrow militarist form perpetuates violence, its blunt law is the weapon detrimental to peace and detrimental to those who see the world as a space for all to enjoy and co-habit equitably” (Gibson, 2011, p. 85). When summing up the difference between human security and state security, Christie notes “that human security provides a framework for disparate communities to talk about issues of security” and a state security model does not (2010, p. 170).
Critical security and human security

As Stamnes broadly defines critical security, it is a “generic term for all post-positivist/critical work that challenges the underlying assumptions of Traditional Security Studies” and, secondly, a “subcategory of this broad group, consisting of the work of those individuals who take their inspiration from the Frankfurt School tradition of Critical Theory” (2004, p. 162). The Frankfurt School emphasises the ideal of people’s freedom from social and other related legal restraints especially from the state. A less structural, more cultural, definition is offered by Browning and McDonald who define critical security in terms of “representations or discourses of security in defining group identity, enabling particular policy or legitimating particular actors as security providers” (2013, p. 236), which links with the brief summing up of critical security theory by Cox (1981) that critical security studies are reflective, recognise the importance of change and are also concerned with the manner in which change takes place.

Proponents of critical security theory (Krause et al., 1997; Peoples & Vaughan-Williams, 2014) view traditional notions of security as part of the realist security agenda. For them, it supports the existing security systems which are managed by the influential, developed countries at both domestic and international levels as a way of exploiting the disadvantaged. They do not agree with a situation in which superpowers dominate the world, instead they advocate a system which assigns equal treatment to all. According to George:

Critical theory, thus, reconnects (theoretical) knowledge to the practice of power, and opens up a previously fore-closed debate about the way we know and create reality. It does not posit [an] historical continuing process of historical change. It does not accord existing institution and power relations the status of facts or givens but calls them into question by concerning itself with their origins and how and whether they might be in the process of change (1994, p. 218).
Similarly, Browning and McDonald (2013) argue that critical theory contributes to the security studies debate through critiquing traditional approaches. Its emphasis on the politics of security within communities, and the emphasis on the ethical dimension of security, make it people-centred.

These views feed into another important aspect of critical security: the way it treats the ‘dominant’ and the ‘dominated’. The theory seriously challenges the state’s domination of the people which allows Baldwin (1995) and Williams (2012) to argue that for a restructuring of national and global social power relations. Those in power should not use it to dominate the majority, rather people should be treated equally.

As opposed to the state security model, critical security studies is a relatively new area, and at times considered controversial because it aims to radically change the traditional ways in which security has been perceived. Further, its critics suggest that it has concentrated on criticising other concepts of security rather than on developing ideas about how threats can be eliminated, for example, that while state security emphasises the use of the military to achieve peace, critical security has no clear proposal (Browning & McDonald, 2013).

Yet, the arguments put forward by advocates of critical security studies, more far reaching and forward-looking than those made by traditional security studies, encourage debate about clearer meanings of the term human security. For example, Roberts (2005) describes the debate as fluctuating and unstable because of the expanding meaning of the term to one in which human agency can be seen to influence both human security and insecurity outcomes (Roberts, 2005). Yet, it can be argued that the human security model, theoretically, can be the most effective means of protecting vulnerable people caught up in different security threats because, as for Liotta, the focus can be placed on the individual, rather than the state, which he suggests “is the best guarantee for long-term stability, prosperity, and security” (Liotta, 2002, p. 474). So, while state security mainly addresses specific threats to the country like
sovereignty and territorial integrity, human security addresses all threats related to vulnerability and other extreme circumstances, for example, during conflict.

From a social perspective then, human security aims to focus on anything which impacts negatively on the people, such as wars, post-conflict situations, financial crises, or unfavourable development models. The intention is to maintain the dignity of all affected.

Yet, a dynamic conceptualisation of human security is also demanded, because people’s needs differ from each other, as do the needs of communities. The human security approach brings together the differing security concerns faced by people under threat, which has helped to widen people’s understanding of what constitutes a threat and subsequently enables more appropriate policy initiation, implementation and change, which have helped to improve the security concerns of people/communities specifically in developing countries (Axworthy, 2001).

Yet, through its different phases and understandings of its usefulness, Christou and Breslin argue that the human security approach now “has evolved, to the extent that it has become a clearly articulated concept both in academic terms and as a guide to concrete political action for policy-makers” (2015, p. 1). Therefore, the term is relevant in identifying various human security threats where appropriate actions can be taken to avert those threats.

Human security prioritizes living with prosperity, freedom and dignity, universal human values which should be accorded to every citizen and which are necessary for a free and just society: as King and Murray suggest, “it is universal, its components are interdependent, it is best ensured through prevention, and it is people-centred” (2001, p. 589). Although it might be deemed to be too broad to be useful, advocates for the human security approach contend that this breadth is what gives the approach its strength. Indeed, Nuruzzaman argues that “broadening the concept of human security points to some analytical difficulties,
but inclusion of all categories of threats and vulnerabilities is necessary if comprehensive security for the individual human being in different societies is to be achieved" (2006, p. 292).

This section has introduced and defined the critical security approach and contrasted it with the human security approach. Critical security criticises a state-centric model as the primary referent to security. It argues that state security’s oversight on vital areas that matter to the security of humans needs to be addressed. Like human security, it emphasises individual human beings as the targets of security, with the state being the protector of the people. It emphasises widening the notion of security to include aspects like the economic, the environmental and social justice.

However, the human security approach broadens the approach to include other threats to people like the effects of political and economic conflicts, environmental disasters and poverty. Such threats compelled many third world countries to emphasize the human security approach. As Christie (2010) argues that because human security has challenged old notions of security, “it cannot be dismissed as being irrelevant either to policy or to the development of” north, south relations. However, he appears to suggest the notion is not completely new “as it is embedded in prior conceptualizations and concerns of security” (Christie, 2010).

Criticisms of the human security approach

The human security approach nonetheless is both a contentious and a multidimensional concept. Its critics (Hataley & Nossal, 2004; Hynek & Chandler, 2013; Paris, 2001; Prezelj, 2008) argue that it lacks certainty in its meaning and is so wide and holistic that it simply reflects the values and priorities of whoever happens to be advocating for human security. Critics have also raised concerns about its relevance in areas such as global governance and peacekeeping. Paris, for example, argues that “human security tend[s] to be extraordinarily expansive and vague, encompassing everything from physical security to psychological well-
being, which provides policymakers with little guidance in the prioritization of competing policy goals and academics little sense of what, exactly, is to be studied” (2001, p. 88).

Similarly, Krause suggests that the term human security loses its real descriptive power by bundling together individual insults to dignity with serious issues such as genocide (Krause, 2004), and Chandler argues there is too much exaggeration in it, that its holistic approach is too ambitious and not practical for policy making. He finds “it difficult to grasp, asking first, why the discourse of human security has become so dominant in international policy circles, and, second, why it has had so little impact on policy outcomes,” (Chandler, 2008, p. 428). Already in the early 1990s, Ayoob (1991) was making the devastating argument that although an all-encompassing approach makes human security flexible, it also puts an end to its convenience as an analytical tool.

When it comes to issues around the position and dignity of women, the norm in both state practice and the implementation by non-state actors of human security principles in northern Uganda has not been encouraging. Hudson (2005) though specifically not referring to Uganda situation, he argues that states sometimes use their structures to promote the dignity and protection of their male citizens, and draws attention to the way they tend to overlook the dignity and protection of women, he also critiques human security for the same problems (Hudson, 2005).

In some developed countries it is suggested that leaders are using the concept for their own ends to fulfil their own ambitions and to strengthen themselves in the international state system (Tadjbakhsh & Chenoy, 2007). For example, because of the threat of extreme terrorist organizations, many developed countries are linking development assistance to fighting terrorism (Duffield, 2006).

Critics of the human security approach argue that developed and developing countries are often talking at cross purposes when it comes to individual country’s security needs. Most
of the decisions, it is suggested, favour the donors. Owens and Arneil (1999) argue that the concept is being used to advance neo-colonialist tendencies toward the developing world, so that, for example, developed countries mainly collaborate with countries where they have security or commercial interests or colonial ties. These distinctions between developed and developing states lead McCormack (2008) to suggest that the human security approach both reveals and perpetuates the power imbalances between them, that developing countries lack the capacity to hold developed countries to account in the same ways they are themselves are held to account by those developed countries.

As discussed above, the concept of human security is seen by some as an innovative way of addressing a multitude of security threats from a new perspective. It represents an innovative approach to how people should be protected from different threats. From the advocates’ viewpoint, the individual is the starting point, not the state. However, the state should be seen as a protector of its citizens. Fukuda–Parr and Messineo argue therefore, that “the framers of the 1945 United Nations’ Charter were motivated by the need for nations to act collectively to protect the freedom and dignity of individuals and recognized the tension between the individual and the state, and required states to respect human dignity and fundamental freedoms as human rights” (2012, p. 4).

Critics of the human security approach such as Johns (2014) point out that the concept is unclear because it pools many critical things together making the concept difficult to implement and meaningless to relate to the security concerns of the individual. Upreti, Bhattarai and Wagle (2013) suggest though that although it is hard to disregard a concept designed to help marginalised people, the state cannot reach each and every individual within its boundaries, which was certainly the case in northern Uganda conflict. Similarly, critics such as Hussein, Gnisci and Wanjiru (2004) note that all issues affecting people cannot be treated in the same way when it comes to prioritizing. For example, the threat of terrorism cannot be
treated in the same way as environmental degradation. States will deal with these threats according to their priorities.

In general, those who criticise the concept including postmodernists, critical theorists and feminist advocates, contend that the concept has been highjacked by some dominant groups within the society, who interpret it in a way which suits their agendas. According to Sheehan (2005), such interpretations could lead to unjust political decisions which could also threaten the economic order. As discussed in this research, using northern Uganda as a case in point, different interpretations of human security led to more suffering specifically those who did not have access to power.

Relevance of a human security approach

The extent to which people have ownership of projects affects the way they look at their well-being and their security. In 2004, while working with Caritas Uganda as a Research and Advocacy worker, I conducted one of a number of community sensitisation workshops on the techniques of community advocacy at Opit IDP camp. During the day-long workshop, and through the responses of the participants (eighty or ninety in number, as always more women than men), an understanding that had been growing for me through a series of such workshops in this and other IDP camps became very clear to me: that the type of empowerment that the human security approach offers was beginning to operate in these camps. Instead of always relying on me or other aid workers to articulate their concerns, workshop participants were beginning to own the process of writing their concerns and taking them to the relevant authorities such as Sub County or District local government structures. That was empowerment in action. For me, there was a realization that improving the level of engagement between the concerned people and the government with the aim of improving the levels of human security could prevent possible violent conflicts, improve peace-building processes and
could be an avenue to press for democratic reforms. I also saw that owning the process of
conflict resolution could lead to greater stability, predictability, and continuity in the affected
people’s daily lives.

The human security approach provides policy makers and academic interested in peace-
building and conflict resolution with a people-centred approach aimed at making social and
structural change. Conteh-Morgan argues that “to guarantee human security at the personal,
institutional, and structural-cultural levels, power relations and relations of power should be
underscored within a socio-cultural context” (2005, p. 71). He added that peace-building using
a human security approach would mean the transformation of an adversarial system to one that
promotes equality and strives to correct historical grievances (Conteh-Morgan, 2005). What
this has made possible in practice, internationally, is that human security has been used by the
European Union in the Democratic Republic of Congo conflict in 2006 to promote its
relationship with the African continent (Martin, 2007).

The human security approach addresses issues, both military and non-military, which
bring human insecurity into communities, and brings a new perspective by which innovative
ways can be developed to identify all threats to human life. Thomas and Tow, for example,
suggest that “human security has been developed as an idea that can be contrasted with national
security and that can direct attention to an emerging and wider spectrum of security issues”
(2002, p. 178). The former UN Secretary General, Kofi Annan, also emphasized the role of the
human security approach. He recommended that the global community adopt a people-centred
approach to security, and declared that “The basis of such a system must be a new commitment
to preventing latent threats from becoming imminent and imminent threats from becoming
actual, as well as an agreement on when and how force should be used if preventive strategies
fail” (2005, p. 66).
The human security approach makes no distinction between the security of men and women, which has contributed to an increasing awareness of women’s lack of security in conditions of armed conflict, in transitions from conflict to rehabilitation and in humanitarian emergencies and development programmes. There is also increasing attentiveness to the necessity to pay greater consideration to the physical welfare of women in armed conflicts, as well as to their safety and the advancement of their economic and social rights during humanitarian emergencies. In post conflict situations too, special attention needs to be given to the security needs of girls and women, to concrete policies aimed at improving their situation, since they are often the victims of social dislocation and violence (Chenoy, 2005; McKay, 2004b). Indeed, the possibilities for achieving gender equality are enhanced because human security contains, as a foundational principle, the desirability of human equality.

Ewan argues that “while scholars try to resolve the question of where the conceptual parameters of human security should be fixed, Western policy practices increasingly reflect the ‘merging of security and development’ that human security represents” (2007, p. 187): in practical terms, the concept of human security can offer comprehensive security as it combines political stability, economic development and caters for environmental degradation.

This extends to its focus on individual human rights. As Kaldor (2013) observes, human development and human rights are core aspects of the paradigm. Going a step further, human security initiatives emphasize people’s involvement in matters which affect them a process which makes those involved feel included in the community through ownership of the processes. Creating a sense and space of ownership is intended to bring out the best results (Andersen, 2006). It encourages self-reliance and discourages dependency, although, Anderson also makes the point that too little attention is paid to how ownership should be achieved.

Although O’Brien and Leichenko do not refer specifically to the northern Uganda situation, their position is that where human security principles are in place, “individuals and
Communities have the options necessary to end, mitigate, or adapt to threats to their human, social, and environmental rights, and the capacity and freedom to exercise these options” (O’Brien & Leichenko, 2007). In the northern Uganda conflict, community engagement, meaningful dialogue and consultation between affected communities and the government security forces/army had been absent, at least until the time of the Juba peace talks (2006-2009). Therefore, there had been no ownership of decisions, which contributed to the people feeling a lack of security.

The people did not participate in decisions about their well-being due to the top-down approach used by the government of Uganda. Because the government’s primary concern was fighting the LRA, there were no avenues to generate people-centred policies. I continually observed that this lack of opportunity to participate in community decision-making left many people feeling stressed and depressed due to uncertainty about what the future held for them.

For example, in 2003 while visiting one of the biggest camps Pabbo, in Amuru District, to conduct community meetings (on behalf of Caritas), one of the participants talked about the unfamiliar environment that camp inhabitants had to experience, such as overcrowding and a lack of freedom to do what they wanted to do. She told me that the presence of armed personnel everywhere, dressed in camouflage military uniforms, stressed her very much.

The observations I made while meeting people affected by the war are supported by research conducted in northern Uganda by Mugisha, Muyinda, Malamba, and Kinyanda. They found that “[s]tudies of psychiatric disorder undertaken in this region during the conflict reported rates of Major Depressive Disorder (MDD) of between 31% and 67%” (2015, p. 2). Similarly, Amone-P’Olak, Garnefski, and Kraaij found that “many social, psychological, health and physiological disturbances have been shown to be related to the war experiences of adolescents, such as PTSD or PTSD-like complaints” (2007, p. 656).
In a conflict environment, bringing people together and allowing them to devise ways to use the events in their favour empowers them. The security of the people can be seriously weakened when issues of concern to their security are poorly managed and co-ordinated and are not in line with what they expect to be put in place. Nathan (2007) points out that, particularly in Africa, the lack of local input to, and ownership of, the reform agenda has been an ongoing problem (Nathan, 2007).

Effectively, what at least part of the literature is suggesting is that the human security approach has seldom been used to improve people’s basic security needs in situations of intra-state conflicts, civil wars, and guerrilla wars, and that although it has been applied in peacekeeping and peacebuilding, its potential for systematic threat assessment (and the impact assessment of those threats) remains under-utilized (Imboden, 2012). Nonetheless, as discussed in subsequent chapters, and based on both an analysis of the more specific literature on the northern Ugandan conflict, and on my own extensive experience in the field, I argue that the human security approach when implemented, to some extent improved the lives of men, women and children in northern Uganda during the conflict.

From that, and from the wider review of the literature presented here, I suggest that despite its critics, the human security approach can be seen as having potential as a way to deal with particular threats such as increasing poverty, ethnic violence, human trafficking, effects of climate change, chronic diseases like AIDS, and the increasing incidents of terrorism which all have negative consequences for humanity. The relationship between local and global interests in generating a more secure world is one of the guiding principles of the human security approach. Indeed, according to Axworthy, we are no longer limited to discussions of states' rights and national sovereignty.

Protecting civilians, addressing the plight of war-affected children and [curtailing] the threat of terrorism and drugs, managing open borders,
and combating infectious diseases are now part of a dialogue (2001, p. 19).

But, despite Axworthy’s recognition of human security issues being part of the dialogue, there is still the need for a concerted local, national and international effort to prevent such threats from happening so that they can be controlled before they cause a significant humanitarian crisis.

**The relationship between human security and development.**

This research is not about human development as such, though of course human security and human development are related. In northern Uganda, the socio-economic and political conditions of the people on the ground contributed much to the conflict, yet to achieve human development, human security must be in place, and vice versa. As Klingebiel et al (2006) state, the presence of security is a precondition for any successful development and that successful development policies depend on a secure situation in a country. However, the threats and the level of success differ from country to country.

Jolly and Ray usefully contrast human development and human security by arguing that human development is “the process of increasing levels of human development while human security focuses on avoiding the downside risks of falling below some level of human development already achieved” (2007, p. 459). Hence the concept of human security has attracted attention specifically because of its relevance to people’s well-being and global development in general (Christie, 2010; Cilliers, 2004; Gómez & Gasper, 2013; Kaldor, 2013). Anything concerning development in any country has a bearing on the human security of the people concerned. The application of a human security approach in developmental activities can assist long-term development if people are involved in the planning of the activities which are crucial to their wellbeing. Thus, for citizens to own the process helps forge a sense of
responsibility to sustain what has been initiated. Klingebiel et al., (2006) make a connection between sustainable development and human security by describing sustainable development as focusing on institutions which make regulations in order to maintain community equilibrium (Klingebiel et al., 2006).

At another level, the human security approach has a bearing on development where improvements in income, health and education can lead to overall development of the people and the country as a whole. Human security approaches and development, when linked, provide a basis for international aid agencies to coordinate interventions even in an insecure environment. In such situations, they can complement humanitarian efforts especially when specific states have failed to provide assistance to their citizens. Further, the connection between them has brought countries together to compromise on contentious issues which affect humanity. As King and Murray note:

UNDP’s main goal was to use human security as the organizing concept for the 1995 Copenhagen UN Conference on Social Development. While it was not used as the basis for the social summit, human security as proposed by UNDP has continued as an organizing concept in the development economics, public health, and the security communities (2001, p. 589).

Therefore, people’s well-being, as an element of human security, provides a basis in theory for any development initiatives to thrive. The absence of human security affects economic growth, fuels poverty and retards development in general.

One argument for the relevance of the human security approach in relation to development in Africa, is that “only by formulating and executing policies that explicitly address the mutuality of developmental security challenges will the human potential of Africa be released” (Porto, Poku, & Renwick, 2007, p. 1156). Martin and Owen, however, take the somewhat contrasting position that “whereas development is focused on achieving equitable
growth and sustainability, human security goes further to address the conditions that menace survival, the continuation of daily life and the dignity of human beings” (2010, p. 214). This perspective points to the importance of maintaining a connection between development and human security activities. However, in northern Uganda during the conflict there was no attempt to formulate policies intended for development due to the security situation thus, offering evidence for this research’s argument of the usefulness, but the limited usefulness, of the human security approach during the conflict in northern Uganda.

**Human security and international relations**

MacFarlane and Khong (MacFarlane, Khong, & ebrary, 2006) suggest that human security not only places individuals at the centre of “international security through the merging of the previously independent issues of development and security, but also makes the security of “those over there” an international matter and inextricably linked to “us over here” (2006, p. 230). They identify four areas emphasised in international relations which are also related to human security. First, any security undertaking should be in the people’s best interests and protect their security concerns but not necessarily those of the state. Second, the human security approach addresses the complicated and related issues which emerged from the post-Cold War period. Third, human security has been incorporated into foreign policy security agendas of some developed countries so that the level of awareness of human security has increased. Finally, the concept draws attention to security issues which need attention from various stakeholders to address issues related to insecurity.

A further significant reason for a worldwide approach to human security is that, if issues negatively affecting people are identified, the attention of developed countries may be attracted, in the form of humanitarian assistance, as was the case in northern Uganda. According to the report by the European Commission Directorate – General for Humanitarian Aid (ECHO),
“since 2000, ECHO has channelled more than EUR 63 million into northern Uganda and is a main donor in the country for humanitarian assistance” (2007, p. 4). The contribution of international aid and development support was recognised as being of crucial importance to enhancing human security by McRae and Hubert (2001), although they were not specifically referring to northern Uganda.

The combined issues of human security and human rights have gained prominence in the vocabulary of international relations and international law. Together they provide a framework for mutual understanding and cooperation between countries. Also, together they provide a basic understanding of what individuals and communities need to feel safe and secure. A Report by the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty (2001) notes that throughout the world there is an increased awareness of the need for international institutions to safeguard human rights and human dignity (2001, p. 6). However, in the case of northern Uganda, during the conflict the international responses to the conflict were inappropriate (Quaranto, 2006). Due to the unsafe security situation, it was very difficult to provide large sections of the population with basic needs which made it difficult to apply the human security approach.

Conclusion

This chapter has reviewed and discussed the emergence and varying definitions of human security in the academic literature. It has argued that a human security approach can be used to identify the diverse needs of people and has identified and stated arguments in support of, and critical of, the concept. It has made the point that the human security concept needs to be discussed and its principles applied with attention to development needs.

A human security approach emphasises protecting and empowering people using a people-centred approach, focussing on those issues which impact negatively on people, such
as poverty, poor food security, lawlessness, climate change, violations of human rights, conflict, gender inequality, problems relating to the youth and environmental issues, and so shares the core principles of human development agendas, of referring, protecting, emphasizing and responding to people’s needs and well-being. It is an approach that, as Oberleitner wrote in 2005, already had begun “to influence, change, and challenge global politics, institutions, and governance” (2005, p. 185).
Chapter Three

The causes of civil wars in post-colonial Uganda

Introduction

This chapter examines the numerous civil conflicts which have occurred in Uganda since it attained Independence. It discusses how the political, social and economic situation in Uganda during the colonial and post-colonial periods provided a foundation for the country’s future political instabilities, and it contributes to answering the research question by exploring the extent to which successive post-colonial governments failed to address the politically-based ethnic and socio-economic divisions, and how this led to political leaders failing to manage the human security of many Ugandans and, in particular, the human security of particular ethnic groups in the north of the country. The chapter argues that the causes of civil wars in post-colonial Uganda can be attributed to the lack of a spirit of nationalism manifested by a lack of a sense of being Ugandan. Most ethnic groups focused only on their own advantage and the establishment of political parties based on religious affiliation exacerbated the situation. When Uganda attained Independence in 1962, deep-rooted divisions based on ethnicity, economic privilege, class and religion differences (Rohner, Thoenig, & Zilibotti, 2013): this situation provided a fertile ground for the ensuing civil conflicts particularly in northern Uganda.

As I show here, many of Uganda’s problems, such as ethnic divisions and a lack of national unity, date from the colonial era (1894-1962) (Munene, 2015), and, as indicated below, have resulted in the country’s leaders prioritizing the security of their own regimes over the security of their people. In a mixture of democracy, dictatorship and anarchy, human security has taken a back seat, resulting in social, political and economic crisis.

Uganda’s experience can be understood as paralleling that of many other countries in Africa which have experienced post-colonial political instabilities, directly traceable to disruptive colonial experiences. By consciously redefining traditional social structures, eroding
the distinctions of class and morality, intent on instilling a sense of inferiority, the colonial elite replicated themselves, passing on to their local successors understandings, traditions and practices, steeped in a heritage of colonial corruption (Ejiogu & Mosley, 2017, p. 9). In the case of Uganda as elsewhere in Africa, Senu and Daranjoh persuasively argue that:

western foreign policy has been characterized by an implicit protection of its own values and self-interests that ostensibly claim to support African economic and political development, but in practice encourage financial mismanagement and poor governance to the point where Africa's leaders are bound up with a political culture from which they cannot be liberated, almost creating a perpetual cycle of tragedy and policy (Senu & Daranjoh, 2018, p. 1008).

Since Independence, political volatility, has produced human rights abuses, nepotism, a lack of democracy, regional inequalities, ethnic-based conflicts and religious sectarianism (Oola, 2008). Uganda has not had even one nonviolent transfer of power: a series of military coups has been followed by civil wars. Rather, military means have been used to acquire and hold on to power: “leaving deep scars of distrust and anger between the different regional and ethnic groups, particularly between the northern and southern/central parts of the country” (Okumu-Alya, 2009, p. 1). The history of military coups and the heavy reliance on the military to protect the regimes of Obote I (1966-1971), Amin (1971-1979), Obote II (1980-1985) and, currently, Museveni (1986 to date), are closely associated with the domination of different ethnic groups. These ethnic-based divisions were created by the colonialists as a means of asserting their authority over the colony. The main divide has been the ethnic segregation between people from northern Uganda and those from the south. Significantly, this divide has
contributed to a series of chaotic situations in which various leaders seized power, ruled the country for short periods of time, and then were overthrown.

The legacies of colonialism, particularly the issues related to ethnic divisions, did not allow a sense of national identity. Past abuses have not been acknowledged or remedied, nor has there been an attempt, as in other post-colonial countries, to promote a national reconciliation process (Oola, 2008).

**Colonial period British Protectorate (1894 – 1962)**

In order to understand the origins of Uganda’s current problems, it is necessary to examine its colonial history. Uganda was a British protectorate from 1894 to 1962. Like many other African countries, Uganda had long been divided along linguistic, religious and ethnic lines, which offered the British colonial administrators the means to control the territory: they applied a ‘divide and rule’ strategy which exacerbated and played on these divisions:

The British divided their Uganda Protectorate into two, namely labour and production zones. The division was based on presumed natural qualities of the people of northern Uganda and those of the south. The people of the north were regarded to be strong, muscular and hardworking while the southern peoples were perceived as weak, lazy but intellectually superior (Amone, 2014a, p. 72).

At the time of British occupation of what is now Uganda, the several kingdoms (see fig 1 below) were at different levels of political development, some with a centralized system of governance, others decentralized. During this period, some embraced the colonialists with open arms and others resisted. Those who embraced the colonialists, predominantly the Bantu speaking people in the central and western parts of modern Uganda, especially the Baganda, were rewarded with incentives (Gartrell, 1983). The arbitrary boundaries designated at the
Berlin Conference of 1884-85 brought the Buganda Kingdom together with smaller kingdoms to make what is now modern Uganda. Since the Buganda Kingdom was more powerful than the other kingdoms, it was given a special position by the colonialists, which led to it being given a preferential status (Diaz, 2005).

This preferential treatment by the colonialists towards Buganda, indicates that the British colonialists favoured the Baganda because, like the British, they were familiar with a centralized system of governance (Mutibwa, 1992). As a result, the Baganda, Basoga and Banyankole were encouraged to grow cash crops such as coffee, cotton and tea while those in Acholi and Lango, located in the north, were forced to do manual labour. Okuku argues that in dividing the economy in this way, Britain was “[b]uilding upon pre-colonial differences” (2002, p. 13). The effect was to lead other Ugandans from the west and north of the country to come to Buganda as migrant workers to tap its economic opportunities (Okumu-Alya, 2009).

The British used the Baganda to conquer areas which resisted colonial rule (Okumu-Alya, 2009), and because they worked with the British, the Baganda also benefited greatly from the development of their economy and from better infrastructure including roads, schools and hospitals in their regions. They became Uganda's educated elite. The British further differentiated between the north and the south by recruiting personnel for the army, police, prisons and other security agencies from the north (Berg-Schlosser 1990). These actions further entrenched the existing divisions and served to heighten prevailing hatred between the various ethnic groups.

The northern parts of the country, dominated by the Luo ethnic group from Gulu, Kitgum, Pader and Amuru plus the Nile-Hamites who are the Langi from Lira, Apac and Dokolo districts, were not catered for in terms of economic development (Apuuli, 2006). Rather, as shown above, these groups from the north were used as a source of cheap labour in the south where industries and large agricultural farms had been set up. However, northerners
taller and in general physically stronger, were also the principle source of military recruitment, and so were a large pool of trained soldiers, familiar with guns, but many, lacking military incomes, continued to be cattle dependent and, generally, poor. Southerners on the other hand, more trusted by the British, were more educated and filled the ranks of civil service, and also worked either as out growers, small farmers, or on the large agricultural estates established by the British to grow the new cash crops such as coffee, tea and cotton (Jackson, 2002). The differential treatment of northerners and southerners became increasingly problematic under British rule, particularly as other colonies began to achieve Independence through armed struggle (Laruni, 2015). Yet, the British relationship with the southerners was strong enough to make possible a peaceful transition from colonial status to Independence.

Nonetheless, the domination of security agencies by the northerners (notably the Nilotics) gave them unlimited access to guns, which Dicklitch and Lwanga (2003) argue helped to set the stage for the ensuing civil wars and repressive regimes. It was also, as Lindermann shows, the economic divisions between an impoverished north and a more prosperous south that continued to promote sectarian tendencies among Ugandans, which meant that, following Independence, many continued to think about their identity in terms of their ethnic group, rather than as being Ugandan (Lindemann, 2011a). A case in point is that most of the post-colonial leaders have preferred to be surrounded by immediate relatives, trusted friends from their ethnic identity and all high-level security positions are given to members of their ethnic group (Lindemann, 2011b; Okumu-Alya, 2009, p. 1).

Post-colonial Uganda

Yet, although Uganda had a relatively peaceful move to Independence in 1962, this peaceful situation did not last long after the British left. Van Acker argues that in general, “[i]ndependence found Uganda with an entrenched racial separation of economic function and
privilege, keenly felt religious divisions, and a widespread resentment of preferential treatment accorded to the Baganda” (2004, p. 341). The seeds of mistrust among Ugandans had been planted during the colonial period and the promotion of ethnic-based politics divided the country rather than united it. Since addressing these political mistakes after Independence was not a priority for subsequent leaders (quite the opposite), this led to turmoil in the post-colonial era.

The issue of ethnic divisions has been a significant problem for Uganda since Independence. Differences in political opinions and struggles to hold onto power by some ethnic groups, have continually undermined the push for nation building and a strong centralized political system (Laruni, 2015). When Uganda held its first elections in 1962, the political parties were heavily sectarian in terms of ethnicity and religion. The Baganda, as the principal collaborators with the British, had become part of their administration system so, when Uganda became independent, in an active demonstration that ethnic division was to remain a tool of oppression between different ethnic groups (Rohner et al., 2013) they became the new administrators, replacing the departing colonialists.

In favouring some ethnic groups over others, British policies were disastrous for future nation building (Laruni, 2015). For example, the recruitment policy in the security agencies undermined the country’s future stability. It was the responsibility of the British-trained army and the police to protect the country as a whole, and the new administrators who replaced the colonialists at the time of Independence, but, in a mistake with long-lasting consequences, the “instruments of violence: the armed forces” were left where they had been under the British, in the hands of the Acholi and the Langi from the north (Cheney, 2005, p. 25). The army, as Van Acker argues, was little more than “an instrument of domestic politics”, which in turn was itself “increasingly a function of ethnic retaliation.” Violence became a means to an end, and an instrument of social relationships (2004, p. 338).
Further, the divisive political foundations Uganda inherited from the colonial power, also had a severe effect on the formation of future political parties: “Uganda’s post-colonial attempts to adopt social transformative goals and to create new political structures for popular mobilization rapidly ran into the obstacles posed by this colonial legacy” (Van Acker, 2004, p. 341). Such legacies were instrumental in the lack of a sense of national identity, and especially in terms of building independent national political institutions.

Arguably, religion was an even more significant (and longstanding) divisive factor. Indeed, Kasozi goes so far as to suggest that the violence between Bafransa (Roman Catholics), Bangereza (Anglican Protestants) and Bawadi (Muslims) during the colonial period was worse than anything experienced in the centuries-long history of the kingdom of Buganda. After Independence, the formation of political parties such as the Democratic Party (DP), and the Uganda People’s Congress (UPC) was influenced by colonial political divisions of religion and tribe (Byamukama, 2003), reflecting the marked lines of division which followed ethnicity and religion, particularly between Catholic and Anglican (the latter becoming the most widespread and influential during the pre-colonial period, and retaining that position after Independence) (Carney, p.769). The Uganda People’s Congress party, formed by Milton Obote in 1962, drew its support from the Church Missionary Society (CMS), Anglicans, known in Uganda as Protestants: most UPC supporters were from east and northern Uganda where its leader came from. The other major party, the Democratic Party, drew its support from the Catholics and the mainly Bantu people from the centre, south and west of the country. The DP (founded, 1954) was anti-communist and actively defended the interests of Ugandan Catholics (Carney, 2017). Its founders and most significant support were from the central region, where Catholics were the majority. Because of its roots in the Catholic Church, others called it ‘Diini ya Paapa’ DP” Religion for the Pope;” with the implication that it was foreign controlled. The
other predominantly ethnic party was the Kabaka Yekka (KY) party (“Only the King”), named for its leader, the then-king Mutesa of Buganda. For Dicklitch (1995), it is clear that

Rather than mitigating inherited divisions, the political parties that existed after independence only exacerbated them. The major ethnic, religious, and regional differences were magnified within the major political parties (1995, p. 107).

This remains an unchallenged position in discussions of post-colonial Uganda. Indeed, Haynes, writing more recently, takes it a step further, arguing that the “divisions precluded the formation of a national culture in Uganda and help explain the emergence and development of anti-state ethnic and religious groups” (2007, p. 312).

A spirit of interdependence between the peoples of the different regions in Uganda has never been encouraged by the succession of more or less legitimate and repressive political leaders (Berg-Schlosser 1990) who have rather planted seeds of hatred contributing both to a lack of nationalism and a lack of human security which, as Dicklitch reads them have led only to “a semblance of authority and stability” depending on “patronage, coercion, repression, and the support of the politicized military” (1995, pp. 105-106). These divisions have battered Uganda and resulted in thousands of people losing their lives.

The self-interested tendencies of the leaders of Uganda since Independence have contributed negatively to the country’s peace and development, stagnated the economy and hampered sustainable development.
Figure 1. Ethnographic map of Uganda. Source: Ethnographic Uganda. From “Protracted conflict, elusive peace: Initiatives to end the violence in northern Uganda” (Otunnu, 2002, p. 14).

**Milton Obote’s first Presidency of Uganda (1966-71)**

Milton Obote, a Langi, from northern Uganda, and party leader of the Uganda People’s Congress, became the first Prime Minister of independent Uganda in 1962. He then became...
president in 1966-71. Obote came to power through an unlikely alliance between the UPC and the Kabaka Yekka parties which had previously been strongly opposed to each other (Berg-Schlosser 1990). Although they formed a government of national unity, they had different ideologies and aims, e.g, monachism and republicanism. When Obote attacked the residence of the King of Buganda in 1966, the alliance broke down and he was able to rewrite the 1962 Independence Constitution in his own interests, and without consulting Parliament. His UPC government was able to suppress all political opposition. He successfully removed the Executive President (King Mutesa II) from power and proclaimed Uganda a republic, thereby abolishing the system of traditional kingdoms and denying Buganda its federal status. He then declared himself Executive President (Karlström, 1996). The ongoing political unease between the King of Buganda and Prime Minister Obote created long lasting enmity between the Baganda and people from northern Uganda especially the Langi and Acholi.

The attack on the King’s residence, together with the deposition of the King of Buganda, also soured relationships between the people from the north and those from the south, specifically the Baganda (McDonough, 2008). Obote’s actions were a source of trouble between the northern region and the Buganda Kingdom as he became increasingly authoritarian and reduced the civil liberties of all Ugandans (McDonough, 2008). Realizing he could rule without the support of Buganda, Obote introduced policies which further alienated the Baganda. Commenting on these changes Okuku (2002) argues that Obote’s despotic administration shattered any hope of widespread economic development or a democratic solution to what was essentially a civil conflict. Throughout his rule, Obote had the support of the police and the army which marked the beginning of military intervention in the politics of Uganda.

The army was headed by Idi Amin, a British-trained northerner and ethnic Kakwa, who rose up the ranks because of his cruelty during Obote’s dictatorial regime. Idi Amin used his
charisma and understanding of the techniques of political propaganda to help him stage a coup against the civilian President Obote in 1971 (Nayenga, 1979).

The reasons for this were complex. First, there was antagonism within the military because Obote favoured people from his own ethnic group, the Langis. Second, many military people were dissatisfied with the changing of the Independence Constitution which helped Obote to seize power. Third, the deposition of the Buganda King as an Executive President also riled many (Lindemann, 2011a). In addition, Obote’s UPC government had been weakened by the conflict with the Buganda Kingdom, whose inhabitants welcomed the rise of Amin (Lindemann, 2011b). All these led to a power struggle between Obote and Amin and the coup in 1971 in which Amin came to power.

**Idi Amin’s Regime (1971-1979)**

Amin took control of Uganda on January 25th, 1971. As a result, Obote and many other Ugandans, including the current president Yoweri Museveni, fled to Tanzania where they started to mobilize themselves to fight against Idi Amin. Amin’s regime was characterised by continuing arbitrary violence, and many people were killed for opposing the government. The regime was the most oppressive Uganda has ever known: Amin persecuted anyone whom he suspected of opposing his regime. Those persecuted were mostly from the Acholi and Langi ethnic groups, especially those with a military background, as well as religious leaders such as the Anglican Archbishop Janani Luwum, journalists, intellectuals, judges, artists, minority groups and Obote supporters (Saul, 1976).

Another notable characteristic of Amin’s regime was the expulsion of Israelis for refusing to sell him arms to fight neighbouring countries, and on a larger scale the mass expulsion of people of South Asian descent (Nayenga, 1979). They had been brought to Uganda by the British as labour for the construction of the national railway system and had
remained as shop keepers and small industrialists. Amin declared that expelling Asians was ‘a war of economic liberation’ intended to hand the economy back to local Ugandans (Jamal, 1976). Their expulsion resulted in the confiscation of their houses, shops and industries and redistribution to Africans (Patel, 1972). He also accused them of failing to integrate into Uganda’s culture (Patel, 1972). However, despite having expelled the whole Asian population, including business people, Amin’s regime failed to create the economic basis necessary to rally political support. As Brett argues, “the attempt to maintain power by force made him wipe out able people, undermine property rights and entrepreneurship, and thus reduce economic efficiency and the resources available to the state” (1995b, pp. 137-138). More recently Peterson (2016) observes that the crises in Uganda in the 1970s and 1980s resulted in medical staff leaving the country, a scarcity of modern pharmaceuticals and a deterioration in much of the infrastructure. As a result, the country’s health system, once greatly admired in Africa, was left in a dire state (Peterson, 2016b). Such consequences of Amin’s actions and style of leadership brought him enemies both within and outside the country and soured relationships with the international community, particularly Britain.

The human rights situation during Amin’s regime was dire. Violations in the form of state repression were carried out not only by security agents but also by political activists. Many people used the breakdown of law and order as an opportunity to enrich themselves through stealing, killing and plundering (Kasozi, Musisi, & Sejjengo, 1994). Large numbers of Ugandans fled into exile during Amin’s reign of terror, the greatest number, including many prominent politicians, fleeing to Tanzania. When Amin invaded Tanzania’s territory in order to annex part of it to Uganda, President Julius Kambalage Nyerere declared war on Uganda. While out of Uganda, the exiles formed different fighting groups to oust Amin. They included former President Obote’s supporters, the Save Uganda Movement (SUM), whose political leadership included Ateker Ejalu, Oyite Ojok and Yona Kanyomozi and the Front for National
Salvation (FRONASA), headed by Museveni. However, these groups did not pose a threat to Amin until they joined forces and met in Moshi, Tanzania, where they formed one group, the Uganda National Liberation Front/Army (UNLF/A) in 1978. Then, together with the Tanzanian Peoples Defence Forces, they invaded Uganda and overthrew the Amin regime (1980, p. 467). Previously, the government of Tanzania had refused to assist any of the separate groups but after the invasion of Amin’s forces into Tanzanian territory, the Tanzanian government began to provide each group with training and arms (Gertzel, 1980).

Amin’s reign of terror had a negative impacts on the political, social and economic aspects of the country. Internationally the regime was unpopular especially in some parts of the western world due to its lack of human rights. The three linked institutions of government, Parliament, the Judiciary and the Executive, were broken down by the dominance of the military which attacked the human security of Ugandans. Yet, ironically, although the immediate cause of the fall of Amin’s regime was the Ugandan exiles in Tanzania together with the Tanzanian Peoples Defence Forces, Gertzel (1980) and Brett (1995b) agree that it was not the exiles who brought about an end to Amin’s rule, but dissension within the army and decreased backing from his Muslim supporters. Amin fled to Libya and later to Saudi Arabia where he stayed until his death in 2003.

The turbulent period after Amin’s downfall, January 1979 – December 1980

After the downfall of Amin in 1979, the country needed a strong leader in order to embark on the reconstruction process. However, the resurfacing of ethnic tensions and rivalry aimed at capturing power undermined efforts to rebuild the country. Instead of reconstruction the downfall ushered in another turbulent and bloody period which again affected the security of many Ugandans.
The UNLF gained power following Amin’s fall and embarked on the daunting task of rebuilding the country socially, economically and politically: describing the situation in April 1979, Gertzel (1980) describes Uganda as in a real sense a ‘broken-backed’ state and argues that a breakdown in a society’s institutions had had a profound effect on the country’s development.

