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# The Effects of Violent Conflict and Displacement on Citizen Engagement

A Case Study from Northern Uganda

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Institute of Development Studies  
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Thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

STATEMENT BY THE AUTHOR

I hereby declare that this thesis has not been and will not be, submitted in whole or in part to another University for the award of any other degree.

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UNIVERSITY OF SUSSEX

Marjoke Anika Oosterom – Thesis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

THE EFFECTS OF VIOLENT CONFLICT AND DISPLACEMENT ON CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT

A CASE STUDY FROM NORTHERN UGANDA

**Summary**

This thesis aims to contribute to an understanding of how citizenship is constructed, sensed and practiced by people who have experienced violent conflict and displacement. In the Acholi region of Uganda, the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) created large-scale insecurity and mass-displacement between the late 1980s until the region returned to stability in 2006. In this thesis I compare two conflict-affected locations in the Acholi region with one non-affected location in Lango region. The overall proposition of this study is that the experience of protracted conflict and displacement leads to a lack of a sense of citizenship and to diminished forms of citizen engagement, due to the limited opportunity for learning and experiencing the practice of citizenship.

I used qualitative research methods during ten months of fieldwork in 2010. For an analysis of people's sense of citizenship, I studied how people perceive and feel themselves to be members of the wider political community; as members of the Acholi tribe and as citizens of Uganda. For the analysis of the practice of citizenship I studied various forms of citizen engagement: with local authorities, in community institutions, for development and for accountability purposes.

Numerous challenges to citizen participation exist across Uganda. These include a lack of knowledge about the system and lack of self-confidence, barriers associated with the micropolitics of participation, and democratic deficits of the overall political system. However, underlying reasons for non-participation can vary. In Acholi, some of these reasons are attributable to people's experiences during the war.

I conclude that protracted conflict diminishes a sense of citizenship and radically changes the social environment in which active citizenship is learnt, through the narrowing and securitisation of institutions and the public sphere. The sense and practice that exist in the post-conflict situation are therefore characterised by certain ideas, perceptions, emotions and behaviours that were developed during the conflict.

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## Contents

Summary .....	3
Acknowledgements.....	4
Contents.....	6
List of tables and figures .....	10
List of Acronyms.....	11
Glossary of Luo words .....	12
Map of Uganda showing the research locations .....	13
Chapter 1 Introduction .....	14
1.1 The Acholi experience of conflict and citizenship.....	14
1.2 Framing the debate: active citizenship and conflict. ....	16
1.2.1 An active notion of citizenship.....	16
1.2.2 Everyday forms of citizen engagement.....	18
1.2.3 Citizenship and the experience of violent conflict.....	19
1.3 Focus of this study .....	22
1.4 Main findings .....	23
1.5 Structure of the thesis .....	25
Chapter 2 Literature Review .....	28
Introduction .....	28
2.1 Citizenship as participation .....	29
2.1.1 Approaches to citizenship.....	29
2.1.2 Citizenship and agency.....	32
2.1.3 Voice and participation .....	36
Exit, Voice and Loyalty .....	36
Voice and institutionalised participation .....	37
2.2 Approaches to state-society relations .....	40
2.2.1 Rejection .....	41
2.2.2 Resistance .....	46
2.2.3 Contention .....	48
2.2.4 Critical and constructive engagement .....	50
2.3 Ethnic identity and engagement.....	54
2.3.1 A social constructivist approach to ethnicity.....	54
2.3.2 The ethnic citizen: participation in two communities .....	57
2.3.3 Identity and marginalisation .....	61
2.4 Agency and institutions in conflict settings .....	65
2.4.1 Transformation of social and political institutions .....	65
2.4.2 Forms of agency and navigation in a warscape .....	70
2.5 Citizen engagement in conflict settings .....	73
2.5.1 Narrowing space for citizen agency and voice.....	73
2.5.2 Opportunities for voice .....	78
2.5.3 Can violent conflict positively affect citizen engagement? .....	79
2.6 Citizenship and displacement .....	81
2.6.1 Displacement and layers in formal citizenship .....	81
2.6.2 The camp as permanent exception and real-life setting .....	82
2.6.3 Agency of the displaced .....	84
2.7 'Participation' in recovery interventions .....	87
2.7.1 Community Driven Recovery .....	87
2.7.2 The social and political impact of CDR.....	89

2.7.3	Power dynamics in community reconstruction programmes.....	92
	Conclusion.....	94
Chapter 3	Conceptual Framework and Research Methodology .....	96
	Introduction .....	96
3.1	Positioning my approach .....	96
3.1.1	The sense and practice of citizenship .....	96
3.1.2	Towards an explanation of citizen engagement in post-conflict settings .....	99
3.1.3	Research questions and propositions .....	106
3.2	Researching the sense and the practice of citizenship .....	110
3.3	Research Design and Methodology .....	114
3.3.1	Comparing ‘conflict-affected’ and ‘non-affected’ cases .....	114
3.3.2	Overview of research methodology.....	118
3.3.3	Sample size and sampling strategy .....	120
3.4	Methodological challenges and data validity .....	121
3.4.1	Adjustments in research instruments.....	121
3.4.2	Validity of my argument .....	122
3.4.3	Triangulation.....	124
3.4.4	The ‘munu’ without projects.....	125
3.4.5	Ethical issues .....	126
3.5	Documentation and data processing.....	127
3.6	Data Analysis.....	128
Chapter 4	Citizenship in Uganda: A Historical Perspective.....	131
	Introduction .....	131
4.1	State formation in Uganda.....	132
4.1.1	The colonial heritage for ethnic identities in Uganda.....	132
4.1.2	Post-colonial regimes.....	135
4.1.3	From Movement System to multi-party politics.....	138
4.1.4	Acholi identity and adverse incorporation .....	139
4.2	The state at local level .....	141
4.2.1	Resistance Councils: a guerrilla tactic and democratic innovation.....	141
4.2.2	Functioning of the Local Council system at present .....	144
4.3	The LRA conflict in Acholi.....	148
4.3.1	Northern rebellion after regime change.....	149
4.3.2	From insurgency to protracted conflict .....	151
4.3.3	The role of the NRM government.....	154
4.4	Transformation of institutions in Acholi .....	155
4.5	Post-conflict recovery in Acholi .....	158
	Conclusion.....	160
Chapter 5	Construction of Citizenship in Acholi and Lango.....	162
	Introduction .....	162
5.1	Citizenship construction in Acholi: milestones in recent history.....	163
5.1.1	1986: The regime change to NRA .....	164
5.1.2	Organised resistance by the ‘Cillil’ .....	166
5.1.3	Alice Lakwena’s Holy Spirit Movement and Severino Lukoya .....	167
5.1.4	Karamojong cattle raids .....	168
5.1.5	‘Then Kony came in’: the start of the LRA insurgency .....	170
5.2	The warscape, 1986-1990 .....	171
5.3	Adjusting livelihoods: coping agency for food and security .....	173
5.4	Local institutions and everyday engagements.....	177
5.4.1	The Resistance Councils .....	177
5.4.2	Customary leadership .....	180
5.4.3	Social institutions.....	183



5.4.4	The public sphere.....	184
5.5	The Acholi sense of citizenship .....	187
5.6	Citizenship construction in Lango .....	191
5.6.1	Life under Idi Amin.....	192
5.6.2	Obote's second Presidency.....	193
5.6.3	Return to stability under the NRA.....	195
5.7	Consolidation of social and political institutions in Lango.....	196
5.7.1	Political leadership.....	196
5.7.2	Social and cultural institutions.....	197
5.8	The Lango sense of citizenship.....	200
	Conclusion.....	202
Chapter 6	Acholi Citizenship Recast during Displacement .....	204
	Introduction .....	204
6.1	The IDP camps in Acholi .....	205
6.1.1.	Phases of camp formation .....	205
6.1.2.	Camp governance regime .....	208
6.1.3	Camp security.....	212
6.2	Daily struggles: coping agency in the camps .....	213
6.2.1.	Securing food and livelihoods .....	214
6.2.2	Engagement in protection .....	216
6.3	Social institutions in the camp.....	218
6.4	Forms of citizen engagement.....	222
6.4.1	The petitioning voice.....	222
6.4.2	The risks of exercising the interrogative voice.....	224
6.5	Implications for the practice of citizenship.....	229
6.6	Implications for the Acholi sense of citizenship.....	232
	Conclusion.....	234
Chapter 7	Acholi and Langi Practices of Citizenship Today .....	237
	Introduction .....	237
7.1	The petitioning voice: citizen engagement for 'development' .....	238
7.1.1	Day-to-day forms of community mobilisation .....	238
7.1.2	Formal mechanisms for engagement .....	243
7.1.3	Challenges in exercising the petitioning voice.....	253
7.2	The interrogative voice: engagement for accountability.....	256
7.2.1	Governance problems from a citizen perspective .....	256
7.2.2	'We want to remove the LC' .....	257
7.2.3	Informal accountability mechanisms.....	260
7.2.4	Cultural limitations to making accountability claims.....	262
7.2.5	Reflection on the two Acholi sites .....	265
7.3	Acholi citizenship explained.....	266
7.3.1	Reflections on the findings .....	267
7.3.2	The effects of fear and a lack of a sense of citizenship.....	268
7.3.3	Internalised perceptions of the public sphere .....	270
7.3.4	Perceptions of state responsibilities .....	271
7.3.5	Effects of the fragmentation of social institutions .....	272
7.3.6	Customary leadership challenged.....	276
7.3.7	Lack of prior experience with citizen agency .....	278
	Conclusion.....	280
Chapter 8	Conclusions .....	282
	Introduction .....	282
8.1	Acholi and Lango compared.....	283
8.2	Mechanisms of conflict and their effects.....	290

8.2.1	Reflections on the propositions .....	291
8.2.2	Securitisation of the public sphere and institutions .....	293
8.2.3	Limited opportunities for learning citizenship during the war .....	296
8.2.4	The post-conflict situation .....	297
8.3	Contributions to previous literature .....	300
8.3.1	My approach to the everyday.....	300
8.3.2	Citizen engagement in post-conflict settings.....	304
8.4	Comparison with studies that suggest a positive impact of conflict .....	306
8.5	Policy implications .....	308
8.5	Implications for further study .....	312
	Bibliography .....	313
Annex 1	Overview of interviews and focus groups.....	329
Annex 2	Analysis in NVivo .....	335
A.2.1	Example of tree and child nodes for 'camp life' .....	335
A.2.2	Analysis for the sense of citizenship .....	335
A.2.3	Analysis for the practice of citizenship .....	336
Annex 3	Mariana's story .....	338
Annex 4	Alfred's story .....	340
Annex 5	Joseph's story .....	342

**List of tables and figures**

<b>Table</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Page</b>
Table 3.1	Overview of case study locations	115
Table 3.2	Final sample size per research site	120
Table 3.3	Example of a part of the NVivo tree – Acholi history	127
Table 7.1	Institutions involved in brokering between village and sub-county	244
Table 7.2	Number of issues raised by individuals with their leaders	248
Table 7.3	Qualitative differences between Lango and Acholi functioning of LCs	255
Table 7.4	Differences between Acholi and Lango for Citizenship Practices in the present	264
Table 8.1	Differences between Acholi and Lango Citizenship	289
Table A1.1	Overview of semi-structured interview used in the villages	329
Table A1.2	Overview of focus group discussions in the villages	331
Table A1.3	Participatory Research Methods used in focus groups in the villages.	332
Table A1.4	Interviews with government officials	332
Table A1.5	Interviews with international and domestic Civil Society Organisations	333
Table A1.6	Interviews with Bi- and Multilateral Donor Agencies	334
Table A1.7	Interviews with Academia	334
Table A2.1	Part of the NVivo ‘tree’ – Camp life	335
Table A2.2	Part of the NVivo tree - Acholi identity	336
Table A2.3	Part of NVivo tree on – engagement	336
<b>Figure</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Page</b>
Figure 2.1	A spectrum of state –society relations and tactics of engagement	41
Figure 3.1	Diagram of how violent conflict affects citizen engagement	108
Figure 4.1	The Local Council System of Uganda	143
Map 1	Map of Uganda showing research locations	13

### List of Acronyms

CBO	Community-Based Organisation
CDD	Community-Driven Development
CDO	Community Development Officer
CDR	Community-Driven Recovery
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DP	Democratic Party
DDP	District Development Plan
FEDEMU	Federal Democratic Movement of Uganda
FRONASA	Front for National Salvation
HSM	Holy Spirit Movement (led by Alice Lakwena)
ICC	International Criminal Court
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
IRC	International Refugee Committee
KY	Kabaka Yekka
LC1	Local Council 1 – village level
LC2	Local Council 2 – parish level
LC3	Local Council 3 – sub-county level
LC4	Local Council 4 – county level (MP constituency)
LC5	Local Council 5 – district level
LDU	Local Defence Unit
LRA	Lord's Resistance Army
NAADS	National Agricultural Advisory Development Service
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NRA	National Resistance Army
NRC	Norwegian Refugee Council
NRM	National Resistance Movement
NUSAF	Northern Uganda Social Action Fund
Obote I	First regime under president of Milton Obote
Obote II	Second regime under president Milton Obote (1979-1985)
OPM	Office of the Prime-Minister
PDC	Parish Development Committee
PRDP	Peace, Recovery and Development Plan
RC	Resistance Council
RDC	Resident District's Commissioner
SMC	School Management Committee
UN	United Nations
UNC	Uganda National Congress
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNLA	Uganda National Liberation Army
UNOCHA	United Nations Organisation for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
UPC	Uganda People's Congress
UPDA	Uganda People's Democratic Army
UPDF	Uganda People's Defence Forces
VHT	Village Health Team
VSLA	Village Savings and Loan Association
WB	World Bank
WFP	World Food Programme

### Glossary of Luo words

<i>Adwong-wan-tic</i>	Leader of farmers and communal work (Lango)
<i>Akiba</i>	Group for drinking and saving in Lango
<i>Alulu</i>	Group of farmers (Lango)
<i>Atekere</i>	Clan
<i>Awitong</i>	Clan leader at district level (Lango)
<i>Bol-i-cup</i>	Savings group. Literally 'to drop a coin in the bowl'
<i>Dwong</i>	Voice, raising a problem or concern
<i>Gombolola</i>	Local government
<i>Grup mephu</i>	Group of farmers (Acholi)
<i>Jan Jago Atekere</i>	Clan leader (parish level)
<i>Jago Atekere</i>	Clan leader (sub-county level)
<i>Kakha</i>	Lineage
<i>Kalulu</i>	Savings group (Acholi)
<i>Mato oput</i>	A reconciliation ritual. Literally "to drink a bitter potion made from the leaves of the 'oput' tree"
<i>Myumba kumi</i>	'Ten houses'. Part of the local governance system at village level set up during the second Presidency of Milton Obote
<i>Rwot County</i>	Clan leader at county level
<i>Rwot kalam</i>	Chief by the pen
<i>Rwot Kakha</i>	Clan leader
<i>Rwot Kweri</i>	Leader of a group of farmers. Literally: chief of the hoe
<i>Rwot Moo</i> (plural: <i>Rwodi moo</i> )	"Anointed chief": hereditary successor of a pre-colonial chief
<i>Wang oo</i>	The evening gathering around the fire. Used to teach the youth about norms and values and tell the stories of the ancestors.
<i>Won Nyasi</i>	Highest level of customary leadership of the Langi

**Map of Uganda showing the research locations**



Source: [WeInformers.net](http://WeInformers.net)

Acholi region: Amuru, Gulu, Kitgum (now Chua and Lamwo), and Pader districts.  
 Lango region: Oyam, Apac (now Kole and Apac), Lira, Dokolo and Amolatar districts.

## Chapter 1 Introduction

### 1.1 The Acholi experience of conflict and citizenship

This thesis aims to contribute to an understanding of how citizenship is constructed, sensed and practised in contexts of violent conflict and displacement. The study makes use of ideas about (citizen) agency developed in the field of citizenship and citizen participation, ethnicity, conflict studies, and forced migration. It aims to advance these academic debates by looking at their intersection in one particular post-conflict setting: the Acholi region in Uganda, the region that borders South Sudan.

In the Acholi region, the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) has created large-scale insecurity, mass-displacement and thousands of victims from the late 1980s until the region returned to stability in 2006. This thesis provides a historically contextualised account of how the Acholi people lived through different episodes of the LRA war, which includes a period of displacement into camps. It unpacks the conflict into different features and shows how these set in motion a series of changes in local institutions and the public sphere, with implications for citizenship. This contributes to an understanding of how the Acholi sense and practise their citizenship in the post-conflict situation.

At the time of research in 2010, the Acholi region was in the early stages of post-conflict recovery. Rebel activities in the region had stopped after a series of peace negotiations between the LRA and the Government of Uganda, which had taken place in Juba, South Sudan, from 2006 to 2008. A final peace agreement was never signed, but the negotiations had resulted in partial peace agreements, after which security in northern Uganda improved significantly. In response to this development, both the Government of Uganda and aid organisations had transitioned from humanitarian aid to recovery programmes. Challenges emerged for local state institutions resuming their functions, having to respond to the needs of an impoverished population. Moreover, they had to catch up with the institutional changes the rest of Uganda had gone through over the last twenty years.

When stability returned, the Acholi people gradually started to leave the displacement camps, which had existed for five to ten years. They faced many challenges in the return areas, but

also proved to be very resilient. Many of the livelihood-related problems were visible: lack of seeds, tools, and difficult access to services like education and health care. Other problems were less visible. Some of these related to the memories of the LRA war and how they shape the Acholi's perceptions of themselves as citizens and their forms of citizen engagement. Beneath the surface, past experiences of the war may have shaped people's current ideas and behaviour - as family members, as community members in their localities, as members of the Acholi ethnic group, but also as *citizens*.

The Acholi lived in fear for many years and felt abandoned by a government that failed to protect them. This came on top of what was already a problematic relationship between the incumbent government and the region. In fact, the alienation of the Acholi region started long before the LRA conflict. Then during the war the Acholi experienced insecurity due to both the LRA and the Uganda People's Defence Forces (UPDF), which disrupted social and local political institutions. In the displacement camps, which were located within the war zone, they became recipients of relief as internally displaced persons (IDP), a status with different sets of effective entitlements from those of 'ordinary' citizens. In the camps the Acholi experienced parallel forms of authority: that of the state, of camp leadership, of humanitarian actors, and customary leadership - a myriad of actors and power relations the camp residents had to navigate their way through. At present they are 'returnees', encouraged to be self-sufficient and to participate in recovery programmes. The Government of Uganda and aid agencies expect the Acholi to participate in Uganda's economy and political system as ordinary citizens, including the multi-layered decentralised governance system of Local Councils (LCs).

This is of great importance to the functioning of a local democracy in the present day. Will the Acholi participate as citizens to the same extent and in the same ways as other citizens of Uganda who have not experienced war? **The central question of this study is: In the case of the Acholi region in Northern Uganda, how does the experience of protracted conflict and forced displacement affect how citizenship is sensed, constructed and practised?** The study thus establishes the connections between the past and the present, looking at how citizenship unfolded during and after the conflict.

This thesis contributes to empirical knowledge of how citizen engagement unfolds in post-conflict settings. This is important, as citizen engagement is promoted by certain (post)conflict recovery interventions with the objective of repairing social relations within society and between society and the state. My study contributes to academic debates on citizenship as



participation by unpacking the features of this conflict and relating them to what I have termed the *sense* and the *practice* of citizenship. My thesis furthermore contributes to scholarly debates on the types of agency that evolve during conflict and displacement. Finally, with this study I add to debates on how social and political institutions change during conflict by identifying how this has implications for learning active citizenship. I will show also that an analysis of the perceptions of the public sphere is important for understanding citizen engagement.

In this chapter I explain the rationale of this study. In section 1.2 I present the bodies of theory that have informed my research. I discuss how the concept of citizenship is used in this study. I then explain how I used the literatures on conflict studies and forced migration studies and say how these may enhance our understanding of citizen engagement. Next I articulate the gap in existing knowledge about citizen engagement in (post)conflict settings. This leads to the focus of my thesis: in section 1.3 I explain the contribution of my study and present my central research question and my overall proposition. I summarise my key findings in section 1.4. In the last section I explain the structure of this thesis and the focus of each chapter.

## **1.2 Framing the debate: active citizenship and conflict.**

### **1.2.1 An active notion of citizenship**

Distinct theoretical schools agree on the definition of citizenship as membership of a political community (E. F. Cohen, 2009; 2000). The theoretical foundation on which this study is based is an understanding of citizenship as a status and as active practice, as developed in the participatory democracy school (Fung & Wright, 2003).

Conventional liberal understandings of citizenship take a legalistic approach, which emphasises its *legal status* and a set of rights that protect the freedoms and liberties of the individual. Critiques of this approach question the notion of the citizen as a passive bearer of rights and, pointing out that generations of rights have come about through social struggles, hold that citizenship cannot be separated from participation (Delanty, 2000). In the communitarian (Selznick, 1992), civic republican (Putnam, 1993), radical democracy (Keane, 1988; Laclau & Mouffe, 1985) and participatory democracy (Fung & Wright, 2003) approaches, the notion of active citizenship is developed, each approach differing on the balance between rights and

duties, and the purpose of participation. Scholars point out that to conceptualise citizenship as participation an understanding of agency is required, as this is the prerequisite of participation: *'Citizenship as participation represents an expression of human agency in the political arena, broadly defined; citizenship as rights enables people to act as agents'* (R. Lister, 2003, p. 37). They also point out that the perception of the self as a citizen, one's citizen identity, and the practice of citizen engagement are interdependent (R. Lister, 2003).