During the 1979-1980 period, ideological differences between the groups that had come together to form the UNLA at Moshi resurfaced again (Kasfir, 2005). The infighting within the UNLA led to three different and short-lived government formations during a 20-month period (April 1979-December 1980) those of: (i) Yusufu Lule (April - June 1979); (ii) Godfrey Binaisa (June 1979 - May 1980); and (iii) Paul Muwanga (May - December 1980). These three interim governments were each backed by former Ugandan rebel groups which had fought the Amin regime: during this period, ethnicity dominated politics, and specific ethnic groups carried out various retribution against their opponents.

Indeed, although short-lived, they are representative of all Ugandan regimes after Independence, characterized by:

- devaluation of human lives, the use of force in social interactions, the presentation by the power elite of political problems as being essentially military in nature, the diminishing of space and tolerance for competition, the abandonment of western-type education and entrepreneurial success as the criterion for upward economic and political mobility, and the domination of civilian institutions by the armed forces (Omara-Otunnu, 1992, p. 445).

The third of these regimes was led by Paul Muwanga, who chaired a Military Commission, effectively the country’s government, which organized the controversial Makara (2010) December 1980 general elections which brought Obote, still at the head of the UPC
back to power (Allen, 1991; Brett, 1995b; Kasfir, 2005). The fairness of the elections was contested by many and widely considered to be fraudulent (Adyanga, 2015). They were organized on a multiparty basis but failed to produce a clear and uncontested winner, sparking another wave of instability between 1981-1986.

The second Milton Obote government 1980 – 1985

During this second period of Obote control, ethnic divisions further resurfaced when, in order to contain any military threats to his regime, he made sure that his fellow Langi and Acholi dominated the army (Laruni, 2015). It was also repressive, especially for the people from the southern part of Uganda as they had not supported him either when he was toppled by Idi Amin or during the 1980 elections. During Obote’s second presidency the country was regarded as having one of the worst human rights records in the world: “Obote was able to create nearly as much havoc as Amin. Obote’s army and political thugs … butchered and massacred nearly six hundred thousand people, leaving piles of skulls and decomposing bodies in a part of the country called the Luwero Triangle” (Carson, 2005, p. 4).

Many atrocities were committed by the UNLA which was comprised mainly of people from Obote’s ethnic group, the Langi. Allen (1991) points out that the second Obote regime fell apart as a direct result of ethnically-based misunderstandings between the Acholi and Langi, in particular that two senior Acholi army officers, Bazilio Olala Okello and Tito Okello Lutwa, were overlooked when Obote appointed a new commander in chief of the army.

As a result, Obote was overthrown in a military coup led by these two officers (7 July 1985) (McDonough, 2008). The ongoing infighting within the army, specifically between the Acholi and Langi, resulted in a chaotic situation. Yoweri Museveni, a Munyankole from western Uganda, with his ethnically-based National Resistance Army (NRA) seized the opportunity and on 26th January 1986 captured power. Museveni formed a government of
national unity and declared himself the President. Since then, Museveni has dominated Ugandan politics, introducing many democratic reforms during his early years which consolidated him in power. These reforms gained him support in the southern part of the country but not in the north and improved on Uganda’s past human rights record. The conflict during Obote’s second regime which resulted in Museveni coming to power was played out in the Luwero Triangle.

The Luwero conflict 1981-1986

The Luwero Triangle conflict between the then-Government army, the Uganda National Liberation Army (UNLA) and the National Resistance Army/Movement (NRA/M) lasted from 1981 to 1986 and was mainly fought in Buganda, central Uganda. Bernard (2017) argues that the government was responding to guerrilla attacks by the NRA on its forces through violent retaliatory attacks aimed at both stopping NRA forces from capturing government weapons and forcing them out of the areas they were operating in (Bernard, p.191, 2017).

Prior to his overthrow, then-President Obote called the areas where the NRA/M led by Museveni operated, along the Luwero, Mityana and Masaka roads, between three major lakes, Victoria, Albert and Kyoga (the current districts of Luwero, Nakaseke, Mubende, Mityana, Mpigi and to a lesser extent in Nakasongola and Mukono (see Map 2 below), the Luwero Triangle. The fighting in this area, often referred to as the NRA Bush War, greatly affected surrounding areas such as Zirobwe, Buzibwera, Kikyusa and Nakaseke.

The Luwero Triangle also refers to the location of a number of post-conflict reconstruction programmes in the area. After the National Resistance Movement (NRM) came to power, they called the area their “political mecca” (Mamdani, 1988). The Uganda Bureau of Statistics 2011 Report, records that the district constitutes 2,180.9 square kms, with a
population of approximately 429,000 people. The main ethnic groups in the district are the Baganda, Balaro (people of Rwandan origin) and Baruli. Other minorities include the Nubians and Banyole. The economy is mainly crop farming, 86.3%. The adult literacy rate is 82.1 percent and life expectancy is 44 years (Kasfir, 2005).
The main cause of this conflict was the alleged rigging of the 1980 elections. The Baganda, Banyankole, Banyolo, Batoro, Bakiga, Basoga and other small, southern and western
ethnic groups voted overwhelmingly for the opposition Democratic Party (DP). So, when the results were announced, followed by widespread allegations that the election had not been free and fair, Museveni and his NRA were forced to go to the bush and fight the government. Many Ugandans had a feeling that Obote and his UPC party, regained power through elections which were not free and fair (Kasfir, 2005). This belief gave the NRA a fertile ground, and an advantage in terms of political climate, to grow and to continue to fight the regime. As a result, Museveni began his rise to power by waging a guerrilla war in the Triangle.

The civil conflict in the Luwero Triangle took place in an area where the then-President Milton Obote was extremely unpopular (Kanyinga, Gibbon, Kiondo, & Tidemand, 1994, p. 21). The Baganda ethnic group blamed and resented Obote for forcing their King into exile and for abolishing the monarchy. They also resented the repressive actions of the army: NRA members were welcomed when they arrived in the Luwero Triangle area (Brett, 1995b).

Ethnic divisions also helped to flame this conflict (Lindemann, 2011b). The NRM/A founders from western Uganda were mainly Banyankole, Museveni’s tribe, and dominated the political and military wings of the movement. Although this civil conflict was fought in Buganda, an area predominantly inhabited by the Baganda, the largest tribe in Uganda, apart from a few elites, they did not join the struggle. According to Kasfir “[t]he leaders of the NRA chose to begin their guerrilla war in the former kingdom of Buganda because the opportunity to mobilise popular support was greatest there” (2005, p. 282).

When the NRM/A defeated the northern-dominated army in 1986, this group, which comprised people from the south and western part of Uganda, subsequently became the backbone of Museveni’s regime. This rebellion, which was led by Museveni, was seen as the southern ethnic groups fighting against the northern dominated army. People from the northern part of Uganda saw this change: people who were not supposed to be in the army had taken up arms, thus altering the status quo set by the colonialists before independence.
Consequences of the Luwero conflict

The Luwero conflict was violent and the repercussions were experienced long after the conflict ended (Gersony, 1997). Mass killings were carried out by the Uganda National Liberation Army (UNLA), particularly the Special Forces of former President Milton Obote, who committed many atrocities while fighting the NRA. Bernard (2017) reports “an estimated 50,000–300,000 civilian deaths in this region. At the end of the war, thousands of unidentified human remains were found in the area in forms of skulls and bones” (Bernard, 2017, p. 188). Although the rigging of the 1980 elections was the main trigger for Museveni’s rebellion in the Luwero Triangle, atrocities carried out by the army further undermined the UNLF’s reputation among civilians, who subsequently brought Museveni to power. For example, the UNLA, almost 90% of which were Acholi and Langi, brutally murdered civilians in the Luwero Triangle, leaving many young boys and girls without parents (Bøås, 2004). Commenting on the violent behaviour of the UNLA, Bernard further argues that “The presence of the UNLA soldiers and the personal militia of UPC local leaders stationed in these districts, who besides killing also engaged in looting and more general violence against civilians, led many villagers to abandon their properties and flee the area” (Bernard, 2017, p. 191). Gersony (1997) describes one military engagement near the Namugongo Christian shrine, east of Kampala as a “massacre in which scores of civilians were killed” and reports civilians being “brought into Luwero to be killed and Acholi soldiers bringing home stolen goods and abducting young girls” (1997, p. 8). Such acts of brutality forced some orphaned children to join the NRA for their safety. As a result, Museveni’s NRA/M recruited many child soldiers, which had long standing consequences.

Widespread accusations of human rights abuses by the UNLA when fighting the guerrillas (NRA) resulted in the NRA receiving more support from affected people. The
frustration of the Obote government in failing to defeat the NRA militarily, and the incompetence with which the counter-guerrilla war was waged, produced a crisis in the government. The immediate cause was the death of the Chief of Staff, Brigadier Oyite Ojok in 1983. According to Brett, “senior Acholi officers not promoted [including Tito Okello and Bazilio who initiated the Acholi backed coup which ousted Obote] after the death of Oyite Ojok in 1983 were excluded by Obote again in 1985 after heavy fighting between Langi and Acholi soldiers” (1995b, pp. 143-144). The infighting between Acholi and Langi ethnic groups which Obote’s second regime relied on, ended in a coup which was led by two Acholi military officers Bazilio Okello and Tito Okello (Lindemann, 2011b).

**The Okello coup 1985**

In July 1985, a faction of the UNLA dominated by officers from the Acholi ethnic group, in a concerted effort, and in conjunction with ex-Amin soldiers (the so-called Former Uganda National Army-FUNA), retreated to southern Sudan, to a place called Owiny Kibul, where they planned their coup to overthrow President Obote. As a result, the mutineers ousted Obote and installed Tito Okello as president on July 27, 1985.

The new government of General Tito Okello Lutwa pledged to reconcile the nation and offered to talk to Museveni and the leadership of the NRA. Peace talks took place in Nairobi chaired by the then-President of Kenya Daniel Arap Moi. After a few months, the Nairobi Peace Accord was reached, but fighting continued until the NRA defeated the Okello regime militarily (Nabudere, 1986). The situation in Kampala before the NRA took over was characterized by anarchy. Different armed factions controlled different zones. Brett (1995b) argues that the NRA used the situation as an excuse to disregard the Nairobi Peace Accord. They took over the capital, Kampala, with ease and formed the government headed by Museveni in January 1986.
The NRA defeated the UNLA and ended the northerners’ domination in Ugandan politics. However, the new situation set the scene for yet more conflicts between north and south whereby northerners, through different armed rebellions, tried to regain power. Brett (1995) establishes that “the [NRA] victory of 1986 was seen as one of south over north, and thus created the prospect ‘of discrimination, neglect and marginalisation’ for northerners” (1995b, p. 145). Nonetheless, Rohner, Thoenig and Zilibotti have argued more recently, the northern rebel movements continue, comprised for the most part of former Ugandan army personnel, often Acholi (Rohner et al., 2013, pp. 223-224).

**Museveni’s regime 1986 to the present**

President Museveni came to power as a result of waging a five-year guerrilla war, popularly known as the Luwero Triangle conflict, against President Milton Obote whom he accused of carrying out election malpractices (Uganda: Reconstruction: Politics, economics, 2004). When Museveni came to power, he promised a fundamental change in Uganda’s politics. Initially he was greeted with jubilation, mainly by the people from the southern part of Uganda and was seen as a saviour from the brutal forces of the northerners. As a reminder to the people about the past regimes’ atrocities, Museveni had built large wooden tables with woven reed tops, which were positioned along major roads throughout Luwero Triangle, in places such as Matuga, Nakaseke, Namulonge and Kakoge: On these were displayed the skulls and bones of people who had died as a result of northern brutality (Bernard, 2017). My memory is that these bones stayed three to four years, before a formal memorial was built, a constant reminder to the whole population.

Peterson (2016) argues that when Museveni came to power, he and the NRM leaders were full of zeal. They aimed to rid Uganda of the excesses of the Obote government by ending corruption and promoting democracy and ethnic cooperation. Peterson further points out that
when Museveni’s “cadres fairly overflowed with millenarian energy and reformist zeal. They set out to transform Uganda’s public life, purge superstition, put an end to ethnic division, and promote local democracy” (Peterson, 2016a, p. 271). Museveni brought different fighting groups together and established a broad-based government, though dominated by people from the south. However, Khisa (2016) questions this, arguing that “Museveni worked on legitimating his rule domestically by reaching out to the different shades of the extant political class, thus able to hide the iron-fist of the NRA behind the velvet glove of broad-base” (Khisa, 2016, p. 733).

Since that time, Museveni has won successive elections in 1996, 2001, 2006, 2011 and 2016. The first ten years saw stability and development mainly in the southern and western regions of the country and internationally, President Museveni was hailed as part of Africa’s ‘new breed’ of leaders for his ability to create stability in Uganda and achieve both political liberalization and economic growth, and was attributed with having established peace in central and western Uganda and bringing about improvements that boosted the economic circumstances of many in the south of Uganda (Rubongoya, 2007).

However, in order to expedite the recovery process, Museveni banned all political party activities. He introduced what he referred to as the Movement system, which was based on the principles of participatory democracy, similar to the system in use in socialist Tanzania. As Carbone (2003) establishes, banning political parties was normalised, “articulated by the NRM leadership as a reaction to a post-independence history of sectarian and ethnically based political parties, the alleged cause of sequential patterns of ethnic exclusion, political violence and chronic instability” (2003, p. 486). Yet while for some the Movement system, which was used for ten years, was not democratic (Tripp, 2004) for others it was the best solution to Uganda’s problems (Makara, Rakner, & Svåsand, 2009). One such widely-approved of major development of the system was the creation of Resistance Councils (RCs), which elected local
leaders from various levels such as the Village, Parish, Sub County and District (Makara et al., 2009).

At the beginning of the NRM government, Museveni promised fundamental changes for the benefit of the country. However, he inherited a country which still had a colonial mentality, and his efforts to rebuild the country were bogged down by its postcolonial inheritance (Petersen & Espeland, 2010). To ensure political survival Uganda’s political leaders have continually relied on the armed forces to keep the civilian population in check (Petersen & Espeland, 2010). Although Museveni’s rise to power was at first welcomed in the west and south of the country, people from the north were not happy from the start. The overthrow of the Obote and Okello regimes meant that some northerners lost positions in the army, ministerial positions, ambassadorships, and control of semi-state bodies, potentially a challenging situation given the ethnic implications. This continued the practices inherited from the British colonialists, a use of ethnicity in Uganda’s politics that Okuku argues “is … intimately linked to political and economic conditions, especially the unequal distribution of and competition for power and wealth” (2002, p. 2). It is not surprising then that as people from northern Uganda felt increasingly marginalized, ethnic tensions rose again, which subsequently led to the rise of rebel groups like the Holy Spirit Movement (HSM) and the Lord’s Resistance Army (LRA), drawing on the belief of people from northern Uganda that “they are the born-warrior Acholi in whose hands the leadership of the country must always rest” (Mutibwa, 1987).

During the first ten years of Museveni’s rule, characterized by sustained economic and social growth, the regime received enormous financial support from international institutions such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank (WB) (Stewart & Sullivan, 1998) which helped the government to finance its development programmes. Commenting on Uganda’s progress during this period, Hickey (2005) points out that Uganda “has led observers to laud the Government of Uganda’s ‘ownership’ of the poverty reduction agenda, creating
the impression that Uganda offers a showcase for the type of politics that can underpin pro-poor policy reforms” (2005, p. 995). During that decade, Uganda was referred to as a model of development by international institutions. From 1990-94, for example, economic growth was at 5.6 per cent per annum. However, although the country was praised internationally for implementing conditions of major financial institutions as a means to implement its development programmes, conditions for many Ugandans, especially those in northern Uganda, were not good. It was obvious to those of us working in the field that many were suffering because of unemployment, increased nepotism and widespread corruption (Izama & Wilkerson, 2011). Indeed this was also becoming evident to external observers: as Atkinson suggests, during this period Uganda became “essentially two separate countries: one included the peaceful and relatively prosperous western, southern, and central parts of Uganda, with a growing economy that has won Museveni much praise from the World Bank, IMF and other donors (including the US): the other was a war-torn, impoverished, isolated North” (Atkinson, 2009, p. 10).

Another major reform during Museveni’s early rule, was that a broad-based government was put in place, which incorporated people from all over Uganda, representing all political parties in key political positions. This was followed by a gradual restoration of civil society including the legal and educational systems. Although there was relative stability during the first ten years of Museveni’s rule, his efforts and policies aimed at rebuilding the country did not please some sections of the Ugandan population. The NRM government tried to incorporate people who had different political views, however, politically it was difficult to sustain them all, especially the extremists (Makara, Rakner, and Svåsand, 2009, p. 190). At the same time, the promotion of the Movement system of administration and the suspension of all political parties’ activities in 1986, which was seen by some as an act of suppressing all
forms of political opinion, led many rebels to surface and start fighting the regime (Makara et al., 2009, p. 190).

Museveni’s prolonged stay in power has increasingly become a concern to many Ugandans. During his reign, he has changed the Constitution to allow himself to re-stand for presidency by removing the presidential term limit clauses (Petersen & Espeland, 2010), and has re-introduced multi-party elections, which so far work in his favour because he is still (2019) President. In addition to these tactics, Khisa (2016) points out that in an effort to secure his longevity in political power, Museveni was astute enough to put aside his socialist agenda and replace it with more neoliberal values (2016, p.733). In addition, coercive measures by using the police and different security organizations, presidential manipulation and election rigging, have assisted to secure his hold on power (Tangri & Mwenda, 2010). In the same way, Khisa argues that he “has combined the use of patronage resources with coercion and informal socio-political networks. A combination of these three factors serves to entrench a regime of rewards and punishment which regulates and directs political behaviour, especially constraining defection” (2016, p.730). In an effort by opposition members to defeat Museveni through elections, they tried to form coalitions, for example, in the 2016 elections. However, they have been unsuccessful: as Beardsworth argues, “The motivations for building coalitions in Uganda are clear – in a context where political party activities were restricted for more than two decades, even the oldest and most established opposition parties are weak, fragmented and severely under-resourced” (2016 p 752,). It is difficult to defeat incumbent leaders even when people demand change.

The legality of elections has been repeatedly challenged by civil society organisations and opposition parties which have continued to complain about the increased narrowing of democratic space through the introduction of parliamentary bills which hinder freedom of speech and encourage nepotism. Critics also complain of widespread abuse of human rights
and corruption, especially by the security agencies. Tangri and Mwenda (2008) point out that “[t]he limited extent of accountability and transparency in the defence budget and procurement practices created abundant opportunities for corruption by government and army leaders, providing a financially lucrative means of rewarding them in order to retain their loyalty” (2008, p. 184). Such actions have fuelled various threats to the human security of the people specifically in northern Uganda. In particular, Tangri and Mwenda (2010) show that Museveni secured and maintained his power by using military force to silence his opponents (Tangri & Mwenda, 2010). Musisi, writing for the Monitor newspaper cites a statement by the former UN Secretary General, Ban Ki-moon, after the 2016 general elections in Uganda, in which he states that “The European Union and Commonwealth observer groups, found the election was unfair, that there was “voter intimidation [by the government], a biased Electoral Commission, incidents of violence and harassment of Opposition politicians” (Fredrick, 2016).

Although Museveni promised to tackle all forms of inequality and to abide by the principles of good governance when he came to power in 1986, up to the present he has failed to implement these changes. Nepotism and the favouring of particular elites are widespread in Uganda’s political system and structures: Lindemann (2011b) establishes that top Army positions and senior cabinet members are all from the President’s ethnic group and some from his own family: his son is the head of the Presidential Guard Brigade and, in August 2016, his wife became Minister of Education. Critical description of Museveni’s regime is frequent. Goloba-Mutebi and Hickey (2013), for example show that it is “characterised by deepening levels of competitive clientelism, highly personalised forms of public bureaucracy, collusive state–business relations, and a ruling coalition that is (expensively) inclusive at the lower levels while becoming narrower and more nepotistic at the pinnacle” (2013, p. 3), and Mwenda and Tangri (2005) suggest that political appointments in Uganda, are often “political sinecures” … in the hands of ethnic kinsmen of the political leadership” (2005, p. 459).
Museveni’s rule has however effectively been limited by armed rebellions based in northern Uganda including by the Holy Spirit Movement, the Uganda People’s Democratic Army (UPDA), the Uganda National Rescue Front, and the People’s Redemption Army. These groups will be discussed more fully in the next chapter.

The emergence of rebel groups relates directly to the Luwero Triangle conflict. In September 1986 child soldiers, popularly known as Kadogo (young fighters), who joined Museveni’s rebellion (1980-86), were sent to conquer the remnants of the UNLA in the northern part of Uganda. These Kadogos went on revenge missions, murdering, torturing and raping for what the UNLA had done to them in the Luwero Triangle (Bøås, 2004). The defeated UNLA soldiers, who comprised many Acholis, “were promptly implicated in the deaths of thousands of civilians in the south and west, during the war against Museveni and the NRA” (Jackson, 2002, pp. 29-30). Because of these revenge missions, the remnants of the UNLA mobilized themselves and formed a fighting force called the Uganda People’s Defence Army (UPDA) to fight this mistreatment and also regain power. The formation of the UPDA can be seen as a direct consequence of the revenge missions carried out by child soldiers in 1986.

With their key leaders either dead, exiled or in disarray, the remnants of the UNLA fled to southern Sudan: the Acholis in southern Sudan are related to the Acholis of northern Uganda, only separated by the international borders drawn by the Berlin Conference of 1894. In August 1986 these soldiers, who had by then re-formed into groups, attacked Museveni’s forces, giving as their reason gross human rights abuses by the victorious NRA. They also accused Museveni of deceit and failing to honour the Nairobi Peace Agreement.

Armed resistance in northern Uganda began in 1986, when the National Resistance Army/Movement (NRA/NRM) Government came to power (Branch, 2007b) but the formation of so many different rebel groups is one of the most disturbing factors of Museveni’s regime.
In terms of development, there continue to be significant differences between the regions of Uganda. Leibig (2005) shows that although during Museveni’s rule Uganda has been relatively stable, the northern region of the country near Sudan have not enjoyed the same levels of economic development experienced by the regions in the south and centre of the country. In addition, unemployment especially among the youth is high: “young people in Uganda are disproportionately affected by high unemployment rates, which [in 2006 were] 76 per cent for males and 72 per cent for females in the 15-19 years group and 92 per cent for males and 77 per cent for females for the 20-24 years age group” (2007, pp. 14-15).

Museveni has been attacked by both opponents and former allies. His opponents argued that the increasing narrowing of political space has affected democratic processes and benefited only his ethnic group members. Former allies have complained about the lack of leadership turnover and internal democratic space within his political party. And from an international perspective, writing about Museveni in 2005, former US ambassador to Uganda, Johnnie Carson, warned that “much of what he has accomplished is in serious risk of stalling, faltering and possibly opening the door to another dark and negative period in Uganda’s turbulent history”. Opposition members have been harshly treated and arrested and sometimes charged with treason. However, the judiciary remains independent, and such cases have not been successful. In addition, Museveni’s regime has been characterized by the use of the police and army to silence his critics (Murray, Mesfin, & Wolters, 2016). But further, Museveni has systematically used the classic political strategy of favours for his supporters, using the extreme economic hardship sections of the population have faced, to persuade and even coerce them to support the government, the only means of gaining access to various opportunities, such as jobs and influence (Tapscott, 2018).

From the onset of his rule, because of colonial legacies, loss of power and jobs by the people from northern Uganda, ethnically-based rebel groups began to oppose the government.
The first was the Uganda People’s Democratic Army (UPDA) which was basically a coalition of the remnants of the UNLF Acholi group from the north. However, in 1998 the UPDA and Museveni signed a peace agreement and many UPDA joined the NRA, while others were given political posts and were absorbed into the ruling government. Other rebel groups were the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) a Muslim group led by Jamil Mukulu, who was arrested in 2015 in Tanzania and extradited to Uganda. The group is still operating in the western part of Uganda in the Districts of Bundibugyo and Kasese but is based in the Democratic Republic of Congo. The Uganda National Rescue Front (UNRF) was another rebel group composed of former Idi Amin soldiers. It was headed by Brigadier Moses Ali, however, when Moses Ali agreed to join the government, UNRF II was formed and led by Ali Bamuze. The group operated in the north-west Nile part of Uganda. Other minor groups included Force Obote Back (FOBA) led by Obote, David Anyoti and others: Ninth October Movement (NOM), KIRIMUTTU- a group mainly in Buganda fighting for a federal government; the Federal Democratic Army (FDA); the People’s Redemption Army (PRA); and the Uganda Salvation Army (USA) led by Sera Muwanga based in the eastern part of Uganda Tororo District. Another group, based in west Nile, and headed by Juma Oris, had an insignificant effect on security because it did not last long. All the groups recorded here had a negligible impact and vanished quickly (Lindemann, 2011b).

However, there was one notable rebel group in northern Uganda’s resistance against Museveni’s regime: the Holy Spirit Movement (HSM) led by Alice Lakwena (Cline, 2003). The significance of this group is explored next as it led to the rise of the Lord’s Resistance Army (LRA) which was responsible for the carnage which occurred in northern Uganda in the years between 1988 and 2006 (Cline, 2003).
Alice Lakwena rebellion 1986-87

Alice Lakwena was born in 1956 and named Alice Auma: she later added the name of Lakwena which means “she was a messenger” in Acholi dialect. Alice Auma Lakwena, a member of the Acholi ethnolinguistic group, was the first woman rebel leader to wage a rebellion against Museveni’s forces in northern Uganda. On 6th August 1986, she formed the Holy Spirit Movement (HSM). Amone argues that the Holy Spirit Movement was just one of a number of actively-rebellious groups challenging the National Resistance Movement (NRM) at that time: (Amone, 2014b). Lakwena claimed that she was fighting evil and would end the bloodshed being experienced by the Acholi people, which she said was being perpetrated by NRA fighters. However, the only weapons her rebel fighters had were songs, sticks, stones and ‘magic’ shea butter nut oil or honey. Lakwena also claimed she was possessed by a powerful warrior spirit and promised her fighters invulnerability to bullets (Amone, 2014b). Allen reports that she “became a significant figure towards the end of 1986. On 23 September, she and her followers were given guns in Kitgum District by a former UNLA commander, and in October a group of about twenty men marched into Gulu town, singing hymns, led by a man waving a Bible” (1991, pp. 371-372)

Directly linking politics and spirituality, Lakwena told her followers that she was sent by God in order to purify Uganda and restore Acholi glory. Her emergence caught everyone by surprise and, although she was illiterate, this did not deter her from leading a rebellion of mainly men. She developed the so called ‘Holy Spirit Tactics’, by which she led her followers to believe that through initiation, purification and ritual they could become “invulnerable and that other magical benefits were theirs to use, including the ability to turn stones into grenades and bees into allies” (Kasfir, 2005; Vinci, 2005, p. 365). Her support was mainly from the Acholi and her troops reached to within sixty miles of the capital, Kampala (Amone-P’Olak, 2007).
Haynes describes Alice’s movement as “a social response to serious upheaval and external attack in a situation where the state was unable either to establish an effective administrative structure or to offer significant economic development for the impoverished Acholi” (2007, p. 310). But, as could be expected, the HSM’s weapons were no match for the conventional war weapons of the Ugandan army (Jackson, 2002).

After her defeat, Alice fled to Kenya and died on 17th January 2007 at a refugee camp near Dadaab in northern Kenya (Amone, 2014b). Her exile left the movement with no clear leadership. However, Joseph Kony, who is claimed to be Lakwena’s nephew (Apuuli, 2004), seized the leadership and in 1988 rebranded the movement, as the Lord’s Resistance Army (LRA). At the beginning, Kony indicated that the LRA’s operations were intended to take over the government and rule Uganda centered on the Ten Commandments. He quickly lost backing from the local people, however, and in frustration, started abducting thousands of children to replenish the group’s ranks, converting the children into killers and releasing them on villages (Chatlani, 2006). Kony led the lengthiest and bloodstained rebellion in Uganda’s post-independence history. This group will be discussed more fully in the next chapter.

**Human security and the conflicts in Uganda**

Since Independence, Uganda’s politics have been marred by violence, despite various leaders’ efforts to develop a stable country. Commenting on this turbulence in Uganda, Brett points out that conflicts in political and military systems were articulated mainly in ethnic terms, and this, combined with a refusal to accept the outcome of democratic processes, led to the destruction of Uganda’s constitutional settlement of 1962, and the emergence of the military as a political force (1995b, p. 134).
All attempts to secure people’s security as mandated by the human security approach have been foiled by either internal or external security threats. Past and present Ugandan leaders have equated security with their regime’s security in order to safeguard themselves in power rather than promoting the security of all Ugandans. Some of the political decisions made by these leaders, indicated above, such as changing presidential term limits in the Constitution, the promotion of an ethnically-based army and nepotism, have led to disagreements with other politicians, and more general discontent, resulting in numerous conflicts erupting in various parts of the country. Force of arms was both the means by which the current government came to power and the means by which it has retained it.

I argue that the absence of people-centred approaches to protect all Ugandans irrespective of their ethnic background has led the country into various civil and political conflicts which have affected Ugandans’ security. The human security approach emphasises the need to respond to people’s needs in case of any threat to their wellbeing. In Uganda, the colonial system of administration, which was based on divide and rule, led to unbalanced regional development. Since Independence subsequent regimes have failed to address this issue. Failure to address this disparity has led to hatred between different ethnic groups. The resulting effect has been numerous rebellions and brutal conflicts which have affected the wellbeing of much of the Ugandan population since independence.

An essential component of the human security approach involves instituting appropriate, comprehensive, multi-sectoral and collaborative programmes aimed at protecting people. However, in the post-colonial period in Uganda between 1970 and 1985, development activities aimed at protecting Ugandans were minimal. Under Museveni, this changed but only in the south and west of the country. Moreover, there is still lack of freedom of speech, little educational opportunity and few opportunities for women’s empowerment in rural areas. These are all obstacles to effective development and have greatly contributed to the country’s lack of
progress. In a potent summary of the situation, Stephen (1991) argues that the political uncertainties, neglect of duty, corruption in government structures and civilian unrest, which are rampant in Uganda today, affect the legitimacy of the government and enable dishonest practices to thrive in the public service sector, civil service and other government agencies.

In addition, Uganda’s security forces, especially the police’s use of coercive measures and techniques against citizens, especially opposition members, have severely affected many people’s livelihood and individual security. Ugandan leaders have used the excuse that their opponents are engaging in or financing subversive activities against the government as a pretext to violate their human rights. (2013) The police almost always stop opposition political rallies and arrest, torture and sometimes kill participants (Byaruhanga, 2013). This has led many to live in a state of fear, unable to achieve what they want, which is against the principles of a human security approach.

The human security approach contextualises and emphasises the wellbeing of people within their communities. However, since Independence, the level of corruption among Uganda’s ruling class has affected the entire government’s administrative systems with diverse consequences for the wellbeing of the majority of Ugandans. For the elites, personal rather than country interests have overshadowed the provision of security for other citizens. As discussed above, leaders have catered to their relatives first, then their ethnic group, who are then able to dominate the administration of key ministries. The lack of human security for many Ugandans shows a picture of people struggling to cope within the system. The general lack of concern by various government regimes to address these issues has affected people’s security in the country as a whole.

In terms of entrepreneurship and individual advancement as stressed by the human security approach, it is only those who have had strong connections to the ruling elites who have been able to carry on successful businesses. This bias has continued during Museveni’s
regime. Although Uganda has made steady progress on poverty reduction since 1986, these gains have not been experienced evenly, with northern and eastern parts of the country badly off and western and central regions relatively well off. Such disparities mean that many Ugandans experience a lack of security and wellbeing. President Museveni’s long term and continuing regime has shown a heightened form of nepotism and a lack of security concern for the people in northern Uganda. Thus, his policies and attitude towards northern Uganda need to be addressed.

Other regimes also neglected to protect Ugandan citizens from threats. Thus, politically motivated torture and killings perpetrated by government security agents undermined people’s security. Commenting on the security situation since Uganda became independent, Kirunda argues that “[d]uring these regimes, security of neither person nor property was guaranteed, but was threatened by the state and its agencies. The most notorious proponent of violations was the army” (2008, p. 3). The human security approach enables the devising of means to address the various threats to people within their communities. However, Woldofa (2004) shows that in Uganda, the various regimes have failed to address problems related to increasing high unemployment due to increases in population, poor education specifically in rural areas, poor health services and decaying urban infrastructure due to rural-urban migration.

Human security emphasises individuals taking on a role within their communities in tackling conflicts. The advantages of involving individuals within their own localities are better assessment, planning, implementation and evaluation of security and peace building initiatives for those involved, since they know their needs and wants better than government officials in towns or international NGOs. In the mid-2000s, Branch observed that peace was unlikely “[w]ithout local participatory institutions and the development of relations of accountability between the rural population and the central government mediated by a national Acholi political elite” (2005, p. 12), yet almost fifteen years later, such recommendations remain
dreams in northern Uganda, where the government did not involve the people or consult them on how to stop the conflict and end their suffering.

The human security challenges which have engulfed Uganda since Independence, necessitate a broad historical understanding of Uganda’s political setup. Viable mechanisms aimed at protecting people from serious threats such as those emanating from ethnic related conflicts and crimes committed by army officers were missing as were programs addressing people’s lack of empowerment. To promote peace in Uganda, leaders needed to change their leadership styles. There was a need to identify the disenfranchised, promote good governance and empower the people. Dealing with such issues as advocated by the human security approach, could have promoted peace and stability. As discussed above, various regimes used coercive and brutal means against Ugandans to force order and maintain the status quo. Such actions cannot promote human security. The focus should be to address people’s basic concerns. Addressing these concerns was the only political option to promote human security. As will be discussed in the next chapter, these deficiencies contributed to the brutal conflict in northern Uganda which lasted for more than two decades.

Conclusion

This chapter has shown how the colonial legacy led to the future political instabilities which engulfed the country. The major leaders since Independence, Obote, Amin and Museveni, have been discussed and their failures to unite the country exposed. The Luwero Triangle civil conflict, which subsequently led to Museveni’s rise to power, provided a background for the rise of various rebel groups, specifically the LRA, which up to the time of writing has not been defeated, although its operations in northern Uganda have ceased. The chapter has emphasized the argument that the politicization of ethnic and socio-economic
divisions was a basis for disunity among Ugandans and contributed greatly to the northern Uganda conflict. The next chapter discusses the civil conflict in northern Uganda.
Chapter Four
The causes of the civil war in northern Uganda and the reasons for its longevity

Introduction

This chapter discusses the causes of the civil conflict in northern Uganda which lasted more than two decades. The chapter examines the reasons for the emergence of different rebel groups specifically the LRA whose actions caused anarchy in the region. It contributes to answering the central research question of the thesis by exploring the ways key stakeholders understood people centred principles, through the different perspectives on human security principles explored in this thesis, and how those differences contributed to the ineffective implementation of those principles in the period 1988-2016. It also examines the ways NGOs attempted to use these approaches to address the ethnically-based, harsh, socio-economic conditions in the north.

As in the previous chapter, this chapter argues that the failure to address the politically-based ethnic and socio-economic divisions was a major contribution to the causes and longevity of the conflict in northern Uganda. The humanitarian and security crisis which followed saw many local and international humanitarian organizations moving in to assist civilians affected by the atrocities committed by the LRA. However, as I argue, these interventions were not always advantageous to the people in northern Uganda.

The reasons behind the emergence of the LRA will be scrutinized, and the social, political and economic situation will be discussed, as will the local, national, regional and international peace building and conflict resolution interventions which took place in northern Uganda. A human security approach will be used to explain how human insecurities in northern communities contributed to the conflict which started in 1988 and did not end until 2006. The application of the human security concept in this research tests the concept’s relevance in a
conflict situation. Since being used in 1994 Human Development Report (UNDP, 1994), it has raised debates among scholars, policy makers, humanitarian agencies, human rights and peace activists as to whether its component practices are a feasible strategy to alleviate the human suffering occurring in various parts of the world (Christie, 2010). Despite limited success during the conflict their applicability was nonetheless evident, for example, in the setting up of health and educational services, the provision of temporary housing facilities and the construction of boreholes in IDP camps. This suggests that the approaches used by INGOs and local NGOs in northern Uganda were an important corrective to state security as the government lacked the capacity to handle the situation unilaterally.

When discussing the different armed resistance groups in northern Uganda from 1986-2006, the previous chapter revealed a picture of anarchy and crisis which affected many innocent people in the region. The various fighting groups, including the Uganda People’s Democratic Army (UPDA), the Holy Spirit Movement (HSM), and the Lord’s Resistance Army (LRA), devastated the region by staging armed resistance against the Museveni government. However, as discussed below, government forces also committed atrocities against the people they were supposed to protect, which contributed to a virtual lack of security for many northern Ugandans for more than two decades.

From the time Museveni’s National Resistance Movement (NRM) government came to power in 1986 until 2006, northern Uganda experienced a deadly civil conflict during which the security of civilians was compromised. This 20-year period of unrest resulted in a humanitarian crisis during which many people were killed either by the rebels or Uganda’s military, or left homeless and displaced. Others, especially children, were abducted (Human Rights Report, 2005; Dagne, 2011). The government of Uganda responded to this civil unrest with military and non-military means. Ten years after the ending of the conflict (2016) the main rebel group, the LRA, had still not been defeated but had moved out of northern Uganda into
the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Southern Sudan and the Central African Republic (CAR).

During the initial period of the insurgency, the LRA were able to sustain their fight because of their tactics and also because they received logistical support from Sudan (as will be shown below). This conflict, as described by Pham, Vinck, Wierda, and Stover, was responsible for the destruction of “any semblance of ordinary life in the northern districts” (2005). It represented a new type of warfare where civilians were frequently the main targets of vicious attacks seriously compromising their security.

Direct confrontation in northern Uganda between the LRA and the Ugandan government forces known as the Uganda Peoples Defence Forces (UPDF) stopped in 2006 when representatives of the LRA and government of Uganda officials signed the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement in Juba, South Sudan, following peace talks there. The genesis of these talks and their implications for the conflict in northern Uganda are discussed in more detail in chapter six.

The causes of the conflict

The most enduring conflict suffered by Ugandans was that between the government of Uganda and the Lord’s Resistance Army (LRA). The politically-based ethnic and socio-economic problems created by the legacy of the colonial administration and the degree to which they were politicized by different rebel groups, specifically the Lord’s Resistance Army (LRA), partially caused the northern Uganda conflict (Nannyonjo, 2005; Otunnu, 2002; Tindigarukayo, 1988). However, there were other contributing factors, the main trigger being the military coup by General Tito Okello and the ensuing military oppression. In response, as analysed above, the National Resistance Army (NRA), led by Yoweri Museveni, engaged in a fierce offensive in the Luwero Triangle and finally forced the Acholi militants to flee further north (Baines,
This was followed by revenge missions in northern Uganda undertaken by some NRA soldiers for the brutal acts perpetrated by the UNLF soldiers during the Luwero Triangle conflict. These and other activities in turn led to the emergence of subsequent rebel groups which in turn led to the emergence of the LRA. As a result, trauma, excessive violation of human rights, displacement and other forms of suffering by innocent civilians became characteristic of the conflict in northern Uganda between 1986-2006.

The discussion below examines how Uganda’s politically-based ethnic and socio-economic divisions contributed to prolonging the conflict in the north. As pointed out in chapter one, an historical perspective indicates that inter-ethnic conflicts had their origins prior to colonisation. However, they were exacerbated by the British, and after Independence in 1962, begun to increase in intensity even before 1986 when Museveni came to power. This was partly because successive leaders since Independence prioritized their own hold on power and failed to address the subsequent social, political and economic issues which divided Ugandans (Van Acker, 2004).

Those who taste power become more hungry for power: or so, it seemed to me and my colleagues, humanitarian workers were doing a balancing act between the powerful and the powerless. While to those of us on the ground during this period, this was a classic struggle for power between two rival groups played out in an environment in which external actors could have excessive influence, scholars differ on the causes of the conflict in northern Uganda which began in 1986. Doom and Vlassenroot (1999) attribute the conflict to divisions between the north and south of Uganda pointing out the most marked division in the recruitment of the military from the north and civil servants from the south (1999, pp. 7-8). Van Acker (2004) stresses the lack of political stability in Uganda in the mid-1980s, while for Jackson (2002) it was the uneven socio-economic factors between the north and the south which he says “fuelled continuous ethnic violence” (2002, p. 29). Similarly, Khadiagala (2001) argues that LRA
leaders used the lack of educational, health and communication facilities including uneven social-economic development between northern and southern Uganda as reasons to fight (Laruni, 2015). Apuuli cites a different reason, arguing that the northerners were doing no more than trying to win back the control they had had until January 1986 (2004, p. 392). Finnström (2006) supports Apuuli’s view of the northerners wanting to regain power. Finnström sums up the range of opinions: “The causes and consequences of the war in northern Uganda, the reasons for it, and facts about it… differ, depending on whom you are listening to” (2008, p. 8). In political terms, although specifically not referring to the northern Uganda situation, Talentino (2004) offers clues to the causes of the conflict when he argues that “when a unifying and legitimate state structure is absent, group identifications will remain strong and counteract internal efforts at nation-building” (2004, p. 557). In the same way, Laruni shows that Acholi power brokers used the poor economic situation in the north both to exacerbate the existing north, south tensions and to negotiate with the government for a better political and economic deal (Laruni, 2015).

While scholars differ on the causes of the civil war, government of Uganda officials described it as a conflict without a cause and referred to the LRA as a group of bandits (Baines, 2010) and, at times, as terrorists (Apuuli, 2004). However, as with my own observation (above), Bøås and Jennings (2008) point out an international dimension of the conflict. They argue that there was an international dimension to the conflict with the LRA, citing it as an off-shoot of the ongoing enmity between the governments of Sudan and Uganda (Bøås & Jennings, 2008). Similarly, Apuuli (2011) contends that a thorough understanding of the armed struggle in northern Uganda requires an examination of both its structural and immediate causes (Apuuli, 2011). A critical analysis of the history of Ugandan politics and the formation of the LRA, which at first received support from the Acholi, indicates that it is not possible to conclude simplistically, as the government did, that this conflict was without a cause (Otunnu, 2002),
the socio-economic and political conditions in the north initially helped the LRA in their struggle because people in the north wanted to improve their situation.

Although the UNLA was mainly composed of Acholi and Langi from northern Uganda, misunderstandings and a power struggle between the two groups within the military, led the Acholi to overthrow the Langi-dominated government. The coup (May 1985) was carried out by General Tito Okello (an Acholi), to oust the Langi Milton Obote (a Langi), Milton Obote’s regime from power. This can also be seen as another cause of the conflict. Mamdani (1988) argues that the Okello coup led to the emergence of various independent armed factions each of which controlled a specific territory. The army was weakened which gave an added advantage to the LRA, and subsequently allowed Museveni to capture power in January 1986.

The British legacy of ‘divide and rule’, especially as it was manifested in the ethnic conflict between north and south, was perpetuated by subsequent regimes since Independence (Kisekka-Ntale, 2007). For example, none of the subsequent leaders tried to form a Ugandan national army or police force comprised of individuals from all ethnic groups (Nannyonjo, 2005). Rather, since independence the army’s formation has corresponded to the leader’s ethnic group. The different perspectives which were held by the colonial and post-colonial leaders undermined Uganda’s future stability. Talentino (2004) explores this colonial legacy when he shows that “while international actors define nation-building as a top-down strategy aimed at developing structures of political and economic governance, internal actors emphasise bottom-up processes designed to bridge societal divisions and demonstrate the tangible benefits of cooperation” (2004, p. 558). In addition, the uneven development between the north and south of Uganda can also be viewed as another cause of the conflict. Citing the Uganda Bureau of Statistics 2010 figures, Mabikke states that, “in absolute terms, the persons living in poverty [in northern Uganda] increased from 2.9 million in 2002/03 to 3.3 million in 2005/06” (2011, p. 1). Although the issue of unbalanced development has been raised by numerous writers such
as Nyadru (1988); International Crisis Group (2004); Allen (2006); Refugee Law Project (2004); Okot (1989); Otunnu (2002) as one of the causes of the conflict, I argue that it should be remembered that the northerners were in control of government resources for over twenty years before Museveni came to power. However, while in power they, like others before him, did nothing to develop the northern region.

The lack of sustainable democratic state building since Independence by various regimes is another cause of the conflict in northern Uganda. Talentino (2004) although not specifically referring to northern Uganda situation, argues that political intervention is usually needed to address situations where there is a need for integration of divisive groups and greater social cohesion (Talentino, 2004). State building involves the formation of new government institutions and the consolidation of existing ones. However, in Uganda neither occurred. Yet, good state building is fundamental to protecting people’s human security (Tripp, 2004), and security issues associated with failed states include poverty, terrorism and internal conflicts (Krasner, 2004). Beswick and Marquette recognise the difficulty of bringing about change: “In states that have experienced conflict and instability, state builders often face the task of establishing and supporting functioning state institutions, necessary to extend some semblance of control over the national territory and to gain support for the state-building project from actors who ideally represent the will and interests of citizens” (Beswick & Marquette, 2011, p. 5).

Acholi moderates and Acholi LRA sympathizers differed in their opinions about how to end the conflict. The moderates included local people who were suffering in camps, church leaders, some local politicians and traditional leaders. In contrast, according to people with whom I talked in camps such as Pabbo, Acet, Lacor, Pader Town Council and Opit camps, LRA sympathizers were out of touch with the situation as they were mainly prominent politicians who lived in the diaspora so not experiencing the hardship the people were going
through. The overthrow of the Obote and Okello regimes resulted in some Acholi and Langi from northern Uganda, mainly LRA sympathizers, going into exile for their own safety. Commenting on these expatriates, Odoi-Tanga, shows that the group was regarded as “Acholi political elites [wanting] to change the political leadership in Uganda, not through the ballot but the gun” (2009, p. 183). In contrast, politicians who remained in Uganda tended to be more moderate and took a conciliatory approach to the LRA, at times arguing for a peaceful end to the conflict. Despite the view of these moderates, Finnström (2003) and Allen (2003) argue that the brutal nature of the LRA failed to gather any support from local non-politically motivated Acholis, particularly because the LRA sympathizers inflicted a reign of terror on their fellow Acholi, whom Kony called traitors because they failed to support him.

Van Acker (2004) suggests “that at the core of the conflict was the failure of consecutive Ugandan leaders to construct and consolidate a modern state that legitimize[d] and promote[d] collective aspirations” (2004, p. 336). This is reflected by a Report by International Alert which argues that “[t]he violence, terror and economic failures of various regimes led by Northerners only served to consolidate these divisions, creating a north-south polarisation. When the southern-led NRM seized power in 1986, it was perhaps inevitable that various factions in the north would seek to regain power” (International Alert, 2008, p. 12). Amongst these was the Lord’s Resistance Army (LRA).

**The Lord’s Resistance Army (LRA)**

The LRA started fighting under the leadership of the former catechist Joseph Kony in 1988 (Apuuli, 2004), widely believed to be “a nephew of Lakwena a daughter of Saverino Lukoya who was once the leader of the Holy Spirit Movement I” (Apuuli, 2011, p. 118). Kony’s group at first called themselves United Holy Salvation, the Uganda Christian Army/Movement, then in 1992 the Lord’s Resistance Army. Kony believed that he was sent
by God to rescue the people of the Acholi region from the brutality of the Museveni’s National Resistance Army (NRA). His beliefs were a mixture of Christianity, Islam and traditional beliefs. The LRA was formed after the defeat of Alice Lakwena’s Holy Spirit Movement (HSM) in eastern Uganda by the NRA and the signing of an agreement with the northern based rebel Uganda Peoples Defence Army (UPDA). Doom and Vlassenroot (1999) state that Joseph Kony seized his opportunity at a time when the army and civil organisations were in disarray and there was a continuation of mutual distrust. His intention was to overthrow the Museveni government which was dominated by people from the southern part of Uganda (McNamara, 2013) and mobilized dejected fighters including defeated former government (Obote’s) Uganda National Liberation Army (UNLA) soldiers who had retreated to the north (Van Acker, 2004). Many of these soldiers joined Kony’s organization, fearing retaliation if they went back to the communities where they had perpetrated so many brutalities (Vinci, 2005).

The widespread local belief is that as an Acholi Kony received ritual blessings from cultural elders to fight on their behalf (Doom & Vlassenroot, 1999) and that having received their support, he was blessed culturally to fight in accordance with Acholi customs. Kony was a tall slender man with a strong commanding voice: “I am fighting for the Acholi people,” he would say in public (personal observation), while killing Acholis who had joined him but who were becoming too popular and powerful among the rank and file of either his military or administrative wing.

Goals, objectives and aims were not clearly defined (Bainomugisha & Tumushabe, 2005): “The LRA has had no coherent ideology, rational political agenda, [and eventually no] popular support” (Akhavan, 2005, p. 407). This lack of coherence was clearly seen at the different peace negotiations which the LRA attended because on each occasion they came up with different demands (as discussed below, chapter six).
At the beginning of his reign of terror, Kony and the LRA claimed they wanted to restore the dignity of the Acholi ethnic group and to create a government based on his personal vision. He claimed to have spiritual powers and wanted to gain power and rule according to the Ten Commandments (Sinclair, 2013). Like Lakwena, Kony looked on himself as a messiah. Vlassenroot, Titeca, Adam and De Cordier (2007) accept this uncritically and suggest that the LRA saw “its struggle as a divine cause directed by God and for the spiritual [salvation] of all the Acholi people” (2007, p. 971). A more critical analysis of what he advocated and what he actually did shows he was far from fulfilling Christian beliefs and the aspirations of the local Acholi community. Nevertheless, during the early years of the rebellion by Alice Lakwena (Holy Spirit Movement), Kony enjoyed the support of the local Acholi and Langi people who felt marginalized by the government. As Amone-P’Olak (2007) suggests, initially the Acholi people supported the rebel groups which later became the LRA, because the NRA had allegedly committed atrocities against them while ousting the military government composed (mainly of northerners) (Amone-P’Olak, 2007).

In trying to explain Kony’s attraction, Doom and Vlassenroot argue that he “exercised a form of charismatic leadership,” (1999, p. 22) which sprang from two complementary streams, the Acholi cultural traditions and biblical interpretation (Kaplan, 2015). However, with Haroz, Murray, Bolton, Betancourt, and Bass (2013) I argue that the intimidating atrocities committed by the LRA instilled fear among those abducted and may have scared others into following him. Stories of fear and intimidation were told to me again and again during peace negotiations when I was the Liaison officer (between Caritas and the UN-based Mediation Secretariat) working often at the assembly points at which LRA combatants were required to present themselves. Coming out of the bush temporarily, always still carrying their AK 47s, they came to receive basic social services food, medicine, and clothes, particularly for the women and children of their families who accompanied them in the bush as shields, but were not permitted
by Kony and his second-in-command, Vincent Otti, to come to the assembly point. As a consequence, we were unable to directly assess their condition and help them in case of medical need.

The socio-economic and political conditions in the north initially helped the LRA in their struggle because people in the north wanted to advance their own position. They supported him because he promised to liberate them against Museveni’s forces (Haynes, 2007). Most of LRA’s fighting force came from the districts of Kitgum, Pader and Gulu. However, as time went on, and because of people’s increased suffering due to the conflict, many from those districts turned against Kony, which he saw as a betrayal by his own people. Annan, Brier and Aryemo (2009) show that once he lost Acholi support, the LRA’s main method of gaining new recruits was to kidnap adolescents and young adults (Annan, Brier, & Aryemo, 2009). They captured most of their fighters by raiding schools and forcibly abducting young boys and girls.

The actual number of children abducted is difficult to ascertain. Camp leaders did not register all the children in the camps due to the large numbers of inhabitants and a lack of proper facilities for registration. However, it is estimated that between 1988 and 2006 at least 25,000 and up to 38,000 children were abducted by the LRA (Vindevogel et al., 2011, p. 552). The LRA attempted to convince those abducted that they would be better off in the bush fighting than being killed by government forces. They used this propaganda when they wanted to recruit more fighters, especially young boys, into their ranks (Doom & Vlassenroot, 1999).

Violent acts were aimed at enforcing discipline within the LRA ranks and destroying individual will and morality among those captured (Akhavan, 2005). Many rescued abducted children told their rescuers that they believed that Kony had spirits which directed him (Lomo & Hovil, 2004b). However, Lomo and Hovil’s (2004a) explanation is that the institutionalisation of violent acts within the LRA led those captured to believe that such acts
could not be done by a normal person unless he was possessed by spirits (Lomo & Hovil, 2004a).

The LRA aimed to recruit or, rather, abduct, its fighters around the age of 12, which according to international law can constitute a war crime (Beard, 2011). Southwick (2005) estimated that 90% of the LRA was comprised of abducted children under the age of eighteen. The LRA preferred these young children because they were easy to control and brainwash (Beard, 2011) but strong enough to carry weapons. According to Akhavan “[w]ithout access to volunteers among the Acholi, coercion was the only way that the LRA could maintain its forces” (2005, p. 407). He argues that the children acted as soldiers and at the same time were victims of the LRA’s structural command and control. Many children who committed such atrocities ended up traumatised and unable to return to a normal life with their families and communities of origin. The effect was to create an army of young Ugandans dependent on the LRA and thus committed to its campaign of terror against the government and fellow Ugandans. For the abducted children, this was tantamount to psychological torture and an abuse of their rights as children. According to Angucia “[t]he abductions were a deliberate guerrilla strategy, a weapon of choice to systematically terrorize and subjugate the population” (2009, p. 87).

Once captured, the children were tied together and marched to camps where they were viciously indoctrinated and put through a process which the LRA termed desensitisation (Beard, 2011). The process included forcing them to murder their parents so that they had no family to escape to and exposing them to acts of horrendous mutilation and violence which was meant to instil a sense of fear not to run away (Lomo & Hovil, 2004b). At first these atrocities were carried out in areas specifically targeting the Acholi community (Moy, 2006a).

Thousands of young girls were also abducted (Smith, 2012) and put to work as porters of firewood and heavy loads, cleaners and cooks. Some were given to LRA commanders to be used as sexual slaves. Out of the estimated 7,500 girls who were abducted, at least 1,000 girls
gave birth during captivity (Beard, 2011, p. 12). Due to the high prevalence of sexually transmitted diseases such as AIDS in Uganda (Goodgame, 1990), the LRA men preferred young girls with the hope that they were less likely to have sexually transmitted diseases (Hanlon, 2006). However, this did not stop the spread of HIV/AIDS within the LRA ranks. Beard notes that “according to World Vision’s rehabilitation centre records for formerly abducted children, out of eighty-three children in 2002 being tested for HIV, thirteen (seven boys, six girls) were found to be HIV positive” (2011, p. 12). Many children captured by the LRA had died by 2002 because of direct fighting with the UPDF, succumbing to various diseases or because of the extremely harsh punishments administered by the LRA commanders. Commenting on the harsh treatment of children during the northern Uganda conflict, Leibig states that “terrible abuses of children’s rights occur[ed] on a daily basis” (2005, p. xx).

Acholi people’s houses were torched (Apuuli, 2004; Weinstein, Stover, Vinck, & Pham, 2007) as a form of retaliation for not supporting the LRA cause. Such acts created displacement, hunger, malnutrition, death and added more misery to the people. Due to the lack of security in the region, humanitarian agencies could not reach the Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) camps (discussed below), where many Acholi had been forcibly moved, which further threatened their security.

The LRA carried out many murderous raids, some of which were publicized worldwide. One was the massacre of the people of the small town of Atiak situated northwest of Gulu District in 1995 led by Kony’s Deputy, Vincent Otti. After defeating the UPDF, on April 20th, 1995, the LRA entered the trading center of the town. They rounded up people and took them to the bush. After being lectured for their alleged collaboration with the Government, over 250 people were murdered in a horrific way (Gersony, 1997). Another such horror was the abduction of girls from St Mary Aboke’s Girls’ Secondary School in 1996. The LRA under the command of Ocaya Lagira, raided the Catholic girls’ boarding school, looted the school’s clinic,
tried to burn down some of the buildings, and abducted the girls, all of whom were between the ages of 15 and 17. Most were not seen again until many years later (Vinci, 2005).

Pabbo camp inhabitants described to Caritas staff a later attack, on July 20 and 25, 2002 at Palabek, Kitgum district, when the LRA attacked and looted shops and the food supplies delivered by the World Food Programme the day before. They also kidnapped the headmaster and all his family. People also told us that in August 2002 the LRA ordered all humanitarian agencies operating in northern Uganda to withdraw or risk being attacked. Despite this warning, relief agencies continued their activities, although with reduced staff and resources and fewer journeys to the camps, which signified less humanitarian assistance to those in need. Ensuring the human security of particular groups of northern Ugandans was the aim of humanitarian and educational organizations during the time of the LRA but as the above examples of LRA tactics show, it was difficult to achieve and its successful application severely hampered.

LRA atrocities were especially carried out on those whom they suspected to be collaborators with the government forces. Writing in The Guardian newspaper about the brutality carried out by the LRA on the Acholi community, David Smith recorded that apart from forced killings of a friend or a family member and the desecration of dead bodies, the LRA was “notorious for chopping off limbs as a form of punishment,” (Smith, 2015). Describing the situation in northern Uganda at the peak of the conflict, Sserwanga, Kiconco, Nystrand and Mindra make the devastating analysis that “[a]n entire society had been systematically destroyed physically, culturally, emotionally, socially and economically. The extent of suffering according to international benchmarks constituted an emergency out of control” (2014, p. 302).

Atrocities in northern Uganda have been written about in diverse ways. Among those who have extensively written through personal stories is a Spanish Roman Catholic priest, Father Carlos Rodriguez Soto, who worked in the region, and who participated fully in the
activities of the Acholi Religious Leaders Peace Initiative (ARLPI) during the conflict. His experience involved face-to-face encounters with nearly all the major actors in the conflict including the LRA in their hideout bases. Soto observed a brutal massacre committed by the LRA:

As I watched those men wearing combat fatigues and rosaries around their necks, and as I heard them talk about God and his Angels, I could not help recalling one of the worst and most repugnant massacres perpetrated by the LRA in a village near Patongo, in Pader district, in November 2002. After murdering 20 people, the commander of the group gave an order to dismember two of the dead bodies, put the bloody parts in a big cooking pot and boil them in the presence of the terrified survivors. Such an act, an example of the horrible mutilations, child abductions and cruel massacres by the LRA, combined with the pseudo-religious prayers and biblical symbols, provoked in any normal person the most absolute rejection of the group and their beliefs (2009, pp. 20-21).

As a result of prolonged brutal atrocities against the Acholi people, the lack of an explanation to the local and international communities as to why the LRA was fighting, and its visible lack of political motives and goals, from as early as 1990 the northern Uganda population started to distance themselves from LRA activities: the LRA was already demonstrating a lack of management and technical skills, people were leaving its ranks and it was responding with violence. According to Bussmann (2015) the Acholi people just wanted peace and there were few signs of Acholi cooperation with the LRA. While the LRA maintained they were acting in the best interests of the Acholi, once the LRA began their
vicious attacks against civilians, any belief that this was the case disappeared (Bussmann, 2015).

The culture of indiscriminate violence which Kony unleashed against his own people, created more enemies than friends within the Acholi community. The tactic of attacking civilians made the LRA the most brutal rebel group in northern Uganda’s history. Yet, Lomo and Hovil (2004b) argue that because the LRA had terrorized northern Uganda for so long, they could not be described as a band of criminals. Rather they argue that the group had significant military ability.

A major tactic which has helped the LRA last for such a prolonged period of time has been its ability to instil fear among its fighters. According to Vinci, “the LRA’s use of fear acted as a force multiplier in war. It has allowed a tiny insurgent force of between 500 and 3,000 fighters to hold off a government army of 40,000 to 60,000 army and militia troops, battle the Sudanese People’s Liberation Army (SPLA) in southern Sudan, while effectively controlling millions of civilians in the north [of Uganda]” (2005, p. 361).

Further, the ability of the LRA to persist and cause havoc in northern Uganda can to some extent be attributed to the Sudanese government, which was its only regional supporter. Sudan supported the LRA militarily by providing ammunitions and allowing them to use their territory as a training base (Van Acker, 2004). Jackson (2002) argues that the LRA received help from the government of Sudan in retaliation for support the government of Uganda gave to the rebel Sudan People’s Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A), as the two arms of the Sudanese struggle were named. Not only did Sudan’s support destabilize Gulu and Kitgum, but it also helped the LRA to fight the SPLA.

With Sudan’s involvement, the northern Uganda conflict became more complicated, taking on a regional and international dimension (Finnström, 2001; Dolan & Hovil, 2006; Allen, 2006; Okumu-Alya, 2009). In practice, both Uganda and Sudan supported rebel groups within
each other’s territory. Uganda supported the SPLA and Sudan supported the LRA: “Sudanese government aid turned the LRA from an army equipped with stones, rifles and machetes into one equipped with landmines and machine-guns” (Jackson, 2002, p. 30). Many abductees from Uganda were taken to Sudan for training whereas many Sudanese were trained in Gulu army barracks (Lomo & Hovil, 2004b). Okumu-Alya (2009) notes that SPLA/M had its radio station at Gilgil barracks in Arua, north-west of Uganda. SPLA training camps were located at Midigo, Koboko and Olaba inside Ugandan borders while another was at Gulu barracks in northern Uganda.

In order to normalize bilateral relations between the government of Uganda and Sudan, talks started in 1999 which culminated in each side ceasing support for the other’s rebels and re-establishing diplomatic relations. Enhanced mutual relations led to Sudan agreeing with the Ugandan government to carry out military operations inside southern Sudan. The UPDF launched an operation in March 2002, which was code named ‘Operation Iron Fist’. At this time, hopes were high that the LRA would be defeated. However, the LRA responded by increasing its attacks in Uganda. Commenting on this operation, Apuuli (2006) suggests that although it was a success on the Ugandan side as the LRA was dispersed, NGOs claim that it created more havoc for the civilians whose security situation worsened.

During Museveni’s regime, strained relations with the neighbouring countries of Rwanda and DRC have resulted in physical fighting, which has affected the security of people on the borders and worsened bilateral relations between those countries. According to Francis, “economic growth and development objectives of integration” cannot be achieved in the midst of armed conflict and regional instability: “The inextricable link between economic regionalism and security integration highlights the fact that it is impossible to achieve the in an environment of wars, armed conflicts and perpetual regional political instability” (2006, p. 7).
Although the involvement of Sudan in the northern Uganda conflict cannot be termed one of the causes of the conflict, it could be argued that it helped prolong the conflict. Sudan’s assistance to the LRA also underlined the complexity and the international dimension of the conflict.

The government of Uganda’s response to the LRA insurgency

The government of Uganda at first underestimated the LRA’s capacity to wage and sustain a rebellion. As the government had just defeated the Holy Spirit Movement (led by Alice Lakwena), it was confident the LRA could also be easily defeated using military means (Lau, 2011). They were clearly wrong, as the LRA persisted and caused a huge humanitarian crisis in northern Uganda. As Baines argues:

- the Ugandan government convinced international donors, humanitarians, media, and its own citizens alike that the LRA was little more than a rag-tag group of spiritual bandits gone wild, thereby justifying a military solution to the persistent northern "problem" and the creation of massive displaced persons camp (2010, p. 144).

As a consequence, the government refused to accept foreign intervention or to declare northern Uganda a disaster area. Yet, the Ugandan military struggled to defeat the LRA: the military strategy proved not to be the best option. Years passed without the LRA being defeated, and human suffering worsened because of the government’s policy of internment.

The constitutional obligation of an independent country like Uganda is to provide security to its citizens. Chapter twelve of Uganda’s Constitution outlines the functions of the security agencies and their obligation to observe and protect people’s rights as they perform
their duties (Mukholi, 1995). However, the situation in northern Uganda between 1986 and 2006 was insecure for its citizens and, from the standpoint of a participant, I argue that the government above all wanted to protect its image for fear of attracting international political interventions which would have led the country to be labelled as a failed state.

Neither military means and negotiations were successful until 2006 and the signing of the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement (CoHA) which brought peace to northern Uganda (below, chapter six) (Pham, Vinck, Wierda and Stover, 2005). The government at first referred to the LRA as bandits but as they caused devastation in the region (with the active participation of the government of Sudan), it began to refer to the LRA as a terrorist organization (Apuuli, 2004). Naming the LRA as terrorists enabled the Ugandan government to receive more military assistance from the US government, although at the expense of humanitarian aid to the people in the IDP camps (McCulloch 2002, p.291). Indeed, Branch argues that it was “Western media, Western states, non-governmental organizations (ngo), international institutions” (2009, p.482) that benefited from the terrorist characterization of the LRA.

Branding the LRA as a terrorist organization led to two challenges for human security in the war-affected region. First, there was a reduced interest by donor agencies in addressing human security issues. Secondly, it led to increased funding to the government to purchase more sophisticated weaponry, which brought more misery to the local communities, further undermining human security (Branch, 2009).

Although the government of Uganda used various initiatives and methods such as research, community mobilisation, peace negotiations (see table 4.2 below), military operations, amnesty, disarmament, and political education, to create peace and reconciliation, throughout this period the government’s preferred strategy to end the conflict was the military option, as depicted in the Table 1 below. This military strategy, which was and is still supported by the USA, meant that other strategies were not a priority, and so undermined the efforts of civil and
traditional leaders in northern Uganda (Quaranto, 2006), and considerably affected the various peace processes which were attempted in the twenty-year conflict period.

Table 1

Major Government military offensives against the LRA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Military offensive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 1991</td>
<td>Operation North</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Operation Iron Fist was launched inside Sudan after the development of warm relations between Sudan and Uganda</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 2001</td>
<td>Operation Iron Fist II</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 March 2004</td>
<td>Operation Lightning Thunder</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 14 December 2008</td>
<td>Operation Lightning Thunder</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: (Pham et al., 2005)

Table 2

Non-military initiatives by the Government of Uganda to end the conflict

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Nature of initiative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 1994</td>
<td>Attempt to negotiate for a peaceful settlement under the Minister for the North, Betty Bigombe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 November 2004-February 2005</td>
<td>Betty Bigombe attempted another peace initiative which collapsed after a ceasefire was secured</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 August 2006</td>
<td>Juba peace talks where the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement was signed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: (Pham et al., 2005)

Throughout the 1990s, the government of Uganda fought the LRA without success. None of the military initiatives listed in 4-1 achieved their aims. For example, despite superior arms, the UPDF operation code named ‘Iron Fist’, made little progress in conquering the LRA but rather spread the conflict to the east of the country: this helped the LRA to continue its terror activities and to abduct young fighters to replenish its fighting force (Royo, 2008; Van Acker, 2004). Whenever the UPDF intensified its bombardment of the rebels, the LRA divided into smaller groups of around six to eight fighters, which made it difficult for the government
forces to fight them. Government military strategies failed (Royo, 2008). Instead they led to the dispersion of the rebels across a much larger area enabling them to target yet more isolated villages creating a greater humanitarian crisis.

Non-military initiatives employed by the Government of Uganda as listed in Table 2 above had just as little success: none stopped the LRA from continuing its abductions and other criminal activities.

The LRA’s insurgency inevitably meant that the Uganda government needed more resources to fight the LRA: its budget expenditure on defence increased by 2% in the 1998-99 budget, and 60% of its budget was spent on security and defence compared to 12.6% on social services (Majtenyi, 1998), which was unacceptable to international donors (Willett, 2009, p. 340). Uganda’s economy during that time depended to a great extent on international donor funds to support its budget requirements (Mwenda & Tangri, 2005). Eventually, donors started criticising the government’s overspending on the defence budget compared to social services.

In addition, at the height of the conflict (1991-93), the local defence militias, which were formed to protect the affected communities against LRA attacks, were not well equipped by the government to fight the LRA (Branch, 2005). Acholi elders and administrative councillors pleaded with the UPDF to provide local defence units with more and better arms (Branch, 2005). However, their requests were turned down by the UPDF.

The government’s counter insurgency measure of forced internment breached international laws. Branch argues that “the mode of displacement and internment; the rationale for displacement; and the conditions of the displaced” were not in line with what is required internationally (2008, p. 162). However, despite those allegations, there were no arrests or charges pressed by the international community on those alleged to have committed such crimes. Rather, the army routinely transferred army personnel to other areas without charge.

Commenting on these allegations, the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court, Ocampo
said “the crimes committed by the LRA were of higher gravity than alleged crimes committed by any other group. We are in the process of reviewing information on several other groups in northern Uganda. There is no doubt that the worst crimes were committed by the LRA” (Bulletin, 2007). Branch put the government’s actions into perspective arguing that “[i]n dominant international portrayals of the conflict, … government violence has been downplayed, if not entirely ignored” (2007b, p. 182).

Meanwhile, during this period (2002-2004) the government of Sudan entered into peace talks with its own main rebel group, the Sudan People’s Liberation Army (SPLA), which was fighting for independence (Apuuli, 2007). These talks deprived the LRA of bases to launch attacks into Uganda (Apuuli, 2007). In contrast, the Ugandan government was able to capitalize on the peace talks, which resulted in South Sudan gaining independence in 2011, thus allowing the UPDF more access into Sudan to fight the LRA. As a result of these talks, military support from Khartoum to the LRA declined. This led the LRA to relocate its bases to the DRC through the thick forests of Garamba. According to Nannyonjo the “success of the Sudanese peace agreement [was] critical for stabilizing both southern Sudan and the relationship between Uganda and the Sudanese government” (2005, p. 13). The Government of Uganda, however, had to seek permission to enter the DRC to fight the LRA (Apunyo, 2006), which was known as a ‘rebel movement on the move’. The relationship between Uganda and the DRC was not good because the DRC in 1996 allowed Ugandan forces to enter the DRC to pursue another rebel group, the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF). At that time, Ugandan forces looted mineral resources and timber from the DRC. Consequently, when the LRA moved into the DRC, President Museveni and his DRC counterpart Joseph Kabila failed to reach an agreement which would allow the UPDF to enter DRC and fight the LRA (Le Sage, 2011).
The context of the northern Uganda civil conflict

For almost 20 years (1988-2006), northern Uganda was an arena for armed conflict between the Government of Uganda and the LRA. During this period, the UPDF forced people to live in IDP camps, with minimum security accorded to them by government security agencies. Mayega et al., (2015) estimate that over 2 million people in the Acholi and Lango sub-regions of northern Uganda were affected by the conflict, with the Acholi the most severely affected (Finnegan, 2010). Many people were forced by the UPDF to live in harsh and desperate conditions. The Government of Uganda claimed that this was necessary to identify easily LRA combatants. As can be seen in Table 3 below, in some Districts, such as Pader, up to 95% of the people lived in IDP camps. The harsh conditions in the camps led to acute malnutrition in children and the undermining of local people’s norms, social networks and culture (Henttonen, Watts, Roberts, Kaducu, & Borchert, 2008). Yet, this internment policy was a total failure in terms of securing people’s security. Roberts et al.(2009) called it “a cover for violation and mass humiliation’’ while Wegner (2012) refers to this policy of internment by the UPDF as a ‘genocide’. The LRA attacked the camps at will. The extent of the humanitarian crisis is illustrated by the number of camps and the number of people in each Districts affected by the conflict, shown in Table 3 below.

Table 3

Camps and population 2005-2006

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Total number of IDP camps</th>
<th>Total persons</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lira</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>351,020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pader</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>349,538</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kitgum</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>331,169</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apac</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>107,130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gulu</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>1,599,081</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

During the conflict between 1988 and 2006, there were high levels of poverty and unemployment, high birth and mortality rates and a lack of social security safety nets (Nannyonjo, 2005; Sserwanga et al., 2014). The encampment policy restricted people’s movement and made it difficult for inhabitants to live a decent life. As a result, many people lived on less than a dollar per day, which was not enough to support their well-being. Social protection was poor and there was a lack of basic services. Most survived through engaging in small business and humanitarian handouts (Esuruku, 2011). While the Human Development Indices (HDIs) and Human Poverty Indices (HPIs) for Uganda in 2005-2006 indicate overall improvement in other parts of the country (0.488 in 2003 to 0.581 in 2006), the northern region lagged behind, 2.9 million in 2002/3 to 3.3 million in 2005/6 (Esuruku, 2011, p. 114). It is obvious that human and economic development had become stagnant in northern Uganda compared to the rest of the country (Nannyonjo, 2005).

Peace activists and other human rights activists, including religious leaders and traditional leaders in the northern part of Uganda criticized Museveni for his overuse of the military, ignoring the suffering of the civilians in the conflict-affected regions, and failing to address social and unbalanced development between north and eastern Uganda compared to other parts of Uganda, but to no avail (Khadiagala, 2001).

Forced encampment by the UPDF increased people’s vulnerability and instilled in them a general fear for their security. This was compounded by a general lack of appropriate responses from national and international organizations. According to Ban Ki Moon, the UN Secretary General, as cited in the UN’s Human Security Unit Strategic plan 2014-17, “the common understanding on human security as agreed by the General Assembly in resolution 66/290, provides a useful way of thinking about how we respond to 21st century challenges” (Unit, 2014, p. 3). In the northern Uganda situation, the government neglected people’s security which led to undermining international standards set by the UN to protect those affected by the
conflict. For Duffield and Waddell (2004), human security portrays international concerns which are related to humanism and reflects accepted international norms and conventions aimed at improving people’s security. Such internationally accepted conventions include the Geneva conventions, UN Declaration of Human Rights and the formation of the International Criminal Court. Since Uganda is a signatory to these conventions, its membership suggests the human security of its citizens is an important state consideration.

Uganda’s security strategy was to wipe out the insurgency created by the LRA at whatever cost. In doing so, Van Acker argues, it ignored “human rights and international humanitarian law” (2004, p. 335). The government’s strategy contradicted basic human security principles, for example, community security. Throughout the conflict the government failed to protect the people and seemingly lacked the capacity to secure their safety. At times it was accused of perpetrating atrocities (CsoPNU, 2004). In theory at least, as Oberleitner (2005) argues, state and individual security are not mutually exclusive, yet Uganda showed little concern for appropriate measures which could have protected its citizens better.

The absence of security meant that the people of northern Uganda were vulnerable to rebel attacks and abductions but also, during the period 1988-2006 a combination of poverty and conflict resulted in many young rural people migrating to nearby towns, which had negative consequences for the receiving towns in northern Uganda. These (discussed in detail in chapter five) included the mushrooming of unplanned informal settlements resulting in pressure on existing infrastructure. People suffered from poor sanitation, unreliable water supply, intermittent electricity and an overburdened transport system.

People living in unprotected IDP camps also inevitably encountered problems. The psychological stresses contributed to aggression and violence (Lomo & Hovil, 2004b) and the situation was particularly hard on those children who had been abducted and forced to participate in violence and other aspects of crimes against humanity. Also, actions by both the
LRA and the UPDF against the local people inflicted untold suffering and led to many human rights abuses (see below, chapter five). Kasozi (2005) estimates that there were approximately 100,000 indiscriminate child killings and 20,000 abductions in the period 1988 to 2003 (A. Kasozi, 2005, p. 1054). These abuses prompted Kasozi to argue that part of the LRA campaign was to destroy the Uganda government’s credibility with the international community as the government showed itself unable to maintain state security or provide human security for its citizens. However, unusually, the international practice of support/interference from powerful nations in fighting local insurgencies, such as that of the LRA, did not occur. Quite simply, unlike the situation in, for example, DRC, the lack of significant economic resources caused the turning of an international blind eye to the conflict (Kastner, 2011).

Figure 3. Map of northern Uganda regions affected by war. Source: Allen and Schomerus (2006), originally obtained from UN OCHA.
Figure 4. Map of northern Uganda showing numbers of internally displaced people by District (May 2004). Relief web Map Centre. Internally Displaced Camps and Protected Villages in Northern Uganda.

Figure 5. The internally displaced persons’ camp at Opit, Gulu District. Note the non-traditional crowding of the huts (Photograph Davis Kawooya, June 2005).
As a result of the atrocities perpetrated on northern Ugandan communities by both the LRA and forces of the government of Uganda, and as demonstrated in Figure 4 above, many people were internally displaced. Writing in 2010, it was possible for Dagne to declare that “more than 2 million civilians had been affected and that an estimated 90% of the population in the districts of Gulu, Kitgum and Pader had been displaced” (2010, p. 7). Whyte, Iha, Mukyala, and Meinert (2013) also agree with Dagne’s claims that the military’s tactics during the conflict resulted in a lot of displacement. Every person living in the areas shown in Figure 3 above was forced into camps by the army. As well as (theoretically) protecting the IDPs, this enabled government forces more easily to identify those outside the camps as rebel elements. This strategy was disastrous in terms of human suffering. The photograph of the camp at Opit, Gulu District (Figure 5), for example, shows the very close proximity of the huts to each other. The result of a total lack of both planning and implementation of human security principles. Okello and Hovil (2007) observe that for those living in the camps it was a daily struggle to survive because of the stifling of economic activities, the abject poverty, the overcrowded housing and the ongoing threat of armed attack. These conditions resulted in many families becoming dependent on food distribution by the World Food Programme (Stark et al., 2010); people “suffered high levels of poverty as they generally could not travel back to the villages and farm lands” (Roberts et al., 2009, p. 3).

The setting up of IDP camps was an indication that approximately huge numbers of people were displaced (Okello & Hovil, 2007) and interned in these camps in 2003. Such enormous numbers of people forced into the IDP camps led to a humanitarian crisis and a collapse of the economic and social development of a region which depended entirely on agriculture.
Table 4 below shows that up to 46.9% of the total population were interned in these camps in 2003. Such enormous numbers of people forced into the IDP camps led to a humanitarian crisis and a collapse of the economic and social development of a region which depended entirely on agriculture.

Table 4
Total number of IDPs by District 10th October 2003

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>District</th>
<th>District Population</th>
<th>IDP Population</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Gulu</td>
<td>468,407</td>
<td>419,258</td>
<td>89.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Kitgum</td>
<td>286,122</td>
<td>281,372</td>
<td>98.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Pader</td>
<td>293,679</td>
<td>229,115</td>
<td>78.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Lira</td>
<td>757,763</td>
<td>79,097</td>
<td>10.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Soroti</td>
<td>371,986</td>
<td>136,112</td>
<td>36.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Katakwi</td>
<td>307,032</td>
<td>104,254</td>
<td>34.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Kaberamaido</td>
<td>122,924</td>
<td>97,561</td>
<td>79.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Kumi</td>
<td>388,015</td>
<td>59,207</td>
<td>15.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Apac</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>2,995,928</td>
<td>1,405,976</td>
<td>46.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Government of Uganda, Department of Disaster Preparedness and Refugees, 2003*

By 2003, there were over 150 camps for the internally displaced and hundreds of thousands of people were dependent on handouts from the World Food Programme to survive (Stark et al., 2010, pp. 1056-1057). In these camps more than eighty percent of women were illiterate and a large percentage of children had lost one or both parents (Wierda, Stover, & Baines, 2006).

The difficulties are symbolised by the lack of any accurate figures for the numbers of people in the IDP camps. Due to the high insecurity in the area, the length of the conflict, and a lack of accurate figures kept by both the government and humanitarian organizations, most of the figures given were estimates. According to Akhavan “In 2003, the population of IDP camps in the Gulu and Kitgum/Pader districts of northern Uganda doubled from approximately
four hundred thousand to eight hundred thousand, a figure that represents approximately 75 percent of the region's population of 1.1 million” (2005, p. 209). However, Otim and Wierda (2008, p. 21) claim that over 1.5 million people were forced into miserable camp conditions.

According to the usually reliable Civil Society Organization for Peace in Northern Uganda (CSOPNU) in its 2006 report, however, there were

- 202 IDP camps in northern Uganda.
- Between 1.8 and 2 million displaced people (approximately 8 per cent of the national population).
- Population densities exceeding 1,700 people per hectare.
- 50 per cent of IDPs under the age of 15.
- 25 per cent of children over 10 years who had lost one or both parents.
- Large absences of adult males aged 20–29, as a direct result of the war.
- 12 per cent of females aged 30–44 who were widows — twice the national average (C. S. O. f. P. i. N. Uganda, 2006).

The government failed to provide protection for its citizens within the camps: there was little or no emphasis on human security. The 2004 Annual Report by CSOPNU made the accusation that “[t]he GoU has failed in its responsibility to provide adequate services for these people and has also failed to create an effective operating environment for the adequate provision of national assistance” (2004, p. 113). In such a situation, local and international NGOs effectively took over the role of government in the provision of basic services (Branch, 2005). The Acholi people in camps survived on the charity of aid agencies (Branch, 2005). Branch also makes the point that “[w]hile the government euphemistically call[ed] the camps ‘protected villages’, they [were] most accurately identified as internment or concentration camps, given their origins in forced displacement and the continued government violence used to keep civilians from leaving” (2009, p. 480).
Most of these camps had populations of about 2,000 people but only small numbers of government soldiers assigned to protect them. So, the LRA were able to attack the camps at will (Roberts et al., 2009). The level and magnitude of human rights abuses by both the LRA and the UPDF was appalling and, as Joireman, Sawyer and Wilhoit (2012) show, some people were so desperate, that they even took to protecting themselves by sleeping outside the camps. Within the camps, poor living conditions had negative consequences on the lives of IDPs (which will be discussed in more detail in chapter five). According to Nannyonjo (2005) the widespread dislocation led to a breakdown in traditional values and behaviours and a subsequent increase in the crime rate (Nannyonjo, 2005). Because the LRA often attacked at night, large numbers of people (night commuters as they were known) commuted (walking for the most part) up to five kilometres daily to and from the towns of Gulu, Kitgum and Pader which were relatively safe and where they spent nights. The children who did not commute moved to the centre of the IDP camps (Rockmore, 2016). Despite these precautions, abductions from within the camps continued (McElroy, Spittal, Atim, Tebere, & Muyinda, 2010). The security situation on most of the roads leading to these camps was challenging for the delivery of vital basic supplies to the people: “The LRA … even attacked humanitarian relief convoys belonging to the UN World Food Programme, which almost one million people relied on for sustenance” Akhavan (2005, p. 409). Yet, as Alderman, Gilligan, and Lehrer note, because of the lack of income generating activities, camp residents depended on food aid from humanitarian organizations, among them the World Food Programme which “provided monthly food rations to each household living in the IDP camps” (2012, p. 197). The number of dependants on relief supplies from aid agencies continued to grow.

During this period, in my role as the research and advocacy Coordinator for Caritas Uganda, for nine years, I made frequent visits, three to four days each week, from the regional office in Gulu to nearly forty IDP camps of differing sizes across the three districts Pader, Gulu
and Kitgum. People forced to live in the camps complained they were poorly managed and short of the basic social services required by international standards for displaced people. The conditions in the camps were filthy, and as the conflict continued, they worsened in terms of sanitation, hygiene and malnutrition. As Roberts summarises, “The camps were characterized by chronic over-crowding, poor housing, water and sanitation” (2009, p. 3). And, as shown above, these problems were compounded by the appalling state of human security within the camps. As the CSOPNU 2004 report noted above, further indicated “the GoU has fallen short of its obligations under International Humanitarian Law (IHL) to guarantee the rights of its citizens to live in dignity, and to protect them from harm” (2004, p. 11).