An important characteristic of the participatory democracy school is that identity is considered to be constitutive of citizenship. This means that a sense of identity shapes engagement (Isin & Wood, 1999). A citizenship identity is one identity that people possibly possess and it may or may not function as a basis for citizen agency. Particularly in the African context, people are members of more than one political community: of the state and of their ethnic group (Ndegwa, 1997). Membership comes with a set of rights and entitlements, as well as duties, regarding their respective political communities, and with a set of political relationships with their fellow members (E. F. Cohen, 2009). Various authors have argued that people have differentiated attitudes towards these political communities and therefore engage differently with them (Ekeh, 1975; Ndegwa, 1997).

The relationship between ethnic identity and action, engagement and mobilisation is widely debated. Rational choice scholars emphasise the instrumental use of ethnicity to further individual interests and acquire power and wealth (J. D Fearon, 2006). Social constructivists, on the other hand, hold the view that ethnic identity is constructed in the process of interaction between groups, and state that rational accounts of ethnicity cannot explain why people adhere to communal ideas (Kaufman, 2006). According to this theory individuals do not make decisions in isolation, but are influenced by their identities and their relationship to their community (Delanty, 2000).

In the context of Africa, debates on citizenship and identity have contributed to understanding mechanisms through which (ethnic) populations are excluded. An emphasis on autochthony as the basis of citizenship has led to exclusion, marginalisation and social tensions in many countries. Processes of 'adverse incorporation' experienced by certain groups often started during the colonial regime (Hickey & Du Toit, 2007a). For this thesis, understandings of ethnic identity and citizen identity are relevant, given the multi-ethnic character of Uganda and the framing of the conflict in ethnic terms such as 'the Acholi war' by state actors (Mwenda, 2010).

As many have argued before me, and as this thesis confirms, the LRA conflict deepened the alienation of the Acholi from the state and furthered the process of adverse incorporation.

My definition of citizenship is informed by the work of scholars who emphasise an agency approach to citizenship and who understand citizenship as status and as practice (Kabeer, 2005; R. Lister, 2003). It is also informed by the idea that a notion of identity shapes agency and that a citizen identity is important for citizen agency. There is some evidence that the memories and experiences of a past war shape present identities and behaviour (Theidon, 2003; Wood, 2003). However, the issue of how citizenship evolves in (post)conflict settings still remains underexplored.

This study looks at how conflict affected the Acholi's *sense* and *practice* of citizenship through various mechanisms. The *sense* of citizenship encompasses how people feel as citizens, their self-consciousness of their citizen identity, and how they perceive themselves as citizens in relation to others and in relation to the state. For Ugandans, perceptions of 'others' are governed by notions of one's own ethnic group and ideas about other ethnic groups. I define the *practice* of citizenship as the individual and collective actions undertaken by people to shape and enact their rights, and influence the politics and governing institutions of society that affect their lives. Here I mean the institutions of both the political and the social spheres, and define institutions as the formal and informal rules and conventions that govern society (North, 1990). The practice cannot be separated from the sense, because a sense of citizenship is also developed through participation and actions, and interactions with others. Subscribing to the notion that people are members of the political community of the state as well as their ethnic group, the Acholi were thus affected by the conflict *as Acholi* and *as citizens* of Uganda.

### **1.2.2 Everyday forms of citizen engagement**

The question of when and how citizens engage is not limited to citizenship studies. As I will describe in detail in Chapter 2, scholars have described a spectrum of forms of engagement and state-society relations: from rejection to resistance, from contestation to critical and constructive engagement. Many of these scholars have focused on highly visible forms of mobilisation that involved the masses and have related revolutions to processes of state formation (Moore, 1966; Paige, 1975; Popkin, 1970; Skocpol, 1982; Wolf, 1969). These scholars used various explanatory frameworks: the peasant economy (Scott, 1976), rational choice

(Popkin, 1970), class relations (Moore, 1966; Paige, 1975) and structural explanations (Skocpol, 1982). Other scholars have analysed a broader range of the ways in which citizens express their discontent with the state through contentious politics (McAdam, Tarrow, & Tilly, 2001; Tilly, 2008; Tilly & Tarrow, 2007). A contentious politics framework continues the emphasis on mass mobilisation and overt, often disruptive and violent, practices of engagement, while presupposing the presence of government (Tilly & Tarrow, 2007).

My work follows that of Scott (1985), who argues there is a 'landscape of political activity' between revolution and quiescence. The approaches that focus on revolutions, riots and mass protests ignore the everyday negotiations with forms of authority and the small instances of engagement in politics that matter in people's lives. My study uses ideas developed by Corbridge, Williams, Srivastava and Véron (2005), who have demonstrated that state – society relations can be understood in the moments and interactions when people 'see the state'.

In this study I extend a perspective on citizen engagement from a focus on large-scale collective action to a focus on everyday forms of engagement: engagement with local state institutions and social institutions in the community, whether through formal or informal channels. I am open to analysing instances of rioting and protesting when they occur. These instances are 'ruptures' in the day-to-day practice and tell us about people's normative ideas about a relationship, because they indicate when a social contract was broken. In the context of Uganda I did not expect to find many instances of violent mass-mobilisation. My focus, therefore, is on how people engage with public authority and engage in the public sphere in everyday life. As this engagement is informed by how people see their citizenship, I need to start with a deconstruction of the meaning of Acholi citizenship.

### **1.2.3 Citizenship and the experience of violent conflict**

A citizen identity and expressions of citizenship are shaped by many contextual factors such as history, process of state formation and democratisation, but also culture (Cornwall, Robins, & Von Lieres, 2011). The LRA conflict and period of forced displacement form important episodes in the construction of Acholi citizenship. I use the term 'construction' to imply that citizenship is always in motion, and that historical events and processes shape citizenship, its meaning and relevance. It is not a linear process with a beginning or ending. Citizenship (Delanty, 2009) is constructed by people but its meaning can also be imposed by other actors, such as the state. I

will deconstruct empirically the meaning of citizenship for the Acholi and how conflict led to a *destruction* or reconfiguration of aspects that the Acholi defined as crucial for their citizenship.

My understanding of 'conflict' is informed by Vigh (2006) and Nordstrom (1997), who emphasise that the experience of violent conflict does not simply mean the experience of violent acts, but is also a particular context comprising structures and processes. Nordstrom (1997) terms this a 'warscape': a background against which social-political relations and institutions develop. Vigh (2006) describes it as a social terrain, and as a volatile environment that is constantly 'in flux', in which instability has become a stable fact. For a long period of time, the situation in the Acholi region and its displacement camps formed such a warscape. Yet the construction of Acholi citizenship started long before the war, with the colonial regime having a profound impact on this process. Traumatic episodes such as war can result in a situation in which the experience and practice of citizenship are reconfigured in a relatively short time.

To understand how citizenship unfolded in this context I use various bodies of literature: conflict studies, citizen participation, and forced migration. Conflict studies demonstrate that citizens develop various strategies in order to cope with volatile, complex situations. Micro-analysis of conflict situations shows how people adjust to conflict to maintain their livelihoods (Justino, 2008, 2009). They make maximum use of the opportunities available in the social order produced by war (Utas, 2005). Vigh (2006) uses 'social navigation' as a concept to describe how people deal with insecurity and multiple authorities in warzones. Agents 'move' based on their evaluation of their past experience and knowledge, their present environment and opportunities therein, and ideas about future developments, while the environment itself is continuously in flux, unstable and dangerous.

However, these conceptualisations predominantly relate to how people *survive* in a conflict setting - forms of coping agency. Of late, other scholars have started to distinguish types of agency in conflict settings, enhancing understanding of how citizens live through conflict (Barter, 2012; C. Moser & Horn, 2012). I follow Lister (2003), who states that citizen agency requires an act or issue to be brought into the public realm. In my understanding of citizenship these acts or issues may concern a relationship to the state, but also the sub-national social setting and the ethnic community, and the politics, forms of authority and decision-making that exist within both spheres.

A subset of the literature on citizenship looks at the particular challenges to citizen participation in conflict and violence-prone settings (Buckley-Zistel, 2006; Pearce, 2007; Pearce, McGee, & Wheeler, 2011; Wheeler, 2005). This literature emphasises that violent conflict affects citizens as well as the state and its institutions, and the interfaces between them. It affects citizens as actors, individually and collectively, as well as the spaces where they exercise their citizenship (Pearce, 2007). The public sphere, the realm of socio-political interactions and discourses, is often curtailed by violence. Both conflict studies literature and the literature on citizenship and violence point to the presence of (armed) non-state actors, which compete for authority and challenge the legitimacy of the state. Non-state actors may take over state functions and become mediators between citizens and the state, but often lack accountability towards citizens (Pearce, McGee, & Wheeler, 2011; Wheeler, 2011). This implies that citizens develop relationships with a range of actors in (post)conflict settings and that their engagement with state institutions should be seen in this light.

Finally, I use the literature on forced migration to study how the Acholi experienced the displacement camps. I felt this was relevant, because the camps were a key feature of the LRA conflict (Dolan, 2009) and lasted for a number of years. The majority of the Acholi were Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) as the camps were located in Uganda. The literature on displacement discusses many of the themes that figure in citizenship debates and conflict studies, but specifically for displaced people: citizenship and agency of the displaced, rights, and governance. This literature speaks directly to how the experience of displacement affects a sense of citizenship (Nyers, 2006) and emphasises the forms of agency exercised by the displaced in response to their situation (Malkki, 1996; Turner, 2006). Most of this literature concentrates on the experience of refugees, not of IDPs.

Thus, while there is some discussion in the literature on coping agency in response to conflict and displacement, a thorough understanding of how *citizen* agency evolves is still lacking. I elaborate this argument in Chapter 3. Conflict studies literature has generated important insights from which it is possible to theorise about citizen engagement. Despite the devastating effects of conflict there are also social structures and practices that persist. Violent conflict *transforms* rather than destroys forms of social and political organisation (Justino, 2012; Pouligny, 2005; Vlassenroot & Raeymaekers, 2004; 2005; 2008a). This has implications for citizen engagement, because the experience of citizen engagement is often gained through local institutions. The literature on forced displacement describes how displacement leads to a lack of sense of citizenship. But this literature does not explicitly interrogate the relationship

between the sense and practice of citizenship, and often limits the scope of the inquiry to the period of displacement, whereas my study will take people's histories into account.

### 1.3 Focus of this study

In this thesis I show that the past experience of violent conflict affects the sense and practice of citizenship of the Acholi people, by unpacking the LRA conflict into its different features and studying how these features affect the sense and the practice of citizenship, and the relation between the two. Through historical analysis and by examining the interaction between the sense and the practice of citizenship I contribute to an understanding of how citizen agency evolves during conflict, thus addressing the gap identified above. The study furthermore contributes to understanding the practice of citizenship after conflict by taking into account the full spectrum of forms of engagement and by its focus on the everyday forms of engagement.

The **central question** for this research is: In the case of the Acholi region in Northern Uganda, how does the experience of protracted conflict and forced displacement affect how citizenship is sensed, constructed and practised? My **overall proposition** is that the experience of protracted conflict and displacement leads to a lack of a sense of citizenship and to diminished forms of citizen engagement, due to the limited opportunities for learning active citizenship. After elaborating the bodies of theory in Chapter 2, in the next chapter I formulate concrete propositions about how the sense and practice of citizenship evolved in Acholi during and after the conflict.

Using a comparative case-study design, the thesis describes the construction of citizenship in two conflict-affected areas in Acholi and in one non-affected area in Lango. The justification of the selection of research locations and the range of qualitative research methods used will be explained in detail in Chapter 3. I use an actor-oriented approach to describe the perceptions and forms of citizen engagement by individual citizens, while also looking at forms of collective agency. The study pays attention to variation in gender and age groups. In this thesis I highlight differences in their citizenship experience where relevant.

As I will explain in the conceptual framework in Chapter 3, for the *sense* of citizenship I use key aspects that the Acholi themselves identify as important for their membership of the wider

political community and of Uganda as a country, and how they relate to citizens in those regions where conflict did not occur. For the analysis of *practices* of citizenship I study various forms of citizen engagement. I look at the everyday interactions between citizens and local leaders, the various ways people engage in local level decision-making about services and material aspects of development in their area, voice for accountability purposes, and forms of community organisation. For both the sense and the practice of citizenship I adopt a historical approach to examine how they develop over time. The analysis concentrates on whether changes can be explained by particular features of the conflict.

The conceptualisation of citizenship as the membership of a political community (Delanty, 2009) and being constituted of a status and a practice (Kabeer, 2005; Lister, 2003) informs the scope and boundaries of my study. A focus on the everyday practice of citizenship implies observing forms of engagement within a particular location, staying long enough for a deep understanding. I therefore limited my fieldwork to the three rural locations and did not look at the large Acholi diaspora and the Acholi communities that live in urban areas, who no doubt have a different citizenship experience. It was not feasible to include engagement at the national level, like with Members of Parliament. Findings about the national level are therefore limited to *perceptions* of these institutions and their performance.

I focus on the Acholi and Langi as citizens of Uganda and as members of their respective tribes, while taking into account differentiated experiences caused by gender and age. It was not feasible to study other forms of membership of other possible communities; the state and the ethnic group are considered the most relevant. Finally, my historical approach was limited to modern history. My fieldwork concentrated on post-colonial regimes and particularly on citizenship since the NRA came to power in 1986. For the earlier history I relied on historical sources and other studies that have carefully documented the history of 'Acholiness' (Finnström, 2003).

#### **1.4 Main findings**

The findings show that the certain experiences from the conflict and the period of displacement continue to play a role today, in the post-conflict phase. These experiences inform the engagement of the Acholi with state institutions and in community structures. My main argument is that the war, as it was experienced in rural areas, eroded crucial aspects of



citizenship amongst the Acholi and undermined a sense of citizen agency. It did so by limiting people's experience with ordinary state institutions, and by curtailing spaces for (political) socialisation where skills for effective voice and citizenship could be learnt.

Numerous challenges to citizen participation exist across Uganda, affecting both citizens who have experienced conflict and those who have not. These factors have been identified by others and are corroborated in this thesis. They include a lack of knowledge about the system, a lack of self-confidence, and barriers associated with the micropolitics of participation (Harriss, Stokke, & Törnquist, 2004). In Acholi, additional challenges to citizen engagement exist. Certain challenges are attributable to people's experiences during the war, and some attributes of the conflict have reinforced 'ordinary' barriers to citizen participation.

The thesis shows that certain features of the conflict shaped the Acholi experience of citizenship and how it evolved during the war: displacement into camps, the presence of armed actors, the experience of violence and atrocities, and the role played by the state in response to the war. These mechanisms set in motion a series of changes in the public sphere and in social and political institutions, causing a lack of a sense of citizenship and creating a situation in which the Acholi were unable to build up experience of the practice of citizenship during the years of the conflict. As a result, forms of citizen engagement are different in Acholi compared with Lango.

At present, there are fewer relationships between the Acholi and their leaders, and less awareness about possible channels of engagement, than in Lango. A persisting fear of the state and suspicion of the public sphere limit engagement, particularly citizen engagement to hold local leaders accountable. For older citizens, local social and political institutions had been important for gaining experience of active citizenship. Since these institutions have been disrupted for over two decades, younger generations lack similar socialisation experiences. The generation of 'the elders' had suffered a loss of legitimacy from the onset of the war and, as a consequence, they do not function as proper role models and lack the ability to mediate between citizens and authorities as brokers.

These findings have implications for a number of policy domains, like approaches to state-building, participatory local governance in (post)conflict settings, and humanitarian operations in displacement camps. The literature on participatory governance has, particularly in the context of international development, examined the conditions under which participation can

actually lead to changes in unjust social structures and policies, placing power relations at the heart of the debate (Cornwall & Schattan Coelho, 2007; Gaventa & McGee, 2010; Hickey & Mohan, 2004). As some authors contend, it could be wise to delay participatory approaches if there is no experience with popular agency or where the wider political context is unsupportive of it (Hickey & Mohan, 2004). However, others say micro-level democratisation could make vital contributions to the depth, quality and durability of peace if addressed from the outset (Roque & Shankland, 2007).

For the purpose of this thesis I refer to one of the popular recovery instruments for post-conflict recovery: Community-Driven Development (CDD), or Community-Driven Recovery (CDR). CDR makes use of a participatory approach and has the explicit objective of (re)building state-society relations. In Chapter 2 I present the principles of CDR and evidence of its impact on social and political relations. Studies from several countries show that the impact is minimal in most cases (Wong, 2012). As the feasibility and effects of participatory approaches to recovery are being questioned and the effects of conflict on citizen engagement are ambiguous, more empirical work is needed that unpacks the complexities of engagement in (post)conflict settings.

To design recovery interventions one first needs to know how conflict has *affected* citizens, local government actors, and the nature of state-society relations at a local level. This study suggests that a recovery process requires attention to the sense of citizenship, which may fall outside the scope of CDR. It also proposes that the design of CDR interventions needs to be adapted to enable citizens learn the practice of engagement and to actively facilitate interactions between citizens and local state actors. Finally, CDR needs mechanisms that address social inequalities within communities that affect citizen engagement of specific groups, such as women and young people.

### **1.5 Structure of the thesis**

This chapter has outlined the rationale for this study and summarised the theoretical debates to which this thesis contributes. In Chapter 2 I elaborate the sets of theory summarised above: citizenship and participation, approaches to state-society relations, ethnicity and citizenship, agency and institutions in conflict settings, forced migration, and participatory approaches to recovery interventions. In Chapter 3 I present my conceptual framework, which, informed by

the literature review, shows how I want to take existing knowledge further and outlines the gap that I am addressing. I formulate propositions about how citizenship evolves during and after conflict and I explain the citizenship proxies that were studied in the field. The subsequent chapters reflect the chronology of events that have shaped Acholi citizenship, as compared to that of the Langi. These are the political history of Uganda (Chapter 4), the early years of the NRA regime and start of the conflict, 1986-1997 (Chapter 5), the displacement camps in Acholi, 1997-2007/8 (Chapter 6), and the post-conflict situation (Chapter 7).

Chapter 4 presents the context of Uganda. Detailed historical knowledge is crucial for understanding the process of the construction of citizenship. I therefore use historical sources about post-colonial regimes and democratisation in Uganda and on the history of the northern regions and the LRA conflict specifically. I start with the political history of Uganda from independence up to the first years of the NRA regime under President Museveni. I also discuss the development of the local level state and the current system of decentralised governance. The last section gives an overview of the LRA conflict in Acholi. The chapter thus presents the historical and political contexts in which Acholi and Langi have constructed their citizenship.

Chapter 5 describes how the sense and practices of citizenship developed from 1986 until the mid-1990s - the first decade under the NRA/M regime. For Acholi I explain the first phases of the war, before mass displacement began in 1996. The emphasis is on presenting people's narratives, based on my empirical data, about how they developed agency in response to the insecurity, and how conflict affected local institutions and the public sphere. For the Langi, the first years under the NRA regime represented a transition to stability after many years of social and political upheaval.

In Chapter 6, I explain the situation of the Acholi while they were in the displacement camps. Their environment was characterised by insecurity, a specific governance regime, and lack of basic services. Yet, even in these conditions of hardship people developed coping skills. At this point I start to analyse how the conflict affected people's sense of citizenship and forms of citizen engagement in the post-conflict phase.

Chapter 7 discusses present-day practices of citizenship at the local level in Acholi and Lango. I analyse existing forms of citizen engagement in community-based and government-initiated spaces for participation, and for processes of accountability. I show ordinary barriers to

substantive citizen participation in Lango, and in the case of Acholi, how these intersect with the past experiences of conflict.

The concluding chapter summarises the differences between Lango and Acholi. I return to the propositions that were formulated in Chapter 3 and present my contributions to the literature. I finish with policy implications for CDR and suggestions for further research.

## Chapter 2 Literature Review

### Introduction

Different scholarly approaches vary in their treatment of what constitutes citizen engagement. Conflict affects citizen engagement through several mechanisms. Focusing on the conceptualisation of citizenship as participation and agency, this literature review shows a variety of approaches to studying citizen engagement and explores what diverse literatures have contributed to an understanding of how participation evolves in (post)conflict situations. Although various studies have demonstrated that citizens express agency in conflict situations, there is not much known about how *citizen* agency evolves in such fluctuating, adverse settings.

Section 2.1 outlines the concept of citizenship and the aspects of citizenship that are of central importance to this study: agency, identity and voice. The approach that I adopt in this study is 'citizenship participation', which highlights issues of power and rights. But there are, and have been, other approaches to studying state-society relations. I explain several other approaches in section 2.2 and highlight the differences in how they see citizen engagement. In section 2.3 I extend the discussion about identity by focusing on the interaction between ethnicity and citizenship in the African context. Here I also pay attention to how discourses on citizenship are used to exclude certain categories of citizens, pushing them into marginalisation.

These first three sections about what constitutes citizen engagement in different scholarly approaches prepare the ground for the three sections that follow: what does citizen engagement look like in (post)conflict settings? Section 2.4 offers insights from conflict studies about institutions and agency in settings of conflict and violence. Although this literature does not explicitly address citizen engagement, it is instructive on how people have agency in conflict settings, and thus can inform thinking about how citizen engagement evolves. Section 2.5 presents what *is* known about citizen engagement in adverse settings, using examples from several countries. Section 2.6 explains how citizenship and agency are addressed in forced migration studies. I conclude this chapter with section 2.7 on participation in community-driven development: a popular approach to post-conflict recovery in international aid.

## 2.1 Citizenship as participation

### 2.1.1 Approaches to citizenship

Citizenship is defined as membership of a political community (Held, 2006, p. 64). Although there seems to be agreement about such a basic definition, the substance and scope of the concept remain heavily contested. As Cohen (2009, p. 14) states: it means many things to many people, and it is described in many terms to do with status, actions, institutions and rights. Complicating the debates is that normative ideas about what citizenship should entail are conflated with the actual reality of how citizenship is experienced (E. F. Cohen, 2009). Citizenship thus remains a contested concept.