Fear of the LRA prevented people moving out of these camps to their farms, which in the past had provided a livelihood for most people in the affected region. In a report on the implementation of the recommendations made by the UN Secretary General’s representative on IDPs following his visit to Uganda, it was noted that, “continued encampment (with resulting limitations on freedom of movement) and the impact of the ongoing war leave the majority of people living in the north unprotected. Women and girls are especially at risk, with chronically high levels of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) reported” (2006, p. 9).

The government tried to protect the people by further setting up what they termed ‘protected villages’. These were smaller camps and the numbers of people were few and different from the bigger IDP camps (E. Baines & Paddon, 2012; Branch, 2009). However, the LRA were still able to carry out surprise attacks on the government troops protecting these villages, resulting in the deaths of both civilians and government soldiers. Although these villages were set up within the government forces’ areas of operation, they were subjected to frequent raids and abductions. Sometimes people’s huts were burnt. Thus, those in the villages lived in a state of constant fear and trauma (Branch, 2011; Dolan, 2013; Dolan & Hovil, 2006).
The IDP camps and the ‘protected villages’ were criticised by northern Uganda politicians, human rights organizations and civil society organizations for their lack of protection from LRA attacks and the poor living standards which lacked basic social services (Branch, 2008). As Laruni indicates, “Numerous accusations of brutality by National Resistance Army and Uganda People's Defence Force soldiers against Acholi civilians during the conflict have been levied against the government, leading many Acholi to believe that, rather than helping to restore peace in the Acholi communities, the NRM's motives were more concerned with eradicating them all together” (2015, p. 213).

Although the duty of the state is to defend its citizens from insecurity, the government of Uganda’s response to the LRA insurgency brought more harm than good to the people of northern Uganda:

[the] policies of the Ugandan government and military play[ed]

a major role in determining livelihood strategies (through forced displacement and regulations on movement) as do the policies of the humanitarian aid community (through provision of certain types of aid, the manner in which aid is allocated (Stites, Mazurana, & Carlson, 2006, p. 11).

The excessive human rights cruelties by the UPDF as a result of the military attacks against the LRA, not only resulted in an increase in high death rates, they inevitably fuelled more hatred among the people confined in IDP camps. According to Latigo, quoting from the local press, President Museveni in July 1994 referred to the Acholi people “as being like grasshoppers in a bottle in which they will eat each other before they find their way out” (2008, p. 89). Such comments by the head of state, angered many people from the Acholi sub-region, and left them feeling humiliated and dehumanized as an ethnic group (Otunnu, 1998).
Interventions by humanitarian non-government organizations (NGOs)

The media played a significant role in magnifying the humanitarian crisis in northern Uganda. In doing so, they brought the conflict to the attention of the international community which enabled many international aid agencies to assist in providing emergency relief such as high nutrient food, clothing and medical supplies. Caritas Uganda, with which I was working, appealed to other Caritas members for humanitarian assistance. Among those who responded positively to the appeal were Caritas organisations from Germany, Norway, and Denmark as well as Caritas Internationalis. In 2003 media attention also forced the UN Emergency Relief coordinator, Jan Egeland, to travel to Uganda to assess the extent of the problem, which he described as “the biggest forgotten, neglected humanitarian emergency in the world today” (Mailer, 2008, p. 5). Egeland’s visit, in highlighting the humanitarian situation in Uganda, helped the international community realize it was in danger of failing to follow its own agenda of extending humanitarian assistance to those in danger. On his return, addressing the UN Security Council, Egeland said “20,000 children had been kidnapped, large districts now had 90 per cent of their population displaced and 80 per cent of combatants in the Lord’s Resistance Movement [are] minors. The situation is a moral outrage’” (C. S. O. f. P. i. N. Uganda, 2006). According to Mukwana & Ridderbos (2008), Egeland’s visit awakened the international community’s interest in the affected region and forced Uganda to develop a national policy on internally displaced persons, based on the guiding principles of internal displacement. These include:

- Holistically addressing protection of people against displacement
- Providing IDPs with the right to request protection and assistance from the government and district authorities
- Ensuring IDPs are not discriminated against
- Ensuring the government provides educational facilities
- Consulting with those affected especially women and the youth
- Translating the IDP policy into local languages
- Holding the government accountable for its actions

Jan Egeland’s appeal at the peak of the conflict created considerable awareness of the conflict and prompted many NGOs to intervene. Although national and international aid agencies had been slow to respond to this crisis, those humanitarian agencies which responded to Egeland’s appeal made a very significant contribution towards human survival.

In addition, Egeland argued for NGOs to continue a more permanent presence in the IDP camps and appealed to the international community to come to the rescue of the people in northern Uganda. As a result, aid agencies increased funding for social services in the camps. Schools, health clinics and other basic services begun to be provided for the displaced people. Despite Egeland’s appeal though, Brown reports that “the majority of the population of the Acholi sub-region remained displaced, living in squalid conditions in some 200 overcrowded camps, reliant on food aid, their traditional livelihood patterns and clan systems destroyed” (Brown, 2006, p. 1).


Local and international aid groups responded in additional ways. Nannyonjo (2005) specifies some of the areas in which aid agencies assisted such as the provision of basic drugs,
assistance for HIV-infected persons, the provision of water facilities, classroom and scholastic materials, psychosocial care and support, tracing and integrating abducted children into the community, counselling and peace education and community-based reconciliation. As stated above, some gave humanitarian assistance while others engaged with the two warring factions on how to solve the conflict through dialogue. Many NGO’s activities became specialized in order to deal with the huge demand for assistance. For example, some dealt with counselling, rehabilitation and re-integration, others with health, education, economic livelihood and peace building.

ACCORD dealt with conflict management, capacity building and public education on rights and responsibilities whereas AVSI dealt with physical rehabilitation on top of identification and registration of amputees (Omona, 2008). The heifer project dealt with the distribution of dairy cattle and the promotion of micro enterprise. ICRC dealt with various emergencies and the Norwegian Refugee Council dealt with distribution of food and other relief supplies and conducted empowerment workshops. NGOs helped to fill the gaps left by the government in providing basic services such as food, water supplies and pit latrines (Timothy Shaw, 2014). In doing so, they responded to the human security element of designing appropriate programmes aimed at protecting people by providing comprehensive, multi-sector and collaborative initiatives to those in need.

NGOs had contrasting ideas on how best to reintegrate formerly abducted children. Local groups such as the Gulu Support the Children Organization (GUSCO) used traditional practices known to the people whereas World Vision (WV), an international Christian relief and development organization, combined Christian ideas based on the commandments of God, with a western style format of counselling (Akello, Richters, & Reis, 2006). Although they were not always successful, most NGOs continued with providing counselling and psycho-
social support for formerly abducted people especially rescued women who had borne children to LRA commanders while they were in captivity.

While working for Caritas I came to an understanding that supporting formerly abducted children using foreign-based methods was not as effective in mending broken community relationships as approaches based on local practices that the people understood and valued. I could see that GUSCO’s use of local people-centred practices were more respected within the communities and more effective. For example, the ceremony of cleansing the body \((moyo kum)\) which involved elders appealing to the ancestors for their blessings and washing away evil spirits from those returning from captivity often was effective. During my period in northern Uganda, I witnessed four community ceremonies (two in Pader and two in Kitgum) in which former combatants went through a process of reconciling with the dead spirits and seeking for forgiveness among community members. These helped former combatants to partly reconcile and re-integrate with local communities where these ceremonies took place.

Other effective ceremonies included cleansing an area \((moyo piny)\) and bending the spear \((gomo tong)\), both of which took place after a community-mediated process, in which the wrongdoer accepted blame, requested pardon and agreed to pay reparations to those affected. Performing such ceremonies according to Acholi cultural norms was held in high esteem and was respected by community members. People performed them willingly, believing that it was good for the community’s wellbeing. These traditional ceremonies were rooted in Acholi traditional beliefs of the sacredness of social stability in families. The German researcher, Thomas Harlacher who also worked with Caritas Gulu concurs that these traditional practices were effective, recognising that, although there was no written information to support the usefulness of these practices, “many traditional rituals and procedures had the potential of fostering healing among the war-torn communities” (Harlacher, 2009, p. vii).
Ironically, the role of aid agencies in providing basic services helped the government’s strategy of forced displacement of people into camps. As Branch notes

If the relief agencies had not intervened, the government simply would not have been able to sustain the camps through violence alone. But once the humanitarian infrastructure had been deployed and movement out of the camps had been halted, forced internment became a viable long-term strategy (2009, p. 484).

Therefore, it is clear that the setting up of IDP camps helped the government to continue its military approach to the conflict while forcing civilians to become dependent on aid relief. In fact, Branch (2009) argues that without NGO assistance, the humanitarian disaster would have been even more catastrophic since all the government’s resources were being put into strengthening the military while neglecting civilian human security.

During the conflict, there was limited cooperation between humanitarian organizations and the UPDF. This cooperation was based on the condition that any humanitarian assistance had to be cleared by the military. Indeed, as Branch shows, aid agencies “found it in their interest to cooperate openly with the government’s counterinsurgency to the point of enabling its policy of mass forced displacement and internment” (2009, p. 479). The UPDF coordinated military escorts and land mine clearance in areas where humanitarian assistance was to be delivered. However, at the peak of the conflict (1998-2002), the imposition of various restrictions on humanitarian organizations by the UPDF irritated some agencies and most withdrew from the region. According to Brown, during that period, NGO and UN employees rarely visited the camps or initiated new humanitarian programmes. As a result, the basic needs of the inhabitants were barely addressed (Brown, 2006).
The UPDF restrictions coupled with the heightened security situation led to the mass withdrawal of NGOs. This severely affected the people in the camps who were depending on the relief services provided by NGOs, both local and international for their survival. During this period, as I and other observers still in place could see all too clearly, the conflict situation was even more severe than reported by the local and international media (Nassanga, 2007).

The critical situation highlighted the need for donor countries to provide a key role in terms of financial and political assistance. The international community’s support also seemed essential in finding a lasting solution in the conflict since the local military option preferred by the government had failed. The regional dimension of the conflict and the worsening relationship between Uganda and Sudan demanded high level talks between the two countries because both countries were accusing one another of harbouring rebels fighting their respective regimes.

**Identifying the causes of the longevity of the conflict using a human security approach**

In a conflict situation, a human security approach aims at bringing together the two warring parties to negotiate their differences and re-establish normality. However, in the case of northern Uganda, neither the government nor the LRA wanted to confer or to accept defeat. This stand-off led to a continuation of the conflict and to the suffering of the people of that region.

Yet the conflict in northern Uganda demonstrated the need to engage a human security approach in order to have meaningful humanitarian assistance for those suffering during the conflict. However, it is important to note that the security situation during the conflict caught both the people and the government by surprise.

Although the key elements of human security had already been recognized by international institutions and organizations because the Ugandan government did not attend to
the needs of the northern Ugandans, the human security situation was left in the hands of non-
government entities. For example, the government played down the seriousness of the northern
Uganda situation with the President jokingly comparing the “LRA with ‘a jigger [worm] in the
toe’. You need a safety pin to remove it” (Taylor, 2005, p. 566). His comment indicated that
the security objectives of the state and the human security of the communities affected by the
conflict were at odds, and that the situation was simply going on and on.

A human security approach can help to explore the root causes of the longevity of a
conflict: it is argued here that applying this approach in northern Uganda in terms of exploring
social, economic, and political causes, and other related issues like ethnic exclusion and
political grievances, could have helped unearth accompanying inequalities and identified
people’s capacities for peace building. Close cooperation between NGOs and the government
with the aim of finding lasting solutions should be a priority for all concerned in a conflict
situation. However, as the northern Uganda conflict showed, success cannot be guaranteed.
The government and NGOs analysed the problems, the root causes and how to end the conflict
differently. A reason for why different interpretations occur is provided by Conteh-Morgan:

many peacebuilding efforts undermine the emphasis on
human security because people are viewed as the "means" to
political stability as opposed to being the "end" of all peacebuilding
efforts. People are also viewed as the means to a stable state
conducive to the infiltration of globalization trends (2005, p. 70).

This difference was evident in northern Uganda, where the government treated people
as pawns and showed little respect for the work of the INGOs and local NGOs. The
government’s approach to the conflict was to use only military means, while the NGOs,
religious leaders and traditional leaders favoured a more people-centred approach through
negotiation. As a result, the relationship between the NGOs and the government was damaged,
which led to a loss of trust and, in turn, the prolongation of the war. Further, a human security perspective emphasizes the need for cultural sensitivity. In the northern Ugandan conflict, both the actions and the speech of some politicians and commanders of the government forces angered the locals who felt that their cultural practices and community needs were ignored.

**The role of NGOs in promoting people centered approaches in northern Uganda**

For many years (1988-2006), NGOs took center stage in providing humanitarian assistance to those in need: people centered in form, NGOs’ responses to the worsening humanitarian situation in northern Uganda post conflict, often resembled a human security agenda. There is no available data which shows that NGOs used a human security approach. A basic tenet of a human security approach is to assist people to deal with unexpected and potentially dangerous or harmful circumstances which can emanate from either local, international or environmental disasters or infections that afflict humanity (Weller, 2014). In northern Uganda, NGO operations throughout the conflict showed a desire to promote what can be read as the human security approach. This was demonstrated by their readiness to confront the status quo, their closeness to the local people, their ability to reach out to the vulnerable majority and to address the threats to those in their care through partnership building. Richmond notes that “NGOs provide an important bridge between the local and the global, public and private, and so may facilitate the broader forms of prevention, peacemaking, peacekeeping, and peace building that are now required” (2003, p. 4).

Although many NGOs faced security obstacles when providing humanitarian assistance, the use of a people centred framework was at the centre of their operations. For example, Caritas used its humanitarian donor networks like the Catholic Agency for Development (a charity in England and Wales) CAFORD, Caritas Norway, Caritas Germany and Caritas Denmark to lobby for more humanitarian assistance when the crisis was at its worst.
During my years working with Caritas, one notable contribution CAFORD offered to Caritas staff was training in how to respond in emergencies in line with international humanitarian principles, to act ethically and responsibly at all times, training which was of much practical value in the field. The Caritas relationship with the LRA was expressed through hundreds of small interactions with Caritas staff each time the LRA fighters came into an assembly point: a continual and stressful balancing act. Both the CAFORD training and the Caritas ideals, enabled the organisation and its people to act impartially and to remain in the field throughout the conflict: this led the LRA to trust the organization. This trust showed itself in many ways. At one incident, when the LRA faced intense bombardment from UPDF army helicopters in Kitgum, they were forced to abandon some of the abducted people who were injured and contacted Caritas to pick them up. Caritas had then to contact the UPDF personnel who escorted our staff to where these people were abandoned and collect them.

Both local and international NGOs collaborated with and assisted local people to improve their security by providing economic opportunities, education, health care, and human rights advocacy discussed above, chapter three). During the period 1998-2004, NGOs’ provision of basic social services became critical in ensuring human security. However, there was a negative consequence in this otherwise successful work. The UPDF enforced strict measures which were supposed to be complied with before NGOs entered or supplied any assistance to those in camps. These measures included the military systematically checking every supply truck and giving clearance before aid could enter the camps. Such restrictions delayed humanitarian assistance which increased threats to human security. In some cases, the UPDF assumed humanitarian, development and peacebuilding roles for which they were not suitably trained, forcing humanitarian organizations to suspend their operations at the peak of the conflict for their staff’s safety. The involvement of UPDF in distributing humanitarian assistance complicated the process. Communications from the UPDF and from the various
INGOs and NGOs operating in camps were at times at loggerheads. No doubt many NGOs would have agreed with Maya that “the government should [have] focus[ed] more on building up its own delivery capacity rather than managing the work of NGOs” (2008, p. 23). These complications limited the capacity of NGOs to use a people centred approach to assist in the humanitarian crisis in the northern Ugandan conflict.

Involving NGOs in initiatives which have security implications has the potential to improve NGO-government relationships, including in the sharing of information. However, in northern Uganda this did not happen, souring relationships. One of the reasons is almost certainly as Fox argues, that a human security approach “recognizes the limited role the state plays at times, and in doing so challenges the centrality of the state as the sole actor” (Fox, 2004, p. 476).

As discussed above a human security approach tackles security issues, governance and socio-economic challenges in diverse ways. By providing basic services to the people of northern Uganda during the conflict, NGOs demonstrated their desire, even though they were not always successful, to provide human security in a variety of ways. First, they set up offices within the affected region to coordinate their own activities and help local groups and communities mount a rapid response to sudden unexpected disasters in the region through sharing decision making and programming with locals. They also addressed the local health and livelihood issues which affected the people. Second, during the conflict, many NGOs demonstrated their accountability to both the donors and the communities they served, which gave them a comparative advantage over the government which was normally corrupt. In addition, they tried to align their efforts with what the local populations needed.

For example, a report by NORAD, for all Norwegian funded NGOs operating in northern Uganda which included the Norwegian Refugee Council, CARE Norway, Save the Children Norway, Norwegian Red Cross, Caritas Norway and Médecins sans Frontières
Norway, stated that “the choice and relevancy of core activities is largely informed by community needs identified through formal and informal needs assessments and baselines surveys” (2009, p. 26). This was an indication that NGOs were willing to work within local cultural norms and environmental contexts, and with the participation of the people affected. The NGOs’ record of engaging with local communities and the rapport they established with the communities made them better placed than the government to get involved in people centred/human security program development. During the conflict, my observation of Caritas decision-making and responses, was that these depended primarily on feedback from the people. This information helped us identify the neediest in the region and design appropriate programmes for them.

The lives of many NGO staff members were placed at risk, often for very small reasons, as they tried to assist the people. One of the Caritas Gulu team members (name withheld) was shot and injured in 2002 at Parabek (Gulu District) by the LRA; he was going on a humanitarian mission, but he did not have the necessary bread to bribe the LRA. NGOs were prepared and able to support the people but the security situation on the ground frequently undermined the use of a people centered approach: “The humanitarian relief effort took place in an environment characterized by chronic insecurity” (Maya, 2008, p. 5).

NGOs engaged the locals through community meetings, printing of posters and capacity building workshops. These included teaching participants how to avoid diseases like AIDS and malaria, how to build safe sources of drinking water and innovative technologies like fuel efficient stoves and bio-gas cookers using local appropriate technology. NGOs also addressed the impact of deforestation on the environment (Martin, 2010 ). And, in a different type of intervention, realizing the need to address the threat of AIDS in the camps, they set up voluntary testing and counselling centres, provided free condoms and carried out community sensitization workshops on how to stop the spread of the virus.
Although NGOs are competent and practiced at working on short term interventions to improve the lives and livelihoods of people in conflict situations, their common long-term strategy is to empower people so that they can deal with these threats themselves. To this end, in northern Uganda, NGOs also worked on designing long term preventative measures which could be employed when people felt their security was being threatened. NGOs see as part of their undertaking the process of assisting in the two-way dissemination of information by representing the political fears of the poor, who are traditionally ignored, to international decision-makers, thus contributing to making the world’s political and economic institutions more accountable (Nyamugasira, 1998). The Acholi Religious Leaders Peace Initiative (ARLPI), a local NGO, for example, encouraged people’s participation in political matters through community peace-building workshops. The group encouraged and influenced the passing of the Amnesty Act 2000 (discussed in chapter six), as one measure to end the conflict. At the Juba peace talks, many NGOs provided information on how the conflict could be handled. Such representation helped to develop a strong civil society network and created a platform to address future threats to human security (Nyamugasira, 1998).

In northern Uganda, other people centred/human security areas which NGOs addressed through capacity building included good governance through popular participation and transparency. According to Guzman in the field of enhanced peace and reconciliation, SAFE (a USAID funded program for Supporting Access to Justice, Fostering Equity and Peace emphasised “building the capacity of local community faith and civil society organizations as well as promoting local networks” (2013, p. 11). In attempting to improve people’s livelihoods, NGOs used sensitisation advocacy workshops, organised community meetings and sponsored radio programmes aimed at ensuring the long-term realization of security in the region (Makara, 2003). Thus, NGOs filled the gaps left by the government in the process of fostering the security of the people (Clark, 2015). This role was carried out especially by those NGOs which
had a relationship with international peace organizations. For example, Pax Christi had access to the European Union and various United Nations forums, including at UN headquarters in the New York, one of which in 2004 Bishop Odama (chairman of the ARLPI) addressed on the situation in northern Uganda (Otim, 2009).

Although the most important aim of many NGOs which operated in northern Uganda during the conflict was to cater for the wellbeing of the people, the security situation hampered many of their initiatives and so further undermined the use of a people centred/human security approach in the conflict situation. This is demonstrated in more detail in the following chapter which discusses in detail the social, political and economic consequences of the conflict in northern Uganda.

**Conclusion**

This chapter has examined the causes of the northern Uganda conflict, a conflict which exposed the weaknesses of state-centric concepts of security. It highlighted the importance of involving the affected people in decision making, respect for human rights and the need to understand better the relationship between conflict management, human rights, human security and the international community’s engagement in solving conflicts. The neglect of such issues prolonged the conflict which impacted negatively on people’s security.

The poor security situation prevented aid workers from effectively applying a people centered/human security approach. It also led to ineffectual coordination between humanitarian agencies and the military as there was a lack of consultation, shared information and constructive dialogue between the two.

The human security approach considers individuals as central to security issues. The approach also emphasizes the importance of addressing people’s needs and acknowledging their capacities and values, which was the opposite of what occurred in northern Uganda.
International efforts to solve the conflict locally should have more readily supported local leaders’ strategies to manage and solve the conflict (Bar-Tal, Halperin, & De Rivera, 2007).

In addition, policies which were introduced and implemented by the government, coupled with the mistreatment of the locals by government forces, led to a lot of bitterness. This undermined the legitimacy of state institutions and security strategies, a legitimacy based on how locals see and access justice and acquire basic human needs. The government’s Operation Iron Fist in 2002, which increased military pressure on the LRA drastically reduced the humanitarian situation in northern Uganda, an indication of the government’s lack of protection of its citizens (Southwick, 2005).

The causes of the northern Uganda conflict were many and led to the emergence of the LRA which continued to operate for more than two decades. The role of the government of Sudan in supporting the LRA as a retaliative measure against Uganda’s support of the SPLA, worsened the humanitarian situation in the area and prolonged the conflict. The government of Uganda’s response to the conflict was mainly the use of the military, which did not protect people’s security. Rather it put people’s lives in more danger as they were caught up in the fighting. The government’s anti-insurgency measure of creating IDP camps was not the best solution to protect civilians. Instead it brought them more misery. Also, people’s well-being was compromised in the camps. A lack of basic social services created further security threats to the people. As a result, the conflict led to various human security threats which affected every sector of the community. In addition, the failure by the government of Uganda to deal with the causes of the conflict through meaningful discussions with the affected people contributed to an escalation of the conflict and more human insecurities. The issues identified above demonstrated that, even if the Ugandan government had wanted to apply a human security approach during northern Ugandan conflict it would have been difficult. This conflict was the longest and most brutal to threaten the human security of the people in northern Uganda
since independence. It led to widespread death, injury and resulted in many health-related consequences for the people in the affected region. The consequences of the conflict on both the people and the region are discussed in the next chapter.
Chapter Five

Consequences of the northern Uganda conflict

Introduction

As chapter four showed, the humanitarian crisis can be attributed to a lack of appropriate responses to stop the conflict and the failure of the UPDF to defeat the LRA. This chapter discusses the contexts of the social, political and economic consequences of the humanitarian in northern Uganda. It supports the first hypothesis of the thesis which opens up questions about the ethnic and social economic divisions in Uganda. The chapter explores the ways that the sustained politically-based ethnic and socio-economic divisions was a major contributor to the longevity of the conflict leading to catastrophic consequences for the people and the region. Further, it unpacks the different perspectives held by key stakeholders in the northern Uganda conflict and how they led to catastrophic consequences for the people of northern Uganda and the region.

As previous chapters have begun to show, the northern Uganda conflict affected the lives of many people in many ways. Although the LRA’s intention was to overthrow the Museveni regime, the main victims of the conflict were the civilians (Dagne, 2010). People lost their lives, others were abducted by the rebels, others lost their homes and means of livelihood. This was a humanitarian crisis in the region (Otunnu, 2002). Notably affected were the Districts of Pader, Gulu and Kitgum in the Acholi sub-region (2,279,788) with an overflow into the Districts of Lira, Otuke, and Aleptong in the Lango sub-region (458,150) with populations. Throughout the conflict, relationships in these Districts between the people and the government were fraught, indeed, as Dolan argues, when Uganda’s volatile political history is examined, it is clear what led many northern Ugandans to have little faith in the government (Dolan, 2008).

At the peak of the conflict, the humanitarian situation was appalling. However, the
government in Kampala intentionally censored news of it from reaching the international community, using all available means to cover up the extent of the humanitarian crisis faced by the people in the vast camps in the north (Branch, 2008). By the time the international community realized what was occurring in northern Uganda, it was too late for the many people whose human rights and security had long been violated (Otunnu, 1998). The conflict had social, political, economic, cultural, moral and emotional consequences which left many people in the region in a dire state. These consequences are the subjects of this chapter.

**Political consequences**

The arbitrary use of violent means by the LRA to achieve its aims led to political instability in the whole of northern Uganda (Atim, Mazurana, & Marshak, 2018), leading to lawlessness and turmoil, decreasing people’s security (Kizza, Knizek, Kinyanda, & Hjelmeland, 2012), and increasing the intensity of the violence perpetrated on civilians by both the UPDF and the LRA (Moorehead & Rone, 2005), which had severely negative effects on social and economic activities in the region (Lomo & Hovil, 2004b), and the need for the formation of IDP camps. For Mergelsberg, tragically, this was a meaningless conflict (2012, p. 65). The political consequences included increased loss of freedom of speech and security, increased human rights abuses, and increased opportunities for corruption and, as the government imposed restrictive measures on the peoples’ advocates such as the politicians, they too became voiceless (Armstrong, 2008). The impacts were widespread across the government’s institutional framework, the political system and policy development, to the point that early in the conflict the government’s political structures in the region had effectively ceased functioning. As a result, the army took over the role of politicians in decision making processes (Brett, 1995b) with the immediate consequence that people living in northern Uganda became direct targets of security reforms/measures. Even before the LRA
was branded a terrorist group, there were restrictions on people’s freedom of speech and movement (Branch, 2011) but the government’s emphasis on intensifying security measures had led to the people of northern Uganda being regarded as terrorists or opponents of the government, which automatically excluded them from being part of the development process of the country.

The Kampala government appealed for more funding primarily for social measures, but the persistence of the conflict meant the funds were diverted for military purposes. Ironically, such funding led to more suffering while also ignoring affected people’s security concerns (Macdonald, 2017a). Consequently, the conflict-affected communities in northern Uganda mistrusted the government and on several occasions during national elections voted overwhelmingly for the opposition party as, for example, in 2001 and 2006 (Izama and Wilkerson, 2011), demonstrating the negative perceptions and mistrust of many northerners towards the Museveni regime.

Museveni used the conflict to protect his own political position: by demonizing the LRA as a terrorist organization, his government achieved access to more international funding and armaments (Kustenbauder, 2010). Uganda was perceived as a strong ally of the USA in the effort to fight terrorism, and it can be argued that the principal reason the government insisted on using a sustained military rather than humanitarian approach was that it had received substantial military support from the US. However, even when funding, such as the US$100 million received from the 2003 East African counterterrorism initiative (Whitaker, 2010, p. 651) was designed to counter terrorism through a mix of social, military and political measures, much of the assistance was used to finance internal military campaigns against the Kampala government’s opponents.

Branch (2009) argues that the enforcement of the camp system benefited the government politically because potentially camps were the main source of government
opposition and cites an example where people who were vocal were denied access to areas where food aid was supplied (Branch, 2009): this confirms what I and other aid workers constantly witnessed, that people in the camps were usually too frightened to speak against injustices committed by the Army. In addition, the government worked to increase its political control over the people and the authority of traditional leaders to regulate and mediate among people consequently was greatly decreased (Branch, 2013).

Social consequences

The northern Uganda conflict resulted in both short and long-term effects on people’s well-being, not least because the lack of meaningful association and cooperation between the government of Uganda and humanitarian agencies working in the area exposed the people of the region to insecurity and its consequences.

Bradbury (1998) notes that by late 1997 the number of people displaced in the affected region had already reached 479,000 (Bradbury, 1998, p. 331). Displacement had two forms (Lehrer, 2008): one, internal, with the formation of displaced people’s camps within the country, and other more informal displacement, including some who had the means and relatives to migrate to the capital, Kampala, and the second, external to Uganda, to Kenya, Tanzania, Zambia, South Africa, and further afield to Europe, the US and Australia (Rockmore, 2016). In northern Uganda migrants faced hostility from those into whose areas they had unwillingly migrated (Esuruku, 2011). However, many internally displaced people ended up in camps (Table 4-4), which lacked basic necessities and heavily relied on humanitarian aid (Branch, 2008). Describing the situation in northern Uganda, Daley states that since the mid-1990s “forced displacement [has been] of a magnitude and duration unusual in the modern world” (2013, p. 893). The high numbers of displaced people at the peak of the conflict meant that in 2010 Uganda was ranked as having the third largest number of IDPs,
totalling to 1, 405,976 IDPs in nine northern Uganda districts namely Gulu, Kitgum, Pader, Lira, Soroti, Katakwi, Kaberamaido, Kumi and Apac (Kindi, 2010, p. 2).

Many of the negative aspects of enforced camp life have been discussed above (chapter 4), but here it is necessary to address the issue of the widespread breakdown of family norms (Cagney, 2011; Finn, 2012). The changing living environment people faced during encampment impacted greatly on people’s sense of morality and family values. It led to decaying moral situations within the affected families and the community in general (Mergelsberg, 2012). In Acholi culture, people value their traditions because these guide their interactions on a daily basis (Ochen, 2012). Cultural norms and observance of those norms are the basis of many cultural institutions in both rural and urban Uganda, and Africa more generally. Any practice which deviates from those norms is regarded as a taboo. In the northern Uganda situation, it proved impossible to practise Acholi norms in the camp environment. For example, sexual practices occurred among minors, which was counter to tradition. Traditionally, “premenstrual sex was forbidden and was the cause of much consternation and stigma for both families involved. In fact, if a child was discovered having sex prior to menstruation the incident became a kin and community issue and was dealt with in the same manner as a sexual assault that took place in the bush” (Patel et al., 2012). However, all this was much affected by the conflict and the subsequent encampment (Ochen, 2012).

The social consequences of the conflict were also related to the disruption of traditional community settings. Traditionally people have worked communally as a unit so as to depend on one another. This helps them to console one another in times of trouble, to share information and to protect themselves against serious crimes. The creation of camps which the people were not used to, and which lacked basic services, contributed to increased crime, prostitution and the breakdown of the traditional communitarian system. The lack of
community ownership during camp life also directly contributed to the lack of human security in the region.

While working with Caritas during the conflict, through informal discussions with the elders and through community meetings, I recognised the depth of their reliance on the strength of traditional social practices, such as that the men were the bread winners while the women were carers at home. Yet, as other observers have also noted, I saw that due to insecurity and restrictions on their freedom of movement, these traditional roles had changed, within a short period of time (Davenport, 2011). Men lost their power and authority within the family and were no longer able to provide for their families. Rather they became dependent on handouts. As a result, some women took on responsibilities traditionally outside what they were supposed to do. This was intended to increase family income while maintaining traditional domestic duties (Reinke, 2016), but it had negative effects on family relationships.

As a result of the displacement of nearly 95% of people in Lira, Pader, Kitgum, and Gulu Districts (Jacobsen, Marshak, Ofori-Adjei, & Kembabazi, 2006) the displaced population had limited access to land which led to a dramatic decrease in food production and in turn led to high levels of chronic and acute malnutrition (Horn, 2009). This was because of the stringent restrictions imposed on those in camps by the military due to security reasons. These restrictions confined them in camps without going to their original homes (Alderman et al., 2012), yet the nature of camps did not enable people to carry out farming or own livestock due to lack of farm space due to overcrowding. Therefore more than 80% of those in IDP camps were dependent on external food aid (Podszun, 2011). Acquiring water for drinking, cooking, etc, was also a big problem: every day people had to wait an average of two hours to get water from the few available boreholes (Corbin, 2008). Commenting on this situation, a report by the Civil Society Organisations for Peace in Northern Uganda (CSOPNU) concluded that these conditions led to 95% of the 1.2 million people in the camps

An alternative, slightly higher figure of 1.5 million people in 2005/2006 (UNHCR, 2007), makes the point that despite attempts to register people and manage the camps, the situation was only just under control, and for aid workers and organisations this was a daily struggle to estimate needs in specific places. The camps were very overcrowded and, as the photograph in figure 5 shows, the huts were extremely close together, crowded in on one another in a way that no Ugandan village would ever be. Appropriate sanitary facilities such as latrines were almost non-existent, increasing the risk of diarrheal diseases, and the poor security situation impacted on immunization programmes aimed at eradicating various preventable diseases. People’s health was seriously affected. Accorsi (2005) point out that the effects of the conflict and displacement on the health system led to the perseverance and re-emerging of diseases, increased poverty and malnutrition among children and an increase in war related injuries and infectious diseases (Accorsi et al., 2005).

Enforced camp life led people to resort to various coping mechanisms which were unusual in local cultures. As an aid worker I heard such stories, and in situations where I came to accept them as terrible realities. For example, when talking with people in Pabbo camp one day in June, 2005, I was told by one man that due to the lack of proper income generating activities to buy food and other necessities, some parents allowed their daughters to become prostitutes or engage in ‘survival sex’ especially with UPDF soldiers at the end of the month, which was when the soldiers received their wages (and see below, (Liebling-Kalifani et al., 2008). Such money was then used by the family to buy necessities. Although not particularly referring to the situation in northern Uganda, Patel et al., (2012) make the point that in conflict situations, girls’ lack of power to make independent decisions, increases the risk of acquiring HIV/AIDS (2012, pp. 2-3). In the northern Uganda situation, scholars continue to debate whether the increase of HIV infection was caused by the displacement
(Mergelsberg, 2012). Yet, as a Caritas worker, I was confronted with the obvious situation that in order to survive, some northern Ugandan children resorted to prostitution, which certainly exposed them both to psychological harms, as well as HIV/AIDS.

The psychological harm inflicted on people during the conflict had dire consequences: Amone-P’Olak (2008) argues that the resulting and diverse effects on the Acholi communities will not heal quickly. For example, the sense of community belonging which contributed to people’s lack of emotional and human security, was eroded during the conflict. Forced conscription of both mature people and under-aged children led to slight or serious psychosocial consequences depending on the circumstances. The experiences of abducted people during captivity were varied and always traumatic, resulting in widespread post-traumatic stress disorder (Pham, Vinck, & Stover, 2008).

Due to the government’s inability to deliver basic services to people in the camps, the responsibility of providing the basic needs was left largely to aid and humanitarian agencies. The role of NGOs is further discussed in chapter seven. What is significant here is that despite the efforts of NGOs, many people, forced into these camps for their own protection, were in fact placed in more danger: as Mergelsberg (2012) argues, the government put people in camps to control them instead of protecting them against the LRA rebels (2012, p. 65). Poor collaboration and coordination meant that human security needs were not satisfactorily met, by the government of Uganda or by international or local aid agencies: both women’s and men’s traditional roles and practices were disrupted, challenged and often destroyed in these camps. Further, as Okello and Hovil (2007) argue, because the war undermined traditional community structures, women were denied the traditional/cultural assistance they would have received from their husbands before the conflict. Consequently, they often had to work harder, and travel longer distances to look for food and other household requirements, with the result that often they were separated from their children for the whole
day, with numbers of negative effects for the children (Okello & Hovil, 2007).

In some cases, as Whyte, Iha, Mukyala, & Meinert argue, breakdowns in traditional practices and forms of moral compliance resulted in previously unheard-of gender conflict, such as in the practice that developed of men focussing on single women for sexual satisfaction: many married women were unhappy with this practice (S. R. Whyte, Iha, Mukyala, & Meinert, 2013). But sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) was something to which both men and women were subjected to during the conflict. By definition SGBV includes sexual abuse and exploitation, rape, domestic violence, forced early marriages, trafficking and female genital mutilation (FGM) (Kahunde, 2014). Many of these occurred as alarming levels in the IDP camps, as Liebling-Kalifani et al., (2008), for example, show for Kitgum, pointing out that many experienced rape, defilement, “incest, sexual slavery, forced marriages and sexual exploitation for survival or in exchange for food” (2008, p. 178).

The psychosocial impact of this type of abuse had long-term effects and was a concern for activists, not least because its threat to their wellbeing and so its negative implications for people’s roles in local, national, and regional growth and development programmes. In a report on the effects of SGBV in Pabbo camp, Gulu District, for example, Akumu, Amony and Otim (2005) show that it affected survivors’ emotional, mental and physical health and frequently resulted in hatred of themselves and others and social exclusion and discrimination.

A study conducted by Kinyanda et al., (2010) on war-related sexual violence and its psychological consequences on women in Kitgum, shows that 28.6% suffered at least one form of war-related sexual violence, 72.4% had at least one gynaecological complaint, 75% had one surgical complaint, 69.4% had significant psychological distress (2010, p. 1). A similar study in Gulu and Amuru Districts, showed the direct connections between trauma and dependency and suicide, with an increased number of people committing suicide every
Due to the lack of support services in the camps and the social stigma associated with SGBV, most cases were not reported to authorities (Liebling-Kalifani et al., 2008; Okello & Hovil, 2007). Victims, especially men, were not supported psychologically and women were affected in such a way that their reproductive systems no longer function normally (Akumu et al., 2005).

Life in the camps destroyed the social fabric on which the Acholi people thrived. The difficult camp life led to the destruction of community values. Feelings of despair were increasingly expressed, there were increased numbers of suicides, and increases in HIV/AIDS cases, particularly after ‘survival sex’ (Liebling-Kalifani et al., 2008).

As a consequence of the conflict, the human rights of many people in the affected area of northern Uganda were compromised (Apuuli, 2006; Okello & Hovil, 2007; B. Roberts, Ocaka, Browne, Oyok, & Sondorp, 2008, p. 7; Ssenyonjo, 2005, 2007). It was alleged that while carrying out counter insurgency measures against the LRA the UPDF constantly violated people’s human rights, on the same scale as the indicted LRA commanders had done (Freeland, 2015): committing violations which included excessive use of force to arrest suspects, forced displacement of people to IDP camps, arbitrary arrests and detention without trial, torture of suspects, widespread killings of civilians in camps, disappearances of people without trace, and rape (Freeland, 2015). Human rights defenders who tried to speak against these abuses were targeted by both sides through the use of direct violence against them, intimidation, and mistreatment (Branch, 2009): both warring parties committed atrocities, human rights violations, against the people of the region (Baines, 2007). Many were tortured and others died at the hands of those who were supposed to protect them.

During the later period of the conflict (2002-2006) conditions deteriorated. People had no freedom to speak against injustices carried out against them in the camps and, although
government structures like the District Administrator’s office, the local Resistance Councils and the Resident Minister representing the office of the President were operating; these were all silent on the abuses carried out against the people (Branch, 2005). There was an increasing general sense of fear and disenchantment among the people in IDP camps. The protected villages, as the camps became known as in this later period, were a breeding ground for many preventable diseases due to overcrowding and lack of income generating activities (Liebling-Kalifani et al., 2008). Illnesses became more widespread in camps because the region was becoming too dangerous for humanitarian aid agencies or the government of Uganda to deliver consistent health services and there was a total breakdown in the social service system in the whole of the Acholi and Lango sub-regions (Nannyonjo, 2005).

Living through the effects of prolonged conflict, and witnessing war-related shootings, killings, torture, rape, and murder of family members left many people traumatized and with a heightened sense of insecurity: the long and deadly government military campaigns coupled with frequent attacks by the LRA had lasting social effects on the young men and women who both directly and indirectly took part in combat operations.

**Social consequences for children**

Children were frequent victims of the conflict and the problems for children were visible to development workers in the region, such as myself. Higher poverty levels and lower social development indicators in northern Uganda were reflected in the low level of children’s access to basic social services (Higgins, 2004). These, and the other problems I and other aid workers were confronted by, have also been identified by humanitarian organizations working in the region such as Human Rights Watch, UNICEF, World Vision, GUSCO, Caritas, and Invisible Children (Beard, 2011; Ochen, 2012).

Having been abducted at a tender age and involuntarily forced to join the LRA,
children were indoctrinated and then forced to commit atrocities, often against people from their own tribe. An estimated number of abducted children in 2003, stood at 20,000 (Weber & Rone, 2003, p. 17). Writing eight years later, Vindevogel et al. (2011) took a different view on the number of abducted children, noting that due to the precarious registrations, the numbers range from 25,000 to 38,000. In my view, and from my observations, even these can be no more than estimated numbers. The security situation and lack of logistics at that time prevented exact numbers being possible (2011, p. 552). During times of intense confrontation between the LRA and UPDF, and as abductions increased, many children escaped the rural areas and some IDPs and moved into urban areas at night because of their relative safety (Akello, Reis, & Richters, 2010; Dunn, 2004). This ‘night commuting’ as it was popularly known, was one of the coping strategies used by children as a result of the prolonged conflict and displacement (Emry, 2004; Latigo, 2008). However, irrespective of this commuting, thousands were abducted and forced to join the LRA.