There are many approaches to citizenship. Four are often used: the liberal, the communitarian, the civic republican, and the participatory democracy approaches. In this section I introduce these four main approaches, focusing on the differences between them in respect of the balance between duties and rights, universality versus difference, and citizenship as status and as practice. This prefaces an explanation of active citizenship in the next section.

The *liberal* approach emphasises citizenship as legal status obtained through membership of a state. Citizenship and corresponding civil and political rights are 'granted' by the state to its 'recipients', and both have their duties and responsibilities. The liberal approach prioritises individual freedoms. Everyone has equal rights by virtue of being human, and these rights are consequently universal. The focus is on civil and political rights, for these guarantee people's freedoms, whereas social and economic rights are regarded as too much state intervention and use of public resources. The state must be restricted in its activity to maximise the freedoms of the individual. However, the state must also be strong to ensure the rights and freedoms of its members (Held, 2006). For the emphasis on individual liberty, the freedom of the individual is prioritised over that of groups and society. Classical liberal theory informs conventional debates on citizenship and continues to be the dominant approach. Yet the liberal approach is challenged from various sides for being state-centred in its focus, and conceptualising human beings as atomistic rather than as embedded in social relations (Kabeer, 2005; R. Lister, 2003; Tastsoglou & Dobrowolsky, 2006).

The *communitarian approach* emphasises that an individual's identity is shaped primarily through his/her relations to the community. The emphasis on identity is a direct challenge to a

strict notion of universality in the liberal tradition (Delanty, 2000). Some communitarians argue that a political community is based on a cultural community, and therefore different communities have different understandings of citizenship, and the state must recognise cultural differences (Selznick, 1992; Taylor, 1994). A good society is made through the cooperation of its members, group action and mutual support, as opposed to the atomistic individuals as in the liberal approach. To some, this means that the community can limit the freedoms of the individual (Bauman, 1993). Communitarians place strong emphasis on citizen *obligations*, while still aiming to guarantee rights, but people cannot expect immediate returns for their engagement (Janoski & Gran, 2002).

In the *civic republican* approach, citizen participation is a duty and a right for the community and the broader public good. It thus opposes the liberal, individualistic notion of citizenship and individuals as passive rights bearers. Political engagement is an end in itself through which people can seek self-fulfilment (R. Lister, 2003). It differs from communitarianism in its reliance on civil society rather than on the state, and it emphasises civil society and civic virtue rather than obligations enforced by the state (Janoski & Gran, 2002). Identity plays less of a role here than in communitarianism, but commitment to a shared goal is emphasised. The self-regarding individual need not be in tension with the collective. Citizens can have both an 'ethnic identity' and a civic identity that is shared by all citizens in pursuit of the common good (Beiner, 1995; Ekeh, 1975). This approach was critiqued by radical democracy theorists who argued that is not enough to focus on participation as an end in itself while accepting the status quo.

One strand of modern civic republicanism emphasises the benefits of participation through associational life. This strand is associated with the literature on social capital (Putnam, 1993, 2000). Putnam (1993) argues that participation in associations, no matter what kind, breeds trust, commitment and solidarity. A strong civil society will produce a stronger state. He develops the notions of 'bonding' and 'bridging' social capital. The former refers to 'inward-looking activities' that emphasise a particular identity, thus often creating homogeneous groups. The latter is about activities that encompass diverse people from across social cleavages. These groups, particularly, are thought to breed social trust and overcome social conflict (Putnam, 2000). His work has been subject to debate. Critics point out that he pays insufficient attention to how political structure affects associational life (Tarrow, 1996) and to forms of 'uncivic' social capital, and to the fact that civic participation sometimes causes less political participation (Theiss-Morse & Hibbing, 2005).

The *participatory democracy* approach builds on civic republicanism and forms the theoretical basis of my study. In this approach the rights and obligations of both individuals and groups need to be recognised, and balanced. Citizenship is about the 'right to have rights' (Arendt, 1958), but also about the right to participate in defining those rights and what they entail, and not just about accessing rights that are formulated and made available by the state. The participatory democracy approach points out that diversity and inequality in society limit the opportunities for certain individuals and groups to attain equal citizenship. This is a critique of liberal approaches to citizenship. Liberal views on citizenship, based on the premise that every person is equally able to realise citizenship, obscure the unequal power relations and forms of oppression that exist in reality (E. F. Cohen, 2009). The participatory democracy approach stands for the right to empowerment and the inclusion of marginalised groups. It pays attention to mechanisms, institutions and power relations in society that lead to exclusion from equal citizenship, highlighted particularly by feminist contributions to the citizenship debate (Lister, 2003). Within the participatory democracy approach various strands exist. Deliberative democracy scholars emphasise the importance of deliberation among citizens, which would lead to better informed and more inclusive decisions (Fishkin, 1993; Mansbridge, 2010). Other strands address the conditions under which citizen participation leads to the desired outcomes that were the objective of participation (Gaventa & Barrett, 2010).

Both civic republicanism and participatory democracy have been influenced by ideas developed in radical democratic theory. Radical democracy is primarily a theory of democracy, not of citizenship (Delanty, 2000). Radical democracy scholars want to reconnect a notion of citizen participation to the state, something lost in communitarian and civic republican approaches, which reduce democracy to citizen participation (Keane, 1988; Laclau & Mouffe, 1985). They see the state itself as often responsible for perpetuating inequalities and therefore reject the strict separation of state and society (Pateman, 1985). Radical democracy aims to transform politics for social change and the relationship between state and society, making citizenship part of the project of democratic transformation. In this tradition democratic citizenship is seen as a vehicle for transforming democracy and politics (Delanty, 2000; Held, 1989; Heller & Feher, 1988).

The different approaches to citizenship and democracy also differ in their perspectives on citizen participation. In the liberal approach, participation is encouraged because citizens are deemed the best representatives of their own interests. Participation is limited to the conventional political arena: in political discussion and through rational voting (Thompson,



1970). It argues for representative democracy and thus decisions made by a small group of representatives, not through direct citizen engagement. In the civic republican approach, participation is mostly restricted to formal political institutions and mechanisms. Its radical supporters feel that all participation should be located in civil society, while others feel that forms of representation are unavoidable but need to be 'democratised' and complemented by other mechanisms (Macpherson, 1977; Pateman, 1970). In the participatory democracy approach, participation is considered a way for citizens to shape society and the institutions that govern it. Like radical democracy scholars, participatory democracy scholars seek to *transform* the relationship between state and society. Participation is therefore extended beyond conventional political institutions, as argued by Thompson (1970), to 'politics' and decision-making in any setting (Pateman, 1970). The state has the obligation to engage *directly* with citizens, not only through their representatives, in participatory democratic mechanisms.

The debate on citizenship continues and not all lines of thought can be elaborated here. Feminist theory has contributed tremendously to the notion of differentiated citizenship, inequality and exclusion, positing that differences need to be addressed with special measures. State-centred understandings of citizenship are increasingly questioned due to processes of internationalisation and migration, or the 'cosmopolitan challenge' to citizenship (Delanty, 2000; Held, 1995). Scholars have advocated more sociologically informed approaches to citizenship with a firm recognition of culture and identity as its constitutive elements, in addition to rights and participation (Abraham, Chow, Maratou-Alipranti, & Tastsoglou, 2010; Isin & Turner, 2008; Yuval-Davis, 2007)

This study is informed by the participatory democracy approach with its emphasis on citizenship as status and as practice. Importantly, a notion of active citizenship requires a focus on the various mechanisms and tactics through which citizens practice their citizenship, based on particular prerequisites for citizen agency and their understanding of political opportunities. In the sections which follow I elaborate key aspects of this approach, such as understandings of power, voice and agency, and identity.

### **2.1.2 Citizenship and agency**

The participatory democracy approach emphasises that citizenship needs to be understood in terms of how it is constructed 'from below' (Kabeer, 2005). Empirical studies on citizenship

show that people who have been excluded from equal citizenship nonetheless use it for their own struggles. Though citizenship has different meanings for different groups of people, certain values are shared. These are a notion of justice, a demand for recognition, a claim to self-determination, and a sense of solidarity (Kabeer, 2005; R. Lister, 2008). Taking an actor-oriented approach to citizenship brings to the fore the values people are struggling for, the rights they claim, and the collective action they take to attain those rights. This approach to citizenship focuses on *agency* (explained below), the conditions that limit or support agency, and the capacities to act as citizens (Nyamu-Musembi, 2005, 2009). A citizen is understood as:

... someone who belongs to different kinds of collective associations and defines their identity through participation in activities associated with these different kinds of membership. Their sense of citizenship lies in the terms on which they participate in this collective life and the forms of agency they are able to exercise. And when they are only able to participate on highly unequal terms, or are denied access altogether, citizenship relates to their attempts to challenge these exclusionary practices and bring about change (Kabeer, 2005, pp. 21-22).

Such a perspective endorses an understanding of citizenship in which social and cultural aspects are included. Empirical studies show that citizens often define citizenship, their rights and duties not only in relation to the state but also in relation to their social environment and collective life. The state is often perceived as distant and the community more relevant for acts of citizenship (Wheeler, 2005). Often the object of citizenship struggles is to change society itself. Citizens and their various forms of collective action seek not only to transform vertical state-citizen relationships, but also horizontal relationships among citizens in society (Kabeer, 2005, p. 23).

Culture and identity are recognised as important components of citizenship. Distinct groups in society make claims for the acknowledgement of cultural diversity, while at the same time fighting particular cultural rules that deny people the right to have rights, and produce inequality (Dagnino, 2005). Hence the emphasis on a cultural dimension of citizenship and the entangled relationship between identity and citizenship: a citizenship identity is constructed, continues to evolve, and is one of many identities held by actors (Isin & Wood, 1999; R. Lister, 2005; Yuval-Davis, 2007). (I will come back to the issue of identity later, in section 2.3.)

The concept of agency is important for an understanding of citizenship as practice. Agency may be latent: it refers to the *potential* to reflect, imagine and act, and may be manifested in actual actions (Frie, 2008). People's agency is shaped by many factors, including their history, tangible and intangible resources, and their socio-political and cultural contexts. Lister combines elements of the civic republican and liberal approaches to citizenship into a synthetic approach, which connects the two traditions, at the heart of which is human agency: *'Citizenship as participation represents an expression of human agency in the political arena, broadly defined; citizenship as rights enables people to act as agents'* (R. Lister, 2003, p. 37).

Citizenship rights can potentially guarantee a basis for agency. Both formal civil and political rights and substantive socio-economic rights enable humans to act, since every form of citizen action requires time and resources. Lister's conceptualisation of human agency locates it in a dialectic relationship with social structures and also as embedded in social relations. Following Gould (1988), she underlines that individuals become self-aware and develop themselves through interaction with others, in particular in collective activities that may constitute individual as well as collective goals.

To act as a citizen requires first a sense of agency, the belief that one can act; acting as a citizen, especially collectively, in turn fosters that sense of agency. Thus, agency is not simply about the capacity to choose and act but it is also about a conscious capacity, which is important to the individual's self-identity (R. Lister, 2003, p. 39).

While 'agency' is important, a further question is 'what *enables* agency'? Martin argues: *'Real citizenship reflects and expresses people's sense of agency, i.e. their willingness and capacity to act politically'* (2003, p. 575). It is argued that active citizenship is 'learnt' (Delanty, 2003), because active citizenship requires a political consciousness and certain skills. Scholars emphasise local institutions and social interactions where such skills are learnt and where consciousness is acquired from a young age, often through participation in events or activities, or through exposure to them (Heater, 1990). A process of 'conscientisation' and particularly a critical consciousness about the self and society occurs often informally, and primarily through interaction with others (Freire, 1986). Socialisation occurs mainly in the direct environment: in the family and the community, in groups and associations. For younger generations, schools are important places to learn about formal frameworks, but are also important institutions where socio-cultural conventions are reproduced (Merrifield, 2001). Social interactions are conducive to awareness of causes of exclusion and to building a 'capacity to aspire' (Appadurai, 2004): to think that a situation can be different. Especially the collective dimension

of citizenship, *acting with others*, is conducive to that sense of agency (Kabeer & Haq, 2009; R. Lister, 2008).

*Identity* has been recognised as important for citizenship. There is a direct relationship between one's understanding of his or her own citizen identity and agency. '*A citizen's identity is an awareness of his relationship to his state and to his fellow citizens*' (Heater, 1990, p. 185). It is argued that the way people see themselves as citizens has consequences for how they understand their rights and obligations, and for whether they are willing to act upon these, and in what form (Isin & Wood, 1999). Being aware about one's citizen identity and corresponding rights may help to claim and enact those rights, whereas a lack of awareness may result in having less of a sense that one may claim any rights.

Theiss-Morse (1993) demonstrates that different understandings of citizenship lead to different forms of engagement. She shows that there is variation in how United States citizens understand their citizenship, in terms of how important it is to vote, whether one should engage in other forms of politics, and *who* should participate. She distinguishes four categories of perspectives on citizenship: 'representative democracy', 'political enthusiasm', 'pursued interests' and 'indifferent'. She shows that each perspective corresponds with different forms of citizen engagement: how politically active or inactive people are and what forms of engagement they find useful - like voting or influencing government through group activities. This study does not tell us how other identities may have informed engagement. This is important, because a citizenship identity is one identity that people possibly possess and it may or may not function as a basis for citizen agency.

For a better understanding of how people perceive their own identities I introduce the concept 'sense of citizenship' in Chapter 3. The term refers to how people perceive themselves as citizens in relation to other citizens, not only in relation to the state, therefore encompassing political relationships to the state and in society. This includes an understanding of how people are self-aware about their identity, including the citizen identity. This opens up the possibility of investigating how, for instance, ethnic identity informs citizen identity (elaborated in section 2.3). This is important for a study that is located in the context of East Africa. Accepting that a critical self-consciousness and identity shape agency (Lister, Kabeer, and Isin and Wood), a sense of citizenship shapes the practice of citizenship.

### 2.1.3 Voice and participation

Having established that citizenship can be understood in an active sense as involving agency and participation, a further question is *how* citizens engage. This question is not new: scholars of state-society relations have analysed a spectrum of forms of citizen engagement for decades. A recurrent theme is that citizenship is about articulating an issue, referred to as voice, and about the effectiveness of expressing that voice. In this section I explain the framework developed by Hirschman (1970) on Exit, Voice, and Loyalty, which forms an important reference point for participation literature. I then discuss how this framework can be advanced by addressing power relations and inequalities.

#### ***Exit, Voice and Loyalty***

Hirschman's framework analyses how citizens respond when corporate firms or states do not perform to their satisfaction and whether they will opt for critical engagement. When faced with declining quality of a product or service the consumers or members of an organisation may choose to exit: to abandon the product or organisation and join an alternative. Through voice they express concerns in order to restore the quality. The concept of loyalty reflects a certain attachment to an organisation or a firm. Because of loyalty, consumers may opt for voice even if viable exit options exist, or postpone the decision to exit. Loyalty does not predict, however, in which form voice will be exercised. The willingness to opt for voice often depends on the trade-off between the certainty of exit and the uncertainties and costs of voice, and the estimate of one's influence.

In the political application of Hirschman's framework to state-society relations, 'voice' becomes a form of critical engagement with state actors. While a number of problems with his framework have been highlighted by others (Downing, John, Mergoupis, & Van Vugt, 2000), I focus on three that I consider relevant to this study. First, exit is often presented as an 'either/or' choice, while voice is a continuum. As I show in section 2.2 there is a spectrum of ways in which people engage, or exercise voice, including through non-participation. Thus, Hirschman does not adequately explain that there is variation in voice and in how influential voice can be. Secondly, Hirschman pays little attention to the social differentiation of voice, treating it as a homogeneous whole. This raises issues of which interests are represented once concerns are voiced. Finally, Hirschman takes little account of the fact that the cost-benefit analysis of exit and voice are context-dependent, and that the behaviour of the state is an

important part of that. He only mentions that organisations can forge a very high cost of exit (Hirschman, 1970: 97) – not of voice. Thus, Hirschman’s framework overlooks the process of interaction, including over time, between states and citizens, which this study highlights.

The issue of social differentiation and how this matters for exercising voice is addressed in work on citizen participation. Through a focus on power dynamics this literature, discussed in the next sub-section, shows that the scope for exercising voice is different for various social identities, such as men and women, adults and young people.

### ***Voice and institutionalised participation***

In citizenship studies, the concept of participation is central to scholars who emphasise an active notion of citizenship. The theme of participation became popular in the field of international development throughout the 1980s and 1990s (J. M. Cohen & Uphoff, 1980; Esman & Uphoff, 1984; Uphoff, 1985, 1998), first in relation to social and community development. Various trends then led to its incorporation in democratic governance discourses and interventions (Cornwall, 2011). One was the confluence of the development and democratisation agendas, which spurred the support for decentralised governance systems. A second development was the increased awareness of the various democratic deficits that could potentially be overcome by enhanced citizen participation (Gaventa, 2011; McLaverty, 2011). While traditionally representative democracies function through elected politicians that mediate between the citizen and the state, radical democracy theorists argue that there should be more direct linkages and a more active citizenry (Held, 2006). Mechanisms for state-citizen interactions have been initiated that institutionalise spaces for constructive engagement, with the intention of addressing the deficits of representative democracies. For instance, McLaverty (2011) describes a range of mechanisms used in western democracies and in the global south, showing their variation in design principles and to what extent outcomes of participation are binding.

Institutionalised mechanisms for participation aim to include citizen voices in planning, policy-making, decision-making and, more recently, in transparency and accountability initiatives. They are introduced at various levels. At national level, government and civil society actors can interact in ‘policy spaces’ for policy design, for instance around poverty reduction or the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (Brock, McGee, & Gaventa, 2004). At the local level, mechanisms aim to involve citizens in decision-making, planning and budget allocation with

the objective of making services 'pro-poor' (Cornwall, 2002b; Cornwall & Schattan Coelho, 2007). Frameworks that institutionalise citizen participation in local level budgeting are popular in a number of developing countries. It is recognised that interventions need to address both strengthening the voice in civil society and building more accountable and responsive state institutions (Esman & Uphoff, 1984), referred to by Gaventa (2004) as 'both sides of the equation'. However, many initiatives focus on building the voice of marginalised groups, leaving aside state institutions and the nature of state-society interfaces. This risks obscuring power relations that inhibit effective voice, downplaying bias against the voice of certain groups, and neglecting the reasons why power holders can get away with not reacting to increased voice. Since recently, academic thinking focuses on what happens at the *interface* of the equation, where state institutions and citizens interact. There is a 'blurring of boundaries' and movement across the two sides. Citizens and officials can fulfil multiple functions, and through their interactions different perceptions about each other and different terms of engagement may emerge (Citizenship-DRC, 2011).

Contributors to the debate challenge certain applications of participation as limited and instrumentalised, which bring concepts of power and politics centre-stage (Gaventa, 2004; Hickey & Mohan, 2004). Without an understanding of how power operates there is a risk that citizen participation will not attain its democratising potential. It is necessary to analyse the politics of the local political sphere and power dynamics, for the local level is where the micropolitics of participation play out (Brock et al., 2004; Gaventa, 2006b; Harriss et al., 2004). This requires an analysis of actors based in political and state institutions and parties, linkages across levels of governance, and linkages between civil and political societies (Chatterjee, 2005; Corbridge, Williams, Srivastava, & Véron, 2005). Insights from numerous rich empirical studies, both on participation and from the deliberative democracy strand in political science (Mansbridge, 2010) point to the formal and informal institutions that maintain domination by the powerful and the exclusion of marginal voices.

The concept of 'space' is often used to analyse power dynamics. A space is conceptualised as *'opportunities, moments and channels where citizens can act to potentially affect policies, discourses, decisions and relationships that affect their lives and interests'* (Gaventa, 2006a, p. 26). In such spaces interactions between society and state actors take place for e.g. policy formulation and decision-making (Cornwall, 2002b; Gaventa, 2006a; McGee, 2004), but the term is extended to citizens seeking to influence any actor - private, governmental or non-governmental. Spaces and deliberation processes can be biased and reflect existing

inequalities and social cleavages in society, such as, for instance, elite dominance. Women, youth and people with disabilities face specific restrictions attached to their social identities. Thus, to come back to Hirschman's framework, the analytical focus on micropolitics and power brings to light the social differentiation and inequality that exist within the voice category.

Thinking about citizen participation extends from participation through institutionalised mechanisms to include forms of engagement that were traditionally not considered to be part of the political process. Scholarly work on voice and accountability politics contributes to this debate (Fox, 2007; Goetz & Jenkins, 2004; Hossain, 2010). Hossain (2010) speaks of 'informal accountability' to highlight the informal pressures that poor citizens apply to demand services and sanction failures of accountability in the absence of formal accountability mechanisms. These pressures take place at the very local level between frontline bureaucrats and citizens and can take 'rude' or violent forms (Hossain, 2010). Goetz and Jenkins (2004, p. 29) use the concept of voice to capture formal and informal tactics, defining it as:

(...) a metaphor for the variety of ways in which people express beliefs, articulate preferences and advance their interests. Voice can be expressed individually or collectively. It can stake out original claims or react to official decisions. Moreover, any of these variants may be peaceful or socially disruptive, and may take place within the arenas of civil society, between and inside political parties, through interactions between citizens and state institutions or within the state itself.

Collective voice is stronger than individual voice and can exert more pressure on power holders. Collective voice can mobilise actions across levels of governance, and across regions (Fox, 2007). While voice and accountability are conceptually different, in practice they are inseparable. As Goetz and Jenkins argue, to provoke answerability someone has to at least ask the question. Participation and the exercise of voice in relation to accountability are about *interrogation* (2004, p. 31). I follow this thinking to distinguish the interrogative voice from the petitioning voice (Chapter 3).

Fox (2007) uses the term 'accountability politics' to encompass both formal, political accountability and social accountability mechanisms, as well as the full range of actors that try to seek accountability from power holders in a variety of ways. He conceptualises accountability politics as unfolding in arenas of conflict '*that are broader than formal authority structures*', including a wide array of socio-political actors.



A number of issues continue to fuel the debates about citizenship as participation. Much of the participation literature continues to look at the benign, 'civic' forms of participation and does not recognise the subversive tactics people use. As section 2.2 will show, other scholars of state-society relations have emphasised exactly those subversive forms of engagement. Then, questions have arisen as to whether citizenship remains a suitable concept for discussing citizen action (Khanna, 2013). Even when it is acknowledged that a state-based definition of citizenship is too narrow, some argue that forms of engagement expressed by 'non-citizens', such as illegal migrants or asylum seekers, need to be understood in a different light. Also, in many cases the state is not the object of engagement, especially when it is only remotely present in people's lives, or not considered a legitimate institution.

Finally, and of particular interest for this thesis, is the risk that the meaning of participation might degenerate into holding people responsible for their own development and well-being, and for the performance of political institutions (Cornwall, 2002a). This 'responsibilisation' of citizens masks the failures of the state to fulfil its obligations and structural causes of poverty that cannot be 'fixed' by citizens (Hickey, 2010). This section introduced the notion of active citizenship and the debates on participation. In the next section I outline a spectrum of forms of engagement and the range of approaches to studying them.

## **2.2 Approaches to state-society relations**

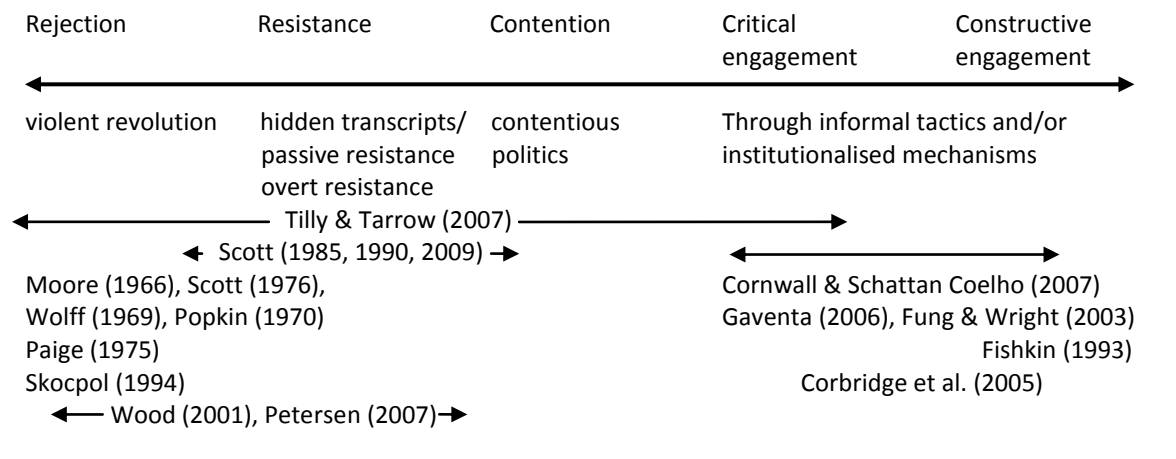
The notion of active citizenship provides one framework for understanding state – society relations. This theme is far from new. Scholars past and present outside what we may call 'citizenship studies' have taken various approaches to understanding the state, society, and their interactions. The debates have been hampered by a dichotomy in which state and society were analytically distinct, almost separated, based on the classic notion of the Weberian state that conceptualised it as hierarchical and autonomous from society. For many, the dichotomy does not hold and a more nuanced understanding of the linkages that connect state and society is needed. Increasingly state and society are viewed as interdependent and constitutive of one another (Migdal, 2001; Sellers, 2010).

Within the vast body of scholarly work on this issue a spectrum of state-society relations and forms of engagement can be distinguished. At one end of the spectrum of relations is total rejection of the state by its citizens, at the other end a constructive relationship. In between lie

relationships in which the state is resisted, contested and viewed critically. Along the spectrum citizens employ different tactics and strategies to express (dis)content, to support or resist the state, to exercise voice and to change its behaviour. Rejection and resistance can be manifested in violent and non-violent forms, but also expressed quietly, almost hidden from the eyes of the powerful. In terms of contention and critical engagement, citizens have different options for expressing voice and there are various mechanisms for constructive engagement, from formally institutionalised channels to informal strategies.

This section outlines scholarly work that represents segments of this spectrum of state-society relations (Figure 2.1). This should not be seen as an attempt to develop typologies for state-society relations. Rather, the spectrum is loosely applied as an organising principle to show how different authors approach state-society relations and to show a range of forms of citizen engagement. This helps to position my own approach to citizen engagement, based on citizenship as participation in everyday life. I first discuss the *rejection* of the state through revolution. This is followed by *resistance* and then *contention* and engagement in contentious politics. I then discuss forms of *critical and constructive engagement*, which builds on the previous section and identifies critical factors for successful participation.

**Figure 2.1 Spectrum of state – society relations and tactics of engagement**



### 2.2.1 Rejection

In this sub-section I discuss one particular form of rejection: violent revolutions by peasant societies. Acknowledging that other, non-violent, forms of rejection also exist, I discuss this

body of literature, because it represents a variety of approaches to understanding what drives engagement of rural populations – from class struggle, to culture, to rational choice. I first discuss scholarly work on peasant revolutions that evolved in the late 1960s and 1970s. Moore (1966) was the first to identify the peasantry as crucial force in modern revolutions (Skocpol, 1994). The Vietnam War then provoked scholarly interest in revolutions in the global south. Authors come to different conclusions about what makes peasants revolt and differ on the nature of peasant societies (Paige, 1975, 1997; Popkin, 1970; Scott, 1976; Skocpol, 1994; Wolf, 1969). I then discuss two contemporary studies on peasant rebellion (Petersen, 2001; Wood, 2003) that advanced the debates - pointing out that engagement changes as conflict evolves and that emotions play a strong role for collective action.

Moore (1966) identifies pathways to modern states. In his explanation of engagement in violent revolutions, the strength of the bourgeoisie and the coalitions between the bourgeoisie, the landed upper-class and the rulers are key variables which determine the type of revolution that occurs and the regime it produces. 'Western democracies' such as France, Great Britain and the United States of America were the result of 'bourgeois revolutions'. Here, commercialisation led to a strong bourgeoisie, while the power of the crown and landed elite weakened. A strong bourgeoisie is needed to oppose non-democratic versions of capitalism, to shape its relationship to the landed upper class, and to prevent a monarch or aristocracy becoming too strong. Fascist regimes such as twentieth-century Germany and Japan were brought about by a 'revolution from above', which was the result of a coalition between the bourgeoisie, the landed elite and the state. In Russia and China, only a weak bourgeoisie developed and the landed upper-class maintained weak institutional relationships with the peasantry. As these societies had a large peasantry with strong social institutions, a 'revolution from below' produced communist systems.

Ultimately, Moore understands politics to be about class struggle. Moore '*... retains the position fundamental to Marxist propensity to explain political struggles and structures as functions of class structures and struggles*' (Skocpol, 1973: 18). This is why the interests and activities of the landed elite form his focus. Therefore, Skocpol argues, Moore fails to acknowledge those state actions that are *not* class-conditioned and how state organisation affects the capacities of the landed elite. But besides class relations, Moore emphasises the importance of social structures *within* the peasant class for their 'revolutionary potential' as well as their links to the upper strata. Where peasants have some degree of freedom to run

communal associations and social institutions a 'radical solidarity' can develop and form the seedbed for revolutionary organisation.

Paige (1975, 1997) also explains peasant revolution through class relations. Both the income base of the peasantry and the economic base of the elites, as non-cultivators, are relevant. The elite's different sources of income, e.g. capital or land, shape their relationship to subordinate classes and the state (1997). The likelihood of peasant revolution depends on a combination of factors concerning the main sources of income for the elite and peasants (1975). Revolutions are more likely to occur where the elite depend on land for their income and therefore cannot compromise when wage-earning peasants start making claims to land or wages. The elite will resist the peasants' demand for reforms, and a revolution will follow. Small-holder peasants are thought to be competitive, less likely to collaborate, and too dependent on elites. Thus, to Paige, the revolutionary potential of peasants does not just depend on their situation or mobilising capacities. Paige's analysis is critiqued by Skocpol (1982, 1994) for his failure to analyse social and political structures.

Skocpol (1982, 1994) proposes a structural approach to the analysis of citizen engagement: a focus on the institutionalised economic relations between the upper and lower classes, institutionalised relations among peasants, and the social political context. She critiques the tendency to overemphasise class struggles, economic interests and social circumstances of peasants. Skocpol's argument is that peasants have the room to revolt when the state and military dominance are temporarily suspended, thus pointing to the power of the state and political structures as explanatory factors in the emergence of peasant revolutions. Relationships between peasants and revolutionary actors are important, but these can only be institutionalised in the absence or easing of state repression.

Wolf (1969) and Scott (1976) argue that incorporation into the capitalist economy prompts peasant revolutions. Capitalism poses a threat to communal ties, collective security and welfare as economic relations become bureaucratic and impersonal. To be able to revolt, peasants need some degree of autonomy or 'tactical mobility' (Wolf, 1969); for instance they may live in remote, isolated areas away from the control of the elite or the state, or, as smallholders, they may depend less on the elite for their income. More than Wolf, Scott (1976) emphasises the culture of these communities. Scott argues that state-society relations in pre-capitalist peasant societies are guided by the principles of the 'moral economy'. The moral economy is rooted in the local community of the village, but is also networked into the state. It

has a 'subsistence ethic': community norms that emphasise reciprocity and solidarity, the common good, and norms for patron-client relationships that evolve around peasants' access to subsistence. This ethic also shapes the behaviour of peasants as political agents - it informs their ideas about justice and legitimacy. The capitalist economy threatens to change the mode of subsistence and traditional relationships: the 'bonds' between peasants and patrons, or the state. Commercialisation violates their cultural system as a whole, their norms about justice and the boundaries for what is just and tolerable behaviour on the part of the elite. As a consequence peasants will revolt. Like Moore (1966), Scott points at social networks of solidarity and the strength of socio-cultural ties within the peasantry that enable mobilisation.

Popkin (1970) uses rational choice theory to explain how peasants invest in relationships with the village and their patrons. With his case study in Vietnam, Popkin wants to demonstrate that peasants are often opportunistic, and emphasises their rationalist behaviour: calculating costs, benefits and risks, and maximising profits. The peasant is competing with other peasants for material gain and power. His argument is that an individual's decision about citizen engagement (with the state or in 'the village') involves an *individual* cost-benefit analysis for personal interests, thus challenging an overly romanticised perspective on peasants' valuing of social ties. To Popkin, Vietnamese peasants did not revolt to destroy the market economy, but to gain some control over it and to remake traditional patron-client relationships. The existence of an external mobiliser is a crucial factor for revolutions to occur, because it resolves the classic collective action problem (Olson, 1963) through incentives. Members of the Communist Party were able to play that role as 'political entrepreneurs', encouraging other peasants to join the rebellion. Subsequent successes of collective action under their leadership nurtured the confidence of peasants that their actions were worthwhile. Thus, while Scott argues that engagement is guided by normative principles, Popkin's rational choice model predicts that citizens engage with state actors as long as it is in their material interest, regardless of social relations and identity.

One of the important insights in more contemporary work on peasant revolutions is that social and political structures change and evolve during conflict (Petersen, 2001; Wood, 2003). Early studies suggested that peasants have two options when a revolution occurs: to participate or not. Contemporary work shows there is a range of options and that forms of engagement can change during the conflict (Petersen, 2001). Petersen describes a spectrum from supporting the oppressor, through neutrality and resistance, to violent opposition to the regime. Similar to Scott (1985), who highlights the importance of analysing the moments when people move

from 'hidden transcripts' to public actions, Petersen is interested in what triggers people to move from passive to active forms of resistance. His framework explains the mechanisms that encourage people to progress along the rebellious side of the spectrum and how rebellion is sustained. His explanation underlines the importance of emotions, in particular feelings of resentment against an unjust regime and hierarchy. Petersen points to the 'value of small victories' and (irrational) wishful thinking that motivates insurgents to continue their rebellion even when the oppressor is far more powerful and defeat inevitable. Variation in the level and nature of rebellious activities across communities is explained by differences in community structures and the strength of community institutions such as reciprocity, and the status and mobilising capacity of leading figures. The presence of community institutions matters, but also their structure: they have to be networked into low-threshold organisations with high moral values.

In her study on the civil war in El Salvador, Wood (2003) also shows that emotions and values form strong motivations for taking part in insurgency. In her theory of collective action she thus includes moral and emotional reasons for acting, agency that is motivated by the will to act in the interest of a community, and the inherent value placed on being part of a process. Before political mobilisation started in El Salvador in the 1970s there were tacit forms of resistance being performed by *campesinos*. The value of agency was increasingly manifested in insurgent behaviour and collective action. For those who had experienced long-term subordination, such as the *campesinos*, participation in the insurgency offered a 'pleasure of agency' and a way of regaining a sense of dignity and autonomy. An 'insurgent political culture' emerged: new values and attitudes developed over time alongside a sense of solidarity. To participate in the insurgency was associated with the attitudes of an insurgent political culture, which emphasised the making of a more just history (2003, p.243). Even in as extremely high-risk a situation as this civil war was, these emotions and values were stronger than the fear of becoming a victim. As the war evolved and actions led to change, the pleasure of agency deepened and this encouraged the population to persist. A major contribution by Wood is that participation is valued in itself and that the 'pleasure of agency' can stimulate further engagement, something Scott (1985) and Gaventa (1982) have also argued.

The studies discussed here give various explanations for what brings about citizen engagement. Each of the earlier approaches touches upon aspects that contemporary academic work has recognised as important for collective action in relation to the state, such as social institutions and political alliances. Other aspects are more problematic. First, the

centrality - in earlier scholarship - of the expanding capitalist economy as the driving force for revolutionary peasants is challenged. Wood's work has clearly demonstrated that state-society relations are about more than the state's control over production. Peasants have ideas about justice, equality, and dignity and thus have normative ideas of what a relationship with the state should look like. This insight is incorporated in this thesis with a comprehensive approach to the question of what constitutes a sense of citizenship (Chapter 3).

Secondly, the peasant identity stimulates engagement in a political struggle, again clearly demonstrated in the work of Wood (2003). Given this, Popkin's (1970) characterisation of the rational peasant who is in it for personal self-interest is problematic. He removes the peasant entirely from his/her context and downplays social and cultural factors that inform behaviour. Yet individual behaviour depends on cultural constructions of selfhood and the community, as section 2.3 on ethnicity demonstrates.

Thirdly, the emphasis on social institutions within the peasantry as reflected, in different ways, in the work of Moore, Wolf and Scott, continues to be relevant. While to Moore this solidarity is instrumental in disseminating grievances, I consider it important for constructing citizenship; a sense and practice of citizenship is nurtured and built in social interactions. Much as Scott (1976) emphasises the embeddedness of peasants in their socio-cultural context, he ignores social differentiation within the peasantry. Yet also in pre-capitalist societies, social inequalities existed.

Skocpol's argument to include an analysis of state structures remains relevant for studying which tactics of engagement are possible. In this study I discuss the 'warscape' as the social structure in which agency evolves (section 2.4). However, instead of her focus on *elite actions*, I look at how the warscape affects engagement by citizens. Finally, unless they revolt, peasants are depicted as people that lack any form of agency. A focus on peasant revolutions obscures other forms of contention and agency by peasants, as the next sections show.

### **2.2.2 Resistance**

An important shortcoming of the earlier literature on peasant revolutions is that scholars neglect other forms of political activity among the marginalised. This is Scott's (1985) critique; he argues that there is a whole 'landscape of political activity' between silent quiescence and

revolution. Corbridge et al. (2005) state that an understanding of state-society relations requires an analysis of the everyday moments and spaces where citizens 'see the state': real life interactions around concrete issues. Scott (1985, 1990) uses this focus on the everyday to show forms of resistance. Although framed as resistance, the tactics he describes can also be viewed as the rejection of power holders by people who do not have the means to oust them

Scott (1985) describes how poor, subordinate people possess a repertoire of 'acts of resistance' that they carry out in their everyday life. Resistance can be expressed through 'passive non-compliance, evasion, or deception' (Scott, 1985). These often symbolic acts demonstrate disagreement and lack of support for the powerful elite. These are not just acts of resistance against a *materially* better-off elite. They also represent *ideological* differences between peasants and elites. The *acts* of resistance, the behaviour, cannot be separated from the *ideas*, norms and social consciousness that inform them. The work on 'hidden transcripts' examines the discourses and acts of the poor and the powerful (Scott, 1985). Public interactions between the powerful and the marginalised are power-laden. Subordinates may show conformity and deference when facing their superiors, thus avoiding direct confrontation where this may put their subsistence at risk. But in the safety of their homes and other 'off-stage' spaces where they feel comfortable they can share their worries.

The hidden transcripts can prepare the ground for public acts of resistance. To Scott, the act of publicly challenging a powerful actor is made possible by 'rehearsing' it in the safe spaces where these ideas are shared and gain legitimacy. Deciding between public and hidden forms of resistance is a careful balancing act. Scott explains how peasants go very carefully about finding the limits of this kind of resistance, to avoid it being revealed as such. The boundaries are mostly constituted by fear of (violent) repression and the risk of losing the economic resources through which the poor depend on the elite. Scott disagrees with Moore (1978), who states that quiescence means that the subordinated have become so used to their situation that they see it as inevitable, even legitimate. Scott argues that the marginalised *are* able to imagine a different life, but that they are often constrained by the possibility of repercussions.

In later work Scott (2009) presents a more radical argument about resistance. To the hill peoples of the mountainous area in south-east Asia, 'civilisation' meant subordination, and hence they resisted the process of civilisation altogether. They migrated from the 'state spaces' of the valleys into the hills, and adapted their livelihoods, cultures and identities to



escape state control. The 'state space' of the lowlands, created by the many kingdoms and dynasties, was one of appropriation. Scott gives numerous examples of how rulers sought to increase food production and manpower as key factors to state formation. Ruling elites used a combination of coercion and incentives to bring large numbers of people to their area. They also forged modes of production that supported this strategy to increase control. Not only did the hill people migrate. Once in the hills, they avoided the modes of production that could easily be appropriated by the more powerful and opted for more flexible livelihood strategies. They developed 'state resenting' social and political structures: hierarchic structures could easily be co-opted and therefore social organisation became small-scale and dispersed.

Scott's work stimulates thinking about certain actions as political acts of resistance. He shows that the hill tribes are not simply marginalised communities. Their thriving social practices and the institutions they create in non-state spaces constitute a strategy. Although legally members of a state, these groups opt out from a form of state citizenship that is not in their interest. Scott contributes to thinking about resistance in that seemingly 'ordinary' livelihood strategies and other activities may be political acts. This may also be its main weakness. Scott perhaps attributes too much significance to certain acts. It may for instance be problematic to see migration as a form of engagement that equals resistance. Other scholars have distinguished different levels of agency in this respect (Barter, 2012), which I explain in section 2.4.2.

### 2.2.3 Contention

A substantial part of the spectrum consists of various tactics and strategies of contention. These may reflect citizens' rejection of the state, or their resistance to it, or contestation and critical engagement. The work on *Contentious Politics* (McAdam et al., 2001; Tilly, 2008; Tilly & Tarrow, 2007) has made a big contribution to unpacking the various tactics and approaches used by citizens to show their discontent and push for change via forms of citizen engagement.

Contentious politics occurs at the intersection of contention, politics and collective action. It *'involves interactions in which actors make claims bearing on someone else's interests, leading to coordinated efforts on behalf of shared interests or programs, in which governments are involved as targets, initiators of claims, or third parties'* (Tilly & Tarrow, 2007, p. 4).

Contentious politics can take the form of revolutions and violent insurgencies, as well as the

demonstrations and social movements that constitute critical engagement. Contentious politics is about situations where the public disagrees with a situation and considers the institutional mechanisms for voicing disagreements no longer suitable. It is about large-scale involvement, often of 'the masses'.

Forms of contentious political action for claim-making are called 'performances' and groups engaged in contentious politics build a 'repertoire' of performances. Tilly and Tarrow (2007) present the argument that seemingly very different forms of contention, such as civil wars and social movements, have commonalities when one analyses their mechanisms and processes. Mechanisms such as brokerage, diffusion, and coordinated action are most common, often complemented with other mechanisms such as social appropriation (when social groups become political), boundary activation, certification, and identity shift.

Tilly and Tarrow insist on the presence of government as part of the definition of contentious politics. They give a number of reasons why. First of all, political contention may pose a risk to those in power. Secondly, governments set rules and boundaries for contention. Third, governments control the means of coercion and use of violence. They acknowledge that most contention occurs outside politics and that such forms also matter, but state that even these actors '*frequently come into contact with governments*' (2007, p.6). Above all, they feel that government-connected contention has distinctive properties.

The question posed is why repertoires of contention vary systematically from regime to regime. Tilly and Tarrow point to the political opportunity structure, which is made up of the crucial features of regimes that determine the horizon of opportunities, risks and threats that will be scanned by political actors when choosing their performances. Changes in the opportunity structure can enable or constrain collective mobilisation, thus influencing feasibility and costs of performances as well as their possible consequences.

I want to highlight two issues that I consider problematic about the contentious politics model (Tilly & Tarrow, 2007). First of all, often citizens do not resort to acts of contention to show their disagreement, nor do they choose mass mobilisation. A focus on riots, protests and other contentious actions neglects the everyday forms of contestation, hidden or visible.