The suffering borne by children during the conflict demanded assistance from both local and international agencies. The work of the World Vision reception centres for abducted children, after they escaped or were rescued, provided havens for these children to undergo a rehabilitation process (Edmondson, 2005). A survey conducted by the World Food Programme in 2009 found that 32% and 18% of children were malnourished in Anaka and Pabbo camps respectively (Dolan, 2013, p. 161).

The LRA’s actions against children led to an entire generation of children living in poverty and suffering chronic hunger and disease. Older children often had to care for younger siblings, subsequently leading to their dependency on humanitarian assistance for survival (Spitzer & Twikirize, 2013). The children’s wellbeing was not helped by the comparatively weak government investment in protective services for children, the limited or inadequate capacities and resources available to address child protection issues as well as the gap in
services left by the pull out of some humanitarian agencies (Weber, 2013).

Saile, Ertl, Neuner and Catani (2014) argue that the effects of the conflict on family values also contributed to the maltreatment of children. Children’s rights were advocated for by various agencies working for children in northern Uganda. However, many of the local people disregarded these rights, labelling them ‘spoiling our children’ (Ochen, 2012). Such comments led to the under-reporting of violations against children and, in northern Uganda, not all police stations even had the capacity to provide monthly reports of child protection violations. The long-term prospects of these children and the likely effects on their education, depended entirely on the quick establishment of well-equipped rehabilitation centres: this did not occur (Ager et al, 2011).

Children born in the camps lacked quality education. In the same way, those abducted at an early age, never had a chance of going to primary or secondary school. The insecurity and lack of infrastructure rapidly affected the quality of education in northern Uganda. Although school enrolments were high, especially in primary schools, as a result of the government policy of Universal Primary Education (UPE) (Alderman et al., 2012), actual attendance and performance were below the required levels. This was due to frequent displacement, parents’ loss of earnings on which they depended for school fees, and a lack of safe and suitable learning environments. According to the Uganda Bureau of Statistics (2006), only 38% of those enrolled completed primary seven and 40% of student dropouts were due to education being too expensive for many parents to afford. Although humanitarian agencies provided scholastic materials and built schools (Ezati, McBrien, Stewart, Ssempala, & Ssenkusu, 2016), the standards of children’s education were far below the rest of the country (Higgins, 2004), while many skilled teachers fled the region, which led to a shortage of skilled personnel in the education sector (Stites et al., 2006). In schools, those teachers who were left, were overwhelmed by the numbers, but also, as a Report by the Women’s Commission for
Refugee Women and Children (2005) shows, a lack of suitable accommodation and scholastic material for school children.

The consequences that have flowed from this are diverse: children born in camps and those growing up in the post conflict era were affected by their lack of education (particularly for child combatants) or the interruption in their education, have had problems in adulthood, affecting their potential to compete favourably in the labour market, particularly because they lacked the skills necessary to get employment and so productivity was diminished. Thus, their wages were lower by a third compared to children from other regions of Uganda, leading to continuing poverty and inequality. The futures of the northern children have been severely affected (Annan, Blattman, Carlson, & Mazurana, 2008; Blattman & Annan, 2010).

The conflict affected boys and girls differently. For the boys, according to Blattman and Annan (2010), a lack of education and time spent in captivity were the main impacts on their earning capacity. For the girls who came back from captivity with babies, it was difficult for them to be trained or educated because no one was willing to look after their children while they were being trained. Denov (2006) argues that these girls were vulnerable to further sexual exploitation because they faced difficulties in finding husbands or partners and were more likely to become prostitutes. Some of the girls faced problems of neglect, rejection, and abuse because, according to the cultural practices of the Acholi, children are not recognized without the father introducing himself officially to the parents of the mother and paying bride price (Akello, 2013).

The effects of the conflict on children, both those abducted and those who were born and lived in the camps, deprived them of a peaceful and organized environment. They lacked support from and protection by their families including adequate educational opportunities (Spitzer and Twikirize, 2013). Thus, children became targets of armed forces in the northern
Uganda (2013, p. 68). The absence of a peaceful environment for the children to grow up in, affected their socialization. In addition, those who were abducted were stigmatized and discriminated against in their communities when they returned. Such treatment had long lasting effects on children’s mental health, which led to adjustment difficulties, anxiety disorders, depression and post-traumatic stress disorder problems (Bolton et al, 2007). Exposing children and young adults to violent activities, left them vulnerable to behavioral problems (Ertl, Pfeiffer, Schauer, Elbert, and Neuner, 2011).

NGOs and other humanitarian groups played a significant role in looking after orphaned and formerly abducted children. As many of the children lacked shelter, money to pay for school fees and scholastic materials, sufficient food, beddings, clothing, and medical care (Akello et al., 2010), they were taken to child reception centres run by local and international NGOs including World Vision Children of War Rehabilitation Centre (WVC), Sr. Rachelle Reception Centre (RRC), Gulu Support the Children’s Organization (GUSCO), and Kitgum Concerned Women’s Association Rehabilitation Centre (KICWA) (Amone-P'Olak, 2007). While in these centres, the childrens’ lives improved. They were protected from the LRA and taught various skills aimed at helping them become self-reliant. However, such programmes did not reach all children.

Involving underage children in war practices, as the LRA did in northern Uganda, was a human rights abuse and a crime against international law. Testimonies from children abducted by the LRA reveal the extent to which children’s human rights were severely violated by the LRA as part of their indoctrination in LRA ranks (Spitzer and Twikirize,2013). As discussed in chapter four, boys abducted by the LRA took part in the actual fighting during which many lost their lives. On the other hand, girls were used sexually by the LRA commanders and combatants and sometimes forced to move long distances while carrying their belongings and their own babies: in this process, an estimated 10,000 girls became forced
child mothers (Akello, 2013, p. 149) and were exposed to sexually transmitted diseases: in such a situation, the probability of acquiring HIV through forced sexual intercourse between military or rebel fighters and the local population was high (Thomas & Tiessen, 2010). Finding ways to support formerly abducted young girls and successfully integrate them into society was emphasized by humanitarian agencies and partly by the government programmes. Such applications of what are effectively human security principles can provide a firm foundation in shifting positive directions to assist war affected girls and raise their profiles (Denov, 2006). In order to improve their economic livelihoods, Veale, Mckay, Worthen and Wessells (2013) advocated for using a culturally-grounded participation model, to help the young girls/women develop skills in self-reliance. Examples they gave included setting up group or individual businesses, community drama groups and community cleaning. Such activities were aimed at improving their health, social relationships and economic self-reliance which, to some extent, contributed to an improvement in their livelihood.

The main challenge many humanitarian agencies and government in northern Uganda faced when assisting formerly abducted girls was acquiring productive assets, such as hoes, pangas, seeds and restocking animals, but they also needed to access working capital and address the shortage of appropriate skills. AVSI, an Italian NGO, in its effort to make some girls self-reliant, provided cash grants of approximately $US150 and offered free basic skills training to those participating in the programme. Preliminary reports showed that there was an increase in business activities and a reduction in poverty among those participating in the AVSI programme (Blattman et al., 2013).

In Acholi culture, parents play an important role in the upbringing of all children in the community. However, during the conflict, parents were not able to guide their children in a traditional manner. Verdeli et al., (2008) recognised other impacts including the constant fear the children experienced, and their disruptive relationships with caregivers, family and
community members, with some even having to prematurely take on adult family roles (2008, pp. 605-606). The abuse children experienced during the conflict led Blattman and Annan (2010) to acknowledge the long-term challenge that children’s rehabilitation presented.

**Impacts on women**

The conflict in northern Uganda forced women to live complex and challenging lives. The camps were supposed to provide safety from the LRA violence. However, once in the camps, for many women the risk was no longer the rebels. The new dangers women faced stemmed from the attitudes of men in general. Those who were forced into IDPs faced excessive alcohol consumption by, and increased violence from, their husbands (Saile, Neuner, Ertl, & Catani, 2013). Many women suffered some form of violence, including marital rape, emotional and psychological abuse, battering and verbal abuse, sexual exploitation or harassment within the home. Further, many women suffered post-traumatic stress from their abuse at the hands of the rebels when they were abducted and forced to act as both work and sex slaves. (Saile et al., 2013)

Decision making culturally, in most African communities, traditionally is done by men. Acholi society is such a patriarchal culture in which the interests of men are prioritised over those of women, and assumes women to be submissive to their husbands (Harris, 2014). However, due to the conflict in the region women’s roles changed, especially during emergencies, transition and in the recovery process (Omona & Aduo, 2013). This and other cultural practices gave rise to desperate behaviours which at times undermined womens’ traditional rights (Saile et al., 2013; Stark et al., 2009). For example, women had “low bargaining power” in terms of safe sex practices: women feared being beaten or their men going to other women if they demanded their husbands use condoms. Yet, the likelihood of women contracting HIV was greater than that of men because of widow inheritance,
polygamy by already-infected men, alcoholism, silence about sex, traditional ceremonies, submissive place of women and resistance to condom use (Rujumba & Kwiringira, 2010). Women also had limited knowledge of their rights within marriage and as a result faced threats whenever they talked about divorce.

Clearly, the existence of statutory, cultural and other forms of discriminatory practices affected women negatively, often resulting in the denial of property and ownership rights and so women were particularly threatened by loss of shelter through evictions (Land & Thern, 2014). Post-conflict, many households were headed by widows or single mothers; the demands of caring for many vulnerable children put significant stress on these women which resulted in their further impoverishment.

The various burdens women faced during camp life included ensuring that their families survive by collecting firewood, fetching water from bore holes and caring for their children. Although, before the conflict, women were able to do all these things without fear of being raped, during the conflict they lived in constant fear of being raped by the UPDF, LRA and other criminal elements (Okello and Hovil, 2007). Although it is the national government’s responsibility to protect its citizens Henttonen et al., (2008, p. 129), in northern Uganda, the national government failed to prioritize issues relating to the security of women, but even in the so-called protected camps, women were regularly raped when collecting water and firewood (Blumberg, 2015).

Although the human security approach emphasises addressing the needs of women during humanitarian crises (Chenoy, 2009), humanitarian agencies failed to differentiate women’s security interests from those of men. When NGOs did try to introduce new initiatives for women, mainstreaming gender issues into their work, men frequently actively resisted them, speaking negatively (personal observations); (Omona & Aduo, 2013). The blocking of such initiatives resulted in the security of women being highly compromised.
Of particular concern to aid workers were sexual and other forms of violence against women which greatly affected their security. Understanding the causes of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), which in any community are based on local/cultural norms, often including gender-based discrimination, is a key to preventing gender violence/inequality in conflict and post conflict situations (Davies & True, 2015). Yet, in dealing with women’s security in northern Uganda, addressing issues related to SGBV was never a high priority (Thomas & Tiessen, 2010). The extreme social pressures caused by conflict and displacement, the consequent break down of social support safety nets, the erosion of positive cultural values, chronic violence, the spread of HIV and economic desperation led to an increase in women- and child-headed households and the adoption of practices and behaviours, like prostitution and overconsumption of alcohol, that were not supportive of child care and protection, and so impacted on the family as a whole.

**Economic consequences**

Throughout the insurgency period, because of the prevailing insecurity, there were no tangible development activities in northern Uganda (Ssewanyana, Younger, & Kasirye, 2007). The conflict strained all economic development in the area leading to a collapse of almost all formerly established income generating activities on which people relied. The twenty years of armed resistance by the LRA resulted in the region having a lower level of economic development than the rest of the country (Ssewanyana et al., 2007).

Because of fear of attack by the LRA, people were not able to start income generating activities (Rockmore, 2016). The widespread destruction of the existing infrastructure, such as the destruction of hospitals and schools, which provided not only basic social services but, to some, a source of income, further contributed greatly to the poverty of the people. The destruction of infrastructure slowed or halted much of the usual economic activity. The LRA
planted landmines on main roads and carried out frequent ambushes on trucks and buses, and 
the insurgency destroyed homes, property, schools, and hospitals, creating an intimidating 
work and living environment. Any proposed development activity was impeded, leading to 
more suffering of the people. Commenting on the economic micro-level consequences of the 
conflict in northern Uganda, Deininger (2003) argues that the conflict had a significant impact 
at the household level and future investment planning for the whole region, which in turn 
affected the broader economy (Deininger, 2003). The conflict led to increased unemployment 
and loss of income due to the collapse of economic activity.

Due to insecurity in the region, there was little public investment (Blattman, Fiala, 
& Martinez, 2012). The conflict also increased the cost of doing business and led to substantial 
capital flight. Most investors preferred doing business in areas which were stable. As a 
consequence, there was a negative attitude towards investment ventures in the region. This 
was supported by official government policy documents which recognised that the human 
security situation was a central factor in determining investment ventures in northern Uganda 
(Golooba-Mutebi & Hickey, 2010).

The lack of well-equipped educational institutions meant there was little training of 
skilled workers such as carpenters, teachers, programme officers, doctors, nurses etc which 
posed a significant risk to the young generation in northern Uganda. As a result, these young 
people had few opportunities to benefit from any economic upturn that might become 
available during the recovery period. The better paying jobs went to people from other regions 
who had better qualifications (Stites et al., 2006).

The economic consequences of the conflict were clearly negative for northern 
Ugandans, and perhaps especially for people with disabilities (Liebling-Kalifani et al., 2008). 
Due to the breakdown of the country’s health system, this group of people was ignored by 
government agencies. Their physical disabilities often gave rise to increased poverty which
affected their socio-economic wellbeing. As for many other northern Ugandans, people with disabilities relied on international organizations for support and help to identify appropriate resources and rebuild their skills.

Because of the absence of proper accountability mechanisms by the government of Uganda, UPDF officers were able to use the conflict to enrich themselves (Van Acker, 2004). The officers’ corrupt practices promoted corrupt tendencies throughout the Army leading civilians to believe that, because the Army officers benefited so much from the conflict, they did not want the conflict to end. Following the example of the army many civilians begun to engage in corrupt practices; corruption became the cause of economic failure in government departments, which had widespread economic and political impacts, beyond northern Uganda. Nationally, government expenditure, until 1991, focused on improving services and infrastructure, but from that time was shifted to accommodate increased military spending: the defence budget increased from $US 32 million in 1990, to $US 44 million in 1991, $US 88 million in 1996, over $US 155 million in 2003, and $US 196-203 million in 2004 (Mwenda & Tangri, 2005), the figures marking the progress of the conflict in the north.

During the conflict, the region lagged behind the rest of the country in all sectors. Insecurity affected every aspect of people’s lives. It hampered aid work, stunted economic development activities, and created a culture of fear and suspicion among people to invest in the area (Lomo, Naggaga, & Hovil, 2001).

Consequences for human security

Human security stresses the importance of people’s safety from all forms of threats. It is clear from the discussion above that the consequences of the conflict in northern Uganda greatly affected people’s wellbeing. A people centred/human security approach emphasizes protection of the individual. The social, political and economic consequences of the conflict
discussed above show that the people were not protected by the Ugandan government. This in turn indicates the differing views by different actors which impeded the application of the people centred/human security approach during conflict. For example, despite the opposition of humanitarian organizations, cultural leaders and politicians, the government policy of forcing the people out of their homes into IDP camps and the lack of a comprehensive plan to protect them in the camps brought suffering with catastrophic consequences.

Correctly instigated, a human security approach entails all stakeholders collaborating in the design of appropriate measures to deter threats to vulnerable people. However, in the northern Ugandan situation, there was no significant collaboration. Stakeholders such as INGOs, NGOs, other humanitarian agencies and the government each responded in ways they felt most feasible. In addition, a human security approach emphasizes people’s participation in designing programs to alleviate the distress within their localities, people in the IDP camps were given little encouragement to participate in planning for their well-being or for an end to the conflict.

The Ugandan government’s emphasis on using a military approach rather than identifying the sources of the conflict had terrible consequences for the people in northern regions including prolonging the conflict, and as a consequence the conflict has had several long-term legacies, including the significant number of children and women left as orphans and widows. Even though INGOs, NGOs and other humanitarian groups attempted to provide basic social services, the insecure situation was not conducive to reaching everyone suffering, thus rendering the application of the human security approach limited and ineffective during conflict situation. The assistance provided was never enough to cope with the enormous number of people in need.

The northern Uganda conflict has also led to a lowering of the literacy levels of children, forcing many into child labour activities and affected the social and economic
development of many adolescents (Blattman & Annan, 2010). As recognised by Chandler (2012), the implementation of a human security approach, which emphasised designing appropriate programmes, would have addressed the needs of at-risk children and teenagers and could have led to many young people having a sustained income base.

**Conclusion**

This chapter has highlighted the consequences of failing to address the ethnically based socio-economic divisions in Uganda following independence. The dire social, economic and political circumstances of the northern Uganda people during the conflict were a direct result of the cruelty and human rights violations perpetrated by the LRA and UPDF and of the effects of displacement on the Acholi people and their culture. The chapter demonstrates the difficulties of applying a people centre/human security approach in an ongoing conflict situation. Eventually, due to the scale of the ongoing atrocities, which undermined the security of all the civilians in the region and because of pressure from local, national and international stakeholders the two warring parties agreed to talk. The next chapter discusses peace initiatives and how they impacted on the conflict situation in northern Uganda.
Chapter Six

Peace initiatives in the northern Uganda conflict

Introduction

This chapter discusses the successes and failures of the national, local, international and regional initiatives to bring about peace in northern Uganda. Notable among these were the impacts of the influence of the religious and traditional Acholi leaders, the *Amnesty Act* of 2000, the ICC's intervention and the Juba peace talks. These will be contrasted with the military approach preferred by the government. Each peace initiative will be examined through a discussion of both its impact on the conflict and the security of the inhabitants of northern Uganda. The chapter will argue that the deep-rooted ethnic and socio-economic divisions within Uganda contributed to the failure of most of these initiatives and that international interventions like that of the ICC, which emphasized revengeful justice, also helped prolong the conflict.

As foreshadowed in previous chapters, it is argued here that the northern Uganda conflict was the result of complex historical issues which complicated the various strategies intended to usher in peace to the region. In order to explore these complications, it is essential to position them in the contexts of the political, ethnic and socio-economic divisions (hypothesis one of the thesis) which hampered most of the peace initiatives while revealing the diverse interests and views of the various stakeholders, including their lack of agreement on whether to use local or international approaches to end the conflict. In addition, this chapter examines the inadequate information, mistaken beliefs and myths and a lack of knowledge about the internal operations of the LRA that made it difficult to set up and conduct peace negotiations.
National initiatives to end the conflict

Although the government of Uganda, and President Museveni in particular, preferred the use of the military option to end the LRA insurgency, during the two-decade northern Ugandan conflict, the GoU explored other options aimed at persuading the LRA and other fighting rebel groups to lay down their arms and stop the suffering of the people in the region. Nevertheless, the mistrust between the GoU and the LRA undermined almost all of these efforts (Regts, 2010). In addition, the government's lack of consistency in negotiations, the LRA's unwillingness to compromise and the ongoing violence contributed to peace proposals and initiatives not being honoured (Branch, 2007).

The 1988-89 UPDA – Government peace process

The UPDA/M was one of the first armed rebel groups to fight Museveni’s regime when the NRM government took power from Tito Okello in 1986. It comprised mainly former UNLA soldiers and civilians who had little experience in guerrilla warfare. At first the Acholi supported the rebellion with elders demonstrating their backing by carrying out traditional war rituals, including blessing the soldiers with special tree leaves (Acholi, oboke olwed) (Okumu-Alya, 2009). However, the lack of supplies to replenish their arms, political intrigue within the leadership, factionalism and failure to raise funds from the diaspora, all affected the group's morale and fighting spirit. Their uprising was short lived due to mounting pressure from the NRA, which persuaded the UPDA to negotiate with the government, which it did in June 1988, with most of its leaders surrendering or joining the NRA (Happold, 2007).

The Addis Ababa Peace Agreement of 1990

The Addis Ababa Peace Agreement between the government of Uganda and the political wing of the UPDA who were in the diaspora (Quinn, 2009a) was the result of a peace
process secretly rotated between London, Lusaka and Nairobi, the places where most of the politicians were exiled after the overthrow of the Obote and Okello regimes (Bainomugisha & Tumushabe, 2005). The government believed that these exiled politicians were behind many of the insurgencies. It hoped that if these politicians returned home, they would cut off their support to the LRA, and they would engage in discussions about the notion of Ugandan identity. After months of negotiations, an agreement was signed on 14 July 1990 in Addis Ababa. Under the agreement, former combatants were given amnesty and in 1992 their leader Otema Alimadi went back to Uganda to settle. Although some of the leaders in the diaspora abandoned the rebellion and returned to Uganda, many fighters stayed in the bush in northern Uganda, forming the basis of the LRA fighters.

**LRA/M Government negotiations of 1993-4**

While the GoU continued fighting the LRA in northern Uganda, in the Teso sub-region of eastern Uganda another rebel group was formed by Peter Otai, the former Minister of State for Defence in the second UPC government. He formed a resistance force, the Uganda People’s Army (UPA), in May 1992 (Lewis, 2016). The formation of the UPA was related to the government’s failure to protect the people of the Teso region against cattle raids from the neighbouring Karamajong ethnic group (Lewis, 2016). However, Larson and Lewis argue that “it is difficult to draw a firm connection between pre-existing, anti-government grievances and civilians' initial refusal to share information about rebels from the government” (1995b). Other fighters joined UPA due to the violent nature of the NRA (now known as UPDF) when they entered the Teso region (Brett, 1995a). On top of the insurgency in northern Uganda, the NRA also had to engage in aggressive counterinsurgency operations in Teso region where sympathizers and rebel combatants faced extra-judiciary executions (De Berry, 2000). However, using their experience of negotiating with the UPDA, the government negotiated
quickly with the leaders, offering amnesty to the rebels (De Berry, 2000). Having experienced success with this negotiation, the government set up another negotiating team with the LRA, but unacceptable demands by the LRA led to the breakdown of these talks and the conflict continued (Okuku, 2002).

Betty Bigombe’s peace initiatives

Betty Bigombe was born (1957) into the Acholi tribe of northern Uganda. As an Acholi woman, throughout the conflict she used her positions, as a Minister and chief negotiator for the government of Uganda, to work tirelessly to restore peace and stability in northern Uganda (Oywa, 2002). Her determination to achieve peace and her life-risking acts of mediation brought her face to face with Joseph Kony who Royo (2008) describes as one of the most ruthless rebel leaders the world has known. She championed core humanitarian standards and, in order to identify the drivers of human insecurity, promoted what has come to be called human security principles. She identified acceptable local approaches which involved consulting different local stakeholders to get their opinions on how to end the conflict (Kisekka-Ntale, 2007). In doing so, she acquired a reputation for using a bottom-up approach in her efforts to bring peace to northern Uganda (Kisekka-Ntale, 2007). During numerous peace initiatives in which she was engaged, her approach offered new opportunities for resolving the conflict by using processes of effective negotiations (Quaranto, 2006). In short, Betty Bigombe’s peace initiatives were based on the promotion of human security through dialogue.

Her first peace initiative as Minister for Northern Uganda was between 1992 and 1994 when she began secret peace meetings with the aim of alleviating the anguish of the people in northern Uganda. Bigombe's initiatives enabled the establishment of contacts with the top leadership of the LRA and the top government army leadership. Her efforts in 1994 almost
succeeded in facilitating peace talks, however, talks collapsed at the last minute (Quaranto, 2006). Lack of trust between the government of Uganda and the LRA leadership was understood as the underlying cause for the collapse of these talks (Pham, Vinck, Wierda, & Stover 2005).

The second Bigombe initiative was from 2002-2005, when she continued with her efforts to mediate between the LRA and the GoU. However, the lack of skilled negotiators, who failed to consult all the concerned stakeholders on the progress of the peace talks, the lack of government support to uphold what had been agreed on, and the indictment of the top LRA leaders by the ICC (discussed below) led to the collapse of this round of talks. Nevertheless, Bigombe continued with her peace initiatives. On one occasion, her efforts bore some fruit when President Museveni offered an 18-day ceasefire from 4 February 2005 (Hovil, 2013, p. 3). However, as with other initiatives by Bigombe, this ceasefire did not last long.

During her negotiations for peace, Bigombe sought support from recognized traditional leaders and managed to arrange an unknown number of meetings with Kony, as well as her safe passage along with other commanders such as Komakech Omona to these meetings (Doom & Vlassenroot, 1999). Although her efforts did not end the conflict, they did lead to some top commanders of the LRA abandoning the rebellion and defecting to the government side (Apuuli, 2006).

As I observed at close quarters, Bigombe’s peace campaigns included a remarkable series of unexpected and unpredictable break-through encounters with Kony. She achieved these unique meetings with him by her deep understanding of the power of traditional participatory approaches, and her capacity to persuade members of his small leadership group to act as intermediaries. Through these meetings, she was able to learn more about who he was, and what his motivations were, than anyone else in the past had been able to discover. As a result, she was able to interpret for the government something of the motives and intentions of
the man it sought to destroy militarily (Bainomugisha & Tumushabe, 2005). In addition, on behalf of the government, she extended a hand of peace to the LRA by using the *Amnesty Act*. However, before the process could take off, President Museveni gave a seven-day ultimatum to the LRA to submit, which sabotaged her efforts. Museveni’s actions effectively ended Bigombe’s peace talks. The army leadership wanted the rebels to negotiate their surrender, while Bigombe wanted a settlement “where everybody was a winner” (Bainomugisha & Tumushabe, 2005, p. 28). The government in Kampala refused any suggestion that they should talk to the LRA. As a result, the LRA became completely unresponsive to government, except through military resistance: Kony continued his deadly operations.

Betty Bigombe’s initiatives proved crucial in terms of bringing the warring parties together. She used her local base as an Acholi, her interest in bringing peace in the area and her knowledge of the local language to persuade the LRA fighters to lay down their arms. However, as Dagne (2011) argues, because the GoU had international backing in the form of providing heavy weapons to fight the LRA, her initiatives were thwarted. Yet, it was on Bigombe’s efforts at opening contacts with the top leadership of the LRA that the Juba peace talks were based.

*Kony’s willingness to talk peace in November 2002*

While Bigombe was negotiating with the LRA in 2002, Kony wrote a letter to President Museveni through the Acholi Religious Leaders Peace Initiatives (ARLPI) (discussed below), showing his interest in ending the conflict through a negotiated settlement. Throughout the conflict, the ARLPI was instrumental in advancing the needs and articulating the suffering of the various stakeholders (Kasaija, 2006). In early 2003 both the LRA and the GoU announced a limited ceasefire aimed at enabling face-to-face talks to take place. The government formed what it called the Presidential Peace Team (PPT) headed by the First
Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Internal Affairs, Eria Kategaya, to lead these negotiations. However, the ceasefire lasted for only a few days because Museveni, citing the LRA’s failure to adhere to the ceasefire, retracted it and ordered a military offensive against the LRA. However, Quaranto (2007) suggests that it was the government’s bombardment of the proposed peace contact area which led to the failure of the meeting. The reasons for the PPT failure were: first, it was mainly formed to satisfy international pressure that the government try to end the misery of the people in northern Uganda. Second, there was no replacement for the head of the PPT when he was sacked due to his divergent views about the changing of the constitution to allow Museveni to stand for the third term. Third, the LRA made no effort to name its own negotiating team (Bainomugisha & Tumushabe, 2005). The government used this excuse to continue the offensive and the LRA continued to carry out attacks on protected camps and ambush military and civilian convoys.

The various peace initiatives discussed above failed to achieve their goal of stopping the conflict and proved costly to the security of the people in the region. The main challenge was the lack of trust between the two warring parties which acted as a stumbling block to any negotiated settlement of the conflict, enabling the continuation of threats to the human security of the people in northern Uganda.

**Local peace initiatives**

During the conflict, there were various local initiatives by different actors. Among them were the Acholi Leaders Peace Initiative, traditional Acholi leaders’ initiatives, the *Amnesty Act* and the role of the media in amplifying the conflict locally and internationally. These initiatives were people-centred and focused on how local people can best be involved and protected in order to improve security within their communities. In other words, they emphasized the advantages of using a human security approach in solving conflicts. However,
as with the national initiatives, local peace initiatives were unsuccessful in bringing peace and stability to northern Uganda.

**Acholi Religious Leaders Peace Initiative (ARLPI)**

The Acholi Religious Leaders Peace Initiative, is an interfaith peacebuilding and conflict transformation organisation, formed in 1997 to encourage and set up acceptable means of dialogue between the government and the LRA rebels. As a faith-based organization it advocated for a local, people-centred approach to ending the conflict (Apuuli, 2011). The main objective of the ARLPI was to stop conflict and re-establish peace in the region through negotiations involving all stakeholders. It was an umbrella organization of three religious’ groups, Catholics, Protestants and Moslems, who were based in the Acholi region (Apuuli, 2011). During the conflict (1988-2006), the ARLPI, in conjunction with other NGOs, advocated for a peaceful resolution of the conflict and a reconciliation process between the rebels and the community, facilitated contacts on both sides and organised people’s forums (Paul, 2014).

In contrast to other local humanitarian groups geared towards humanitarian assistance, the aim of the ARLPI was to bring peace to northern Uganda but not to provide aid (Otim, 2009). The ARLPI based its activities on the human security principle of working with different stakeholders within the community to highlight the threats the conflict caused the people. In its advocacy campaigns to end the conflict, it highlighted human security components of reducing fear and want and emphasising the need to live in a dignified environment. In a particularly effective summation of the situation, Bainomugisha and Tumusabe, suggest that the ARLPI “advocated vigorously for a comprehensive amnesty law intended to promote reconciliation, forgiveness and healing in the community” (2005, p. 50). Other areas emphasized by the ARLPIs’ program involved:
• Promoting the use of interreligious dialogues to both strengthen coexistence and pluralism.
• Equipping people with the skills to educate their respective followers about interreligious dialogue.
• Providing their followers with the necessary skills to become active facilitators in peace dialogue.
• Training their followers in conflict transformation to be active peacemakers in their respective communities.

The ARLPI’s effect on ending the conflict in northern Uganda cannot be underestimated (Kasaija, 2006). For many people in northern Uganda religion is not just an abstract and simple belief system, but something embedded in their daily life. Koppes (2012) argues that religion has been and will continue to be an important basis for individual and group identity in northern Uganda. I agree with Koppes. While working for Caritas, I saw religious leaders, in particular the Catholic Bishop of Gulu diocese, John Baptist Odama, a powerful preacher, effectively use his position to guide and motivate congregations during mass to strive for respect, peace, justice, tolerance and understanding in everyday life.

The role of the ARLPI in searching for peace and reconciliation was also recognized by Khadiagala (2001) who argued that engaging local and international actors the group was able to campaign for ways to alleviate the socioeconomic problems facing northern Ugandans (2001, p. ii). The ARLPI’s approach was important because it moved away from the usual “religious polarization and partisanship”. In doing so, it was “a courageous attempt to put an end to the cycle of violence” (Diaz, 2005, p. 27). Since the ARLPI was a locally-based organization formed to articulate the needs and priorities of the people, it provided a solid basis on which to discuss and find lasting solutions to the conflict. This provided a contrast to using
foreign interventions designed by international organizations, most of whom had no idea of the origins of the conflict.

During the conflict, religious bodies complemented the security efforts of the government. Although they were unable to deal with the underlying causes of the conflict, their activities helped reduce threats to the security of those in camps by creating development opportunities (Khadiagala, 2001). They also worked with government agencies and the international community to improve people’s physical, economic and social needs. As a result, they played a key role in reducing the threats to humanity and therefore improved, to some extent, people’s human security. Commenting on the role of the ALRPI in bridging the gap between the government and the local population in the conflict, Khadiagala (2001) suggests that by taking on a leadership role the ARLPI acted as a bridge-builder between the Acholi and the Ugandan government (Khadiagala, 2001).

Traditional Acholi leaders

Traditional leaders in the Acholi sub-region, through their paramount chief, Acholi cultural leader, Rwot David Onen Achana II, argued that they could deal with the LRA and end the conflict using traditional restorative approaches. They claimed that by using locally known, traditional dispute mechanisms, which emphasized all-inclusive engagement with the people affected, trust could be established with the LRA which could end the conflict (Apuuli, 2006). While working for Caritas, I observed traditional leaders in the region urge the government to use locally accepted and traditional dispute mechanisms, including addressing LRA grievances by using the human security principle of empowering individuals and local communities to manage and devise means of stopping the conflict and achieving stability in the region. In this case, effective mobilization of the Acholi people, combined with the government’s counter insurgency measures would have led to the defeat of the rebels, thus
leading to peace (Branch, 2005).

When the government referred the LRA case to the ICC, traditional leaders lobbied the government to stop outsiders interfering with what they thought was a local problem which required a local solution, and which could be dealt with by the traditional leaders. Traditional leaders’ views encouraged debate about which approach to justice was suitable for the northern Uganda situation, the local restorative approach or a retributive approach to justice. However, Baines (2007) makes the point that the justice debate was much more nuanced than that canvased by the government or the traditional leaders. She acknowledges that those affected directly by the conflict preferred the line taken by their traditional leaders arguing that peace should come first then justice later (Baines, 2007). Even though Acholi traditional leaders pleaded with the government to end the conflict by negotiated means, their pleas proved futile.

Most of the people in the affected region and many members within the LRA respected the traditional leaders. As Latigo (2008) argues, there was a need to use and listen to what the leaders had to offer, that Acholi people valued their local traditions, beliefs, norms and customs, and believed in them more than those of foreign politicians or judges. From my own observations, the use of traditional justice mechanisms, as advocated by the local leaders, would have been beneficial. Many local people were illiterate, so it was easier for them to relate to locally known mechanisms which they were familiar with, and which were also people-centred and conformed to the principles of human security. An advantage of engaging the traditional leaders in ending the conflict effectively using a human security approach was to bring decision making mechanisms closer to people and enable them to participate in matters affecting them in their community. Working closely with the Acholi communities and observing the ways they value and respect their local leaders; it was clear to me that this could have helped to end the conflict sooner.
The Acholi traditional justice system: *Mato Oput*

The persistence of the conflict and the indictment of the top leadership of the LRA (discussed below) raise questions of whether seeking justice before the conflict ended could help the situation. For this situation, the Acholi traditional leaders proposed a traditional justice mechanism which is built on restoring broken community relationships, a position supported by Pham, Vinck, Wierda and Stover (2005) who argue for the benefit of using traditional means and that the Acholi people should decide on how to deal with those who committed atrocities in a way acceptable to their victims.

The mechanism for clemency and compromise among the Acholi is *Mato Oput* (drinking the bitter herb). Traditional Acholi culture sees justice as a means of creating harmony among the people and restoring social broken relations. It views justice as restorative rather than retributive (Tom, 2006), encouraging individuals to admit their faults and be accountable for their actions. Individuals are encouraged to forgive and not to seek revenge. Tom (2006) describes *Mato Oput* as both a process and a ritual ceremony that aims at restoring relationships between clans that have been affected by intentional murder or accidental killing. Baguma (2013) also argues for the value of using the traditional justice system in the case of northern Uganda, suggesting that victims believed that prosecutions carried out by an international body would violate Acholi traditions and lengthen the war by complicating the LRA’s willingness to negotiate or surrender.

Among the people affected by the conflict who supported the use of *Mato Oput* were the former child soldiers who had come back to their communities. They argued that they had been forced to commit crimes. Some accused the government for failing to defend them. The use of a traditional justice mechanism, as performed in numerous areas in northern Uganda, could have reconciled people and helped to entice those still with the LRA to leave it.
Advocates of the traditional justice mechanism argued that what the people of northern Uganda needed was peace and that justice could come later or be dealt with in a traditional form (Blumenson, 2006, p. 809). Similarly, supporting the use of the traditional approach, MacGinty argues that “since conflict is often culturally located, then it is sensible that attempts to ameliorate and manage conflict are respectful of culture” (2008, p. 141).

However, not all have agreed: Muwereza (2011) states his scepticism about the appropriateness of using traditional forms of justice, noting that “when the crimes are of an international nature as is the case in northern Uganda, this renders local forms of justice inadequate” (2011, p. 115).

**The Amnesty Act 2000**

After the years of conflict between 1988 and 2000 and the continual suffering of the people in northern Uganda, religious, civil society organizations and traditional leaders began lobbying the government to institute an amnesty for the rebels, especially the LRA, so as to bring an end to the numerous rebellions in Uganda. A precedent for the amnesty was that Museveni had used an amnesty to bring back former leader Tito Okello and end the insurgency caused by the UPDA/M (Apuuli, 2005). Although the government at first resisted calls for the amnesty, it examined the matter and eventually responded with proposals for a new amnesty package, which became the *Amnesty Act 2000*. It was aimed at bringing stability specifically in the conflict-affected region of northern Uganda, through pardoning armed combatants, especially the LRA, so that they would abandon their rebellion. It was also aimed at convincing armed combatants who were fighting the government to hand over their weapons and be assisted in rebuilding their lives.

It corresponded well with a human security approach which emphasizes responding to people’s needs in dealing with the sources of threats. The amnesty covered any rebel
combatants who willingly surrendered and abandoned their involvement in the war. Nevertheless, the Act did not apply to the top five LRA commanders accused by the ICC for war crimes and crimes against humanity. The Act was implemented by an independent Amnesty Commission appointed by the government. Blattman & Annan (2008) stated that the Act pardoned genuine combatants since 1986, and their supporters, so long as they abandoned their rebel activities. However, Muldoon et al. (2014) point out that the “Commission only began providing certificates and aid to combatants that returned after 2000” (2014, p. 2).

According to Nannyonjo the major goals of the *Amnesty Act* were to:

- improve public and political leadership with regard to conflict resolution and reconciliation;
- promote dialogue and reconciliation among rebel groups;
- demobilize and process applicants seeking amnesty;
- provide resettlement assistance that included psychological support and health care, and financial assistance to those seeking amnesty; and
- facilitate long-term social and economic integration through income-generating and skills development programmes (2005, p. 12).

Although over 15,000 insurgents surrendered under the *Amnesty Act*, only about 4,000 received a reintegration package (Nannyonjo, 2005). To be granted an amnesty a person had to “sign a declaration denouncing their former activities. They were then registered, given an Amnesty Certificate and in theory, the reintegration package” (2005, p. 45). Notable among those who benefited from the amnesty were former LRA spokesperson, Brigadier Sam Kolo, former third-in-command of the LRA, Brigadier Kenneth Banya, and the chief operations officer, Brigadier Onen Kamdul (Apuuli, 2006). The *Amnesty Act* covered all those involved in insurgency through actually participating in the conflicts whether they were combatants or just supporters of the insurgency (Apuuli, 2006). This was supported by the majority of the
Acholi people, who were both victims and perpetrators of the war with the LRA (Blumenson, 2005).

The amnesty is still in place in 2019. Although the conflict in northern Uganda has finished, the LRA has continued to terrorize neighbouring countries. Even so, the government of Uganda continues to offer amnesty to former rebels through the Act. Also, the Act includes a pardon and exemption from criminal prosecution by the Ugandan government (Rose, 2008). The amnesty was not successful in stopping the LRA committing atrocities. Although several separate fighting groups used this initiative to abandon armed struggle in Uganda, the LRA did not because the amnesty excluded the top leadership who were the decision makers. Moreover, the overall effectiveness of the Act was jeopardized because the reintegration packages were funded by international donors, who restricted their funding because most favoured the ICC to deal with the conflict (Hovil and Lomo, 2005).

**The role of the media**

During the entire conflict, the local and international media played a big part in exposing the humanitarian crisis in the IDP camps. The media’s role in exposing the deteriorating situation to local and international communities and stakeholders emphasized upholding the human security element of protecting people in collaboration with other interested parties when disaster strikes. The media has a role to play in providing channels of communication between the governed and the government, presenting fresh perspectives on topical issues, and can act as a watchdog capable of sounding a genuine alarm (Acayo and Mnjama, 2004).

Apart from journalists, local politicians and human rights advocates helped bring attention to the extent of the humanitarian crisis in northern Uganda (Brisset-Foucault, 2011). Throughout the conflict, Ugandan journalists, especially those working at radio stations and
some politicians from northern Uganda, were instrumental in broadcasting peace and reconciliation messages in the area (Bongyereirwe, 2010). The media were actively engaged in changing and shaping people’s attitudes towards peace and reconciliation a role which was recognised before the conflict ended, attracting funding from Britain through its Department for International Development (DFID) (Daniel, 2010).

Some Ugandan media houses referred to themselves as the ‘voice of the voiceless’ in order to persuade people to participate in solving the conflict (Goretti, 2007). Despite the government’s efforts to play down the seriousness of the situation, media exposure led the international community to pressurise the government of Uganda and the LRA to end the conflict. It further provided the means of communication between the government and the people in the area. The media, both local and international, presented new perspectives on how the conflict could be solved through airing and writing about people’s views. Commenting on the role of the media, Bongyereirwe (2010) credits it with updating locals and the world about the situation caused by the LRA insurgency in the affected regions. Yet, Goretti (2007) suggests that, because journalists relied on the Ugandan army helicopters and trucks to take them to the conflict zone, the independence and objectivity of their reports was questionable.

International interventions

Although the LRA posed no real threat of overthrowing the government of Uganda, the failure of local initiatives highlighted the need for a different approach. However, as I have shown above, that did not occur through local interventions. The human suffering and the extensive human rights abuses in the region, coupled with international pressure, therefore led the government of Uganda to allow international involvement in attempting to solve the conflict. Because of atrocities committed by the LRA, international interventions in terms of
personnel, resources and legal means had to be employed to reduce the suffering caused by the LRA and to achieve peace. Also, as the LRA operated beyond Ugandan borders into South Sudan, the Democratic Republic of Congo and later on Central African Republic, the conflict had taken on an international dimension. Consequently, the international community became involved in tackling the problem. Notable among these international interventions were the involvement of the Carter Centre, Kacoke madit and the International Criminal Court (ICC).