A second problem concerns the explanation of how social actors become political actors and how identity plays a role in this (2007, p.78-81). Tilly and Tarrow acknowledge that social

identities can form an important basis for political action. Identities are defined by the relationships within the own group and between the own and other groups. In contentious politics, often already existing boundaries are activated while certain other boundaries are deactivated for the purpose of claim making. This is based on earlier work on social movements, which acknowledges that a common 'we' is needed for collective action. The identification of the 'we' requires a negative identification of the 'other' who is opposed (Della Porta & Diani, 2006; Tilly, 2004). Although I do not refute this, their explanation for how a political identity develops is incomplete. The emphasis on a cognitive boundary between 'us and them' ignores how the emotional attachment to a group and a sense of belonging motivate engagement, which has been pointed out by others (Goodwin, Jasper, & Polletta, 2001). It also leaves aside how identity construction takes place through action (Wood, 2003).

Furthermore, the authors state that 'identities become *political* identities when governments become parties to them' (Tilly & Tarrow, 2007, p.79, italics original), in line with their definition of contentious politics that includes the government. I disagree with this statement, because when citizens make claims on other citizens to recognise certain rights they act as political actors. Drake (2010) argues that *any* social identity is a political one. Social identities are constructed in different situations and discursive fields of society. Drake explains that for social identities to be effective they require social recognition, but they can therefore be acted upon, negotiated and changed, and therefore are political (*ibid*, p.57).

#### **2.2.4 Critical and constructive engagement**

Critical and constructive engagement constitutes the right-hand side of the spectrum. In this last sub-section I discuss *institutionalised* participation, which was meant to offer mechanisms for citizens to critically and constructively engage with state actors. Compared to other segments of the spectrum, the literature on institutionalised participation is more attentive to social differentiation within the citizenry and the power dynamics that obstruct effective engagement. It would be beyond the scope of this review to discuss all the democratic innovations that have been implemented in both developed and developing countries (see McLaverty (2011) for an overview). In the African context, democratic decentralisation has been important for opening up possibilities for institutionalised participation. Therefore, and because of the importance of local governance mechanisms in this study, I limit this section to a discussion of participatory local governance.

The wave of decentralisation in Africa and other parts of the world was intended not only to improve service delivery and hence development, but also to enhance local *democratic* governance (Blair, 2000). The *democratising* potential of decentralisation rests on two dynamics: participation and accountability. Through popular participation citizens have a bigger role in local governments' decision making, and will be able to hold the local governments accountable for the decisions that affect them. These themes, according to Blair (2000), make democratic decentralisation different from earlier decentralisation processes that emphasised efficient service delivery. Olowu's work concentrates particularly on the African context where decentralisation and related political dynamics are strongly affected by multi-ethnic societies and post-colonial histories (Olowu, 2003, 2004).

Decentralisation literature demonstrates that political factors shape the real possibilities of democratic decentralisation. The national political context and centre-local relations are important: the central state can use decentralised governance to create loyal elite locally, thus retaining substantial control over the local level. Central control is a common phenomenon in many African countries, and indeed across the global south, where the elites at central level are reluctant to give up their monopoly on power (Crook, 2003; Crook & Manor, 1998; Olowu, 2003). Olowu (2003) argues that political constraints such as these need to be tackled even before technical issues are addressed. Limited autonomy of sub-national administrations make them merely local 'implementers' of state policies, primarily accountable to the centre. Decentralisation needs to be accompanied by devolution of powers to both the local administrations and elected bodies to fulfil its democratic potential.

Decentralisation literature also identifies local challenges that can interfere with local democratic governance, such as elite capture, a composition of the council that does not reflect the social reality, and patronage relations between elected leaders and their constituency (Olowu, 2003). A persistent risk is that marginalised groups are not represented (Blair, 2000; Crook & Manor, 1998; Crook & Sverrisson, 2001). These challenges reflect the concerns about the micropolitics of participation mentioned earlier.

There is a small literature on decentralised governance in post-conflict situations, which has highlighted a number of challenges for these settings. Experiences vary for each country and there is therefore no consensus about the exact relation between decentralisation and conflict mitigation (Brinkerhoff, 2011; Crawford & Hartmann, 2008). Institutional deficits like resources

and staff capacities are commonly considered to be worse in post-conflict settings and a potential risk to the still fragile legitimacy of local institutions (Jackson & Scott, 2008; Woodward, 2002). Scholars have warned, however, that enhancing technical capacities needs to go hand in hand with addressing the political context, since it is this context that can greatly interfere with state performance (S. Lister & Wilder, 2007).

Numerous political challenges may interfere with a decentralisation process (Jackson & Scott, 2008; Woodward, 2002). Generally, in (post)conflict situations the central state – local state relationship is precarious and can even become volatile (Brinkerhoff, 2011; Brinkerhoff & Johnson, 2009; Jackson & Scott, 2008; Woodward, 2002). The nature of a political settlement and the complex configuration of power relationships between government and non-government actors shape the prospects for local democratic governance (Jarstad, 2008; Söderberg Kovacs, 2008). Recent decentralisation and conflict literature pays some attention to the role of citizens in decentralised governance. However, the analysis of the problems facing citizens is rather thin. The problem is largely explained by pointing to ‘weak and fragmented civil society’ (Brinkerhoff, 2011), rather than looking at the disrupted relationships within society and between state and society. I address this in section 2.7 on community-driven development.

Scholarly work on institutionalised participatory governance has identified factors which limit or encourage citizen engagement. Cornwall and Coelho (2007) highlight conducive factors in the case of participatory budgeting in Brazil. These refer to the institutional design as well as active citizens and a committed bureaucracy. The design of participatory mechanisms should take minority groups into account to make them work in their advantage. Openness of state institutions to engagement is relevant, and legal frameworks can form important back-up.

Gaventa and Barrett (2010) map the impact of different forms of participation for four democracy and development outcomes: a) construction of citizenship; b) the strengthening of practices of participation; c) the strengthening of responsive and accountable states; and d) the development of inclusive and cohesive societies. They compare the effects of different strategies: local associations, social movements and campaigns, formal participatory governance spaces, and the use of multiple strategies. Findings show that using a multiplicity of strategies is more likely to produce results, in particular in strengthening state responsiveness and accountability. The multiplicity often consists of combining participation with broader social mobilisation: aligning with a diversity of actors to mobilise political support

(civil society, but also media and actors within the political system) from local to national and even global level (Citizenship-DRC, 2011; Gaventa & Barrett, 2010). Strategies for effective mobilisation differ for more or less favourable contexts. There is, however, no linear relationship between the level of democratisation (stronger/weaker institutions) and positive outcomes of participation. Also, in weaker states strategies may have some democratising effects, and negative outcomes may occur in stronger democracies (2010, p. 53).

In a review of numerous Transparency and Accountability Initiatives (TAI) McGee and Gaventa (2011, p. 22) identify factors that contribute to increased levels of accountability or responsiveness impact. A number of these factors are concerned with the role of citizens and civil society.

- 1) Capabilities of citizen and civil society organisations, like the ability to analyse and use available information. Exercising voice depends on other factors like the level of prior social mobilisation; presence of active media; the presence of coalitions that can act upon evidence; the presence of intermediaries who can communicate information to those affected.
- 2) The degree to which TAI interacts with other mobilisation strategies, which may include advocacy and campaigns, electoral pressure, popular protests and movements.
- 3) Citizens are more inclined to become involved in monitoring when they were also involved in the formulation of the policy or programme.

This section has reviewed a range of forms of citizen engagement, from rejection through violent revolution to critical and constructive engagement in institutionalised participation. This last sub-section discussed the right-hand part of the spectrum, which forms the focus of this study. I acknowledge that people use both formal and informal tactics of engagement, and can be constructive as well as subversive depending on the circumstances. The work by Tilly and Tarrow (2007) is a major contribution in this field. But in the Ugandan context, where this study is carried out, the right-hand part of the spectrum is considered the most relevant for the particular period of the study. I elaborate this in Chapter 3, where I explain my focus and on everyday forms of engagement, informed by the work of Scott (1985, 1990) and Corbridge et al. (2005). I also reflect critique of the literature on contentious politics and resistance. Before I start reviewing conflict studies literature I discuss a last component that is important for understanding active citizenship in African contexts: ethnic identity.

## **2.3 Ethnic identity and engagement**

As mentioned in section 2.1, in citizenship studies identity is recognised as a possible basis for agency. Because the ethnic identity is so important when working in African contexts, I now discuss the relationship between citizenship, ethnic identity, and engagement in some detail. In social sciences there are various approaches to understanding ethnicity and how it relates to social and political engagement. Section 2.3.1 introduces the social constructivist approach to ethnicity (Jenkins, 2008), which is, together with the rational choice approach (Bates, Figueiredo, & Weingast, 1998; J.D. Fearon & Laitin, 2003), one of the main contemporary approaches to understanding ethnicity. Section 2.3.2 discusses the concept of identity in the African context. Here citizenship debates revolve around the differentiated senses of ethnic identity and national identity and how these shape attitudes and behaviour towards the ethnic group and the state. In section 2.3.3 I present social-constructivist approaches that explain how identity has become entwined with the exclusion of certain categories of citizens, leading to marginalisation. This debate touches upon how a sense of marginalisation shapes citizen perceptions of the state and citizen agency, which may shed light on citizen agency in conflict-affected settings.

### **2.3.1 A social constructivist approach to ethnicity**

In this thesis I adopt a social-constructivist approach to understanding the Acholi ethnic identity (Jenkins, 2008). Social constructivists and rational choice scholars compete to explain the role of ethnic identity in collective and political action. Rational choice theorists consider reason, interest and the pursuit of personal gain as the basis for political action, while constructivists argue that it is emotion, identity and the search for meaning through interpretation (Bates et al., 1998). Social constructivists argue that ethnicity comes about and is reproduced through social interactions. I find this particularly helpful for an understanding of processes of marginalisation of certain ethnic groups, in which the reproduction of stereotypes and exclusion based on ethnic identity play a major role. This section thus prepares for the discussion on marginalisation in section 2.3.3. As the social-constructivist approach is more important for my study I limit myself to presenting only a few key points for the rational choice approach.

Social-constructivists study how identities and the boundaries between them are constructed, and the role of culture in the forging of communities. It was Barth (1969) who shifted the perspective from a focus on the tribal identity as the defining feature of social structure to ethnicity as an aspect of social organisation (Barth, 1969; Jenkins, 2008). It is also different from Fearon (2004), who considers *descent* the distinctive characteristic of an ethnic group, along with shared characteristics such as religion, culture, language and a sense of homeland. Key features in Barth's thinking (1969) are: that an analysis of ethnicity starts from how social actors themselves perceive it; a focus on how boundaries are constructed through interactions across the boundary; that identity depends on ascription by ethnic group members and outsiders; and that ethnicity is not fixed but situational. People imagine the community of which they want to be part (Anderson, 1993). When it is acknowledged that culture and tradition are dynamic and constantly reinvented through social practice, it follows that people have some autonomy to unpack and put together aspects of culture. Constructivists emphasise the power of symbols, language and rhetoric, and communication, which are used to give political meaning to moments and events.

In the African context, the colonial regime was a major actor in the construction of ethnic identities (Young, 2007). The colonial administration divided the population into tribes and developed an 'identity codification' that simplified and regrouped apparently similar entities. Africans themselves were actors in the social-construction process, especially the chiefs who could benefit from the way groups and boundaries were defined (*ibid*, p.251). As the modern African state developed, under colonial rule and after independence, an important debate evolved over the differences between membership of the ethnic group and membership of the state (Ekeh, 1975; Mamdani, 1996; Ndegwa, 1997). This debate is captured in section 2.3.2.

It is argued that the constructivist approach could be improved by paying more attention to the relationship between ethnicity, class and stratification, and to power and domination between groups (Eriksen, 2002; Jenkins, 2008). Jenkins suggests distinguishing two analytically distinct processes of ascription: group identification and social categorisation, which he explains thus:

The first occurs inside and across the ethnic boundary, the second outside and across it. Social categorisation, in particular, is intimately bound up with power relations and relates to the capacity of one group successfully to impose its categories of ascription upon



another set of people, and to the resources which the categorised collectivity can draw upon to resist, if need be, that imposition (2008, p. 23).

It is particularly this aspect of how ethnic boundaries are constructed in order for one group to become dominant over another, or how a sense of domination is perceived by a minority, that is interesting for this study. A sense of domination may subsequently affect their citizenship and the practice of engagement.

To rational choice theorists, ethnicity is considered primarily instrumental in seeking to maximise individual preferences and interests, notably material wealth and power. Psychological benefits are usually excluded from the spectrum of interests. This approach furthermore assumes that people are ready to make 'cultural trade-offs' in order to attain their goals (Hyden, 2005). Bates (1990), a rational choice scholar, gives examples of the instrumental use of kinship ties. Social and political institutions in kinship societies constitute a form of 'self-insurance' and a risk-mitigation strategy. Ethnic communities are instrumental in building human capital: families will invest in education for clan members in town, knowing that this eventually leads to higher returns from their paid employment in cities. Older generations are able to resolve the collective action problem by imposing rules and sanctions that ensure that the younger generations that migrated to the towns continue to remit funds to their rural homelands (Bates, 1990, 2000).

Fearon states that '*Ethnicity is politicized when political coalitions are organized along ethnic lines, or when access to political or economic benefits depends on ethnicity*' (2004, p. 860). Bates (1983) shares this view and argues that in post-colonial Africa ethnic groups developed coalitions to secure access to resources. A shared language and culture made coalitions easier to form along ethnic lines than according to other social categories. Their numbers added up to win power with a minimum majority while not having to share the benefits with too large a group. Ethnic diversity may affect the distribution of political preferences and the likelihood of cooperation, for example in reaching agreement over policies and the financing of public goods.

The rational choice argument for the role of ethnicity in political action has been particularly articulated in explaining civil war. Several studies show that ethnicity, or ethnic polarisation between two groups, cannot adequately explain state failure (Bates, 2008, for the African context) or support for ethnic rebellion (J.D. Fearon & Laitin, 2003). Fearon and Laitin (2003)

argue that ethnic civil wars are not significantly different from other civil wars (J.D. Fearon & Laitin, 2003). Fearon and Laitin state that '*constructivist explanations for ethnic violence tend to merge with rationalist, strategic analysis...*' (J.D. Fearon & Laitin, 2000, p. 846) because individuals (particularly the elite but also individuals on the ground) seek to advance their personal interests by mobilising ethnicity.

Social constructivist approaches argue that rationalist approaches fail to give an adequate explanation for the '*willing attachment to communal ideas*' (Kaufman, 2006). Hyden (2005) furthermore points out that this approach fails to consider that socialisation processes generate preferences and values. To constructivists, an explanation for ethnic mobilisation is that differences are strategically manipulated. Several authors propose that elements of the constructivist approach are needed to complement rational-choice theory (Bates et al., 1998, p. 629; Kaufman, 2006).

### **2.3.2 The ethnic citizen: participation in two communities**

Ekeh (1975) distinguished two public realms with different 'citizenship structures': the balance of an individual's rights and duties in relation to the public. Most Africans are citizens of both these publics in society. The *primordial* public is constituted by the social ties and is a *moral* public. In terms of rights and duties, the African citizen is obliged to further the welfare of the primordial public, to a great extent through material contributions. Importantly, an individual considers these duties as moral obligations, expecting few material benefits in return. According to Ekeh, what the citizen can expect from this public is intangible: recognition, identity and (psychological) security, which form his 'rights'. The relationship between the individual and the primordial public cannot be expressed in material terms as the moral duties outweigh the material value of the contributions made. The *civic* public stems from the colonial administration and is constituted by state institutions like the civil service, police and the military. This public is *amoral* and therefore its economic value is emphasised. To the civic public, the citizen has no moral duty to contribute anything but can extract as many benefits as possible. The two publics are in dialectic relationship with one another: the logic of the dialectic is that it is considered legitimate to channel what is gained from the civic public into the primordial public. It is the dialectical tensions and confrontations between these publics that characterise African politics (1975, p.208). The differentiated attitude towards the two publics explains behaviours such as corruption and bribery, work ethos, and associational life.

Voluntary associations belong to the primordial public and do not represent the 'civic culture' in the Toquevillean sense, as described by western political sociologists.

The two publics, Ekeh argues, are the enduring legacy of colonialism, the period during which the colonial regime and the educated African elite were contesting claims of legitimacy. The post-colonial ruling elites needed to establish their legitimacy, and did so by exploiting the ethnic divisions created during colonialism, a process of promoting tradition as the basis of legitimacy, and portraying the civic administration as amoral while the (new) ethnic groupings were described as moral. This set in motion the dialectic relationship between the two publics, legitimising the profiteering attitude towards the civic public for the benefit of the primordial public. This process greatly influenced post-colonial statehood as it obstructed the development of a sense of duty towards the state.

The membership of two political communities is a theme explored by other authors. Mamdani's famous work, *Citizen and Subject* (1996) describes the bifurcated state: the duality of two forms of power under one hegemonic colonial authority. This duality entailed a system of direct rule and modern law in urban areas, creating citizens, and a system of indirect rule through customary authorities using customary law in rural areas, creating subjects. Citizenship became a privilege of the civilised: in urban areas 'civil society' implied the civilised society comprising the educated Africans who were employed by the colonial administration and who enjoyed civil rights. Uncivilised 'natives' were excluded from civil rights and freedoms.

In rural areas, the colonial regime reconstituted the customary chiefs or created chiefs through appointment where previously they had not existed (*ibid*). Chiefs held legislative, executive, administrative and judicial powers without any checks and balances and thus formed a powerful, authoritarian system of rule. Although the site of customary law was contested, the institutional context enabled the chiefs to define its content. Customary law regulated non-market relations and community affairs, and access to land. It was not about guaranteeing rights but about guaranteeing power, hence Mamdani's stance that this created subject identities.

The development of the system of indirect rule was accompanied by a process of tribalisation. Rural Africans were organised in tribes, each with their own territory, ascribed culture, and leadership. The British colonial regime in particular used 'culture' as a way to demarcate territorial and administrative boundaries and assumed tribes to be cultural units, even when

distinct ethnic groups lived in the same area. The categorisation of rural areas into tribal areas each ruled by a Native Authority meant that there were as many sets of customary law as there were tribes. The combination of financial autonomy of the tribal units and a powerful chieftaincy produced what Mamdani calls 'decentralised despotism' (1996, p.57). Abuse of power by chiefs was widespread, and the colonial power tried to counter it by making the chieftaincy a salaried and appointed, instead of inherited, position, and by transferring chiefs to other locations. Despite these measures the practice of extorting resources from subject populations continued.

According to Mamdani (1996), the way post-colonial regimes have responded to the bifurcated state is the major reason why rural populations continue to be excluded from equal citizenship. Conservative regimes maintained the hierarchy in the local state through customary authorities after independence, thus reproducing the 'decentralised despotism'. Conservative states thus continued the practice of forcing an ethnic identity onto subject populations. Clientelist relations crossed the rural-urban divide, which tended to exacerbate ethnic divisions. Radical African states, however, sought to transform the native authority and discard ethnic differences, but often did so by formulating one customary law for the countryside that coexisted with modern law for urban areas. A single, customary law thus applied to the entire rural, subject population regardless of ethnic identity. This process went hand in hand with a tightening of control over local authorities in the name of 'detrribalisation' and centralising the state's coercive and administrative power. Thus, instead of reforming the local state and making it more democratic the tendency was towards centralised despotism. In both conservative and radical states a process of deracialisation occurred, which entailed modification of the social boundary between modern and customary law (1996, p. 136). Modern law could now be accessed by all people, both natives (of African descent) and non-natives. However, the urban poor often lacked the *de facto* means to access modern legal institutions. Customary law governed the lives of rural populations that had no physical access to modern law as it had no presence in rural areas.

According to Halisi, Kaiser and Ndegwa (1998, p. 342) it is crucial to recognise that both liberal and republican values are relevant to the study of citizenship in Africa, because together they address rights and identity. It is especially the (creative) tension between civic republicanism and liberalism that is relevant. Liberal citizenship was associated with legal membership of the state and an emphasis on legal rights. Much activity by African citizens at sub-national level, however, resembles civic republican notions of participation in the institutions that belong to

the ethnic community. Ndegwa (1997) writes about the 'duality of citizenship' in the ethnic community and the nation-state. When it is recognised that ethnic political communities can exist at sub-state level, it can be acknowledged that different forms of citizenship can coexist. Although these forms of citizenship coexist, there is a 'hierarchy of attachment' to the different communities and the citizenships are in competition.

Ndegwa (1997) elaborates this competition between ethnic citizenship and state citizenship. Membership of and belonging to the nation-state and its authority are codified in legal, rational and bureaucratic frameworks, whereas membership of the ethnic community is organised through socially constructed definitions (Ndegwa, 1997). The ethnic community is defined by membership through descent, and the recognition of a shared history and values. The legitimacy of the nation-state rests on the notion that, through democracy, citizens are able to affect the institutions that govern society. Authority in the ethnic community is non-bureaucratic and relies on cultural practices that confirm the authority of institutions, often through socially legitimated individuals. This translates into differentiated citizenship practices as well, and in particular the balance of rights and obligations one has towards the state and the ethnic community. Whereas legal membership of the nation-state qualifies members to participate in the nation's community, ethnic citizenship requires members to participate and advance the welfare of the ethnic group. This resonates with what Ekeh (1975) wrote on differences in obligations towards each community. Moreover, participation in the ethnic community encourages members to compete with other communities, in particular the state, unless their own ethnic group 'owns' the state. Citizens in the ethnic community are not autonomous. They cannot claim rights if it has negative consequences for the group. The republican citizenship in the ethnic community dictates that one is a citizen in that community through active participation in it, and only by active participation can the ethnic citizen gain rights. This explains the vibrant networks between migrants and their home areas, because the obligation to participate still holds while they are away.