**The Carter Centre and Nairobi Peace Agreement 1999**

The Carter Centre, which was headed by the former US President, Jimmy Carter, played a key role in normalizing relations between Uganda and Sudan (Neu, 2002). The two countries accused each other of supporting rebel groups fighting in their respective countries (Prunier, 2004; Vinci, 2007). These counter accusations gave the conflict in northern Uganda a regional/international dimension which complicated efforts to resolve the conflict. A report authored by the International Crisis Group (2004, p, 6) points out that “The LRA remains one of Khartoum’s proxy militias”. In their view, the LRA, lacked any specific political targets for which they were fighting. Rather, Sudan used the LRA to disorganize the Ugandan government because of Uganda’s presumed support to the Sudan People’s Liberation Army (SPLA). In 1999, Uganda and Sudan agreed to a mediation proposed by the Carter Centre which led to the normalization of diplomatic relations and the signing of the 1999 Nairobi Peace Agreement by both President Museveni and Sudan’s President Bashir (Neu, 2002).

The Agreement was intended to cease hostilities and stop both countries harbouring rebels and providing arms to each other’s rebels (Dunn, 2004). One of the reasons why Sudan accepted the mediation was to improve its international image. At that time, the USA regarded Sudan as a sponsor of terrorist groups including the LRA. Uganda was also under international pressure to end the conflict and the suffering of its people. Uganda claimed that had it not
been for Sudan’s military support to the LRA, the conflict would have ended long before. However, this argument was disputed by a Report for ACCORD authored by Ahere and Maina which stated that “it is doubtful that it was only Sudan’s support that strengthened the LRA. Years after Sudan withdrew its support and allowed Uganda’s forces to destroy the LRA’s operational bases in South Sudan, the UPDF has still not been able to capture Kony” (2013, p. 4).

The LRA accepted the Carter initiative in principle. However, Garang and the SPLA did not, which further complicated the issue. Despite, the in-principle acceptance of the initiative, it had no real effect on the warring parties’ military confrontations. Otto (2002) observed that, although many people had high hopes that the agreement would resolve the conflict, their enthusiasm was short-lived. The Nairobi Peace Agreement managed to restore diplomatic relations between Uganda and Sudan, but Sudan continued to support the LRA militarily (Dunn, 2004). Meanwhile, the security situation in northern Uganda continued to worsen because a peaceful settlement of the conflict never materialized.

**Kacoke Madit**

*Kacoke madit*, an Acholi word meaning a large meeting, involved international actors in the northern Uganda conflict holding a conference commissioned by International Alert in London in May 1997. Organizers of this meeting realized that the obstacles to any peaceful resolution to the conflict were based on poor relationships between the Acholi people, the LRA and the GoU. Immediately after the conference, which representatives of the GoU and the LRA also attended, the resolutions were implemented. However, infighting within the LRA about who should represent them internationally led to the failure of this initiative (Lucima, 2002).
The International Criminal Court

There has been much debate as to why the Ugandan government referred the situation in northern Uganda to the ICC and to the real timing of ICC’s intervention in the conflict. The government of Uganda would have preferred to handle its conflict with the LRA without attracting the attention of the international community. However, after 17 years of failing to defeat the LRA or to reach a settlement and because of the escalating humanitarian crisis and intense criticism from both local and international actors, the government decided, in December 2003, to end its international isolation and refer the case to the International Criminal Court so that the LRA’s crimes against humanity could be investigated (McNamara, 2013; Nouwen & Werner, 2010). Although the referral represented a tactic in the Ugandan military's attempt to defeat the LRA, not a shift of policy, it contained risks and opportunities for the Museveni government. Internationally the referral and subsequent indictments to the top LRA leaders were praised by human rights organizations and the UN. At the local level the Ugandan government, according to Burke White and Kaplan (2009), wanted to use the ICC to “provide an opportunity to raise the international profile of the conflict, to pressure the LRA and its supporters particularly Sudan and to transfer the political and financial costs of apprehension and prosecution to international actors” (Burke-White & Kaplan, 2009).

The crimes against humanity included murder, enslavement, torture, rape and enforced disappearance (Happold, 2007) and, since Uganda is a state party to the ICC, the government was able to invoke Articles 13(a) and 14 of the Rome Statute which allow for such a situation to be referred by a state party to the prosecutor. These articles according to Caesius (1999) indicate that “investigations may be initiated at the request of a state, but then the Prosecutor must immediately notify all other states, so as to enable those which intend to exercise their jurisdiction to rely upon the principle of complementarity” (1999, p. 162).
There is no agreement on the Ugandan government’s reasons for referring the LRA case to the ICC. By engaging the international community, Museveni was attempting to improve his chances of defeating the LRA while not having to contend with the logistics of doing so (Moy, 2006). Another possible reason is that the Ugandan government thought that indicting the top leadership of the LRA would force junior LRA commanders to surrender and seek amnesty (Apuuli, 2008). Other reasons for involving the ICC suggested earlier by Apuuli (2004) include wanting to force Sudan to expel the LRA from its territory, to mobilize support from neighbouring countries to fight the LRA and to get justice and reparations for the victims of the LRA. However, Freeland (2015) argues that a more accurate reason was that "Museveni was eager to alter European perceptions of Ugandan military activities and reshape Sudan's incentives in dealing with the insurgents" (2015, p. 296). Nouwen and Werner (2010) similarly emphasise that “The failing military operations and corruption scandals, the rapidly deteriorating humanitarian situation, and the classification of northern Uganda by the UN Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs as the ‘most forgotten and neglected crisis in the world’ were beginning to tarnish the government's reputation” (2010, p. 948). Akhvan (2010) argues for a simpler reason: simply to seek international cooperation in ending the conflict and the suffering of the people.

Among other reasons as to why the ICC became involved in the northern Uganda conflict that should be recorded here for the light they shed on attitudes within Uganda and within northern Uganda in particular, are that, first, the ICC was seen as a means of deterring further atrocities in northern Uganda. As Branch (2007) points out “there is a clear record of international crimes perpetrated by both the rebels and the government forces in northern Uganda, many within the ICC’s temporal mandate” (2007b, p. 182); secondly, donor countries like Britain and Denmark criticized some of the government’s policies and tactics on how it was handling the conflict and threatened to suspend aid to Uganda. This was due to the
government's increased defence expenditure which was far in advance of the money it was spending on social services, especially in the war-affected regions of the north. The third reason was the government's insistence on using a military approach instead of peace talks to end the conflict in northern Uganda. In fact, against the wishes of international donors much of the aid money supplied for humanitarian causes was being used by the Ugandan government to help arm its military in the eastern part of DRC where Uganda was fighting against another rebel group which was based in DRC (Branch, 2007). Uganda’s sending of troops to fight in the DRC was a concern for the donors as they saw it as yet another conflict which was impacting on the budget of a country which was also dependent on donor funds.

The ICC’s Chief Prosecutor, Moreno-Ocampo, also had his own agenda, not driven by the northern Uganda conflict but by international politics. As Branch (2007) suggests, “the fledging ICC faced the urgent need to establish its efficacy through a viable first case” (2007b, p. 186). Moreno-Ocampo wanted the institution to attain legitimacy as a working institution because since its creation in 2002 it had focused largely on its own internal formation. By 2005, he wanted to show the fledging Court’s credibility and efficacy by using the case of northern Uganda (Peskin, 2009).

Referring the situation to the ICC helped Uganda’s standing because the international community had accused Uganda of not doing enough to alleviate the suffering of the people in northern Uganda. The referral was a way of showing the international community that it was serious about stopping the conflict with the LRA. Akhavan (2005) emphasizes that ”the referral was an attempt to engage an otherwise aloof international community by transforming the prosecution of LRA leaders into a litmus test for the much-celebrated promise of global justice” (2005, p. 404). As it turned out, referring the case to the ICC did not provide a solution since the government had not sufficiently explored all local avenues of resolving the conflict,
especially the use of traditional justice systems, which many people in the affected region preferred.

Uganda's case was the first to be referred to the ICC by a member country. Thus, the ICC wanted to prove its own worth by investigating these alleged crimes against humanity: explained, "the voluntary referral of a compelling case by a state party represented both an early expression of confidence in the nascent institution's mandate and a welcome opportunity to demonstrate its viability" (Akhavan, 2005, p. 404).

The Ugandan government thought that the seriousness of the crimes committed by the LRA would mean that the ICC would deal with the case urgently, that the perpetrators would be punished, and subsequently the war would end. By referring the case to the ICC, the government managed to convince the international community to support its cause and discredit the LRA. Indeed, Freeland (2015) observed that "[b]y inviting external scrutiny and manipulating the investigative process, the Ugandan government received an international seal of approval for practices that the ICC would normally punish" (2015, p. 293).

In addition, Uganda wanted an independent international institution to deal with this case to avoid opening further differences between the north and south of the country (Akhavan, 2005). The focus of the investigation was made evident in 2004 at a shared press briefing of Moreno-Ocampo and President Museveni where they announced that the ICC would start preliminary investigations into “the situation concerning the Lord's Resistance Army” (Allen, 2005, p. 45).

After its investigations of the claims against the LRA, the prosecutor of the ICC on 8th July 2005 issued arrest warrants for five top LRA commanders for crimes against humanity. These included the leader of the LRA, Joseph Kony, his deputy, Vincent Otti, and other commanders, Raska Lukwiya, Okot Odhiambo and Dominic Ongwen. Their alleged crimes included rape, slavery, murder, sexual slavery, and forced enlistment of children (Rose, 2008).
The leaders of the LRA of course were opposed to being tried at The Hague, claiming they were innocent, had not done anything wrong and that most of the crimes were committed by the UPDF. During an interview with a journalist of *The Times* quoted in the *Africa Research Bulletin* (2006), Kony was questioned about the killings and kidnappings done in his name. He responded "That is not true. It's just propaganda. Museveni went into the villages and cut off the ears of the people, telling the people it was the work of the LRA".

The principle objective of the ICC was not however to solve the conflict between Museveni and the LRA, but rather to pursue any prosecutions that it considered warranted (Branch, 2007b; Peskin, 2009) despite Uganda’s long history of being divided along ethnic lines, which threatened to jeopardise the ICC’s efforts. These issues underpin the literature which discusses the case. Without specifying ethnicity, Di Giovanni (2005) for example, when discussing the ICC’s involvement, focusses a spotlight on the government’s failure to tackle the underlying grievances that pre-dated the fight with the LRA, while underlying ethnic tensions between the northern and southern parts of Uganda were perhaps another reason why the impartiality of the ICC was questioned (Allen, 2005). At the time of the referral, ethnic tensions were still rife, and because the government was dominated by southerners, its referral of LRA crimes to the ICC was questioned by northerners, particularly because both sides in the conflict had committed human rights abuses. However, the ICC ignored those of the UPDF (Allen, 2005, p. 45).

Another cause of concern about the ICC’s impartiality and neutrality was that the investigators carried out their investigations when the conflict was ongoing, so they were escorted to places which had been selected by the government (Ssenyonjo, 2007). Moreover, due to a complex situation whereby the ICC investigators needed cooperation and protection from the Ugandan army, it proved difficult to carry out an independent investigation (Ssenyonjo, 2007). The situation was further hampered as court officers had to rely on the
Uganda government army personnel to enforce arrest warrants (Clark, 2010). And among northern community leaders and those opposed to Museveni in Kampala it was a commonly held view that the court was not impartial but was being used by Museveni as a political tool (Clark, 2008).

What northern Ugandans wanted was the end of the war so that they could go back to their homes and forget about their life of misery in the IDP camps. However, the ICC insisted on retributive justice, not taking into consideration the local people's demands to deal with the crimes using traditional justice mechanisms which emphasise forgiveness and reconciliation (Armstrong, 2014). These issues later proved critical in negotiating a lasting settlement to the conflict during the Juba peace talks (discussed below). They generated debates on whether the ICC could successfully solve conflicts if, as would be advocated when using a human security approach, the wishes of the affected were not considered or addressed when negotiating a lasting solution to the conflict. In the northern Uganda conflict, victim communities urged the ICC to forgo prosecution in favour of a traditional Ugandan forgiveness and reconciliation process, the Mato Oput (Latigo, 2008).

Researchers such as Beitzel and Castle (2013), writing in favour of the ICC's intervention, note that "the warrants helped to bring the LRA/M leaders to the negotiating table in 2006" (2013, p. 43). They argue that this intervention effectively ended the insurgency in northern Uganda. However, Pham, Vinck, Wierda and Stover (2005) predicted that aiming for peace at the expense of justice was not a workable long-term plan and that the court's activities in Uganda prevented the LRA and its supporters from seeking a negotiated settlement to the conflict. Akhavan however saw some benefit in the ICC’s involvement, arguing that "the ICC referral significantly weakened the LRA by pressuring Sudan to stop harbouring rebel camps" and the “new found LRA willingness to negotiate with the government [was] a mark of desperation resulting from this new reality” (2005, p. 416). During the period 2004-5, the level
of violence did reduce dramatically, especially on the side of UPDF, possibly due to its fear of being reported to the ICC and prosecuted. Nonetheless, the LRA continued to carry out killings.

The ICC's investigations and its subsequent indictment of the LRA leaders helped legitimize Uganda's military policy against the LRA in the eyes of the international community but was unfortunate for northern Ugandans as military actions continued to cause them untold suffering (Branch, 2007b). Countries which supported the ICC, namely Denmark, Norway, Canada and UK, argued that, by intervening in the northern Uganda conflict, the ICC helped the government of Uganda set up the International Crimes Division of the High Court which helped to improve the country's rule of law and accountability. Ugandan courts could have tried the indicted LRA leaders without the judges being intimidated by the executive (Apuuli, 2008).

The question of the effects of the ICC on the local community generated widely different views. Diaz (2005) points out that "One of the positive things about the intervention of the ICC is that it … refocused attention to one of the most neglected humanitarian disasters in the world" (2005, p. 30). However, some northern Ugandans who supported the ICC's intervention at first, then changed their minds when they realized that the court could not arrest any of the perpetrators and also had to rely on government assistance in its fact-finding mission. Many others saw the ICC as an external and therefore a neo-colonialist institution which imposed foreign laws on Uganda, because of its perceived underdevelopment (Otim & Wierda, 2008). However, this is a mistaken view, because it is a requirement by the ICC that member states, such as Uganda modify their laws in accordance with ICC statutes. Since many locals had not heard of the ICC, it lacked legitimacy in their eyes (Schomerus, 2008). The ICC’s intervention complicated future locations of peace talks because countries which are signatories to the Rome Statute are obliged to extradite indicted persons to the court (Schomerus, 2008). Early in the process, it was clear that the ICC’s involvement would not be a quick solution to
the conflict because as Schomerus (2008) observes “it had no mandate or executive partner to act on its arrest warrants and seize the LRA’s elusive leaders” (2008, p. 94).

Ending the conflict was considered a priority by UN agencies and humanitarian and civil society activists operating in northern Uganda such as Caritas Internationalis, Save the Children, UNICEF, and World Vision. The UN humanitarian coordinator, Jan Egeland, urged Uganda to strike a deal with the LRA in order to stop the humanitarian crisis in the region (Otim & Wierda, 2008). However, to address the conflict and ease the misery of the people in the war-affected north, it was necessary to address other related issues created by the colonial administration like the social, economic and political imbalance between the north and the south of Uganda. Addressing such issues on a national level, using locally acceptable means rather than involving the ICC, would have helped to forge a way forward to amicably deal with them (Rose, 2008).

Internationally the referral and subsequent indictments of the top LRA leaders were praised by human rights organizations and the UN. The former UN secretary general, Kofi Annan, when commenting on the ICC’s involvement, praised it saying that the indictments “send a powerful signal around the world that those responsible for such crimes will be held accountable for their actions” (Moy, 2006b, p. 269). In northern Uganda though, indicting the LRA leaders further increased the threat to people's security. In fact, the ICC came under intense condemnation for its interference and was labelled by peace activists as a spoiler in the endeavour of bringing peace to the region. Apuuli (2006) observes that these criticisms came mainly from those who were working on the ground during the conflict to pursue a negotiated settlement: mainly religious leaders under their umbrella organization, the Acholi Religious Leaders Peace Initiatives (ARLPI), NGOs, academics and mediators.

The referral angered those who had been working on a negotiated settlement of the conflict because the people centred/human security approach, which they advocated and which
emphasizes placing the affected people at the centre of any meaningful discussions to end the conflict, differed completely to the ICC approach. The ICC's involvement created a tug of war between locals who wanted peace and many western countries which wanted justice. In Acholi culture, local approaches are based on rebuilding social trust and restoring the conditions of communal co-existence. All this is based on the principle of forgiveness and reconciliation which is people-centred as is the human security approach. However, western justice systems tend to promote exclusion from the community, which in turn can result in hatred directed at the perpetrators of crime. Hanlon (2006), commenting on which should come first, peace or justice, argues that, "For a westerner, forgiveness in lieu of justice sounds like impunity. For an African steeped in traditional justice what is surprising is that Museveni petitioned the ICC for the LRA situation, especially considering the African opinion of western jurisprudence" (2006, p. 298). In this view, widely accepted in Uganda, Museveni disregarded traditional practices.

The ICC’s involvement rotated around promoting values which are essential for justice, the redress and deterrence of crimes against humanity, as well as the necessity to restore peace in northern Uganda. However, the Court was accused of promoting what it was supposed to protect. Commenting on that issue, Pham, Vinck, Wierda and Stover (2005) suggest that in the northern Uganda situation there was a need to develop a strategy which incorporated local and foreign mechanisms intended to bring peace.

Arsanjani and Reisman (2005) argue that "To start war crimes investigations for the sake of justice at a time when the war is not yet over, risks having in the end neither justice nor peace delivered" (2005, p. 385). The ICC's involvement in the northern Uganda conflict meant local and international actors shifted their attention from the local communities who were suffering as a result of the conflict to the involvement of ICC in the conflict. This change of attention prolonged the debate on whether peace should come first before the justice or both
should be pursued simultaneously. As previously mentioned, for many of the people who were suffering, the dream was to have peace and, as a result, justice to follow. Traylor (2009) though, viewed the ICC’s arrest warrants as likely to hinder “efforts to bring an end to the conflict” (2009, p. 34).

Furthermore, the situation in northern Uganda provided an insight into how internationally led peace initiatives can jeopardize local peace processes. This can be seen in the case of the LRA refusing to sign the final Juba peace agreement (below). On the other hand, local initiatives, which emphasized the individual needs approach to ending the conflict, were accepted by the majority of the northern Uganda people. Allen (2005) encapsulates the negative effects of the ICC's involvement on the security of the people in northern Uganda. He claims it was biased, had the potential to increase violence especially against children and witnesses, that it damaged the peace process by undermining the amnesty and ceasefire and that it “ignore[d] and disempower[ed] local justice procedures” (2005, p. iv).

The ICC intervention in northern Uganda conflict undermined the principles of human security because individuals were not regarded as central. According to civil society groups and most of the local Acholi population, the arrest warrants associated with the ICC indictment made the peaceful resolution of the conflict less likely (Apuuli, 2006). The LRA did not want to be tried either locally or in a foreign court and they were not willing to surrender to the Ugandan government. Also, since the Ugandan military approach had failed to defeat the LRA or capture its leader, the ICC's intervention was unlikely to change the situation since the ICC did not have a mechanism to arrest perpetrators of crimes.

The ICC's action of investigating only the LRA and not the UPDF during the conflict was seen as showing that the ICC put itself and the institution's credibility first, instead of the plight of the people suffering in the conflict, and undermining the human security approach of treating people equally (Sinclair 2013). Yet, while Branch (2007) can argue that "the Ugandan
government cynically referred the ongoing conflict to the ICC, expecting to restrict the ICC’s prosecution to the rebels in order to obtain international support for its militarization and to entrench, not resolve the war” (2007, pp. 179-180), since it is not within the jurisdiction of the ICC to arrest suspects, the main reason why the ICC ignored crimes committed by the Ugandan military should rather be read as pragmatic. It needed cooperation from the government to investigate the allegations.

In responding to threats to ordinary people, the human security approach first identifies the sources of those threats. Both the LRA and the UPDF were sources of threats to the people of northern Uganda. Although the prosecutor at that time, Moreno-Ocampo, promised to carry out more investigations into the conflict, nothing was done, prompting writers such as Sinclair (2013) to argue that justice will not be served until the UPDF actions during the war have been investigated. Indeed, commenting on this imbalance, Sinclair points out that "it is hard for the victims of conflict in Uganda to entrust [sic] the ICC when it is not considering the totality of the situation" (Sinclair, 2013, p. 78).

As the western interventionist approach of the ICC as opposed to the localized people centred/human security approach, shows, external solutions are sometimes not effective. The human security approach devises means to best protect the people most affected by the decades of conflict who, as Di Giovanni (2005) relates, continue to express fear and resistance to historical problems created by the colonialists. His argument then was that intervention would most likely lead to a continuation of their suffering.

Further, the people centred approach of responding to people's needs within their communities, based on local values, was severely undermined by the ICC’s involvement in the conflict. Jackson (2009) argues that the Acholi claimed the northern region was left underdeveloped intentionally, so solutions to the conflict should refer to local norms embedded in traditional ways of reconciliation which Ojok (2014) refers to as being interpersonal,
intercommunity or intertribal depending on the magnitude of the offences committed. Ssenyonjo (2005) points out that the government’s *Amnesty Act* of 2000, which was overwhelmingly supported by Uganda's opposition groups and traditional and religious leaders, would have been enough to persuade the rebels to come out of the bush and stop the conflict. The ICC's involvement jeopardized those amnesty initiatives because the rebels feared being arrested and tried at The Hague. Yet, what Ssenyonjo does not account for is that, despite the *Amnesty Act*, the conflict continued in the years before the Ugandan referral of the case to the ICC.

The ICC wanted to combine peace and justice simultaneously in an effort to solve the conflict. However, those affected by the conflict had mixed feelings on the issue of peace and justice. Clark (2007) argues that advocates of people affected by the conflict believed there was a need to have "a multi-faceted transitional justice response, combining several processes and institutions to address different types of harm caused by different levels of perpetrators" (2007, p. ii). As discussed above, the ICC’s intervention jeopardized and weakened local peace initiatives while, when left alone, local peace mechanisms usually had a greater impact because they were traditionally accepted by the concerned people. Yet, as Grono and O'Brien (2008) argue, "it is difficult to tell victims of these conflicts that the prosecution of a small number of people should take precedence over a peace deal that may end the appalling conditions they endure and the daily risks they face" (2008, p. 14).

The ICC's involvement in the conflict was praised as an achievement by some international communities and some human rights advocates. Nonetheless, victims of LRA atrocities preferred a reconciliation and reintegration process within their communities (Lanz, 2007) 9). This suggests that to be successful, international interventions need to be backed by the full participation of local communities. Although the ICC is internationally recognized by a number of countries and has set out operational procedures, there is a need to scrutinize its
operations especially in cases dealing with a notorious rebel group like the LRA: because the ICC's intervention jeopardized a negotiated settlement in northern Uganda, the LRA exported its activities to neighbouring countries, affecting people's security in those countries.

Future research is needed to examine how best the ICC could intervene in ongoing conflict situations like that in northern Uganda and how its intervention affects the victims of the conflict. Such research is necessary especially because the ICC's intervention helped the Uganda government rescue its credibility in the eyes of the international community, while at the same time undermining the security of affected people (Happold, 2007).

**Regional peace initiatives**

Regional efforts to solve the conflict were dismissed by the government of Uganda, which insisted this was a local problem which could be solved locally, using local means. Thus, from the beginning of the conflict, regional countries had offered few resources and little commitment in the fight against the LRA even though the conflict had impacted on the security of neighbouring countries in the region. However, in the end, it was regional efforts which led to the Juba peace talks, which proved to be a turning point in the northern Uganda conflict and the start of that region’s recovery process.

**The Juba peace talks 2006-2008**

Before the beginning of the Juba peace talks both local and international initiatives had failed to bring the two warring parties together. For example, in 2004 there were efforts aimed at solving the conflict when the LRA appointed two senior commanders, Vincent Otti and Sam Kolo, to negotiate on their behalf (Dagne, 2011). However, Kolo’s defection to the government side undermined that prospect of a peaceful settlement.
In 2006, when South Sudan became semi-autonomous and following the ICC indictments, Kony declared his wish to conduct peace talks. These talks also coincided with the address of Bishop Baptist Odama, by then the chairman of the ARLPI, to the UN Security Council about the situation in northern Uganda which had the effect of persuading the UN, with the assistance of the international community, to participate in peace talks in Juba, southern Sudan. The mediator was the then Vice President of South Sudan, Lt. Gen Dr. Riek Machar Teny Dhourgon, a former rebel in Sudan's own north-south war. After meeting Kony in the bush near the Congolese border in May 2006, he began mediating between the LRA and the government of Uganda.

These UN-backed talks were the result of intense pressure from local and international peace activists (Kasozi, 2012): Stakeholders included the local populations, religious and faith-based groups and civil-society groups, and countries such as Canada, the Netherlands and Norway that had been persistent peace advocates (Omach, 2011a). The talks, also supported by South Africa, Kenya, DRC and Tanzania in the form of military personnel who formed the bulk of Cessation of Hostilities Monitoring team (CHMT), generated a lot of enthusiasm among peace activists in those countries (Quinn, 2009b). Other groups who supported these talks were the traditional and religious leaders from northern Uganda. For them, peace, based on their traditional values, was their highest priority and the basis for a new beginning (Armstrong, 2014). In more than 20 years of conflict in northern Uganda, there had never been such an extensive involvement of international actors focused on finding a lasting solution to the conflict. In addition, the Juba talks, unlike previous talks, promised a negotiated settlement because the agenda emphasised ‘reconciliation and accountability’ (Baines, 2007). As a participant in these talks, I was constantly aware that many humanitarian organizations considered these talks crucial to improving security on the ground which would mean they could extend their services. The visible longing for peace extended even further:
while at Atiak camp for example, on my way to Juba for the peace talks, I observed that people in the camp were praying day and night for the success of these talks.

The Juba talks coincided with changing circumstances in the conflict between north and South Sudan. The agreement between the north and the SPLM/A to permit a semi-autonomous country had a significant bearing on the northern Uganda conflict. During that period, the Government of South Sudan was interested in ending abductions and massacres by the LRA in its own territory and stabilizing the fledgling peace agreement in South Sudan (Baines, 2007). In a similar way, the improving relationship between south and north Sudan raised prospects for peace in northern Uganda as it was anticipated that the support from Sudan to the LRA would be cut off (Valérie, 2008).

It is my contention that finding a lasting solution to the conflict demands a concerted effort by all the relevant countries to address the historical issues related to the conflict. However, this still has not happened at the time of writing (May 2019). The LRA is still at large and continuing its reign of terror in countries north of Uganda. My position is supported by Omeje and Hepner who have pointed out that even those peace negotiations in Uganda which have been called successful, have not addressed “the historical and political-economic factors at the root of the conflict and their cross-border or regional ramifications” (2013, p. 86). However, as discussed below, the Juba peace talks tried to address the historical problems during the agenda setting for the talks.

At the beginning of the Juba talks, August 20, 2006, both the government of Uganda and the LRA representatives signed a Cessation of Hostilities Agreement (CoHA). This resulted in a cessation of brutal attacks occurring in northern Uganda. There were a number of agendas which formed the basis of the Juba peace talks (Rose, 2008). Agenda one, the CoHA, was the first formal agreement signed between the LRA and the GoU since the conflict started and was aimed at creating a favourable environment for talking about peace. Both parties
agreed that the LRA fighters should assemble at two areas, Owiny Ki-bul in the semi-autonomous region of Southern Sudan, and Ri-kwangba near the DRC border.

Under this agreement all armed combatants had to leave Uganda and assemble in the agreed areas, assembly points, which effectively ended the presence of LRA in northern Uganda, and so the conflict in northern Uganda (Price, 2007). As part of the conditions set by the LRA to participate in these talks, the LRA demanded to be given basic social services in order to be able to concentrate on the talks, which was accepted by the Mediation Secretariat. According to Sebukyu (2006), then-Deputy Director of Caritas Uganda, the assembled combatants were to be given basic social services, food, sanitation facilities, medicine and other nonfood items. These were to be supplied by Caritas Uganda as a development arm of the Catholic Church with support from the international community, specifically Danish Aid. Since Caritas was well known by both parties and had the experience, knowledge and good working relationship with both the LRA and the government, they chose Caritas to provide the basic needs as requested by the assembled combatants. It took only three weeks for the first delivery to arrive at the two assembly points (Ri-kwangba and Owiny Kibul in the bush. They came by truck from Kampala, 320 kilometres to Gulu, and then more than 300 kilometres north-east along muddy unmade roads (bush tracks) to the assembly point.

The monthly deliveries by Caritas continued throughout the peace talks, a strong indication of the trust LRA had in Caritas. During this period, my team and I put in much effort to create an acceptable atmosphere to create friendship between Caritas and the LRA. This was exemplified when different visitors, including members of the Mediation Secretariat and the CHMT, to the assembly area were stopped and asked very many questions at the LRA-manned roadblocks, while as Caritas staff we could continue to move freely without being questioned, as we had done during the years we had already worked in the area. Another indication of the trust the LRA put in Caritas, was that we were allowed to provide basic social
services for the LRA women and children (who stayed in the bush, not coming into the assembly area), but when UNICEF wanted to establish a camp for those women and children to provide similar services, the LRA emphatically refused this proposal.

However, while we had no violence even threats from the LRA, other incidents which stay in my mind did happen. One was when one of our staff was taken hostage by members of a South Sudanese community which we used to pass on our way to the assembly area. They claimed that we needed to compensate them for the atrocities which the LRA did to their community. They felt that, LRA was getting assistance from our programme, and so should they. He was released unharmed a week later, but only after negotiations with the South Sudanese government. The other such incident that stays with me was when LRA attacked an SPLA camp and killed several soldiers and stole their guns. My team and I did not know about the fighting until we reached that area and were all of us detained for two days by the SPLA, claiming that we Ugandans were collaborating with the LRA to kill South Sudanese.

However, in both these two incidents, we managed to contact the UN representative who worked with the Mediation Secretariat (headed by the vice President of South Sudan), which sent Special Forces from the United Nations Mission in Sudan (UNIMIS) who negotiated our release.

After the assembly areas had been set up in South Sudan, what followed was relative and sustained peace and fewer reported abductions and killings in areas where the LRA had been based (Grono & O’Brien, 2008). Although there was considerable intimidation by the LRA in the two assembly areas, these talks were seen by many as the best hope for ushering in peace in northern Uganda since the conflict began (Grono & O’Brien, 2008; Pham & Vinck, 2007).

Agenda two was signed on May 2, 2007. This centred on finding a lasting solution
to the end of the conflict and at improving democratic governance, the reintegration process of LRA combatants and the general recovery process. Agenda three was signed on June 29, 2007. This focused on accountability and reconciliation and was aimed at identifying and designing acceptable justice mechanisms to accelerate the reconciliation process which were acceptable to both sides.

Other agendas which included the permanent ceasefire and the agreement on the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of the rebel fighters were discussed and signed. However, only the GoU signed the final peace agreement. The leader of the LRA refused to come to the final signing ceremony, citing fears of not understanding some of the clauses in the agreement (Spiegel & Prendergast, 2008). Irrespective of the failure to have the final peace agreement signed, the talks seemed to offer a lasting solution to the problems of northern Uganda. Peace and stability were ushered in enabling the implementation of various recovery programmes and some of the resolutions decided on during the Juba peace talks. Thus, the reconstruction process began.

Although the Juba peace talks were a regional initiative, external influences, mainly the insistence of the ICC to prosecute the top leadership of the LRA rather than using locally known approaches, ended the talks prematurely (Lanz, 2007). The ICC was a major obstacle to the success of the Juba peace negotiations mainly because the LRA leaders feared for their own survival and safety (Lanz, 2007). During the Juba peace talks, international institutions like the UN, UNICEF, AU and countries like Denmark, Sweden, Britain, the United States and Canada contributed a considerable amount of material resources and diplomatic effort (Quinn, 2009). For some commentators, however, these efforts were too little, too late. Armstrong (2014), for example, argues that the war would not have continued nearly so long if the international community had made such contributions earlier (Armstrong, 2014, p. 594). However, during the time I worked in northern Uganda (2002-2008), and during my
participation in the Juba peace process of (2006-2008), I saw no indication that increased financial, technical and diplomatic resources would have been enough to end the conflict. This conflict was fought on ideological grounds and I argue that to end it the need was for understanding and work on the issues which had caused the conflict.

During the Juba negotiations, I realized that there was improved communication between the LRA and the government which was not the case previously. Indeed, during the Juba peace process, amnesty was extended to LRA combatants and their leaders plus welfare and security (Le Sage, 2011). However, this was against the ICC principles (Le Sage, 2011). Northern Ugandan communities also benefitted as commitments to improve security and provide more development aid and government employment were also offered to northerners. This was visible as early as 2007, when the situation in northern Uganda visibly improved. The signing of the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement in August 2006 was instrumental in that process because it also led to improved security and the beginning of the return of some internally displaced persons to their former homes (Otim & Wierda, 2008).

In northern Uganda, after more than two decades of fighting, people were testing peace, and many were optimistic of the outcome. The improved security situation enabled people to move freely outside the camps and start growing food crops in nearby gardens without the fear of abduction which they had had in the past. The outcome of the Juba peace talks paved the way for peace, recovery and development in northern Uganda (Kasozi, 2012; Martin, Petty, & Acidri, 2009).

The sticking point of the Juba peace talks came though when Kony refused to sign the final document. He said he feared the ramifications of the ICC’s indictment and claimed that he did not understand the document. The LRA also claimed it was willing to stop fighting but only if its leaders were given immunity by the ICC which indicated Kony understood the implications of the indictments and wanted assurance that he would not be sent to The Hague.
if he signed the final peace agreement (Keller, 2007). The other leaders of the LRA who had also been indicted by the ICC feared attending the Juba peace talks meetings, so it was left to some prominent Acholi exiles to negotiate on their behalf. This led Dylan and Kennedy (2012) to point out that “The LRA’s reliance on ‘political proxies’ – many of whom were more like consultants than genuine representatives, and whose loyalty and competence was consequently in doubt, further confused negotiations” (2012, p. 5). The different views possessed by each of the LRA delegates undermined the talks because they often misinterpreted the discussions at Juba, which almost certainly confused the indicted leaders of the LRA still in the bush (Otim & Wierda, 2010). A lot of time and resources were spent in establishing contacts with these top leaders because they issued orders to their representatives using satellite phones, which proved costly and complicated the negotiations.

Supporters of the ICC during the Juba peace talks continued pressing for its involvement. At the same time, the ICC insisted on prosecuting the leadership as per the Rome Statute. Armstrong (2014) argues that “the indictments against the rebels had an impact on the LRA/M leadership and influenced their decisions” (2014, p. 594). From the beginning of the negotiations between the government of Uganda and the LRA at Juba, the issue of dropping the ICC’s indictment of the top leadership dominated and complicated proceedings at the negotiating table.

Traditional and religious leaders from the Acholi sub-region realised that the ICC’s judgement was a stumbling block to solving the conflict and raised the possibility of reviving traditional cultural ceremonies in order to end the conflict. However, as discussed above, this strategy received little support from the international community which continued to advocate for retributive not restorative justice (Baines, 2007). Otim and Wierda (2008) explain the religious and traditional leaders’ form of justice which emphasises “forgiveness, reconciliation and reintegration over trial and punishment” (2008, p. 22). Following a western
perspective, Branch (2007b) argues that the move by the traditionalists to use traditional justice arose from a sense of exasperation and desperation, rather than from its merits as a solution. This is supported by Allen, Wadell and Clark (2008), who argue that because there was a diversity of ethnic groups affected by the conflict, there was no clarity about which rituals and ceremonies would be most appropriate, which would have made it impossible to apply a traditional justice system. However, if a traditional justice system, such as *Mato Oput* which aimed at bringing unity, peace and justice by determining who the guilty were, had been used, then seeking expressions of remorse, compensation and finally reconciliation clearly could have worked (Oola, 2008).

Nonetheless, the signing of the CoHA in Juba in 2006 brought relative stability to the war-ravaged northern Uganda (Armstrong, 2014). Among the positive outcomes of the Juba Peace talks was improved security and the government started drafting programmes which removed restrictions on the movement of people and subsequently led to the return of almost all IDPs to their original homes. Once home, and because they no longer feared being abducted, people started to plant crops and engaged in other income generating activities. Further, the government of Uganda and the LRA reached agreement on addressing some of the historical origins of the conflict which had affected the country since independence, thus providing a basis for future peace talks (Armstrong, 2014). The brutality of LRA was a thing of the past and the Acholi were returning to their land: the long process of reconstruction begun (Branch, 2014).

**Reasons for the limited success of the Juba peace talks**

Although the talks did not achieve complete success, as many hoped, one notable accomplishment was peace in northern Uganda. A critical look at the Juba peace talks shows that both sides were sceptical of each other. The LRA complicated the negotiations by raising
the issue of the ICC. Also, as agreed in the CoHA, the LRA refused to comply and assemble at Ri-Kwangba and Owiny Kibul (Valérie, 2008). As I was able to witness, the LRA leader, Joseph Kony, did not attend any meetings at the Juba peace talks yet he was a key person to the success of these talks. During the entire talks, Kony only appeared twice (seen once in the photograph below) and both times, it was at the assembly area at Ri-Kwangba from where he made decisions on most of the key agenda points, which were then conveyed by his representatives to the Juba peace talks. Kony’s refusal to attend any meeting, sending only representatives, hampered any meaningful outcome of these negotiations since he was regarded as the final decision maker in the LRA’s ranks.

Figure 6. Photograph of top LRA Commanders. Joseph Kony (middle) flanked by his Deputy, Vincent Otti (to Kony’s left), and other LRA commanders attending a meeting with the mediator Riak Machal, Vice President of South Sudan at Ri-kwangba one of the assembly areas agreed on at Juba peace talks. Note the expression on Otti’s face, although he was often at the assembly area, was always wary, and very attentive what was happening, while Kony, a commanding figure even when seated, came out of the bush so really his every word was listened to intently. (Photo: The author, 2007).

The ICC’s involvement in the northern Uganda conflict aided in forcing the LRA to the negotiating table. As I and other Caritas staff observed whenever we visited the designated assembly areas at the start of these talks, up until he himself disappeared (mid-2007) almost
certainly killed on the orders of Kony, Vincent Otti who was the LRA’s ruthless second in command, was always there waiting to talk to us. The ICC’s insistence that the Uganda government hand over the indicted LRA leaders though, meant that ultimately the talks failed. Indeed, many people, including peace activists, blamed the ICC for jeopardizing the Juba peace talks and attribute their partial failure to the ICC’s arrest warrants for the top leadership of the LRA (Branch, 2007b; Otim & Wierda, 2008). Fish (2010) is also critical of the ICC’s role arguing that it “maintained that any effort to reach peace with the LRA violated Uganda's obligations under the Rome Statute and that the only solution for Museveni was to continue fighting until Kony was either killed or sent to The Hague” (2010, pp. 1707-1708).

Another contributing reason, according to Fish (2010), was the “inability of the ICC prosecutor or the Pre-Trial Chamber to suspend a case after the indictment stage [even though it] undermined the peace negotiations in Juba between the LRA and the Ugandan People’s Defence Force (UPDF)” (2010, p. 1705). Apuuli cites another reason, that the LRA’s desire to use the talks to state their case against the ICC’s arrest warrants. He contended that “the LRA representatives … would not conclude a peace agreement when the warrants were ‘hanging around the necks’ of their commanders” (2011, p. 117).

In addition, Kony and the others who had been indicted were opposed to an ICC trial (Keller, 2007), while (Bartlet, 2008) identifies another problem, that Kony’s claims to be unable to distinguish between the ICC and the Special Division of the Uganda High Court, the setting up of which was agreed on during the Juba peace talks as a way to prosecute LRA combatants, shows that there was a lack of clear communication between those negotiating on behalf of the LRA at the Juba peace talks and Kony. However, as Kony had the help of advisors qualified in international legal systems, his claims of not understanding the difference were probably a ploy, although his reasons will never be known for sure. Since the “disappearance” of his deputy Vincent Otti in mid-2007, there have been no public sightings
of any of those indicted. After the Juba talks, most LRA communications were issued by LRA representatives (Mwaniki, 2009).

The LRA used the Juba peace talks, according to Le Sage (2011), as a breathing space to re-organize themselves in DRC, which was not on good terms with Uganda. The LRA thought that DRC was relatively safe because of the vast forests and because at that time DRC’s security forces had no control over the area. The LRA took advantage of the situation and set up their bases in DRC.

Price (2007) attributes the limited success of the Juba peace talks to the different life styles of the LRA in the bush and the LRA’s negotiating team. The representatives of the LRA comprised mainly of people from the diaspora, who had fled the country many years previously and who had little experience of the life of the combatants. This led Price (2007) to conclude that the negotiating team had “their own political agenda and in fact, [had] little in common with LRA leader Joseph Kony and his hardened fighters who have been living and waging their rebellion in the bush for most of their lives” (2007, p. 33).

Although the Juba peace talks did not achieve their goal, they marked the end to the misery of the people of northern Uganda. By 2016, ten years after the war ended, almost all the former IDPs had gone back to their original homes. Relative peace in the region led to the beginning of the recovery process, which is discussed in the next chapter.

Before the Juba peace talks, negotiations, at international, regional, national and local levels had failed to achieve a peaceful resolution to the northern Uganda conflict. During the almost twenty years of conflict, there was little meaningful dialogue between the GoU and the LRA as neither party trusted the other. Resolution was further complicated by the LRA’s failure to participate in a number of attempted peace negotiations.
Peace initiatives

Previous chapters have established that the principal areas which threatened the security of the people in northern Uganda, beyond but underpinning the massive violence, were issues of economic underdevelopment, a lack of good governance, inadequate food, health and educational facilities, excessive human rights abuses, and poor security. Understanding the importance of addressing these issues and relating them to any initiative to bring peace in the area was of paramount importance. These threats to people’s security necessitated a thorough understanding of the perceptions of those affected and required their involvement in designing ways to remedy the problems. In northern Uganda, threats to security, which were related to a colonial ‘divide and rule’ regime, triggered the conflict and its catastrophic consequences. The application of a human security approach in designing appropriate measures to address this division could have reduced some of the suffering of the people of northern Uganda. However, as Acharya (2001) points out such an approach “calls for a shift in security thinking from state security to security of the people, which includes both individuals and communities” (2001, p. 449).

In using a bottom-up approach in dealing with issues which affected ordinary people caught up in the northern Uganda conflict, the human security approach could have offered religious, traditional and other peace activists the opportunity to argue that in order to end the conflict those involved should sit down and discuss their differences. When the LRA and the government of Uganda seriously engaged in the Juba peace talks, the conflict ended in northern Uganda, though it was exported to other countries. During the Juba peace talks, the major stakeholders’ involvement was a key factor in their success. The only reason the peace talks were not completely successful was the ICC’s top-down approach, which the LRA rejected. Advocates of the people centred/human security approach point to the interference of the ICC in jeopardizing the successful ending of the LRA insurgency. Although this sounds
controversial, had the government included Acholi in the planning and to lead the troops in its fight against the LRA, it would have defeated the rebels and thus achieved to peace more quickly (Branch, 2005). Paris (2001) explains that in conflict situations “peace builders should focus on root causes of conflict, pay attention to the differences in local conditions from one operation to the next, seek sustainable and durable results and mobilize local actors and resources in support of peace” (2001, p. 93). In northern Uganda, these principles were not always adhered to, although there were examples where they were. For instance, the amnesty programme, which was people-centred, was overwhelmingly supported by traditional leaders, religious leaders and some NGOs. However, a lack of support from international donor countries undermined this initiative. Another preferred local option, the use of traditional justice systems such as \( (Mato Oput) \) which involves the affected people’s participation was undermined because the government preferred to use the ICC which in turn severely affected the Juba peace talks. Generally, most of the peace initiatives were too narrow to address the origins of the conflict, which according to human security principles, were likely to undermine finding a lasting solution.

The government’s continued use of a military approach contrasted with the approach of consulting with individuals when it comes to their protection. The various security threats experienced during the conflict because of the military offensive against the LRA brought continued misery to the people. What the government needed to do was to be more attentive to the advice given by the local communities, ARLPI and traditional leaders and abandon their military approach. GoU actions showed the deep divisions between the members of the southern-dominated government and people from northern Uganda. Such an environment could not favour the application of the human security approach. The international community was right to pressure the government of Uganda to deal with the humanitarian catastrophe shaped by the persistence of the LRA insurgency. However, as I argued then, and continue to
argue now, their involvement was not always appropriate to solving the conflict.

Human security and peace-building initiatives are pre-requisites for good governance. The Government of Uganda failed to achieve good governance by not addressing the issues which instigated the conflict and so it persisted for over two decades.

Conclusion

This chapter has discussed the various peace initiatives instigated by international, regional, national and local bodies to end the conflict in northern Uganda. It has demonstrated that foreign-based interventions and the deep-rooted ethnic divisions failed to end the conflict. Rather they contributed to a continuation of the threats to the security of the people of northern Uganda. The failure of the peace initiatives meant the LRA continued to inflict horrific security threats on northern Ugandans and people in the neighbouring countries of DRC, South Sudan and CAR. The Juba peace process made substantial inroads in shifting the battle front from northern Uganda and led to significant enhancement in the lives of many IDPs as it enabled them to start moving back to their original homes. Consequently, the Juba peace talks ended the conflict in northern Uganda and marked the beginning of the recovery process which will be explored in the next chapter.
Chapter Seven

The post-conflict recovery process in northern Uganda

Introduction

This chapter examines the recovery period from July 2006 to August 2016, discussing the difficulties which formerly displaced people in northern Uganda faced returning to their former places of residence, and the roles played by the government of Uganda and humanitarian organizations in assisting those returnees to resettle. It addresses these through further testing of the second hypothesis of the thesis: the extent to which the shifting and multiple meanings of security and people centred/human security principles held by key actors in the northern Ugandan conflict impeded the socio-economic reconstruction of northern Uganda. In arguing that human security could have been a productive concept, it was ultimately of limited value in protecting northern Ugandans during the conflict situation. The consequences of the withdrawal of many INGOs which were implementing their activities in line with people centred/human security principles at the beginning of the recovery period and the effects of those withdrawals on people’s security, especially that of former IDPs, are examined through analysis of conditions in northern Uganda following the end of the Juba peace talks (2006), the decongestion process of the IDP camps, the challenges encountered by international, national and local actors, and the security implications of their initiatives.

As we have seen, the completion of the Juba peace talks and the relocation of the LRA from northern Uganda to neighbouring countries brought peace and stability to northern Uganda (Drost, van Wijk, & de Boer, 2014; Joireman et al., 2012). The improved security situation marked the beginning of the resettlement of thousands of people from IDP camps and the relocation of others from the bush, nearer to main roads. Working in northern Uganda for ten years at a critical time, it became evident to me that the relatively secure environment in was enabling very large numbers, perhaps as many as half, of the 1.8 million displaced persons
to return home. The improved security and peace situation led to new economic activities, indicating that investor confidence in the region was rising, marked also by extensive movement on the road connecting Uganda and Sudan, the opening of new bank branches, and traders moving freely around and between districts (International Alert, 2008).

Nonetheless, for more than two decades, the region had been characterized by displacement, the breakdown of traditional social support networks, the erosion of positive cultural values, a significant increase in women and child-headed households, chronic violence, the continued spread of HIV and economic depression. Those situations did not disappear overnight. Humanitarian agencies, policy makers and the government of Uganda, all with limited resources, faced tough decisions on where and how to manage the recovery process.

The process of recovery was the government of Uganda’s responsibility to spearhead (Bertasi, 2013). Constitutionally the government was required to design recovery programmes, increase budgetary allocations to improve the provision of basic services, and strengthen security so that people could move back to their original homes (Omona, 2008). In conjunction with foreign donors it responded by planning and designing an action plan, the Peace Recovery and Development Programme (PRDP) (Adong, 2011) (discussed below). However, assistance on the ground was often slow in coming. Seven years into the recovery process, although the guns had fallen silent and there was a general improvement in security, people in northern Uganda were still physically, physiologically, socially and economically badly off (Chirichetti, 2013). As late as 2015, in the Human Development Report Uganda (2015), the Prime Minister of Uganda, Dr. Ruhakana Rugunda, acknowledged that the country still faced major challenges such as the need to provide economic opportunities, to expand social services, to address youth unemployment, the capacity of local government, and corruption.

A further problem was that although the Juba peace talks moved the conflict out of northern Uganda, the LRA had not been defeated. Rather, they moved their operations into
Sudan, CAR and DRC, where Ugandan government forces continued to pursue them, largely at the expense of focusing on recovery in northern Uganda (Mukwana & Ridderbos, 2008), adding to the other issues affecting the recovery process. Although it is not uncommon in post-conflict situations, where resources to fund various programmes are scarce, for INGOs to initially lead the recovery, in northern Uganda, many INGOs reduced their activities or withdrew earlier than expected (Mukwana & Ridderbos, 2008): another layer of difficulty for the recovery process.

The main reason for the INGOs’ withdrawal was that when the government declared the beginning of the recovery development processes (2008) this was interpreted by international observers as the conclusion of the humanitarian disaster in northern Uganda (Lie, 2015). The gaps left by their departures were immediately evident to us in the field: according to one Gulu-based UNICEF official (cited in Spitzer and Twikirize, 2013, p.75) approximately 80% of INGOs had left the region by the end of 2010. This was compounded by the government’s lack of capacity and resources. In the long run, the government needed to take control and implement its own development priorities, while the many local NGOs needed to have capacity to use creative strategies to respond swiftly to the developing social and economic threats which came after the conflict ended, and political stability had returned. Lack of funds to assist in recovery work on issues such as gender inequality, environmental conservation and improving people’s livelihoods inevitably triggered other threats to human security in the region.

The problem was further increased because the recovery needed to be supported by a transition plan and sufficient donor funding, but this did not occur. Lie notes that the withdrawal “weakened the operational consent to and financial basis of the humanitarian apparatus providing civilian protection and basic services” (2015, p. 1) but an opposing view is taken by Nuerenberger (2010) who argues that the withdrawal of so many INGOs was
beneficial because their presence did nothing to encourage long-term development. Instead it promoted dependency. She argues that, in order to achieve sustainable development, there was a need to promote local NGOs which would design programmes according to the needs of the local people, a process which was in line with a human security approach. In the northern Ugandan situation, this would have meant involving the Acholi in all aspects of the recovery process with limited intervention by external agencies (Branch, 2007a; Sserwanga et al., 2014). However, for a variety of reasons, explored below, this did not occur.

**Conditions in northern Uganda at the start of the recovery process (2006)**

The northern Ugandan conflict destroyed the social, political and economic setup in the region and undermined traditional ways of life. Recounting the situation at the end of the conflict in 2006, Spitzer and Twikirize pointed out that civilians had been the most badly affected and that they were “still suffering” (2013, p. 69). It was a situation characterised by the declining social status of parents, elders and local leaders, a lack of protection by the government, poor health, few educational facilities, heavy dependence on humanitarian aid, and widespread human rights abuses (Finnström, 2008). These issues had a direct impact on the recovery process.

As soon as the security situation improved, people started to move out of the IDP camps to transit camps which were closer to their original homes. There they started clearing land and farming, using seeds provided by development aid agencies. People who had been involuntarily removed wanted to return to their homes and plots of land as they had been before the conflict (Joireman et al., 2012). For most returnees, the first stage was to set up in a smaller transit camp, so that they could monitor the situation with a view to returning to their villages, if safe to do so. More freedom of movement Compared to the past restrictions freedom of movement became more possible: humanitarian agencies were able to operate without escorts,
which enhanced their ability to reach the needy. President Museveni was able to declare in 2007 that “for the first time, in 114 years … the whole of Uganda …[is] peaceful” (Moman, 2012).

Nonetheless, seven years after the end of the conflict, research carried out in northern Uganda by Dyan Mazurana for the Gulu based Secure Livelihoods Research Consortium (2014), found that “5 percent of the population of Acholi and Lango sub-regions [was] significantly impaired or incapacitated by war-related physical, psychological and emotional injuries”. Predictably, Mazurana also found that “[h]ouseholds with war-wounded members were more likely to have fewer assets, worse food security, fewer livelihood activities, and use more coping strategies to survive”: the more serious the crime inflicted on a person, the more likely that person was to have an ongoing injury that impacted on their ability to function (Mazurana, 2014, p. 3).

On the one hand, the prolonged traumatization of so many people, the shattered traditions and social cohesion, and the destabilization of both old and new generation shifted social values: the psycho-social wellbeing of many northern Ugandans was badly affected (McCormack, 2008). On the other, the region’s development had been hampered by a lack of investment, poor marketing opportunities, and the breakdown of systems which provided essential services to the needy. Northern Uganda communities faced significant problems in acquiring resources needed to maintain peace and protect security, re-integrate ex-combatants, rebuild the necessary infrastructure, improve on investment opportunities, resettle IDPs, create employment, eliminate inequalities, and restore the rule of law (Sserwanga et al., 2014).

There were also continuing human rights abuses, most of which were not addressed. For example, in the areas of rule of law and access to justice, civilian beatings and detention were meted out to those who were suspected of being LRA returnees. In a survey conducted in 2008 to rate the population’s perception of returnee children after the conflict, it was found that
while 97% of northern Ugandans welcomed back the abducted children, at least in public, many “community members [were] still angry at the children (66%) fearful of them (52%) and over one third (34%) indicated that community members continue[d] to insult children formerly associated with the LRA” (Atri & Cusimano, 2013, p. 2). Much of the verbal abuse came from drunk community members (Blattman & Annan, 2008). Although alcohol consumption was not a serious problem among people within the camps, many used it as a coping mechanism (B. Roberts, Ocaka, Browne, Oyok, & Sondorp, 2011). As Sarkin found, “[p]rotecting the civilian population … [was not] a priority for the government of Uganda” (2015, p. 112): maintaining human rights and the rule of law were clearly the problems in the early stages of the recovery.

The health situation, especially the prevalence of HIV/AIDS during the recovery process was alarming. Liebling-Kalifani et al., record that compared to other regions of Uganda, northern Uganda had the worst indices. For example, “the region had a prevalence rate of 10.5% [whereas the] national average [wa]s 6.4%” (Liebling-Kalifani et al., 2008, p. 175). The Uganda Country progress report on HIV and AIDS 2008 stated the prevalence rates in the conflict-affected northern region to be above 9% (Rujumba & Kwiringira, 2010). This high rate of HIV/AIDS in northern Uganda was partly due to the “social and economic crises, food shortages, and reduced access to health care and prevention services” (Fabiani et al., 2007), but also, as Nattabi, et al. found, to the survival of distorted sexual patterns of behaviour inherited from the conflict period: “transactional and survival sex” (2011, p. 2). Although people knew about the dangers of HIV/AIDS, their priority was to receive the basic needs of life rather than worrying about the dangers of contracting AIDS (Rujumba & Kwiringira, 2010). Community and district leaders proposed combining information on the effects of HIV/AIDS with information from other development projects (Rujumba & Kwiringira, 2010). Voluntary counselling and testing services and the availability of anti-retroviral drugs were limited to
pregnant women but even then, supplies were not sufficient to reach all who needed them. Health centres had no drugs to prevent mother to child transmission of HIV/AIDS. Condoms were few and people needed advice on how to use them and this was combined, as Liebling-Kalifani et al. note, with “a lower rate of a lower contraceptive use 12%, while the national average was 23%, and a high rate of abortions and unplanned pregnancies (1 in every 5 pregnant women in northern Uganda carried out an abortion, while 50% of pregnancies were unwanted)” (2008, p. 175). The only encouraging development was that people were moving back to their original homes and the camps were becoming less congested, and rape cases drastically reduced compared to the period when people were confined in the camps (Westerhaus, Finnegan, Zabulon, & Mukherjee, 2008). Nonetheless, in order to cope in the post-conflict situation, with the on-going consequences of the years of social and physical turmoil, such as, for example the life sentence of HIV/AIDS, the need continues for significant engagement with the social and environmental concerns and needs of those affected (Wilhelm-Solomon, 2016).

As shown above in chapter five, because the LRA mainly targeted children, the literacy rates of all children in northern Uganda were badly affected. These continued to be the lowest in Uganda. At the height of the conflict, only 56% of primary school aged children attended schools: many children had been afraid to attend. Due to the tense situation, school days had been shortened, schools opened at 10am, and closed at 2pm and in the few hours they attended, the children were learning war tactics and survival skills (Willis & Nagel, 2015). Low literacy rates could thus be directly related to the lack of security during the conflict. At the beginning of the recovery period, as during the conflict, there was a severe lack of qualified staff and scholastic materials, and little suitable infrastructure, which placed additional stress on those teachers who were available. CSOPNU’s 2007 report shows that in most schools the ratio of teacher to pupil was approximately 1:300 to 1:400 (2007, 31).
Armed robbers continued to be a security threat. There were widely reported incidents of *boda-boda* drivers (motorcycle riders who carry passengers to earn a living) being involved in robberies, rapes and murders (Allen, 2015). Many of the teenagers had been trained as young boys to use guns and, as there was widespread unemployment, some resorted to ambushing traders and violently robbing people of their belongings. These robbers were called *boo-kec*, ‘bitter vegetables’ in the local language, meaning they were particularly tough and much feared (Kroes, 2010).

In the recovery stage, NGOs such as Caritas Gulu, which remained in the region where I worked, involved people in designing programmes aimed at re-integrating formerly abducted people into the community. Through workshops and community meetings, they developed programmes aimed at improving people’s livelihoods, their basic health, their water needs and the rule of law. However, this process was not easy. Former LRA combatants received a mixed reaction from community members. For those who had lost their loved ones at the hands of the LRA, accepting former LRA combat returnees proved to be difficult. Some were able to forgive but not forget what happened during the conflict. Although some of the returnees were psychologically resilient and showed little evidence of aggression and violence, they faced many difficulties being accepted back into community life. Addressing the psychological trauma of then-former abductees and helping them reunite with their families and communities were key reconstruction tasks (Kasfir, 2005; Pham, Vinck, & Stover, 2009).

A recovery programme carried out by Caritas Gulu involved holding conflict issue identification workshops whose aim was for people to identify potential conflict issues, discuss their possible resolution and incorporate those resolutions into their local development activities. Commenting on Caritas activities in northern Uganda, Ochen (2012), notes that Caritas formed community-based structures which improved their efficiency in providing community-based solutions. The aim of all Caritas operations was to build local capacity in
planning, conflict resolution, governance, transparency, inclusion and accountability. Such people-centred initiatives helped the concerned communities to own the recovery process and achieve their desired goals, especially in the area of gender relations. In order to promote women-related issues, NGOs and CSOs were formed after the conflict by women specifically to advance and deal with issues affecting them (Stiftung, 2005).

Another community-based service offered by Caritas Gulu was the Psychosocial Support Program which was stationed at Pajule, Pader District. Its aim was to increase community resilience and assist in the reintegration of former abductees using psychosocial support (Harlacher, 2009). Almost all of the responses designed by Caritas staff were people-centred.

The “decongestion process” of the IDP Camps

The end of the conflict in 2006 triggered the decongestion process, a welcome relief to the people living in crowded IDP camps (Bozzoli, Brück, & Muhumuza, 2012). However, the resettlement of people from IDP camps to their original homes did not happen quickly. Despite the introduction of programmes aimed at resettling those who had been in camps, at first people were cautious about returning to their original homes (Brown, 2006), there were multiple challenges for those returning and those who had returned (Bjorkhaug, Morten, Hatloy, & Jennings, 2007). These included “inadequate basic services such as clean water, education and health facilities and, because the LRA had not been defeated, some feared they might return and abduct them” (Bjorkhaug et al., 2007).

Resettlement was carried out in phases. The first was the setting up of small transit camps near the former homes of displaced people so both women and men could go to their own gardens during the day and come back to the camp in the evening. Some returnees in Acholi were hesitant about moving back to their original places, instead preferring to move to
‘decongestion settlements’, which were camps designed to alleviate the overcrowding and lack of basic services in the major IDP camps. By late 2007, however, more than 50% of the people who had been involuntarily displaced, resettled in their home villages or in transit settlements that were closer to their villages (Bozzoli, Brück, & Muhumuza, 2011).

During community meetings and consultations while I was working with Caritas, I found that, although some people expressed hesitation about returning, many expressed willingness to go back to their former homes. They had a number of reasons for wanting to return. The most generally mentioned were to collect natural resources, raise livestock, better access land to grow crops, find better living conditions and experience greater independence and self-reliance. People in semi-settled villages had convincing reasons to continue living outside the camps because they were not overcrowded. However, many households maintained a presence in the camps for at least part of the time.

The movement to smaller, less crowded settlements had a positive humanitarian impact as conditions in the transit camps were markedly better than those in the IDP camps. However, services to the transit camps were sometimes restricted because of their distances from the main camps. This situation affected mainly the unaccompanied minors, elderly, widows and disabled persons whose needs and rights had been neglected (Onegi, 2012).

It was the role of the military to identify new housing sites, which ideally were as secure as possible, for example, away from landmine sites, unexploded ordinance and bandits, accessible in case of any trouble and near to water boreholes and social services such as schools and hospitals (Namakula & Witter, 2014). However, according to Branch “the decision to make IDPs move to decongestion camps in Kitgum and Pader, while letting IDPs move spontaneously to transition sites and to their homes in Amuru and Gulu, [was] a political decision, not one based upon the factual security situation” (2007a, p. 10). Nevertheless, NGOs and UN agencies continued to serve people in the decongestion camps, which was sometimes
difficult as water, schools and clinics were not always available in the vicinity.

Commenting on the need for a range of recovery programs at the beginning of the resettlement period, Bozzoli, Brück, and Muhumuza note that “[t]he observation that individuals living in camps strive to ensure self-reliance underscores the need for livelihood interventions and other recovery programmes to target not only returnee households but also create opportunities for households still in displacement” (2011, p. 1). Although by 2010 most Acholi had left the IDP camps and resettled in their rural homes, some found it difficult to ‘re-place’ themselves according to traditional Acholi notions of belonging to home and land. There were two reasons for this: cultural practices denied women and children access to land if their husbands or parents had died, a not uncommon situation; and people were sometimes unable to lay claim to land and therefore work it because of land wrangles or being unable to identify its boundaries (Whyte., Babiha, Mukyala, & Meinert, 2014).

In situations such as the decongestion process, a human security approach would emphasise the importance of service providers such as the government and other humanitarian agencies to prioritise the needs of the people they served. In accordance with these principles, the government of Uganda, NGOs and other international aid agencies started extending humanitarian and other reconstruction and development efforts to remote areas. The UN in particular operated on the principle of freedom of movement, which is why UN agencies provided assistance to those who moved to decongested sites (Brown, 2006).

Although at first forcibly displaced people remained sceptical about the long-term peace prospects in northern Uganda, they slowly gained confidence and by August 2016 all displaced people camps had been officially closed and their infrastructure converted into schools, hospitals and health care centres. The secondary benefit from this was that it helped town boards and town councils gain status and recognition (Whyte, Babiha, Mukyala, & Meinert, 2014).
Those who have remained in the camps do so for personal reasons such as business interests or the lack of land to settle on or cultivate. This is the case for some youth who were born and grew up in camps, which are then the places that they know.

**International organizations’ intervention in the recovery process**

Because the government failed to respond appropriately to the people’s needs during northern Uganda’s reconstruction, civil society organizations had to fill that gap and international humanitarian assistance became crucial in this process (Kelly, 2014). During the post-conflict period, although many international NGOs left northern Uganda (Branch, 2013) others recognised that aid continued to be needed: in post-conflict situations on such a scale, any successful recovery process is directly related to the accessible foreign assistance. Groups such as UN agencies and INGOs worked with local NGOs, CBOs, and self-help initiators (Omona, 2008) to share their expertise in governance, sustainable livelihoods, peace-building, food security and nutrition, small enterprise development, all with the intention of improving the security of the people in the region (Paul, 2014).

Other organizations such as Action against Hunger (ACF), Associazione Volontari per il Servizio Internazionale (AVSI), CARE, Cooperazione Internazionale (COOPI), Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), Catholic Relief Services (CRS), GOAL, International Rescue Committee (IRC), Medair, Médecins sans Frontières (MSF), Oxfam and Save the Children in Uganda (SCiU), focused on the rebuilding of infrastructure such as schools, health centres, roads, and individual psychosocial support and trauma counselling. Others helped to reintegrate returnees by providing agricultural seeds and farming tools, and specific human rights programs focused on alleviating gender-based violence and establishing children’s rights (Dolan & Hovil, 2006). Most local NGOs? focused on improving people’s livelihoods, food production and housing,
providing legal aid and childcare, and building capacity in environmental protection and health related issues such as sensitizing people about AIDS. Such wide-ranging issues covered by these NGOs made them ‘one-stop shops’ for donor agencies, foreign governments and multilateral agencies involved in funding security innovations in the region.

During and after the conflict, INGOs worked at identifying issues and designing governance projects aimed at increasing the ability of the population to take part in the preparation and monitoring of district government resource allocations. They set up local community forums to create spaces for communities to deliberate on issues of concern and bring these to the consideration of local government representatives.

The nature of the INGOs’ operations made them relevant partners in providing security. AVSI, an Italian NGO which had operated in the region for more than two decades, based its operations on the grassroots needs of each community. Commenting on AVSI’s positive contribution to the recovery process, Annan, Green and Brier indicate that its “approach departs from traditional models of poverty assistance in that it targets the most vulnerable members of the community and provides them with extensive follow-up services and social networks alongside grant assistance” (2013, p. 860).

Some other programs however were relatively short-lived, and have been criticized for having a short-term mentality, being insensitive to local cultures and values, and introducing programs with unintended negative consequences (Wielders & Amutjojo, 2012). By August 2016, a significant number of these organizations had closed their programs in northern Uganda and shifted their attention elsewhere. Some INGOs though, continued to provide assistance to people returning to their original homes, helping local NGOs develop their capacity and set up structures for networking (Omach, 2011b). Although Angoma suggests that many INGOs left at a critical moment, leaving people “stuck between a rock and hard place in [their] respective villages” (2011, p. ii), while there, they served a useful purpose.
Since INGOs had set up the foundation for recovery, it was up to the people in the area to implement and use the capacities and skills imparted to them by the INGOs to change their situation.

After supplying basic needs during the conflict, INGOs which remained in northern Uganda necessarily changed their approach from relief provision to peace building, human rights advocacy, and skills development to those returning from camps to their original homes (Spitzer & Twikirize, 2013). For a recovery program to succeed, people need to have a say in the development of suitable programmes. Since the majority of people in northern Uganda are subsistence farmers, there was a need to promote agriculturally based programmes in the area. Several INGOs supported people in forming community groups in order to access assistance through the government’s National Agricultural Advisory Development Services (NAADS), however, most people did not benefit from this scheme due to the politicisation of the programme and their lack of knowledge about how the programme operated.

To avoid duplication of services, INGOs had begun to work in partnership with local NGOs (Compton, 2014). These partnerships provided extensive support during the conflict and continued in the post-conflict reconstruction period Omona (2008). One combined project, the cluster approach, administratively bringing together people from several camps was instigated in 2007 by the UNHCR. It provided humanitarian assistance to IDPs who were moving out of the camps to their original homes. It ensured that people received assistance based on their geographical location and included provision of basic health and water needs, education and livelihood support. The programmes also aided in road construction and provided capacity building support for district and civil administrators in the rule of law (Landegger et al., 2011). Although some INGOs thought that their mandate extended beyond humanitarian aid, the cluster approach helped in the transition period from relief to recovery, specifically when it involved local organizations and district government
authorities (Bourgeois & Wright, 2007). The positive consequences of the cluster approach were providing the IASC and UN Country Teams with common understandings, objectives and directions;

- facilitating the humanitarian division of labour;
- promoting the exchange of information and ideas between stakeholders
- standardizing concepts, definitions and statistical reporting;
- encouraging the pooling of tools and techniques;
- supporting resource mobilization;
- strengthening humanitarian advocacy, IDP protection and the promotion of human rights; and,
- focusing new attention on issues related to camp management and IDP settlement. Ref?

Many NGOs saw the cluster approach as a way to actively coordinate information sharing, avoid the replication of activities, and a new method for consolidating accountability through monitoring the flow of funds.

As the humanitarian relief started to be phased out, and as the success of the cluster approach became evident, NGO forum boards in different districts affected by the conflict (Gulu, Kitgum, and Pader) took on the role of monitoring and coordinating national and INGO activities. In this period, there was a need to put in place a harmonized approach to recovery and capitalize on efforts set by the cluster approach to advance connections between communities, development actors at the district level and the office of the Prime Minister.

Although some international humanitarian agencies came with their own programmes, which did not always consider the needs of the local people, the majority of INGOs planned and worked directly with the communities, which proved successful by cutting the red tape involved with the district officials. These groups responded to people’s needs in numerous
ways. They helped fundraise from international donors, provided cash to help people develop small projects and support for national and local actors who were involved in the recovery process. For these reasons, many northern Ugandans regarded INGOs as providing the main avenue to rebuilding their lives.

One notable contribution of INGOs was the creation of jobs such as drivers, project officers, monitoring officers and interpreters. However, the winding up of many projects early during the recovery period affected those who depended on these projects for a living (Meier, 2013).

Those INGOs who remained after the conflict did remarkable work in helping the Acholi people recover from decades of war and forced displacement. These NGOs worked towards promoting social change, gender equality, democracy and development in mind when undertaking peace and reconstruction programmes in northern Uganda (Meier, 2013). However, the economic and cultural effects of the amount of aid given to northern Uganda raise provocative questions about the appropriateness and effectiveness of foreign-led development programs in a post-conflict environment. Indeed, Guzman suggests that donors should stop thinking that development is simple, predictable and deliverable from outside, and rather accept that successful recovery processes must consider people’s needs and ensure their involvement (Guzman, 2013). They are best developed locally, as the human security approach emphasizes, so that they focus on salient, local issues. Experience on the ground suggests that such grassroots approaches are most likely to enhance local capacity leading and result in feasible solutions.

The Ugandan government’s intervention in the recovery

The process of resettling people from camps to their original homes was difficult. Although it was the responsibility of the government of Uganda to assist its citizens using its
major initiatives, particularly the IDP policy and the PRDP, during the recovery process, it did not do so (Ogwang, 2014). Rather, the government’s first response to the cessation of the conflict was to increase the military budget and to continue its strategy of pursuing the LRA in DRC and CAR, not instigating political or non-military initiatives. Indeed, after the Juba peace talks, the UPDF’s operations against the LRA were linked to substantial US military aid (Arieff & Ploch, 2012) and between December 2008 and November 2010, the US provided more than $23 US million to the Ugandan army for military operations largely in logistical form (airlifts, fuel, trucks) and intelligence support. The figure [increased] to more than $40 US million in subsequent years (Tumutegyereize, 2012, p. 3). Although the government maintained its pursuit of the LRA, it did also continue to offer amnesty to former combatants until 2012 when the LRA was finally disbanded. Again, in granting benefits to LRA members, former rebels but not to northern Ugandans who had suffered, the GoU policy failed to carry out its responsibilities (McEvoy & Mallinder, 2012).

It can be argued, strongly, that the government would have been better to focus on building “a more peaceful and prosperous society in northern Uganda” (D. P. Thomas & Gardner, 2014). Even though the government signalled its intention to implement reforms to ensure sustainable peace in the region, specifically in the areas of political sensitization, civil rights and individual security, it was frequently unable to transform planned activities into actions (Mailer, 2008). It also failed to address the rampant corruption, tackle land related issues or address the causes of the conflict jeopardizing the security of northern Ugandans. Reconstruction projects that are still greatly needed in the region are at a standstill/have not progressed (Ogwang, 2015).

Uganda has a decentralized system of governance through the use of district structures down to the village level, a system intended to bring services closer to people and encourage people’s participation in issues which matter to them. However, because the conflict in northern
Uganda destroyed most of the structures on which decentralization was embedded, government efforts to design people-centred recovery programmes were hampered by weak and under-developed local government institutions, most of which lacked computers, communication equipment and qualified staff. The lack of basic services and infrastructure also hindered the recruitment of skilled personnel in the region. In addition, the lack of houses in rural areas prevented qualified teachers, doctors and police personnel from living in those areas (Namakula, Witter, & Ssengooba, 2016).

The Ugandan government did though set up several programmes aimed at reconstruction and recovery in the conflict-affected regions. Among these were the Northern Uganda Reconstruction Programme (NURP-1), Northern Uganda Rehabilitation Programme (NUREP), Northern Uganda Social Action Fund (NUSAF), Karamoja Integrated Development Programme (KIDDP), and Post Conflict Reconstruction Programmes (PCRP). The KIDDP had the overall goal of contributing to security and promoting conditions for recovery and development in Karamoja region (eastern Uganda) by dealing with the problem of small arms and light weapons. The government thought the Karamajong ethnic group were continuing, as they had done during the conflict, to supply weaponry to the LRA, increasing accessibility to small arms and light weapons, the main source, then and now, of insecurity in northern and eastern Uganda (Esuruku, 2011). Disarming the Karamajong, the government thought, would solve the LRA problem and future insecurities for the region. The initiative was unsuccessful: while the LRA is no longer operational in Uganda, it continues to cause trouble in neighbouring countries (Central African Republic, DRC, Southern Sudan).

As part of recovery and reconstruction, the government also embarked on large-scale infrastructure developments such as opening up roads and instituting district governance structures to coordinate the recovery process. However, as suggested below such big investments in infrastructure had little effect on the welfare of the people in the region.
In order to accelerate the recovery process, in October 2007 the government, together with UN and international humanitarian agencies operating in northern Uganda, launched a three-year Peace Recovery and Development Programme (PRDP). Formed through the amalgamation of NUREP and KIDDP, the PRDP came out of the peace talks at Juba between 2006-2007 and was aimed at coordinating the recovery process in northern Uganda for both donor and government development initiatives. It was intended to allocate resources effectively in order to achieve social and economic development in the war affected areas and assist those returning to their homes from the internally displaced camps (Esuruku, 2012). The PRDP consisted of four strategic objectives. These objectives as outlined by Bertasi (2013) are:

1. Consolidation of state authority:

   This objective was aimed at restoring government authority in northern Uganda. It was to be achieved through reinforcing law and order in communities, extending judicial and legal services to the people and building the local government (districts) capacity.

2. Rebuilding and empowering communities:

   The conflict destroyed previous social, economic and development initiatives in the area. This objective was aimed at improving the quality of people’s lives through resettling formerly displaced persons and initiating new community development initiatives.

3. Revitalization of the economy:

   Since the conflict destroyed the drivers of economic development in northern Uganda, this objective was aimed at restoring the productive sectors through infrastructure development and designing appropriate mechanisms to cater for the environment and national resources.

4. Peace building and reconciliation:

   As discussed in chapter four, some of the causes of the northern Uganda conflict were historical. This objective was aimed at reconciling the people of northern Uganda with the rest of the country through information sharing, counselling of the victims of the conflict, designing
mechanisms aimed at eliminating inter-communal conflicts and re-integrating former armed combatants in the community (Bertasi, 2013).

These four objectives were ambitious. Although on paper their implementation would have been good for the people of northern Uganda, they have not had the desired effect. The programme has concentrated more on rebuilding government institutions which has had little effect on eliminating poverty. Local governments under the programme areas were under resourced and lacked skilled personnel to implement the plans. For example, health centres lacked adequate accommodation facilities for the staff and wards for inpatients were poorly equipped. Although, on paper, the PRDP had sound principles, the government has failed to implement them, thus undermining its purpose and objectives.

The difficulties are exemplified by a report by the Washington-based ENOUGH Project in May 2008, a year before PRDP implementation began, which argued that, while there was a moderately low risk of renewed LRA attacks in northern Uganda, the north’s immediate needs were “immense” and yet, although the government of Uganda had a multi-million recovery plan, the lack of funding, bureaucracy and political uncertainties were hindering its implementation.

PRDP has been rolled out in phases. PRDP 1 was from 2009-2012, and PRDP II from 2012-2015. While covering the whole of the northern region of Uganda, its emphasis has been on the badly conflict-affected regions of north-central Uganda (see map below). In terms of its implementation, the government releases money to the districts on a quarterly basis. Local governments are then responsible for planning and implementing priority activities (Esuruku, 2011). However, Otto, Oroma and Cho (2012) note- that local government did not have employees who had the capacity to engage community members. For example, appropriate consultations were rarely carried out when planning new projects. Community involvement is important for the successful identification, planning and implementation of community
projects. Such involvement would make affected communities more supportive of the programme activities and would encourage people to monitor and ensure their leaders deliver the much-needed services.

Figure 7. Map of Uganda showing sub-regions covered by the PRDP. Source: Esuruku, (2011) Horizons of peace and development in northern Uganda.
In order for the PRDP to accelerate the recovery process, there was a need to apply a demand-driven approach which emphasized community involvement and was people-centered. Although not referring specifically to northern Uganda, Goovaerts, Gasser and Inbal note that a successful demand-driven approach after a violent conflict needs to aim at “pursuing development agendas through empowering beneficiaries and giving local stakeholders control over decisions and resources, while building community capacities for collective decision-making and action” (2006, p. 10). In political terms, during the post-conflict reconstruction in northern Uganda, there was a lack of peacebuilding packages necessarily involving civil and political actors, to prioritize and engage affected populations in order to develop sustainable modes of post-conflict accountability (Macdonald, 2017b). The PRDP aimed at achieving these objectives.

When the government launched its PRDP programme, local NGOs worked hand in hand with government representatives to ensure its success. However, throughout the recovery period, the government used the PRDP to provide funds primarily to those individuals who supported the NRM government, thus politicizing the programme in a way that undermined the recovery process. Iversen noted the potential of the PRDP for peace building and reconstruction but criticized it “for being geared towards satisfying the GoU’s political agenda rather than fostering peace and reconciliation” (2010, p. 76).

Another area the government failed to address during the recovery period was the issue of children who were born as a result of rape. In most of these recovery programmes such as the PRDP and NUSAF these children were not catered for (Ladisch, 2015). In a patriarchal society such as Uganda, it is important for children to know their fathers for cultural and inheritance purposes. However, those who were born out of rape did not have or belong to any clan. Most of the time these children are rejected or isolated in the community. Thus, their
mothers have had to work hard to support them in order to survive. This is explored by Mailer (2008) who found that in Acholi culture widows and unmarried women who wanted to go back to their villages had to depend on their male relatives to assist them to construct their homes. These women then had to provide food or money in return for the assistance. Although many faced significant difficulties, those who persisted utilized the available small opportunities to change their lives (Ochen, 2015). But, as shown above, these programmes were not gender sensitive as they neglected to deal with the needs of the formerly abducted girls:

Girls often return from a fighting force with children born as a result of forced sexual relations. The presence of these war babies can worsen their situations, because these girl mothers and their children are often subject to resentment, due to the children’s unknown paternity, or because their fathers are known to be rebels McKay (2004a, p. 20).

The PRDP also experienced problems in terms of poor service delivery. Non-compliance with the system procedures for recovery, inadequate national capacity and the high cost of recovery hampered the government from carrying out its obligations. The lack of inputs and labour were the main inhibitors for food production in the region. For example, government contractors supplied substandard agricultural tools such as pangas, hoes and rotten seeds (Gelsdorf, Maxwell, & Mazurana, 2012). The recovery process also lacked conclusive debates on strategies for governance, insufficient leadership and poor roll-out strategies (Bailey, Pavanello, Elhawary, & O’Callaghan, 2009).

In addition, widespread corruption has been another reason for the failure of the PRDP (Nystrand, 2014). The government faced problems relating to accountability, bribery and manipulation by politicians to the detriment of community projects (Omona, 2008, p. 138). Between 2012 and 2013, the office of the Prime Minister, which was coordinating donor funds, was involved in a corruption scandal involving massive sums, 60 billion Uganda shillings
(about $US24.5 million), which led many donors to withdraw funding to the programme. (Bukuluki, 2013, p. 28).

Corruption affected the successful implementation of many recovery programs. For example, in another problem involving the Office of the Prime Minister, more than $US12.7 million intended for rebuilding northern Uganda was embezzled (Human Rights Report, 2013). As a result, in 2012, the European Union, Germany, United Kingdom, Ireland, Denmark, and Norway suspended aid. The history of another government sponsored post-conflict recovery programme, the Northern Uganda Social Action Fund (NUSAF) was also not adequate: for example, “PRDP money was used to buy the Prime Minister a limousine worth $US 200,000 … this mismanagement is due to a lack of transparency, lack of accountability, and lack of oversight” (section 6.2.2) (Compton, 2014). Working on the ground during the recovery period, my own observations convinced me that there was a pressing need to have good administrative structures in place so that provision of basic social services could be accelerated. However, widespread nepotism, based on ethnicity and regional affiliations, within the Museveni regime undermined efforts of the recovery process.

These corruption challenges forced donor countries to change their funding channels from government to NGOs. However, this caused tension within the Ugandan government which led it to table an amendment to the NGO Registration Act (2006) in the parliament. This Act was aimed at controlling and monitoring the activities of many NGOs because of the significant funding they received from donors. The Act restricted NGO activities, which in turn affected their contribution to the development of the country, and particularly, service delivery in post-conflict northern Uganda (Omona, 2008). In addition, as a result of the corruption scandals, the United States Senate Committee on Foreign Relations (2009) determined that it would withdraw aid money unless the government improved its accountability on humanitarian assistance.
In that context, an advocacy group, International Alert, which specialises in solving the root causes of conflict with people across divides, in a 2013 report noted that the PRDP programme and some policies of international donors in the recovery process tended to concentrate on the physical, political, educational, and economic infrastructure while neglecting to develop people’s capacities to manage them so as to enhance participatory human security (International Alert, 2013). This reflects the argument of this thesis, that the government’s programmes stood more chance of success if they had been people-centred rather than centralised in the hands of small elite, which controlled access to funding and therefore to political power at every level, without transparency and accountability. To be people-centred would have been to use the human security approach, building the capabilities of stakeholders at the grassroots level and reducing the opportunities for corruption and mismanagement.

As the evidence presented in this chapter demonstrates, in order to safeguard the security of the people through its decentralization system, the government needed to design human-centred development projects, such as building houses for education and health workers and improving their remuneration, which could have attracted qualified personnel to work in the region and kickstarted the development process. Improving government accountability so that the government could maintain the confidence of donors and the people of the area, is another area which was critical to a successful recovery process. By any measure the government’s accountability left much to be desired.