The tension, or how the two citizenships contests, is manifested in that the demands of the ethnic community may undermine liberal citizenship. First of all, membership of the ethnic community shapes an individual's preferences and aims, and attitudes towards the state (Ndegwa, 1997). As the authority and legitimacy of institutions in the ethnic community are more pervasive in people's lives, mechanisms in the ethnic community are more effective in ensuring compliance. Secondly, the ethnic groups that control the state will use this as an opportunity to further the welfare of the ethnic community and, as Ekeh (1975) has argued,

this becomes an obligation. In the case of Kenya, Ndegwa shows that the liberal state citizenship bestows rights and is unable to demand the meeting of obligations, while the civic republican citizenship extracts contributions from the members, so the two citizenships are not compatible. This explains the ethnic politics in Kenya's post-independence transitional period.

More recently it has been acknowledged that one should not think in overly dualistic terms: in reality people are not either citizens or subjects. Many people, in particular in rural Africa, are both, although often rather more subject than citizen for most of their life (Nyamnjoh, 2008). Even the rural population can, at various points in their lives, participate in the 'civic community' (Geschiere & Gugler, 1998). With so many linkages and networks between rural and urban communities, the strict separation between the two spheres is hard to uphold (Geschiere & Gugler, 1998). Mamdani's distinction between citizens and subjects (1996) has become too general: in today's Africa many people are citizen and subject at the same time (Geschiere & Gugler, 1998). Hickey (2007) cautions against reducing individuals or groups to an essence, to fixed categories such as 'urban' or 'rural' and 'citizen' or 'subject', since the boundaries only become significant when they are reinforced by institutions and social practice.

### **2.3.3 Identity and marginalisation**

While citizenship holds a promise of rights and equality, as was mentioned in section 2.1 the reality is different for many people. In many countries 'hierarchies in citizenship' exist (Nyamnjoh, 2006) and there are both formal and informal institutions that exclude people from membership, and from citizenship rights and entitlements. This generates forms of marginalisation for certain groups of people. In this section I capture some approaches to marginalisation in which ethnicity played a role: exclusion through an emphasis on autochthony as the basis of citizenship (Geschiere & Gugler, 1998); historical processes of adverse incorporation (Hickey & Du Toit, 2007a); and exclusion through socio-economic status (Nyamnjoh, 2006).

Autochthon refers to being a 'son of the soil'. The meaning seems self-evident, but the debates on autochthony and citizenship have shown that it is risky to use it as the basis for citizenship (Geschiere, 2011). An 'autochthon' is much harder to define than an ethnic group, which has a

name and history and is thus more or less clearly defined. Because the meaning of 'autochthon' lacks substance it is therefore open to political manipulation. Like ethnicity, the notion of autochthon-allochthon can be mobilised to create boundaries between 'us and them'. Political actors have used this to their advantage and to generate political support among autochthonous populations by relating autochthony to access to resources, sometimes leading to outbursts of violence (Dunn, 2009). Labelling people as allochthon can easily make them 'strangers' and exclude them from full citizenship and corresponding rights (see Dorman, Hammett, & Nugent, 2007; Geschiere & Jackson, 2006). In practice, an emphasis on autochthony erodes the ideal of national citizenship, which was the objective of nation-building in many African states after independence.

In African contexts a notion of autochthony has increasingly become crucial in debates on citizenship and identity in relation to access to rights and resources. Two factors contributed to this: the furthering of political liberalisation and the global capitalist economy since the 1980s (Dunn, 2009; Geschiere & Jackson, 2006; Geschiere & Nyamnjoh, 2000); and the weakening of the neo-patrimonial system that created a sense of insecurity, for which political leaders found a solution in the autochthony discourse that helped them guarantee resources to their supporters (Dunn, 2009). In many African countries the immigrant populations expanded due to market economies, which posed a threat to autochthon populations. Granting citizenship to 'strangers' means that they have voting power and might one day outnumber the 'autochthons'. Political liberalisation and transition to multi-party politics may offer these groups opportunities for political mobilisation (Geschiere & Nyamnjoh, 2000). Regimes can use autochthon ideology to undermine opposition by dividing it, and as a consequence can contain the effects of multi-partyism as a divide-and-rule tactic.

The literature on adverse incorporation tells us to make explicit the relationship between the marginalisation of certain individuals or groups and the larger systems that shape their lives and set the terms for how they can participate in social, political and economic life: markets, social systems and networks, cultural belief systems, identities and institutions (Du Toit, 2004). *'The concept of adverse incorporation, it is argued, captures the ways in which localised livelihood strategies are enabled and constrained by economic, social, and political relations over both time and space, in that they operate over lengthy periods and within cycles, and at multiple spatial levels, from local to global. These relations are driven by inequalities of power'* (Hickey & Du Toit, 2007a, p. 4). There is a need not just to focus on the mechanisms of exclusion, but to understand the terms of inclusion of certain groups.

Hickey's (2007) discussion of the Mbororo'en, a pastoralist community in North-West Cameroon, illustrates how their process of citizenship construction has been a process of 'adverse incorporation' into the state and that claims over their 'allochthony' deepened their marginalisation. Their identity is not just defined by their ethnic affiliation, but also by their livelihood as pastoralists without a clearly defined home territory. Highly dependent on land for their livelihoods, the pastoralist Mbororo'en engaged in patron-client relationships with customary leaders and state actors that controlled the land. The process of democratisation did not open up spaces for the Mbororo'en. Instead, the patron-client relationships extended into the political sphere; exclusionary, neo-patrimonial politics intensified, and public and political discourses on 'autochthony' further marginalised migrant minorities.

With the case of the Mbororo'en, Hickey demonstrates that marginalisation of a group does not simply mean they are excluded from local citizenship status and practice, but the group becomes part of the construction of citizenship of other groups. The members and leaders of other groups defined themselves in a dialectic relationship to the alien Mbororo'en: the internal, alien 'other'. Furthermore, he shows that marginalisation began during the colonial time, which is different from Mamdani's emphasis (1996) on exclusionary nationalist politics of the post-colonial states.

An interesting point for this study is what Hickey notes about citizen engagement among the Mbororo'en. He states that due to the patron-client relationships in the incumbent regime - which were also nurtured by the Mbororo'en for survival - and fear of negative consequences if they were associated with opposition, Mbororo'en refrained from resistance. For example, they did not participate when the provincial population engaged in protests in the 1990s.

Hickey: *'This episode again revealed the mixture of marginality and self-isolation that characterises the Mbororo'en's experience of citizenship'* (2007, p.96).

Nyamnjoh describes how marginalisation and a 'hierarchy in citizenship' is experienced by immigrants in South Africa and by maids and migrant domestic workers in Botswana (Nyamnjoh, 2006). According to Nyamnjoh the way maids and immigrants are treated is directly related to a nation-bound conceptualisation of citizenship. As globalisation produces large groups of migrant workers, particularly in Africa, adherence to a nation-bound citizenship concept puts all of them at risk of being marginalised. He therefore argues for a more flexible notion of citizenship. Nyamnjoh's analysis of the marginalisation of these groups shows that a



hierarchy of citizenship exists even among the marginalised. His discussion of their coping strategies and how they are, to some extent, shaped by citizenship directly addresses what I have termed the sense of citizenship and how it is related to the practice. I will summarise his two cases here.

In South Africa and Botswana the term 'Makwerekwere' is used for black immigrants and refers to someone who cannot speak one of the South African languages, and who comes from African countries that are considered to be more 'backward', 'primitive' and 'savage' (Nyamnjoh, 2008, p. 79). It is associated with negative stereotypes like being darker-skinned, less educated, and engaged in criminal behaviour. African immigrants are vulnerable to discrimination and violence by South Africans. The police often worsen the situation instead of resolving a case. One coping strategy of Makwerekwere is to learn a local language, which helps them fend off the police who use language to find, detain and send back foreign migrants.

Maids and female migrant domestic workers in Botswana are vulnerable to exploitation and abuse. As Nyamnjoh shows, even within this social category there is a hierarchy in citizenship with implications for how maids exercise voice. The Botswana maids, who belong to the ethnic majority of the country, are more confident and feel themselves better than maids belonging to minority groups and consider themselves particularly superior to Zimbabwean maids. In the case of serious exploitation, Botswana maids are more inclined to report to the police than Zimbabwean maids, who run away from them and choose exploitation over detention and deportation. This fear makes maids reluctant to claim their rights and stand up for themselves. Nonetheless, Nyamnjoh describes how they use 'weapons of the weak' tactics (Scott, 1985) to cope with their masters and their situation.

This section explained the social-constructivist approach to ethnic identity and forms of exclusion, contrasting it with the rational-choice approach. Chapter 3 explains how the social-constructivist approach is deemed most appropriate for this study and how it helps to deconstruct the Acholi sense of citizenship. The next section returns to the question of citizen engagement, now looking at how it develops in contexts of violent conflict.

## 2.4 Agency and institutions in conflict settings

### 2.4.1 Transformation of social and political institutions

There is increasing awareness that violent conflict can transform existing social and political institutions, as well as generate new types of institutions (Justino, 2011, 2013). Justino (2011) distinguishes two forms of institutional transformation: 1) changes in social relations that determine the nature of local norms of conduct, cooperation and trust; and 2) the emergence of non-state forms of governance, notably by non-state (armed) actors that replace 'weak, inexistent or inappropriate' state institutions. This brings to mind the authors discussed in section 2.2.1, who demonstrated that forms of social organisation change during conflict (Wood, 2003; Petersen, 2001).

Justino (2013) argues that change in social and political institutions and the way people engage with them has consequences for the conflict cycle, as well as for governance arrangements in the post-conflict situation. An understanding of institutional transformation during conflict can help to understand why conflict persists or re-emerges (2013, p.9). This thesis complements this understanding with an in-depth discussion of how the transformation of institutions during conflict has implications for the practice of citizenship. In this section I discuss a number of studies that have demonstrated how institutions can transform during conflict, which may provide insights for thinking about citizen engagement.

The conventional idea about social institutions, networks and relationships is that they risk becoming 'fractured' during war. One cause is overt repression of associational life by violent actors: there are no 'safe spaces' for people to get together and discuss issues that are potentially sensitive. A second explanation is found in the divisive effects of conflict, disrupting social networks and social trust, which can make collective action nearly impossible. Although the negative effects on social institutions should not be underestimated, scholars have pointed out that there is no 'vacuum' in social relations (Pouligny, 2005). Instead, they adapt and new institutions may emerge.

Wood (2003) demonstrates that in the case of the insurgency by peasant *campesinos* against the landowning elite and the state during the civil war in El Salvador, the formation of cooperatives led to a thriving civil society. After the war, the situation did not return to the status quo from before the war. Forms of social organisation and rural authority had been

forged: the insurgent cooperatives remained in place, often linked up in networks and affiliated to political opposition. They formed important socio-political institutions that were crucial for the organisation of production and local life. They had transformed patterns of land ownership and tenure. During the war these cooperatives had occupied land that belonged to the landowners. After the war, under the peace agreement, the cooperatives claimed ownership of the land, altering the regime of property rights. They became the legitimate political authority that in many cases *replaced* the alliance between landowners and security actors or, where these actors had remained, challenged their authority. Through participation in the popular organisation of the cooperatives the *campesinos* had claimed rights and practiced citizen engagement. Although they remained poor, at the end of the war they had shifted the balance of power in their favour (Wood, 2003, pp. 86-87).

Concerning political institutions, a key feature of conflict settings is that the state is rarely the only form of authority; rather there are multiple authorities present that often compete for power with one another and/or the state. Even where the state 'collapses', new forms of order and governance emerge (Justino, 2013; Kalyvas, Shapiro, & Masoud, 2008). When the state fails to guarantee security and a form of political order, this vacuum may be filled by organised non-state actors such as customary authorities, but usually by armed groups like guerrilla/ revolutionaries (Pearce et al., 2011). These actors considerably shape the local level micropolitics for participation, and indeed every sphere of local life. *Armed* non-state factions contest both the local and central state with the use of violence, undermining state legitimacy and effectiveness (Pearce et al., 2011). In Afghanistan non-state actors exercise control over sub-national governments in various ways, referred to as the dynamics between the *de facto* and *de jure state* (S. Lister & Wilder, 2007). In the slums of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, drug traffickers, militias and the police constitute 'parallel authorities' competing for control using excessive violence, and shaping the public spaces. Militias mediate access of citizens to state resources and influence what the state can do in the slums (Wheeler, 2011). These actors also matter in a *post*-conflict state, depending on the extent to which they are integrated in the state, engage in dialogue with state institutions, support them or challenge and compete with them. In fact Cleaver's point (2004) about 'old' forms of authority shaping new opportunities for citizen participation seems to apply particularly to post-conflict settings where governance reforms are implemented.

Micro-level research has started to unpack the relationship between a civilian population and guerrillas (Bakonyi & Stuvoy, 2005; Justino, 2009; Weinstein, 2007). It shows how insurgent

groups establish governing mechanisms. It also shows the factors that influence people in deciding whether or not to support the insurgents and if so, how. Support may entail provision of food and other supplies, and intelligence. Insurgent groups need a population exactly for this. The result can be a co-existence governed by various mechanisms. The way the NRA created the RCs in Luwero in Central Uganda is a good example, allowing citizens to take part in the anti-government movement and local self-rule (Karlström, 1996; Weinstein, 2007). I elaborate on this in Chapter 4.

War economies are constituted by economic and political institutions and networks, which create power dynamics that greatly impact the lives of local populations. Nordstrom refers to the institutions of the war economy as 'extra-state' institutions or 'shadows', which emerge during war and persist during cease fires or in post-conflict situations. The shadow economies that emerge include trade networks from the local to international level. The persistence of such networks and arrangements can explain, for example, the failure of peace agreements and rapidly rising crime figures. Nordstrom emphasises that the words used to describe the shadows (i.e. clandestine, informal, illegal, underground) make it sound as if the spaces of the shadows are separated from 'formal life' as two different realms. However, she argues that *'the shadows exist in the midst of formal state society and the minutiae of day-to-day living.'* (p.36). They exist within formal life of government offices, humanitarian organisations and military bases.

It was often assumed that, in times of civil war, economic life would come to a standstill, and that rural communities would 'retreat into subsistence' and no longer engage in wage labour. Literature on war economies has demonstrated the opposite. Cramer (2006b) shows that new economic networks emerged in the Mozambique war with demand for wage labour, in which rural populations also participated. Certain actors, notably party officials, military officials and 'wartime entrepreneurs' benefited from these conditions and attained relative wealth and power, through what Cramer calls 'extraction of war tax'. Regulations were weak and conditions were poor. The rural population got incorporated into the war economy in various ways, depending on how they were controlled by Frelimo or Renamo or both. Meanwhile, several actors were able to secure pieces of land, evicting the rural population and forcing them to look for wage labour. Due to these various processes in the countryside, the war economy accelerated a process of social differentiation that had been set in motion under the colonial regime. As many actors benefited from this situation, aspects of this war economy persisted in the post-war period.

Nordstrom (2004) cites a number of examples from her ethnographic work about local people, humanitarian workers and government officials, and how they take part in the networks and institutions that constitute the war economy. They do not see themselves as 'smugglers' or 'criminals'. Given their circumstances, participation in such networks is just a way of getting by in the complex setting of a war. They are members of a *web of relationships* that link shadow transactions, business development and political power, forming trade networks from the very local to the international level. She states that the shadows and 'politics of invisibility' are created by those who benefit from it (2004, p.34). They use a discourse that justifies the necessity of violence and the war itself, distracting attention from how they benefit from them.

Vlassenroot and Raeymaekers (2005; 2008a) argue that microlevel dynamics in the conflict in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) have led to a series of social and political transformations, which play an important role in sustaining the conflict. Microlevel dynamics constitute a 'war complex': shifting relations between different actors (various militias, local entrepreneurs, actors in the local administration, the military, and sometimes foreign military actors from Rwanda and Uganda) that have created informal trade networks in DRC and across the border in Uganda (Vlassenroot & Raeymaekers, 2005). Militant actors needed resources, but these informal trade networks and arrangements with armed actors were also produced as a strategy by citizens - and especially the local elite - to sustain their lives in the midst of insecurity (Vlassenroot & Raeymaekers, 2008b).

These dynamics have had several socio-political impacts (Vlassenroot & Raeymaekers, 2005, pp. 11-12). One is that younger generations have increasingly become dependent on participation in these trade networks. Moreover, gains from this form of exploitation have offered them a social identity of 'having'. Furthermore, the authority of customary leaders has, to a great extent, been replaced by that of the many militias that operate in rural areas. Customary leaders have often been forced to support these armed actors, which has led to a further erosion of their authority and associated norms of solidarity and in decision-making. Finally, these networks have also produced systems of governance (Vlassenroot & Raeymaekers, 2008b) and militias have created their own governance mechanisms, although they would often make use of the administrative structures that existed prior to the war. The authors demonstrate that there is variation in the types of order in different parts of Eastern DRC (2005, 2008). In some cases, the different actors continued to compete over access to

resources, leading to ongoing insecurity. In most cases, the militias, local administration and local entrepreneurs formed an alliance, in which entrepreneurs shared some of their gains in return for protection and mobility. At the same time they held some power, mediating between militias and the natural resources. Actors found mutual benefit in these relationships and were reluctant to give them up.

It is, however, important to recognise the importance of pre-conflict history. Writing about the war in Mozambique, Lubkemann (2008) stresses that people had their social struggles and relationships *before* the war and these shaped how they responded to the war. In fact, he criticises Nordstrom (1997) for presenting the people in her book as if they have no history, as if everything begins when the war starts. He argues that social and political change during war may affect people's lives more than the violence associated with war. For example, Vlassenroot and Raeymaekers (2008) show how some of the militias' strategies developed as a consequence of, or in response to, the patrimonialism and the decentralised patronage networks that formed a divide-and-rule system imposed in Zaire by Mobutu's post-colonial regime. These networks had serious impact on the local population. Allen (2006, 2010) shows how the position of customary leaders in Northern Uganda and the meaning of Acholi peace-making rituals were transformed over the course of the war. In Northern Uganda external actors played a major role in 'reinventing' the rituals for reconciliation. These changes had implications for how social harmony is guarded in the post-conflict situation. This example will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 4.

From the above review, it is possible to infer that conflict causes transformations in political structures, social relations and economic networks. Institutional change impacts the security and survival of the population (Justino 2013, p.9). However, the range and volume of literature reviewed in this section is not matched by a similar body of literature on the position of the citizen in adverse settings: how citizens engage with the new powerful actors, how they can find space to negotiate better outcomes for themselves, and how they can act collectively and hold actors accountable.

I use this literature to formulate propositions about how citizenship unfolds during conflict. In this thesis I argue that changes in local institutions have implications for citizenship. Central to an understanding of citizen engagement is the notion that conflict transforms power dynamics. If new forms of authority emerge that contest the state, this will affect how citizens engage with the state. The conflict may change those social norms and social practices that guide how

people engage with state and customary authority. If local institutions are important for learning practices of collective action, decision-making and leadership, then changes in these institutions will affect the exposure of citizens to learning such practices. If conflict alters the formal and informal mechanisms and institutions through which citizens exercise their individual and collective voice this will affect how they exercise citizen agency, as I discuss below.

#### **2.4.2 Forms of agency and navigation in a warscape**

In this section I elaborate how agency in relation to conflict is discussed, mainly in anthropology and conflict studies. This will show that academic work has focused on forms of ‘coping agency’ – the agency to survive in terms of staying safe and maintaining livelihoods - while less is known about citizen agency – the agency to take issues into the public sphere, engage in decision-making and with public authority.

Anthropological studies describe in detail how people live through war, how they give meaning to events in their lives, and how social relations are transformed (Lubkemann, 2008; Nordstrom, 1997; Vigh, 2006; E. Wood, 2008). Several anthropologists have argued that war and conflict should not be seen as ‘discontinuities’ or as deviating from normal life and peace (Lubkemann, 2008; Scheper Hughes & Bourgois, 2004). Rather, conflict and violence are part of life like other social phenomena. Of course conflict situations limit, accelerate or generate other social processes, but the boundaries between conflict and stability are not clear-cut. In Acholi the intensity of the war fluctuated and in relatively stable periods people tried to resume life as usual, but in a constant state of alertness. Scholars have introduced terms such as ‘warscape’ (Nordstrom, 1997), ‘war as social condition’ (Lubkemann, 2008), or ‘landscapes of power relations’ (Halstead, 2008) to discuss the particular realities of life in the midst of violent conflict.

What unfolds in these contexts of conflict is a process that Vigh describes as *routinisation* (2006). The conflict becomes the everyday and insecurity becomes anticipated. Routinisation entails the continuous reflection and interpretation of this environment and the subsequent (inter)actions and forms of organisation. The concept helps to understand how people adjust to ever-changing circumstances. War is not seen as a vacuum devoid of social practices and relations, but as a social terrain in which routines and practices are produced and recreated.

The volatility of the situation requires people to reflect continuously on the intensity and movements of the conflict, and therefore they can no longer afford to rely on *habits* (unconsciously repeated actions).

Vigh introduces the term *social navigation* to describe how people try to shape their life trajectories in an environment that is constantly in flux (2006, 2010). He contends that this concept complements an understanding of social action in two ways: it first of all tells us that agents plan and act upon the real and imagined environment. And secondly, it describes a praxis in which social change is an integral part:

...agents act not only in relation to each other, or in relation to larger social forces, but in relation to the complex interaction between agents, terrain and events, thereby making it possible to encompass social flux and instability, and the way they influence and become ingrained in action, in our understanding of a specific praxis (Vigh, 2006, p. 14).

Aware that their context is changing, people adjust themselves and their actions in response. The concept thus conveys that people are inventive, and relations and power continue to be configured in these settings. Hence, agency exists in dialectical relationship to this very complex and dynamic structure that a warscape is. Innovation, flexibility and improvisation are important skills for social navigation (Hoffman & Lubkemann, 2005). The process of reflection is helped by what Vigh terms *social reflexivity*; the continuous interpretation of the context (Vigh, 2006) but through a higher sense of awareness (Vigh, 2008).

Ethnographic work shows how creative coping strategies help people to make sense of their life worlds in the midst of chaos at the same time as it helps their survival. Finnström describes how Acholi interpreted and gave meaning to the violence they experienced, as a way of coping (2003). Others have emphasised how social relations and institutions form the foundations for coping mechanisms (Colletta & Cullen, 2000). Nordstrom describes how the population of Mozambique (re)created worlds that were demolished by war violence (1995, pp. 142-148). Not only did they find ways to maintain a level of subsistence, they also 'created culture'. Certain artefacts represented their suffering and resistance. Healers were routinely involved in 'taking the war out of people' well after a peace agreement was reached.

Nordstrom (1997) gives numerous examples of people who had the courage to stay in the Mozambican war zone and help others, creating new institutions of care and compassion, as



forms of creative resistance against war (Nordstrom, 1997). This helped them to have a sense of identity and agency. It produced culture, as people created a political culture that denounced the use of violence. Although Nordstrom underlines people's creativity for survival, she argues against an association between violence and creativity, often found in social theory, as if '*the phoenix is rising from the ashes*' (p. 15). She shows that people are forced to be creative to survive, but it is creativity under adverse conditions. Nordstrom argues that many of the survival tactics constitute acts of *resistance* and forms of political agency, because people denounce and delegitimise acts of violence and they resist being killed. However, although people resist the negative effects conflict may have on their lives, not all these instances address the causes of conflict or the perpetrators of violence.

Recent scholarly work has started to distinguish different forms of agency in violent settings. Moser and Horn (2011) distinguish 'coping' from 'resolving' agency to highlight the difference between short-term acts for survival and agency aimed at addressing the causes of violence. Based on Hirschman's typology of exit, voice and loyalty, Barter describes three strategies that civilians use, sometimes in combination, to deal with violence: flight, voice and support (Barter, 2012). These strategies represent levels of agency, some of which can be considered more political.

Barter's typology is useful for distinguishing 'survival agency' from agency that is more political in nature; engaging with powerful actors in the conflict. Flight refers to migration away from the (threat of) violence. Voice has three sub-categories: defiance, everyday resistance, and engagement. Defiance is the most visible and confrontational form and is expressed through protests, reporting violations, liaising with international actors, but also in declaring peace zones that challenge the authority of armed actors. Informed by Scott's (1985) work, Barter holds that forms of everyday resistance are often symbolic, require less coordination than mobilised guerrilla activity, are less risky and may have potential for social change. These acts undermine the legitimacy of armed groups. Engagement is about negotiation between civilians and armed actors, with the aim of enhancing security. Support blurs the line between civilian and combatant. It entails a form of collaboration with violent actors, often for one's own protection. Barter's third category of support has been explored by others, who have analysed the circumstances under which people opt to support violent actors, the factors that influence ordinary people to decide whether to support armed violence or not, and in what form (Kalyvas, 2006). There is an increasing understanding of the different forms of support that populations give to armed actors, like food, information and services (Barter, 2012; Justino,

2009) in exchange for minimum levels of security, protection (of homes, economic activities and trade networks) and even ‘order’.

Thus, scholarly work has shown the multiple strategies people develop in the midst of violent conflict. Much of this work, however, shows how people exercise agency to ensure safety and maintain livelihoods. There is still limited knowledge about how citizen agency evolves. Yet for a better understanding of what people do in the midst of conflict it is helpful to distinguish forms of ‘coping’ or ‘survival agency’ from types of agency that are more political. I return to this in Chapter 3.

## **2.5 Citizen engagement in conflict settings**

A small number of studies taking a citizenship approach have been carried out in conflict-affected and authoritarian states. These studies have highlighted a number of factors that obstruct citizen engagement, which I discuss here using the concepts associated with active citizenship described in previous sections: agency, space, and voice. I pay specific attention to Rwanda, Angola and Sierra Leone to compare how citizenship has evolved in countries with various conflict dynamics and violence. I also discuss the findings of a number of studies that suggest that conflict can have positive impacts on citizen participation.

### **2.5.1 Narrowing space for citizen agency and voice**

The available literature on citizenship and violent conflict suggests that changes in the public sphere are equally important for citizen engagement as changes in social and political institutions. The central point is that citizens act partly based on the *perceived* safety of the public sphere, and the perceived threat from armed actors. This relates neatly to Vigh’s concept of social navigation: people analyse their environment and the fluctuations in the warscape and act upon what they interpret as risks and opportunities.

The literature on citizenship and conflict refers to ‘spaces’ for engagement (Gaventa, 2006a). The nature of spaces for citizen engagement in (post)conflict settings is likely to be less conducive to citizen engagement than the more stable environments. Both state and non-state actors can be sufficiently powerful to determine the boundaries for citizen engagement.

Especially when violence is exercised and a threat of violence persists, this rapidly erodes spaces for engagement (Pearce, 2007; Pearce et al., 2011). Citizens feel there is hardly a 'safe space' left, sometimes not even in the private space of their homes. This *perception* of the available space for participation affects people's willingness to actually engage, balancing the risks and opportunities of engagement.

In this thesis, I find it important to distinguish between space and sphere, because 'space' has often been used in relation to actions like influencing and claim-making. The public sphere refers to how people speak and discuss, without necessarily taking further action (Fraser, 1990). Several authors have demonstrated that citizen perceptions of the public sphere also shape engagement. The perceived safety of the public sphere thus depends largely on the configuration of actors and their (previous) use of threat and violence. Of Israel, Ben-Porath (2006) has written that the perceptions and expectations people have of the state have altered due to the war experience. The relationship between citizens and the state has narrowed because security issues dominate the agenda and public debates. As a consequence, insecurity alters the priorities citizens expect the state to fulfil (Ben-Porath, 2006). Living in repressive, violent environments substantially alters citizen perceptions of their environment, even if violence is no longer manifested (Pearce et al., 2011). This has for instance been demonstrated in Guatemala (Pearce, 2007; Green, 1999). Several authors argue that this perception can be passed on to subsequent generations and hence inform their readiness to engage (Beswick, 2010; Kisielewski & LeDoux, 2009).

Given that the concept 'voice' is so important for citizen engagement in the public sphere, it is interesting to note that the concept 'silence' figures strongly in conflict settings. Silence is a concept associated with disempowerment of the marginalised. The 'culture of silence' is a key concept in the work of Freire (1986). It refers to oppression in various forms (i.e. overt, through institutions) by the powerful to silence the powerless, which produces the internalised image on the side of the powerless that the unequal power relations are not to be challenged. Negative self-images, often first created by the powerful, lead people to think they are incapable and unworthy to take control of their own lives and how they are governed. Gaventa builds on the notion of 'culture of silence' and analyses dimensions of power: how they operate directly and indirectly to produce quiescence among marginalised people. The powerful may directly and openly control information and processes of socialisation that make the marginalised think and act in the interest of the powerful. But indirectly they may create a situation in which the powerless cannot develop a critical political *consciousness* about their

own situation (Gaventa, 1982). Silence, then, reflects a psychological adaption to living without power.

In contexts of violence, silence is often a tactic for survival and becomes part of a 'survival' mindset (Green, 1999; Scheper Hughes, 2004; Wood, 2003). It helps social navigation during insecurity. Also *after* conflict it can remain an important protective strategy (Uvin, 2009; Wood, 2003). Wood writes about how silence operates in interviews and how it signalled protective behaviour in the post-conflict situation (2003, p. 39). In people's narrations about the past they leave 'strategic ambiguities' (Warren, 1998 in Wood, 2003, p.39). Green discusses the 'legacy of silence' and how the effects of terror are experienced not only individually, but also socially and collectively. In her research communities in Guatemala silence has become 'the idiom of social consensus' (1999). Various authors have demonstrated that silences are strongly gendered (Das, 1997; Hume, 2010), and in the aftermath of conflict the silences contribute to the process of the social construction of memories, and reflect gender dynamics. Hume argues that the silences need to be interpreted in their own right: one needs to understand the reasons why people choose to omit facts. But silence does not have to last, as Wood demonstrated. In El Salvador the memories of fear and violence remain vivid for a long time after they were experienced and produced a 'culture of fear'. This can have a paralysing effect as much as repression can demobilise agents. But in the case of El Salvador, the moral outrage over violence fed the emotions that, in combination with other factors, encouraged people to support the insurgency and break through the fear (Wood, 2003: 207).

Studies on citizen participation have identified a number of strategies developed by citizens in response to ongoing violence, which have implications for the practice of citizenship. One strategy is *withdrawal* from the public sphere and social networks (Ben-Porath, 2006; Citizenship-DRC, 2010; Green, 1995; Hume, 2010; Wood, 2003). A second strategy is to co-exist with violent actors and/or collaborate to some extent to guarantee one's safety. A third strategy is to establish parallel governance and security structures, such as vigilante groups (Steenkamp, 2011).

The case of Rwanda illustrates how citizens withdraw from the public sphere on sensitive issues, and where social cleavages hamper collective action. In Rwanda, the genocide created deep social divisions between the Hutu and Tutsi populations. The Rwandan state, although applauded by international donors for its progressive strategies for poverty alleviation (Uvin, 2001), has become increasingly authoritarian according to its critics (Reyntjes, 2004). The

public sphere has been restricted by formal legislation and informal strategies of intimidation and harassment to suppress dissenting voices (Reyntjes, 2011). One particularly contested issue is reconciliation between the two ethnic groups. A formal process was imposed by the state in the form of *gacaca* courts, a reconciliation mechanism at local level, modelled after a customary institution, in which participation is required by law. The state perpetuates a formal discourse of national unity. Critics say that citizenship is thus 'fabricated' without reconciliation (Buckley-Zistel, 2006). Also the promotion of unity is used to silence opposition, since criticism of the official discourse may lead to charges of 'divisionism'

In this context, one form of agency observed among citizens in response to state repression is self-censorship and compliance with the regime (Beswick, 2010). Beswick (2010) even argues that the authoritarian regime now no longer needs to use overt violence, because its disciplining structures remain effective. But acts of resistance do occur. Thomson distinguished three categories of everyday forms of resistance used on individual basis (Thomson, 2011). The most important is 'staying on the side-line', which includes an array of avoidance tactics. For instance, because many citizens disagree with the reconciliation intervention, many use avoidance techniques that help them elude participation (Thomson, 2011). A second is 'irreverent compliance': people attend all sorts of mandatory meetings and rituals, but send out subtle signals that reject the authorities or show they do not believe in the ideology of the regime. The third form is 'withdrawn muteness': a silence often accompanied by particular poses of the body when interacting with state officials, sometimes pretending to be 'foolish'. These three categories help individuals cope with the situation and channel their personal grievances. There is little evidence of instances of direct confrontation by ordinary citizens. High levels of collective trauma and persisting distrust between Tutsi and Hutu citizens at local level and in the state place enormous constraints on *collective* action and voice (Unsworth & Uvin, 2002).

In Sierra Leone, the way political institutions developed during the war affected the public sphere and forms of agency in the post-conflict situation. During the war, forms of agency were 'tactical' and focused on self-protection (Utas, 2005; Vincent, 2013). Utas (2005) showed how women in particular tactically navigated social opportunities inside and outside the rebel groups for survival. Vincent describes the emergence of counter-insurgent groups, often mobilised by chiefs. In the post-conflict situation, the persistence of certain command structures links into the way political parties operate. Christensen and Utas (2008) show that social navigation among ex-combatants continued. When competing political parties started to

recruit 'protection task forces' among ex-combatants and youth gangs, many ex-combatants joined. Former commanders mobilised their rank and file through the command structures that had emerged during the war. Ex-combatants compared the 2006-2007 election period to the time of the war, pointing out that their security was just as much at risk due to targeted actions by government and the police against them. As party-affiliated youth militias they used a citizenship discourse to legitimise violence in the campaign process. While ex-combatants initially avoided the political scene for safety reasons, they now linked up with 'big men' out of self-protection. This is an example of how war experiences continue to shape agency, including in the domain of politics and discourses in the public sphere, albeit for the specific group of ex-combatants.

The chiefdoms in Sierra Leone are another institution that was shaped by the war. Certain chiefs played a major role in resisting the insurgency, while other chiefdoms nearly collapsed during the war (Vincent, 2013). Chiefdoms revived in the post-war situation, partly due to state interventions that formalised the authority of the chiefs (Fanthorpe, 2005). One of the post-war reconstruction efforts to rebuild democratic governance was a decentralisation process. The 'traditional' chiefs were formally incorporated in the system of district governance and given the authority to collect taxes (Jackson, 2005). Also their customary powers regarding land and marriage remained strong (Fanthorpe, 2005). They had considerable influence over funds channelled from the diamond industry to the Chiefdom Development Committees, which became a classic failure due to elite capture (Maconachie, 2010). It is widely believed that it was the arbitrary use of power by the chiefs that led to grievances among the youth and a motivation to join the rebellion (Fanthorpe, 2001, 2005; Jackson, 2005). These initiatives thus failed to transform underlying hierarchies of society. Hanlon (2005) argues that the international community was in fact *recreating* the conditions that led to the war by reinstating the power of chiefs. The literature on Sierra Leone is not clear about how citizens, especially youth, saw and engaged with this powerful institution, though from Vincent's work one can derive that there will be variation across the chiefdoms. Fanthorpe (2005) cites the example of youth who migrated away from their district to escape the control of their chief: the exit option. He also shows that many people continued to acknowledge that the chiefs were needed and preferred over corrupt politicians: a form of loyalty (Hirschman, 1970) in absence of a better alternative. In other areas people's perceptions of the chiefdoms were not all negative (Vincent, 2013).

This section showed that certain ideas, perceptions and behaviours which develop during a conflict situation persist, for certain groups, in the post-conflict situation. To whom this applies, and how, depends to a certain extent on the positionality of the individuals involved and their relationships to others. If positionalities and relationships change during the conflict this shapes engagement in the post-conflict situation. I use these insights to formulate my proposition for the post-conflict situation in Chapter 3.

### 2.5.2 Opportunities for voice

Several authors show that forms of citizen agency are possible even within a repressive context. These are often small instances, tacit forms of agency, but can even be vibrant forms of community life. Meta-level analyses of a number of case studies on citizen participation conclude that in adverse contexts like these, local associations can offer the possibility of ‘citizenship building’ and providing an environment in which citizens can learn the skills they need to engage in governance. It is, however, unlikely that they would spur radical transformations of the political system, change policies and governance agenda, or shift the balance of power in favour of the citizens (Gaventa & Barrett, 2010; Schattan Coelho & Von Lieres, 2010).

Shah (2011) shows that while the wider political context in Rwanda has become increasingly authoritarian, practices of democracy do exist at local level in the system of *Ubudehe*, Rwanda’s formalised participatory local development process at village level. Experiences vary and in many cases are marked by the classic participation challenges: elite capture, women and the extremely poor households finding it harder to participate, reluctance to challenge the more powerful members in the community. Nonetheless, *Ubudehe* seems to be a useful mechanism for learning about deliberation and decision-making and has led to tangible development outcomes in many locations. Some questions remain. Citizens develop these practices in one particular domain, but will they use this experience of voice in more politically sensitive domains, such as that of reconciliation? And to what extent would these local practices, in the end, be conducive to transformations in the wider political context?

In Angola, like Rwanda an authoritarian regime context, local democratic spaces emerged too, despite a top-down bureaucracy and centralised political culture, and partly aided by the process of decentralisation (Ferreira & Roque, 2010; Roque & Shankland, 2007). In the suburbs

of Luanda, NGOs supported the creation of citizen-led local water committees, associations of water committees, and local development forums in which also local officials took part. While the entry point was service delivery, these initiatives had implications for governance and local democracy by offering a space for deliberation that had never existed before. It helped to build citizenship skills and leadership skills (Roque & Shankland, 2007). Even in a repressive environment like Angola, local democratic practices can emerge and thrive. However, decision-making is still centralised and participation had little effect on the *broader* context due to persistent central control. Thus, even in adverse settings citizenship practices may exist. It is important to understand under which conditions this may be, and which issues and spaces are considered to be 'safe'.

### **2.5.3 Can violent conflict positively affect citizen engagement?**

There is evidence that goes against the prevalent idea that the effects of war are solely destructive. In this section I discuss three studies that claim that the exposure to war violence may lead to an increase in social and political participation, thus leading to positive political outcomes.

In the case of Sierra Leone, Bellows and Miguel (2009) show that those individuals whose households have experienced violence are more active in political and social institutions. Bellows and Miguel refer to post-traumatic growth theory, a theory developed in psychology that shows that people can respond positively to trauma by changing attitudes, values and preferences. For political participation they show that victims of the war are more likely to register to vote and attend community meetings. For civic engagement they show that they are more likely to be members of political groups, social groups and communal road cleaning activities, and participate on School Management Committees. An alternative hypothesis, that those who were already politically and socially active were perhaps targeted by the rebels, does not hold. Nor was more participation explained by socio-economic differences. Based on their analysis they argue that a short-term legacy of war is '*increasing political mobilisation, community activism and public good provision*' (Bellows & Miguel, 2009: 1145). They anticipate that more political mobilisation for the use of public good delivery will benefit Sierra Leone's economic development, thus pointing out a positive effect of the war.



DeLuca and Verpoorte (2011) measure the impact of war violence on social capital (measured as social trust and participation in community associations) for two violent conflicts in Uganda, one being the LRA conflict in Acholi. Using datasets from the Afrobarometer of 2000 and 2005, they measure social capital indicators before and after a peak in the conflict in 2003. They find that self-reported trust and associational membership decrease substantially during the conflict in LRA affected districts. However, their findings suggest a strong recovery of social capital indicators once the violence has ended (De Luca & Verpoorten, 2011). Like Bellows and Miguel (2010), DeLuca and Verpoorten use post-traumatic growth theory to explain increases in social capital indicators.

Blattman (2009) shows that combat experiences and exposure to war violence in Northern Uganda lead to *greater* political participation and engagement among young men who were in the LRA. In particular violent acts undergone, as opposed to committed, led to an increase in the likelihood of voting, being a community leader or holding a political job, and being a member of a peace-promoting organisation. Blattman refers to 'expressive theories of participation', which hold that people place an inherent value on forms of political expression, which motivates engagement. Moreover, the experience of war violence does not systematically affect non-political forms of social participation (community group membership or public goods management) and Blattman therefore argues that the impact of conscription is 'uniquely political'.

The findings of these studies are interesting and suggest there may be opportunities for developing citizenship practices during conflict. As I explain in chapter 3, my study differs from these in that I have adopted a broader definition of participation. The studies reviewed here looked at engagement in terms of group membership and holding social leadership positions (DeLuca & Verpoorten, 2011; Bellows & Miguel, 2010; Blattman, 2009), and at political participation in terms of voting (Blattman, 2009). I will look at various forms of engagement with political and social actors. Paying attention to micropolitics, I emphasise the depth of the engagement. It is also different in that I have adopted a broader definition of violent conflict, seeing it as a particular social environment rather than narrowing it down to violent acts committed or witnessed.

## **2.6 Citizenship and displacement**

The literature on forced migration has contributed to the debate on citizenship by demonstrating the differentiated experience of citizenship by displaced populations. This section outlines how this literature critiques the notion of citizenship as a status, and how it extensively expounded on agency and forms of engagement undertaken by displaced people. As I argue, this debate can be advanced by relating it to a sense of citizenship in a wider respect, beyond citizenship as status, and by discussing the relationship between sense and practice.

### **2.6.1 Displacement and layers in formal citizenship**

Migration constitutes a major challenge to a state-focused conceptualisation of citizenship, and the social and legal relationship between citizenship and the nation-state (R. Lister, 2003, p. 52; Mehta & Napier-Moore, 2010b; Nyers, 2006; Tastsoglou & Dobrowolsky, 2006). In legal terms, the state has full authority to decide who is included and excluded from citizenship rights within its borders, and on what terms. Migrants and refugees, who are not granted full citizenship but do live within the borders of the host state, break the traditional link between legal rights and the state. The nation-state is often not the first reference point for citizenship, and new forms of belonging and citizenship emerge (Mehta & Napier-Moore, 2010b, p. 20).

The large majority of the Acholi population did not leave Uganda, but were internally displaced within the Acholi region. A substantial difference exists between Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) and refugees in terms of the rights and forms of protection that are accorded to them, and who is responsible for their protection (Mehta & Napier-Moore, 2010b). Refugees leave the territory of their home state to settle in host states, and their protection is laid down in international human rights law. As IDPs remain within the territory of their original home state they therefore fall under the sovereignty, protection and responsibility of their home state. The United Nations Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement give recommendations to states, but these are not legally binding. Rights of IDPs are therefore much less well-defined (Assal, 2008) and the rights and entitlements they can access are very different from those having refugee status. On the other hand, states that host refugees do not always meet the protection standards stipulated by international law.

Thus, IDPs pose a challenge to the conceptualisation of citizenship as status, because they are often *de facto* denied access to their rights, and often more so than their fellow nationals. On top of that, displacement will have resulted in the loss of livelihoods and assets at individual as well as the collective level, which will have created higher risks of poverty and vulnerability (Morvaridi, 2008). Their situation therefore demands additional measures, which may not be recognised. To relate this back to what has been said about citizenship as status in section 2.1, it can be argued that there are layers in relation to formal citizenship and people can enjoy diverse levels of rights according to their status (Mehta & Napier-Moore, 2010b).