**Local NGO interventions in the recovery process**

During the recovery period, more and more local NGOs became prominent in the area of development. As Omona observes, they “filled the gap created by the failure of the market and government” (2008, p. 139). The change in emphasis from relief to development necessitated local NGOs taking centre stage since they were more likely than the government
to emphasize people’s participation and community-led development initiatives. The particular advantage of local NGOs over government was their smallness in size and flexibility in tackling threats to security. They were also familiar with local issues and conversant with local cultural practices and language. Their comparative lack of bureaucracy gave them an advantage over local government and in cases where government failed to provide basic services to its people, NGOs filled the gap (Banks & Hulme, 2012). They did this by advocating for and enabling people-centred approaches which promoted human rights, gender equality, children’s rights, freedom of speech, political rights and health-related issues.

Local NGOs which operated during the recovery were of three types. The first were the religious groups which were able to operate across a wide area due to their affiliations with parishioners, rather than being only locally-based. The second were NGOs that were Ugandan-funded by individuals or groups in response to a particular social need of the community. The third were locally-founded NGOs, but with a base of foreign donors. During the recovery, the NGOs which remained in the region played a significant role in assisting the vulnerable (Whyte. et al., 2014) and then, during the post-conflict reconstruction period, local NGOs began providing a more structured, organized form of assistance than they had during the conflict. Their main areas of concentration during this time included livelihood support through advocacy, and provision of legal advice to victims especially in land disputes.

From the beginning of the recovery period NGOs, including the ARLPI and local peace activists, encouraged the Ugandan government to urge the LRA to release abducted children still held in captivity (Amone & Anenocan, 2014). Children, those currently in captivity and those released or who had escaped during the conflict, are seen as the future of the nation. So, the recovery process cannot be deemed successful without their reintegration. Those who were captured were forced to live in an unfamiliar environment which affected their socialization process. They were exposed directly to hostilities which may have affected their
mental growth. The conflict in northern Uganda was thought of as “a war fought by children on children,” because children account for approximately 90% of the LRA’s forces (Falkenburg, 2013, p. 2). The captured teenagers, the main targets of the LRA, were subjected to more atrocities than other abducted persons (Amone-P’Olak et al., 2007).

Local NGOs also focussed on reuniting families and providing psychosocial care in order to minimize the trauma caused by their dislocation during the conflict. Significantly, with the government unable to provide basic social services, donor support of local NGOs was critical during the recovery process. UNICEF-funded NGOs, such as GUSCO, provided basic needs for women and children, shelter, food and medical assistance in centres which provided either part- or full-time care depending on need, while World Vision took on the role of tracing missing people and counselling. NGO social workers also provided counselling services to those returning from the bush (Compton, 2014). After a few weeks or months rehabilitation, the returnees were given basic necessities such as a mattress and some clothes and then sent back to their communities (Blattman & Annan, 2008).

Although the people centred/human security approach emphasizes the participation of all in matters which affect the community, and despite the suffering of the youth during the conflict, the recovery process neglected their voices. While NGOs seemed to value the participation of young people it was unclear if they were involved in decision making (Robinson, 2007). For younger children, a notable consequence of the conflict was the increasing exploitation of child labour, a major cause of abuse and exploitation and a fundamental violation of children’s rights. When peace came it became possible to setup local NGOs specifically to deal with these issues. Because children were the main target of the LRA, sensitizing children about their rights formed the basis of a number of NGO programmes, which were aimed at the better management of government services and at assisting in implementing, monitoring and supporting programmes that ensured the rights of children. Save
the Children in Uganda, in particular, carried out a capacity building project which set up training programmes to improve the technical skills of people working with children.

Local NGOs developed numerous programmes to reintegrate former combatants and abductees, including children and the youth. In conjunction with traditional leaders, community reintegration started with a cleansing ceremony. This was followed by receiving amnesty from the government at a reception centre, and finally receiving a re-insertion package which was aimed at assisting them to reinsert into the community (Muldoon et al., 2014). Although traditional ceremonies had limited success, western/foreign orientated programmes focussing on dealing with post-traumatic stress disorders were even less successful, possibly because these were new and untried in Acholi culture or even in non-western cultures more generally (Betancourt et al., 2009; Ochen, 2015). These western approaches were not culturally sensitive to the local Acholi traditional practices which led to confusion among those who were supposed to be assisted. Further, the different interpretations between local and foreign approaches, and the level of violence and trauma former combatants experienced during captivity, meant that programmes were doomed to fail. In particular, programmes targeting former child soldiers isolated them from their communities, the opposite of what was needed at the time. The widespread local response was that traditional practices were ignored by those advocating the western approach and that this was ineffective and unethical. As a result, very few returning child soldiers used the programme (Bilotta, 2011).

The experience of local NGOs was that former child combatants could be integrated into their communities by addressing their physical and social needs and focusing more widely on reuniting families (Blattman & Annan, 2008). Other programs initiated by local NGOs to assist formerly abducted children focused on improving literacy, addressing chronic unemployment through skills development, treating serious injuries and illnesses (Klasen et al., 2010).
Designing programmes with the children’s best interests at their core, was aimed at protecting the fundamental principles of children’s rights. This served as a guiding framework and a key reference point for programming and practice and was an approach that helped policymakers and workers not to lose sight of the individual child’s best interests (Spitzer & Twikirize, 2013). While this was most likely the intention of all the NGO programmes, not all had successful outcomes. During the bush war these children were exposed to overt psychological and physical violence, and many participated directly in aggressive and cruel acts. The more they did so, the more they became susceptible to the effects of trauma and, subsequently, to Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (Weierstall, Schalinski, Crombach, Hecker, & Elbert, 2012).

Local interventions in the recovery process depended heavily on international donor support. Withdrawal by INGOs jeopardized many reconstruction activities and also affected efforts to improve people’s security. The use by local NGOs of the community-based cluster approach, for example, in line with the emphasis of the human security approach on people’s collaboration in dealing with various threats as measures aimed at reducing the threats are designed, was intended to reach vulnerable communities. However, the lack of funding derailed these activities since many INGOs which were funding such activities had left the region.

In order to have a meaningful recovery process facilitated by NGOs, the organisations themselves needed to share information and experiences while interacting with people in communities. Putting in place solid NGO networks was a key to dealing with security concerns in the region. However, this collaboration was lacking, and many NGOs were accountable mainly to their funders, rather than to the people they served. In a way, the relationships between NGOs and communities came to be essential for both parties. As Angucia, Zeelen and de Jong suggest, “in a situation where conflict made a once vibrant society mal-functional, the
[Acholi] community became highly ‘NGOnized’. The needs of an individual’s life were segmented according to what NGOs could offer” (2010, p. 226).

**Challenges to the recovery process**

As discussed in previous chapters, when using a human security approach, the main objective in any recovery process after a violent conflict is to build an institutional framework which is favourable for development to take place. As Shinoda and Jeong argue as a general principle, “long term human security will be achieved only when peace-building succeeds in establishing local good governance and a stable society” (2004, p. 25). This was not the case in northern Uganda. Rather there was weak governance, corruption, land disputes, a lack of access to social services, and poor planning and communication. To establish a successful recovery process, the key would have been to design sustainable poverty reduction initiatives based on the actual needs of the people, but the lack of consultation, the short-term intervention policies of many INGOs, poor relations between the government and international donors meant that this did not happen on an ongoing basis in northern Uganda.

The conflict had prevented people from accessing their agricultural land and also prevented many from engaging in other income generating activities. As a result, it affected the fundamental social, micro and macroeconomic institutions in the region (Gelsdorf et al., 2012). Post conflict, inadequate infrastructure and high levels of insecurity prevented skilled personnel from wanting to work in the area. The general lack of field-based information, no statistics on the scale of the problems faced by the people or the proportion of those who faced specific vulnerabilities, available to help agencies determine what and how many resources were required, which greatly affected the work of humanitarian agencies and their capacity to plan effectively (Okello-Obura, Minishi-Majanja, Cloete, & Ikoja-Odongo, 2007).

The key challenges to the recovery process in northern Uganda were resettling IDPs,
revival of people’s livelihoods, and the restoration of social services. One of the government’s main challenges was to meet donor demands. However, as noted above, at times, the government’s priorities were at odds with those of the donors. Donor nations and organisations subjected the government to critical scrutiny in regard to how funds were used during the process: perceived government corruption and poor leadership seriously affected the flow of assistance from donor countries and slowed the recovery process.

The ongoing recovery process held promise for better care of children, but also posed a number of challenges to the safety, security and well-being of children and families. As indicated above, in the discussion of the return of child soldiers, children’s roles of being both victims and perpetrators during the conflict posed a “particular challenge to reintegration efforts since communities were sometimes reluctant to receive children back who had been forced to commit atrocities against their own peers, family, and community” (Spitzer & Twikirize, 2013, p. 70). While Spitzer and Twikirize focus on the need for education and employment for these unsettled former child soldiers, this was not an easy task, given that the government was unsuccessful in putting policy into practice and designing appropriate programmes aimed at assisting these children.

The lack of funding from INGOs, the government and local NGOs particularly affected young people. The success of schools was hampered, and the number of students dropping out increased, partly because unprepared schools had to accept large numbers of children with war experiences that made settling to study difficult (Ager et al., 2011). The lack of quality education for large numbers of children and adolescents meant that their future in terms of acquiring skilled employment opportunities was bleak (Vindevogel, De Schryver, Broekaert, & Derluyn, 2013). In addition, there was a dearth of appropriate programmes for the youth in practical, vocational areas such as brick laying, carpentry, mechanical engineering, modern agriculture, poultry and animal husbandry. To many youths, the lack of opportunities
to find meaningful income generating activities to support themselves and their families, was too much. This affected greatly those who were the heads of their families (Robinson, 2007). However, because of traditional cultural practices, it was female child soldiers who had more problems finding employment and therefore reintegrating than their male counterparts (Annan et al., 2013).

Because one of the major consequences of the conflict in northern Uganda was youth unemployment, the successful implementation of these types of courses would have helped young people/men, especially those who did not have the chance to receive formal education during the conflict, to rebuild their lives and earn a living. According to Weber (2013), the recovery process was undermined because these youth related issues were not addressed. Although important reforms to promote vocational and technical skills had been initiated by government and development partners - reflecting a new and more integrated approach to education, training and employment - these were still inadequate. Multiple constraints such as an inability to adapt programmes to the needs of economies and fragmented training among different agencies still hampered the progress of technical and vocational skills training reforms (Ayai, 2013).

The withdrawal of skilled personnel at the crucial moment as recovery began directly affected the health and wellbeing of the most vulnerable groups. The humanitarian agencies’ capacity to deal with the multifaceted issues was hampered by their lack of funds. The few skilled personnel assisting in the process were overwhelmed by the enormity of the task. In terms of human resources in the health sector, Namakula and Witter, for example, report that the decline in the numbers of international humanitarian personnel and diminishing funds meant that many projects became unsustainable (Namakula & Witter, 2014, p. 7).

As large numbers of people suffered in different ways and faced various health related issues during the conflict, in the post-conflict situation the pressing demand was to tailor health
responses and policies as directly as possible to the needs of the people (Muyinda & Mugisha, 2015). The significance of the recognition within the human security approach that people’s lives can be threatened in different ways by events which are beyond their control (Poku, Renwick, & Porto, 2007), is exemplified by a health-related challenge which emerged in the recovery phase as a threat to the human security of the people in the region, especially the children: the so-called nodding disease. This syndrome started as a result of the conditions which people faced during the involuntary displacement (Mitchell et al., 2013). The ‘nodding disease’, which only affects children, refers to a collection of symptoms such as nodding of the head, emotional withdrawal, and confusion. The causes of this syndrome are unclear, but explanations range from trauma to poor health services for more than two decades to the idea that the government had deliberately infected children. In 2009, the Kitgum District Health Office reported to the Uganda Ministry of Health approximately 2,000 cases suggestive of NS [nodding syndrome] among persons previously displaced by war (Foltz et al., 2013).

Since this disease mainly affected, and continues to affect, children, the consequences for the success of the recovery process were high because it undermined children’s health and prospects for healthy development. The syndrome was a real threat to human security in northern Uganda because it had the effect of aggravating the sense of helplessness of the people (Bukuluki et al., 2012). Parents who had a number of children affected with nodding syndrome were not only grieving because of their children’s illness but also because they were faced with a loss of pride and social value. The problems related to care for the affected children brought a decrease in economic activities and often affected the entire family. Buchmann described the disease as a “loss of lineage” and pointed to the need for families to “adjust to the socioeconomic changes brought by nodding syndrome” (Buchmann, 2014). In addition, the emergence of the nodding disease raised the problem of safeguarding human security in situations where health care systems were not in place.
Nodding syndrome in children was not however the only new manifestation of health issues in the post conflict period. Problems such as malnutrition continued. These recovery difficulties were underpinned by economic issues: historical divisions between Uganda's north and south were a cause of past conflicts, yet continued investment in the north, where poverty rates were twice the national average (Golooba-Mutebi & Hickey, 2010), could have addressed existing inequalities and helped ease the deep-seated hatred many northerners harboured toward the central government, which had caused their forced displacement and extensive human rights abuses.

Overall, although many projects were undertaken by both local and international actors during the recovery process, little has been achieved in improving people’s standards of living by May 2019 when this thesis was completed. For example, in order to construct meaningful post-conflict recovery programmes which directly benefit local people, there is need to promote welfare economics, locally based engagement initiatives and human development based on the human security principles (Futamura, Newman, & Tadjbak, 2010). This has not occurred to a necessary extent in post conflict northern Uganda. Further, the extreme military approach employed by the government during the conflict, inevitably had ongoing negative impacts on people’s participation in the post-conflict reconstruction process (Oosterom, 2016). These challenges affected the ability of aid workers to reduce the risk of further disaster, effectively manage information and peace building. And finally, because the response remained largely uncoordinated, it failed to be effective because it was not harmonized through an established policy and a strategic institutionalized framework.

**Land disputes during the recovery process**

Land disputes were one of the biggest threats to the resettlement plans of former internally displaced people in northern Uganda (Kobusingye, Van Leeuwen, & Van Dijk, 2016;
These disputes arose as a direct result of past poor land policies (Kobusingye, van Leeuwen, & van Dijk, 2017). Many people in the region were peasant farmers, depending on their land for their livelihood: as Mabikke establishes, “ownership and use of land and importantly land tenure security offer perhaps the only survival alternative to the vast majority of poor Ugandans especially living in post conflict regions of the country” (2011, p. 1). However, tensions arising out of land disputes have threatened security in the region during the recovery period. The government’s counter-insurgency policy of moving people into protected camps left large pieces of fertile land unoccupied. This resulted in allowing those in power, for example, politicians, senior army officers, and other elites, to forcibly fence off this land and set up extensive agricultural farms. The impact of land grabbing by the business community, civil servants and national investors was to threaten the successful resettlement of the returnees (Onegi, 2012). Increasing conflict over undocumented land had and continues to have the potential to undermine the peace process, threaten security and increase dependency (Mabikke, 2011, Weber, 2013).

As a result of long-term displacement in IDP camps, many returnees lost authoritative knowledge about their actual boundaries, the prospects of new large-scale investments by outside actors and poor national legislation to protect the returnees have posed further ongoing threats to the successful recovery process. Yet, the security of all returnees and access to land for agricultural purposes should have been the core priorities since they provide the basis of people’s livelihoods and the opportunity of being trained in best agricultural practices. This could have been a promising venture for the many people who were returning from camps, but was not (Birner et al., 2010).

The threat to security of this widespread practice of land grabbing led to the “Acholi Parliamentary Group giving a public warning that any investor who tried to grab land in Acholi would fail. One Member of Parliament even allegedly threatened that land grabbers would be
speared” (Sjögren, Nordiska, Conflict, & Transformation, 2013). As Mogensen and Obika point out access to land is a vital way for people to improve their livelihood (Mogensen & Obika, 2013), and the lack of secure access to land can lead to a cycle of continued poverty. Disagreements between returnees over land ownership and many people’s lack of secure access to land, which infringes on their rights, have the potential to derail the recovery process. Access to land on a shared basis could be a form of protection to many people returning from camp life (Branch, 2007a). In northern Uganda “land remains an important factor in shaping the socio-economic and political relationships between individuals, investors, and the state” (Okwir, 2015).

The post-conflict recovery process

Many of the problems which were brought out in chapter four, detailing the difficulties faced by NGOs trying to apply people centred approaches during the years of armed conflict, continued to exacerbate the problems of post-conflict recovery. To successfully apply such concepts in the post-conflict recovery process that worked from the ground up in northern Uganda, it was essential that government and other agencies systematically come to understand the needs of the people whether baseline surveys, community meetings and consultations, listening to what the people were actually saying. Community social reintegration as a basis for development in any post-conflict situation needed to be emphasised (Osborne, D’Exelle, & Verschoor, 2018).

The human security approach, like the people centred approach, relies on establishing the wellbeing of the people within their communities. However, some of the INGOs and NGOs specifically targeted issues which were not a priority for the concerned people, but which rather represented the concerns and interests of the donors. Planning which involved both the NGOs and the affected people would have been more in line with the human security approach and
with what the people wanted. Rather, most interventions concentrated on “reconstructing physical, educational, political and economic infrastructures, not people’s lives. While rebuilding infrastructures was crucial, these initiatives needed to occur in tandem with developing people’s capacity, and enhancing collective human security” (McKay, 2004a).

A human security approach combines development and security perspectives, but, during the recovery period in northern Uganda, the balance tilted against development because of the government’s emphasis on the security aspect, which it termed a ‘fight against terrorism’. This so-called war on terror affected the recovery process and the promotion of human rights in northern Uganda. Bilateral support (mainly from the US (Branch, 2011), could have been channelled to poverty reduction in the war-torn region, but the government spent the money on buying expensive ammunition to fight the Lords’ Resistance Army in Central African Republic and Democratic Republic of Congo.

In the northern Uganda situation, multifaceted and wide-ranging forms of collaboration between UN agencies and some NGOs were used to develop people-centred networks that helped identify and assist those most in need. UN agencies, NGOs, local organisations and individual actors collaborated with one another to ensure the protection and the provision of basic services to the people (Compton, 2014). For example, a report by UNDP Uganda Programme (2012) shows that the Northern Uganda Early Recovery Programme (NUERP), which was funded by the United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security (UNTFHS), collaborated with three UN agencies UNDP, WHO and WFP to jointly implement grassroots programmes. These UN agencies further collaborated with other grassroots organizations which included FAO, World Vision, International Lifeline Fund and Sasakawa Global 2000. Activities such as building people’s capacity in agriculture and non-agricultural production, accessing credit, improving incomes, enhancing health and nutritional status, peace building and conflict prevention, and increasing access to safe water and sanitation facilities
were implemented in Lira, Oyam, Alebtong and Otuke districts in the Lango region. These projects focussed on three areas: resettlement and recovery support, executed by UNDP and WFP; health, nutrition and HIV/AIDS implemented, by WHO and peace-building and conflict resolution, undertaken by UNDP.

The organizations’ main aim was to provide swift, self-sustainable recovery in the conflict-affected areas using an integrated, community-based delivery approach (UNDP, 2012), in accordance with human security principles. Once this occurred, some positive changes in people’s lives were realized. These included improved farming methods and food security. In addition, people acquired skills of saving through the Village Saving and Loan Association (VSLA) and developed a keen awareness in preserving peace through peace rings which were community-based structures, set up on a voluntary basis to promote dialogue and mediation among people affected by the conflict in the region (Kamatsiko, 2015). People gained an increased consciousness of the necessity to take care of both their health and that of the environment. But while people centred/human security emphasises interventions aimed at improving the resilience and wellbeing of people faced with threats (Wood, 2007), this approach was not always achieved. The need for the promotion of good governance, accountability mechanisms and the provision of better social services remained unfulfilled. Thus, the recovery process was problematic.

As part of their activities during the recovery period, AVSI (2013) empowered local communities through various programmes. These included making farming a business, supporting persons living with disabilities, improving the quality of life of children, providing opportunities for education, contributing to national prevention efforts of mother to child transmission of HIV/AIDS, equipping youth with employment skills, improving health care systems and strengthening and modernizing agricultural production. According to its 2013 report “AVSI [was] mindful to recognize that within every individual resides the potential to
surmount challenges, innovate and achieve success” (2013, p. 6). Therefore, people took a leading role in planning and implementing these programmes although few empowerment strategies that worked in practice were documented. However, empowerment enabled the integration of other sectors of society and government into peace building activities. In addition, programmes were designed to promote learning rather than yielding specific results. One notable contribution of these programmes was the creation of prospects for participants to seek out and captivate knowledge critical to good decision making.

During the recovery period, many NGOs designed people centred programs, which led to a deeper analysis of the root causes and consequences of the conflict. For example, the Youth Empowerment for the Realization and Promotion of Human Rights in northern Uganda (GWED-G), used human rights training and empowerment building activities in conjunction with employment skills training to assist the youth to rebuild their lives, and Caritas Gulu used the participatory approach idea of working with the affected people to identify their interests/needs and the subsequent solutions (Wamala, 2015). Such interventions improved the community’s engagement in the ongoing reconciliation process with former LRA rebels and enabled former combatants to more fully integrate in community. These actions were taken with the aim of contributing to lasting peace in the region.

Both people centred and human security approaches put emphasis on empowering communities in order to strengthen their capacities and improve resilience to present and future threats (Frerks, 2011). In northern Uganda, initiatives designed by NGOs such as community meetings and workshops aimed at empowering and improving the livelihoods of the people during the recovery process led to improved income security and generated pride among the people through ownership of programs/activities carried out in their community (Hochreiter, 2013). People started to share their success stories among themselves, spreading the word to neighbouring communities. For example, since people in northern Uganda are subsistence
farmers, they applied the demand-driven approach, which focused on small-scale interventions. This system helped develop market linkages which in turn supported the economy of local communities and motivated people to become more productive (Kelly, 2015).

As a practice, human security advocates for equal treatment of all people irrespective of race, ethnicity, gender and religion (Richmond, 2012). In northern Uganda, programmes and policies during the recovery process tried to emphasise the new approach of gender equality. To put the gender perspective into the recovery process, there was a need to deal with gender issues by empowering women and at the same time promoting peace and development in the region. For example, since women were no longer in danger of being abducted, many used this recovery period to improve their economic base and support their families (Blumberg, 2015). One programme, aimed at gender transformation and empowerment, helped women’s groups access justice, engage in peace building, conflict prevention and conflict resolution, all of which improved the situation of both men and women (UWONET, 2011). Women’s increased access to information, especially in rural areas, also had the potential to change the use of non-discriminative language and encouraged more equal participation.

This is however, an over optimistic description of the situation since a report by International Alert (2008), shows that even though many programmes were designed to empower and benefit women, it is hard to identify those benefits for women. Cultural and traditional practices in northern Uganda to some extent collided with human security principles of equal treatment of individuals within their communities. This was contrary to traditional cultural practices which emphasized the supremacy of men over women. Any attempt by the youth or women specifically those living in urban areas to question any older male idealisation of pre-war order, was unacceptable (Branch, 2013).

The identification of the underlying causes of conflict is a core concept of the human security approach. However, during the northern Ugandan recovery process, neither donors,
nor government nor NGOs endeavoured to identify what really had caused the conflict. They only dealt with the consequences. Although not specifically referring to the northern Uganda situation, Cunningham stresses the need to explore the origins of conflict, arguing that “Understanding the root causes of civil wars and preventing their re-eruption would help achieve future goals for improving the quality of life for millions” (2013, p. 181). Following this line of thinking, listening to people’s views on the underlying causes of the conflict could have provided a starting point for their involvement in the recovery process.

During the recovery period, there was a need to employ people-centred approaches to help all victims overcome the traumas they sustained in the two decades of conflict. According to Sonderegger, Rombouts, Ocen, and McKeever:

persons may benefit from an intervention designed to improve psychosocial functioning and that a universal intervention offered to all war-affected persons (i.e., not just former LRA abductees) is relevant, as all war-affected persons may benefit, regardless of the degree of their direct and indirect experiences of war (2011, p. 235).

The development of participatory initiatives which included all people, in a bottom-up approach, was essential to complement top-down justice and reconciliation processes. An integral part of this would have been the active inclusion of local traditional leaders in the recovery process as a way of restoring social order among the people. This approach was discussed but not put into effective practice (Branch, 2014).

Similarly, community-based approaches used by INGOs were intended to develop programmes and activities which could help people rebuild their livelihoods and alleviate some of the insecurity. However, these interventions did not instantly yield tangible results.

Accordingly, in order to have a meaningful post-conflict recovery in northern Uganda – one that employed the principles of the human security approach - basic issues for human
survival for example catering for people with mental health, disability, and issues related to youth who have grown up in camps needed to be considered (Barham et al., 2011). In any peace-building effort, a central focus on the principles of human security which ensures protecting and promoting social, cultural, political and economic rights of those affected during and after the conflict, it is essential (Cahill-Ripley, 2016). A people-centred approach based on human security principles could help the recovery process by putting in place programmes aimed at responding to the individual differences mentioned above and also to cultural and ethnic diversity. Moreover, it could help consolidate peace and empower people. However, this did not occur during the northern Uganda recovery process.

As discussed above (chapter two), scholars such as Cilliers (2004), Kaldor (2007), Tadjbakhsh and Chenoy (2007) and Newman (2010) (Cilliers, 2004; Kaldor, 2007; Newman, 2010; Tadjbakhsh & Chenoy, 2007) who are advocates of the human security approach argue that it can be a useful tool in reducing human suffering, assisting with development, resolving conflict and advocating for human rights. In northern Uganda, when humanitarian organizations applied these principles during the recovery period, they reduced people’s suffering and helped some re-build their lives. However, the early withdrawal of many INGOs and the high levels of corruption among government officials tasked with implementing projects at times led to the failure or near failure of those projects which in turn retarded the recovery process.

A people centered/human security approach focuses on addressing issues affecting vulnerable people and groups within specific communities. Human rights groups in northern Uganda which were advocating for people’s rights and for their human security sometimes found themselves at loggerheads with the government because it had little interest in dealing with those issues. Commenting on the government’s contribution during the recovery period, Pham and Vinck note that “for social reconstruction to be effective, the government should be
perceived as legitimate, should not impose measures on communities without their input, and should manage expectations of its development programs. Failure to do so may renew tensions that could undermine the prospect for a lasting peace” (2010, p. 32) and a return to another devastating conflict in the region.

Extending security to all citizens is a responsibility of the state. People centred/human security approaches can contribute to the successful achievement of this aim. During the recovery period, the lack of trained personnel equipped with the skills to put in place recovery programmes undermined the security of many northern Ugandans. Further, the lack of an effective rule of law and the accompanying lack of basic social services meant that, in some areas of northern Uganda, such approaches could not be implemented. A human security approach could not be applied.

Since Independence, Ugandan political leaders, focused on maintaining their own power at the expense of the security of their citizens, have stood in the way of people centred initiatives. Similarly, public institutions such as the police and the army have failed to guarantee the security of all Ugandans, instead favouring the advancement of their own ethnic groups’. These conditions opened up avenues for rebel groups, such as the LRA, to destabilise the country and, as I have shown above, have made moving towards a human security approach extremely difficult.

The participation of ordinarily people in decision making is fundamental to both people centred and human security approaches. Because funding agencies had specific programmes into which they had to release their funds, there was often a discrepancy between the priorities of the funding agencies and those of the concerned communities: very often, the decisions of local participants were not always adhered to, leading to inappropriate planning based on poor decision making and unrealistic costings. Yet, both local and international NGOs made concerted efforts to adhere to the principles of a people centered/human security approach
when implementing programs during the recovery period. Even so, many INGOs withdrew early.

The security situation which prevailed during the conflict period disorganized the social, political and economic setup environment of northern Uganda. Dealing with human security threats in post-conflict meant that various stakeholders needed to strengthen, reinforce, and extend their activities to the people in northern Uganda. Nonetheless, in 2008 Maya suggested that as a result of the extensive socio-economic and political disruption during the conflict in northern Uganda, NGOs were likely to be needed for a considerable time: “Given the limited capacity of local government, there is no question that UN agencies and NGOs will continue to play a significant role in northern Uganda’s recovery and reconstruction” (2008, p. 23). In reality though, in order to have a successful recovery process in northern Uganda, there is a need to reflect on Uganda’s political volatile history, so as to develop acceptable local development recovery opportunities which are based on human security principles for the people of the region, either large programmes at societal level or smaller initiatives at group or individual levels. As Edomwonyi as he writes of Africa in a post-conflict process more generally: “[a] successful post-conflict rebuilding project is one which sets effective foundations for democracy, economic prosperity, peace and justice to take root in societies in transition” (2003, p. 43).

Conclusion

This chapter examined the challenges which former IDP faced returning to their former places of residence and the role played by the government of Uganda and humanitarian organizations in assisting those returning to resettle. After years of social, political and economic turmoil, this period was one of peace. IDPs returned home to greater stability, and humanitarian agencies operated without fear of rebel attacks. The discussion has demonstrated
that applying a people centred/human security approach in a conflict free environment is a basis for comparative success. However, the task of reconstructing the war-ravaged region has been enormous and was not without its challenges. Noticeably, there was little effort spent on identifying the root causes of the conflict at the beginning of the recovery. If this had been done it may have provided some indication on the priorities as to what issues needed to be dealt with first in the recovery period.

The northern Ugandan situation shows that in a human security/people centred recovery process, the emphasis should be on strengthening the capacity of citizens and civil society. NGOs provided the assistance necessary to restore the rule of law and encouraged community-based consultations on issues related to justice, truth healing and reconciliation. NGOs encouraged local governments to create space for dialogue on how to address the people’s dissatisfaction. In some of the areas where these types of programmes were carried out, there was a marked improvement in people’s skills development and wellbeing.

The northern Uganda recovery process demonstrates the need for a coordinated approach when applying the human security concept in a post-conflict situation. However, there was a need to improve the capacity of local stakeholders, and importantly, the government of Uganda needed to strengthen its political will to implement its recovery programmes. Such an approach would, more likely, to have led to a better alignment between planned goals and on the ground practice, which was not the case in northern Uganda.
Chapter Eight

Conclusion

This thesis has used the northern Uganda conflict to analyse the usefulness of the human security approach in assisting people in conflict situations and during the recovery process. It also assesses the impacts of the crisis on the affected people. This research cannot claim to have exhaustively addressed all the issues related to the application of the human security concept when analysing the conflict and the recovery period in northern Uganda. However, the research does contribute to knowledge about, and adds to the literature on, whether a human security approach is a productive concept to be applied in both conflict and post conflict situations. In exploring the relevance of this approach, I have drawn principally on the work of Christie (2010), Ewan (2007) and the UNDP (1994).

While there is no agreed universal definition of human security (Hataley & Nossal, 2004; Hynek & Chandler, 2013; Paris, 2001; Prezelj, 2008), following Gasper (2013), four key elements of the concept have been used to structure this investigation of the northern Ugandan conflict. These are that: a human security framework places the individual as the primary referent, designs programmes to best protect the people, emphasises individuals’ well-being within their communities, and responds to people’s needs when dealing with sources of threat (Gasper, 2013).

The background to this study has been the ongoing conflicts in Uganda since it gained independence in 1962. However, emphasis has been put on the conflict between the LRA and the government of Uganda between 1986-2006. As discussed in previous chapters, the northern Ugandan conflict was the most horrific and sustained of Uganda’s conflicts. Multiple international, regional, national and local actors and organisations were involved, and many strategies were used in efforts to bring peace and stability to the region. This
research has discussed Uganda’s post-independence history and analysed the usefulness of the human security approach by testing the extent to which the concept of human security can be usefully applied in a conflict situation like the northern Uganda conflict. With a human security framework in mind, this thesis explored the reasons for the conflicts, their ensuing consequences, the peace initiatives instigated, and the programs initiated in the post conflict and recovery period.

The thesis has demonstrated that the conflict was produced in part by the disruptions caused by the British colonial administrative system and partly by ethnically based socio-economic divisions within Uganda’s post-colonial political structures. It has shown that human security principles were more difficult to implement during the conflict than after it. Using a human security framework, the thesis evaluates the interventions designed by nations, international bodies, local organisations and the government of Uganda to address the security threats in northern Uganda both during and after the conflict. This research established that although people-led initiatives, as emphasised by the human security approach, and as employed by numerous humanitarian organizations, played a critical role in assisting those who suffered extensively during the conflict, their efforts were not successful in either fully alleviating the suffering or stopping the conflict.

The main argument in this research is that human security is a productive concept, however, its application in the northern Uganda conflict was hampered by political and non-political actors who were opposed to, or who frequently sought to impede, its successful application. It was of limited value in protecting people during the conflict. However, it was more effectively implemented in the reconstruction and recovery period following the conflict in northern Uganda.

Chapter one provides the background and the reasons for this research. It states the problem under investigation, which was the longevity of the conflict in northern Uganda in
relation to the application of the concept of human security and presents the diversity of ethnic groups which make up present day Uganda. The research methodologies used are outlined, the reasons for choosing them are discussed, and the main question and hypotheses of the research are stated. The main questions guiding the research were: What impact did the key stakeholders have in the northern Uganda conflict and how did those differences contribute to the implementation of human security principles in the period 1988-2016.

Chapter two examines the literature relating to the concept of human security, discussing the emergence of the term and its various definitions and analysing arguments put forward by different scholars in favour of, and against, the concept. It explores how human insecurities such as poverty, fear of violence, inter-ethnic conflict, human rights abuses and poor governance are common contributors to conflict. All of these conditions were present in northern Uganda before the beginning of, and indeed throughout, the conflict. Although human security is a contested concept, its application, as discussed in chapter seven, indicates that if the principles had been applied more broadly in the recovery phase, the reconstruction would have been more effective.

Chapter three suggests that the political, social and economic situation in Uganda during the colonial and post-colonial periods provided fertile ground for the country’s political instabilities. The chapter argues that the causes of civil wars in post-colonial Uganda could be attributed to the colonial administration’s system of ‘divide and rule’ (Kisekka-Ntale 2007, Nannyonjo 2005) which resulted in the absence of a sense of being Ugandan and a lack of a spirit of national unity. It also suggests that the application of a human security approach could have linked the nation’s security needs with those of the people. This may have united the country and identified common goals. That this did not occur is demonstrated through the discussion of the causes of the northern Uganda conflict which shows that all the leaders since independence prioritized their stay in power at the expense of the welfare of the civilian
population. This led to many non-state actors destabilizing the country by waging rebellions, with catastrophic consequences for the security of the people, specifically those in northern Uganda. As this thesis shows, the civilian population is most likely to feel secure if the government understands the importance of institutional, political, economic and ethnic relationships.

As this research has demonstrated, the use of military intervention by all the regimes since independence planted the seed of ‘fear’ in many Ugandans. The human security approach is based on freedom from fear and want (UNDP, 1994). However, in Uganda, disregard for human life by the military left many people fearful of expressing their views openly. One of the main reasons for the conflicts in Uganda, and specifically for the emergence of the LRA, was a lack of good governance, which I argue emanated from the colonial era. A lack of good governance in any country contributes to a lack of human security.

Chapter four focuses on the context and causes of the conflict in northern Uganda. The chapter explores the emergence of the LRA and discusses both its backing by the government of Sudan and the prolonged responses from the government of Uganda, INGOs and NGOs, analysing the challenges NGOs faced when trying to assist the people affected by the conflict. The role of NGOs is contrasted with that of the government which failed to protect its citizens, forcing them into camps which lacked basic services. The chapter argues that the failure to address the politically-based ethnic and socio-economic divisions was a major contribution to the causes and longevity of the conflict in northern Uganda. In doing so it demonstrates that ethnically-based divisions following Independence contributed to the conflict. In addition, the lack of a meaningful collaboration between the UPDF and NGOs in the fight against the LRA intensified the conflict and caused great misery to the people. This lack of cooperation and the non-involvement of the local people in designing appropriate mechanisms for deterring human threats further threatened their lives. I argue here that more
effective collaboration between the various stakeholders in the conflict would have helped to defeat the LRA in a shorter time.

Chapter five discusses the various social, political and economic consequences of the conflict on both the people and the region, arguing that the different perspectives held by key stakeholders in the northern Uganda conflict led to catastrophic consequences for the people of that region. The chapter demonstrates that the government of Uganda’s insistence on using a military approach to solve the conflict undermined people’s human security and led to a loss of community organizational structures, a lack of capacity to solve communal and family disputes, and a weakening of social norms. It also created poverty, led to increased unemployment, and greatly affected the delivery of basic social services. If the Ugandan government had applied a human security approach in northern Uganda, it could have enhanced people’s sense of security as the approach draws on people’s experiences to design what is best for them in a given context. In addition, the heavy-handed tactics of the UPDF, which resulted in various human rights abuses of non-combatants, caused much enmity between the UPDF, the government and civilians. Similarly, if a human security approach had been used, the government’s main focus would have been to address the root causes of discontent particularly those of the people in the Acholi region where the LRA caused the most carnage.

Chapter six discusses the different national, local, regional and international peace initiatives and how they impacted on the conflict and the human security of northern Ugandans. The chapter argues that the deep-rooted ethnic and socio-economic divisions within Uganda contributed to the failure of most of these initiatives and that international interventions like that of the ICC, which emphasized revengeful justice, also helped prolong the conflict. The contribution of the Juba peace talks, which marked the end of the conflict in northern Uganda, is also explored. However, the research identifies an ongoing lack of trust
between the LRA and the government of Uganda as a cause for the failure of the other peace negotiations and for stopping the LRA insurgency completely. The conflict showed the government’s lack of commitment to, and understanding of, how people-centred peace-building processes should be handled. As emphasized by the human security approach, the research demonstrates that there was a need to involve the local people in peace talks and include them in the security process. Although extensive engagement was proposed by civil society, religious and cultural leaders, the government’s preference was for a top-down approach.

Chapter seven analyses the recovery process and explores the consequences of the withdrawal of some INGOs at the beginning of the process. The chapter discusses conditions in northern Uganda following the Juba peace process, the decongestion process and the contribution and challenges of various stakeholders. It also argues that human security, while a productive concept, was ultimately of limited value in protecting northern Ugandans during the conflict situation. In addition, the shifting and multiple meanings of security and human security held by key actors in the northern Ugandan conflict impeded the socio-economic reconstruction of northern Uganda. This process was affected by the withdrawal of many INGOs, however, I argue here that if INGOs had not withdrawn their support at the beginning of the recovery process, local organizations and the Ugandan government would have been better able to undertake more people-centred development initiatives in keeping with a human security approach. A human security approach recognizes that the needs of people differ from community to community and individual to individual and considers the integration of gender perspectives in the planning process. The research suggests that had INGOs stayed for a longer time, there could have been more of a focus on these aspects. Local groups and people lost the expertise of the international aid organisations when many of them left the region.

In this research, the emphasis has been on examining how a human security approach
could have been used more effectively in addressing issues of insecurity in northern Uganda. Considering the use, or lack of use, in the conflict in northern Uganda, of the four elements of human security identified in this research enables us to better understand its relevance and the problems which those attempting to apply it might encounter. Certainly, as discussed in detail in previous chapters, those trying to apply it in northern Uganda experienced many difficulties.

The research has established that it is more difficult to use the human security approach during conflict situations than when the situation is stable. This was clearly demonstrated in northern Uganda. During the conflict, many humanitarian organizations tried to assist but often failed to accomplish what they had hoped to do because of the lack of security. After the conflict, during the recovery period, because of the improved security situation, success was partly realised. As demonstrated throughout the thesis, the application of a human security approach was hampered due to reasons which included corruption, a lack of respect for human rights, some cultural and traditional practices, the lack of security, the lack of personnel equipped with the skills needed to employ a human security approach, ignorance of the rule of law by both the LRA and the UPDF, historical and political developments since Independence, a lack of nationalism by politicians and a discrepancy between funding agencies and community needs. A combination of the above reasons created a situation which greatly contributed to the conflict in northern Uganda and led to prolonged human insecurity for many civilians.

The usefulness of a human security approach is often contested (Hataley & Nossal, 2004; Hynek & Chandler, 2013; Paris, 2001; Prezelj, 2008) but there is growing agreement that when INGOs, NGOs, local groups and governments work together, the chance of a more holistic approach to security and benefits for a greater proportion of vulnerable people can be realised (Atanassova-Cornelis, 2005). Although the concept addresses various threats to
humanity, which in theory is attractive to its proponents (Cilliers, 2004; Kaldor, 2007; Newman, 2010; Tadjbakhsh & Chenoy, 2007), the lack of connection between theory and practice, as demonstrated in northern Uganda, undermines its applicability and makes the concept tough to apply in a conflict situation. This raises a question as what other approaches can be used to make the human security approach more practical since it appears that the concept cannot be successfully applied alone in a conflict situation. This is a research area which could be explored further.

Despite the shortcomings of the human security concept, this thesis has shown that its application is more likely to create a space in which human insecurities can be identified, recognized and addressed. Further, the thesis has identified useful, practical and effective ways of engaging those affected by humanitarian crises to take part in managing their own security and livelihood. As progress in northern Uganda’s recovery continues, it is important that the locals take the lead in that process.

It is hoped that this case study, which uses a qualitative methodological approach and auto-ethnography to analyse the human security situation in northern Uganda from 1988 to 2006, offers relevant actions and responses which can be applied in similar humanitarian crises. I have tried to indicate the relevance of a human security approach in responding to current and emerging threats to people in conflict zones. In order for other developing countries to prevent human insecurities from occurring as happened in northern Uganda, it is essential to promote human security approaches, not military strategies, in conflict situations and during periods of reconstruction.

Despite all that we knew about the LRA and their violence, we had made a unique but precarious relationship of trust with them, and they with us. One moment that particularly shows this relationship was when Vincent Otti (by then second in command) entrusted us with his
wife to be taken to Nairobi for delivering a baby. We did this and brought her and her baby back safely. This shows the working of human security in the conflict zone in practice. The theory of human security put to work, in practice in the conflict zone.
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