### **2.6.2 The camp as permanent exception and real-life setting**

Displacement can take various forms: in (designated) host communities, self-settlement in areas chosen by the displaced themselves, and in camps. As the Acholi displacement camps were a key feature of this conflict, this section describes the camp as it is discussed in the literature. For this section I use much literature that has addressed the situation of refugees, because this literature is more abundant than the literature on internal displacement. Although the literature on refugee camps is particularly relevant for this study it must be noted that comparisons with internal displacement camps must be made with care. The relationship to the home state and the actors from which rights can be claimed, for instance, are likely to be very different.

Metaphorically speaking the camp is described as ‘state of exception’ based on Giorgio Agamben’s work:

*The camp is the space that opens up when the state of exception starts to become the rule. In it, the state of exception, which was essentially a temporal suspension of the state of law, acquires a permanent spatial arrangement that, as such, remains constantly outside the normal state of law. (Agamben, 1998, original italics)*

For those who are displaced into camps the ‘ordinary’ citizenship situation, whereby rights are supposed to be guaranteed by the state, is suspended. As I explain below, ‘the camp’ with its spatial, legal and social dimensions changes conventional understandings about who is responsible for the protection of rights, and about how duties are defined.

The camp is also the real-life setting of many displaced people, described in numerous empirical studies (Agier, 2011; Hyndman, 2000; Malkki, 1996; Olaa, 2001). With its

agglomeration of actors, both residents and external actors, the camp is a socio-political setting with social stratification, power dynamics and politics (Turner, 2006). Three aspects of camp life stand out in the literature; social relations and politics, the gendered experience of the camp, and camp governance.

In international refugee camps the camp population is often highly diverse. In Angolan camps in Zambia social strata existed among the refugees defined by which group had arrived and settled first, and by ethnic identity. These factors influenced who had power over other refugees; 'new arrivals' had to negotiate access to humanitarian relief with the group that had settled first (Agier, 2011). Turner describes the rivalry of political authority in Burundian camps in Tanzania, arguing that public authority emerged in the lacunae produced by UNHRC and the Tanzanian government and by the instability of social relations in camp life in general (2006). Young men became more authoritative than older customary leaders. Camp politics and the 'stronger identities' that emerge may affect opportunities for the political voice of the displaced.

Problems in displacement camps are strongly gendered (Callamard, 1999; Grabska, 2011; Hyndman, 2000). Poverty and socio-political dynamics tend to impact particularly negatively on women. Tasks that seem relatively simple may become very demanding in the camp setting and often involve serious threats to women's security in terms of their health and bodies, and care responsibilities. Displacement camps are settings where women face higher risks of being victim to sexual violence by male camp residents and soldiers (Abdi, 2006). This problem is widely reported and recognised by all humanitarian actors, but remains a huge challenge (Branch, 2009).

The administration and governance of displacement camps is a complicated matter. A myriad of actors is involved in taking care of displaced populations, sometimes to the extent that it becomes very confusing to the camp residents (Morvaridi, 2008, p. 58). It becomes a mixture of government actors, the military, humanitarian actors and UN agencies that together should coordinate relief. Humanitarian agencies together set the parameters within which the camp is operated and within which residents live, captured by the term 'humanitarian space' (Nyers, 2006, p. 114). In the camp itself, different levels and structures of (self)governance are put in place that follow a logic of sovereignty (Nyers, 2006, p. 113). Camp leadership structures are often hierarchical, with a central leader at the top who heads different levels of leadership, depending on the size of the camp.

The governance structure of the camp, but even the camp as a settlement option in itself, has been challenged for serving first and foremost the priority of aid agencies to deliver relief and services efficiently. The power constellations created by humanitarian and government actors combined mean that power is often exercised through coercion and discipline. Malkki therefore says that camps are places of '*care and control*' (Malkki, 2002), others even refer to them as authoritarian (Black, 1998; Branch, 2009; Harrell-Bond, 2002a). More recently progress has been made in improving levels of self-governance in camp settings. The Camp Coordination and Management Toolkit, widely used by humanitarian actors, dedicated a chapter to participation and related it not only to effective camp management, but also to enhanced well-being of the residents by giving them back a sense of control (NRC, 2006). The reality is still far from satisfactory. In the implementation of humanitarian programmes often lip-service is paid to the underlying philosophies of empowerment, and participatory approaches risk becoming a 'tick-box' exercise. Camp committees formed of residents, for example, often offer no more than a system for consultation (Kaiser, 2004, 2005). Although partly caused by a lack of time and funds, this problem is symptomatic of an underlying problem of seeing the displaced as objects of aid rather than as subjects with agency.

### **2.6.3 Agency of the displaced**

Representing refugees as helpless victims and passive recipients is heavily criticised by many authors (Branch, 2009; Harrell-Bond, 1999, 2002a; Hyndman, 2000; Malkki, 1996; Pouligny, 2005). They are seen as needy, in particular of care and management, as 'speechless emissaries' to quote Malkki's (1996) famous phrase. This notion comes with expectations of refugees' behaviour. Images of the 'good refugee' depict a person as docile, submissive and thankful, while those that contest the power of relief agencies by 'talking back' or disagreeing with certain interventions are seen as the 'bad refugee' and their behaviour as deviance (Branch, 2009). This, and experiences with politicisation of camp committees, limits explorations of more empowering mechanisms for engagement in camps (Harrell-Bond, 2002a).

There are deep concerns about how displaced people are denied opportunities for engagement and agency. Nyers writes:

The central difficulty with portraying refugees as ‘merely human beings’ is that all notions of political agency are, in a word, emptied from refugee subjectivity. What is most at stake politically with the refugee phenomenon is that refugees are silent – or rather, silenced- because they do not possess the ‘proper’ political subjectivity (i.e. state citizenship) through which they can be heard. (Nyers, 2006, p. 16)

Although Nyers speaks about refugees and not IDPs, his statement applies to the Acholi IDPs to a certain extent. Because of the particular camp governance regime, a particular citizenship developed in the Acholi camps which lacked the substance of state citizenship. Nyers refers to Hannah Arendt’s argument that refugees represent a problem ‘*not of geographical space but of political space*’ (2006, p. 17): they are denied the mechanisms to voice their concerns and interests or to be represented in the political space. Harrell-Bond demonstrated that the asymmetric relation between refugees and the humanitarian agencies plays into this. Humanitarian agencies have ‘*the power to decide who deserves to receive*’ (Harrell-Bond, 1999, 2002a). The often very technical language that is used to describe the ‘refugee problem’, including all the maps and statistics, may be well-intentioned and produced with the welfare of refugees in mind, but exacerbate the process of depoliticisation (Hyndman, 2000, p. 121).

Empirical studies have demonstrated how agency *is* exercised by displaced people: by the various coping strategies they develop for survival in the areas where they settle. Camp residents negotiate forms of authority, including the aid agencies, and engage in rights-claiming actions (Harrell-Bond, 1999, 2008; Mehta & Napier-Moore, 2010a; Turner, 2006). They often lack access to formal channels to exercise voice, but employ various *informal* strategies to claim rights. Refugees employed by humanitarian agencies have gone on strike to demand better wages. There have been protests by women in camps who actively used their ‘vulnerability status’ to claim certain goods from humanitarian agencies: the actors who allocated them that status (Agier, 2011). Walters (2008, p. 191) poses the question whether small, subtle and informal forms of agency actually challenge the nature and logic of the camp.

A final note on non-participation. ‘Passivity’ is a characteristic frequently attributed to a camp population. However, beneath the surface of what is interpreted as ‘passive recipient’ can be carefully constructed ‘good refugee’ identities. This resonates with Scott’s work on public and hidden transcripts. The hidden transcript has the function not only of dealing with the humanitarian actors, but also of gaining as much from them as possible. Research demonstrates that refugees know very well how they should behave as ‘good refugees’ to ensure they will be given hand-outs, and frame their needs in accordance to what they know an aid agency has to offer (Kaiser, 2004; Malkki, 1996).

Powerless in comparison with the institutional actors, they could have little influence on the nature and structure of the assistance regime. As such, their most effective strategy was to learn the rules of the game and become adept in playing it. (2004, p. 194)

However, earlier research has suggested that way power is exercised in camps may have negative implications for human agency. Mental health research suggests that stress-related disorders among refugees were caused by living under hierarchic camp structures in which they are rendered voiceless (Harrell-Bond, 1999). The more authoritarian the camp administration, the less control people have over their lives and the more likely they are to manifest symptoms of mental health problems, including apathy. Though many would attribute the problems to the violence experienced during the conflict, Harrell-Bond asks whether one of the causes of the stress lies in the nature of the humanitarian regime itself. Psycho-social literature on trauma indeed highlights that a felt lack of control is one of the important factors that produce the trauma (Frie, 2008). It would be beyond the scope of this study to discuss this large body of literature, but it brings up the question of how people experience camp governance and their sense of agency in relation to these structures.

To conclude, the literature on forced migration has shown the implications of displacement for their experience of citizenship. The camp, with its physical space and a particular governance regime, is considered a place where citizen engagement is controlled. In terms of their agency, the displaced engage with the actors and institutions that govern the camp, state or non-state, to negotiate their entitlements. From this section it is clear that they deploy a wide range of tactics that represent a substantial part of the spectrum (section 2.2).

This literature has not explicitly addressed the relationship between the status and the practice of citizenship. This applies in particular to the camp setting: little is known about how displacement into camps affects the perception of the self as citizen and how this subsequently affects engagement. The literature does say this situation leads to feelings of marginalisation, but does it affect a sense of citizenship, and in turn, how does this affect forms of engagement? Furthermore, the studies discussed in this section miss a historical approach that includes people's histories from before they were displaced. In this study I take the period of displacement as a specific episode in people's lives and include in my analysis their citizenship prior to the start of the camps. In this way, a more complete understanding of how citizenship evolves can be built.

## **2.7 'Participation' in recovery interventions**

If the experience of violent conflict and displacement limits the opportunities for learning about active citizenship, what does this mean for recovery approaches that have incorporated mechanisms for institutionalised participation? Community-driven Development (CDD) programmes are widely implemented in developing countries by governments and aid agencies. The World Bank has steadily increased its lending to CDD and supports CDD programmes in ninety four countries with an approximate value of thirty billion US dollars (Wong, 2012). In this final section of my literature review I discuss the principles of CDD, evidence of its social and political impact, and key challenges for implementing CDD programmes in (post)conflict settings.

### **2.7.1 Community Driven Recovery**

Community-Driven Development (CDD) is an approach that supports local communities in charge of planning, implementing and monitoring development projects. It is based on principles of participation and empowerment, and on the notion that local communities have the right to shape their own development and the right knowledge about local needs. CDD approaches make various claims: to alleviate poverty, enhance capacities for collective action, enhance social trust and cooperation across social divides, and create responsive and accountable institutions.

Typical design elements of CDD programmes are the introduction of democratic mechanisms for decision-making at local level and the transfer of block grants directly to communities. Communities need to elect Community Development Committees (CDCs) to take charge of the projects and funds and the projects are likely to be selected by community vote. In most CDD interventions a specific objective is to empower women and youth through e.g. installing gender parity requirements for the development committees and assigning leadership responsibilities. The implementation process involves interaction with state institutions. Through exposure to these mechanisms citizens practice new skills, and gain trust in state institutions. The approach gives incentives to state institutions to be responsive. The expected outcome is that citizens sustain their engagement and states continue their responsiveness after the intervention.



For various reasons CDD is considered appropriate for conflict-affected settings, in such contexts referred to as Community-Driven Reconstruction (CDR) (Barron, 2010). CDR addresses specific challenges associated with (post)conflict recovery: weak social relations and lack of trust in state institutions. Through the promotion of collective action around projects inter-group, social relations may improve. CDR creates new avenues through which citizens can voice their needs and exercise claims for accountability, thus supporting demand from the bottom up. It is assumed that more frequent interactions between communities and local state institutions can breed trust and the responsiveness of the institutions. It is anticipated that the institutions and democratic mechanisms introduced under CDR will be sustained after the project. Also, a completed project may encourage a community to increase their demand for responsive institutions. In this way, CDR seeks to transform unequal and exclusionary relations between state and society and bridge social divides that lead to violent conflict (WB, 2006).

Cliffe, Guggenheim and Kostner (2003) argue that CDR can build the legitimacy of national governments when they are engaged in the CDR process and use it to show their political will to support the recovery. For the local level state apparatus, the importance of 'the partnership' between communities and local governments is emphasised as '*a critical factor for success*' of CDR (2003, p. 11). Where local governments are not supportive of a CDR process, the implementing structure can easily be isolated from government structures. At the same time, a partnership is considered a governance outcome of CDR, breeding trust in local state institutions that have become more responsive. It is recognised that forming a partnership can be a huge challenge, and supervision of the implementation process from the outside remains necessary, though in order to gain trust central government should not interfere in the community decision making process over projects.

It is recognised that post-conflict settings are challenging contexts in which to implement CDR programmes (Cliffe et al., 2003; WB, 2006). To what extent have CDR interventions been successful in boosting collective action and creating responsive institutions?

### 2.7.2 The social and political impact of CDR

The evidence on the outcomes of CDR is growing and shows mixed results. Generally, any positive effects associated with CDR programmes are mostly related to the welfare components. Several reviews show that CDR can be relatively successful in delivering infrastructure and improving material welfare. Also, some interventions have successfully targeted the poor, although there is also evidence that shows that CDR fails to reach the poorest households within the more marginalised areas (Mansuri & Rao, 2004). There is hardly any evidence, however, that programmes have improved capacities for collective action, trust, better and more participation, or state responsiveness (Wong, 2012). The social and political outcomes are of interest to this study and this section will proceed with taking a closer look at some of the evidence generated by reviews and evaluations.

Some of the reviews point out that CDR cannot address causes of conflict that are at a higher political level (Barron, 2010; Golooba-Mutebi and Hickey, 2010; Rao and Ibañez, 2003). Barron (2010) reviewed reports of CDR programmes in conflict affected areas in the Philippines, Indonesia, Thailand and Timor-Leste. Only the programme in Indonesia had contributed to better relationships between different ethnic groups. Since there was no evidence that CDR has improved the capacities of communities to resolve internal conflict, Barron argues that the causes of social tensions may be at higher political levels outside the communities. Rao and Ibañez (2003) evaluated the impact of a Social Fund (a CDD-type of initiative) in Jamaica. One of their case studies was a violence-prone urban neighbourhood where rival 'Dons' (non-state leaders) caused deep divisions in the community. Interestingly, it was in this community that it was impossible to carry out a community driven process for identifying a project, and the project was driven by programme staff. The rivalry between the two Dons and politically driven violence threatened the positive effects of the project. For the Northern Uganda Social Action Fund, Golooba-Mutebi and Hickey (2010) argue that CDD cannot resolve the chronic poverty that was caused by factors in the political economy and adverse incorporation of northern Uganda into the state (elaborated in Chapter 4).

Over the last couple of years a number of large-scale Randomised Control Trials (RCTs) have been carried out to evaluate the social and political impacts of CDR programmes; Humphreys, Sanches de la Sierra and Van der Windt in the Democratic Republic of Congo (2012); Casey, Glennerster and Miguel in Sierra Leone (2012); Fearon, Humphreys and Weinstein in Liberia

(2011), and Beath, Fotini, Eniksolopov and Kabuli in Afghanistan (2010). Only Fearon et al find some positive evidence that CDR in Liberia led to an improved capacity to solve collective action problems. Outcomes of the other studies show the opposite: there is no significant impact on social cohesion, collective action and participation. These studies give us a several clues about what goes on at local level.

An evaluation of *Tuungane*, the CDR programme in the Democratic Republic of Congo, shows that the programme had no impact on behavioural change in terms of increased levels of participation or the use of democratic mechanisms (i.e. voting) for selecting projects (Humphreys et al., 2012). It did not increase the sense of the right to be involved in decision-making, nor the sense of an obligation to be involved. The observation of village meetings brought to light that men and elders accounted for respectively 71% and 55% of the interventions in meetings. In *Tuungane* villages elders and chiefs dominated the deliberations even more than in control villages. On social cohesion, the study found as a slightly positive but not significant impact that *Tuungane* produced higher levels of social trust and cooperation, or reduced local conflict. The requirement for including women increased the *number* of women in committees, but this had not led to a change in attitudes towards the roles of women.

Casey et al (2012) find no evidence for lasting impact on social cohesion, decision making, collective action, and participation in governance after the *GoBifo* CDR programme in Sierra Leone. *GoBifo* required that women and young people were elected into leadership positions. However, *GoBifo* had no effect on attitudes towards the leadership capacities of the young and women, nor did it improve their position in local level decision-making. Fearon et al (2011) find evidence for the positive impact of Liberia's CDR programme on the capacity for collective action. The most likely explanation was that leaders in CDR communities made an effort to mobilise the community and share information about the intervention after the intervention was explained to them. Communities were then better able to coordinate their participation in the intervention. CDR would have increased the number of people with organising experience and decision making in respect of collective goods. Also, the study showed some evidence that people learnt from their exposure to democratic mechanisms introduced under CDR, in particular voting for projects and using elections to select representatives on the Community Development Councils.

The mechanisms of the National Solidarity Programme (NSP) in Afghanistan attempt to shift powers from tribal institutions to newly introduced Community Development Councils (CDCs) (Beath et al., 2010). CDC members are elected through secret ballot and the committees need to be gender-balanced. CDCs select, manage, implement and monitor development projects in consultation with the community. NSP explicitly intended to change community-level decision-making; democratising it, and making the process and participation more inclusive and more accountable (Nixon, 2008: 48).

The outcomes of the midterm review of NSP show slightly more positive results than for the other CDD programmes (Beath et al., 2010). On governance outcomes, NSP led to more positive perceptions of government actors and more frequent interactions between them and local communities. However, this did not lead to more acceptance of their authority in terms of taxation and dealing with crime. The level of participation in village meetings increased among both men and women, but there was no evidence that people wanted to make changes in decision-making or encourage others to do so. NSP significantly increased the number of women that participated in local governance. Among men, but not among women, it had a slightly positive effect on attitudes about women councillors, but it had no effect on perceptions of women's participation in elections. The effect on women's participation in community life generally was negligible. On social outcomes, there is no evidence that NSP positively affected levels of trust or reduced village-level conflicts.

Other studies have pointed to the complex power relations that interfere with the democratic mechanisms introduced under NSP (Brick, 2009; McCarthy, 2011). NSP was developed at a time when there were high levels of insecurity across the country. External aid and security actors working in Afghanistan assumed that the rural areas were in 'chaos' and the NSP mechanisms would help to create 'order' (Nixon, 2008). In reality NSP mechanisms were introduced in a setting that was full of non-state governance institutions that had continued to exist throughout the war (Brick, 2009; McCarthy, 2011). NSP attempted to challenge traditional and meaningful power structures at the local level, without understanding how these institutions operated prior to the Taliban and how they were transformed during the conflict (McCarthy, 2011). The study by Beath et al (2010) picked up on the continuation of activities performed by customary leaders. Nixon (2008) described in more detail how dispute resolution occurred in a 'hybrid arrangement' between CDCs, customary leaders and other representatives. Tensions emerged where customary leaders were part of the CDCs and were

able to appropriate resources. The power dynamics influenced who got elected into the CDC, who had actual power once in it, and who were excluded from it (McCarthy, 2011).

Regarding social relations, NSP attempts to create communities and assumes that it can also create unity. This overlooks the inherently political nature of communities and their divisions. McCarthy (2011) argues that NSP failed to address social differentiation in communities. Women that were elected into the CDC faced various challenges in actually playing their roles, to the extent that they could not even attend the CDC meetings, let alone negotiate with the men. McCarthy also shows that the CDCs were unable to challenge the power structures that denied certain categories of people, both men and women, access to CDC resources and structures. For these groups, NSP only deepened their experiences of vulnerability and thus worsened community fragmentation.

Why is it that the mechanisms introduced by CDD interventions, particularly in conflict-affected settings, do not lead to better democratic outcomes and more inclusive, substantive engagement? The findings about various CDR programmes, especially NSP, require a deeper analysis of the power dynamics.

### **2.7.3 Power dynamics in community reconstruction programmes**

Participation literature has highlighted the diversity within communities and power dynamics as important factors that shape citizen engagement in institutionalised mechanisms for participations (Harriss et al., 2004). The RCT studies discussed above did not explicitly address these issues, but their outcomes suggest that this is also the case for mechanisms created by CDR programmes. Missing from the *Tuungane* study is an analysis of power dynamics and inequalities within communities and how these affected the process. Who were the people that were not informed, who did not participate, and was this an effect of exclusion by others? Among those that attended meetings, was there anyone who could not voice his/her priorities, and was it the result of belonging to a particular social category? Who benefited from the public good if marginalised people were excluded from the process and outcomes?

A number of CDD studies do address power relations, mainly to do with power dynamics within communities and the elite capture of CDD projects (Barron, 2010; Mansuri & Rao, 2004). Generally, social and economic heterogeneity, in particular inequality, is negatively

associated with collective action (Mansuri & Rao, 2004). Not in all situations is a negative impact found, however, which indicates that heterogeneity interacts with other factors. Rao and Ibañez (2003) therefore suggest that diversity may be 'managed' or that mechanisms could be introduced that would mitigate negative effects. Cliffe et al (2003) argue that CDR can break existing patronage centres into local patronage networks and mitigate corruption, but Mansuri and Rao (2004) state that CDD is '*no less immune to political manipulation than top-down programmes*'. Abraham and Platteau (2004) show that rural African communities were often manipulated by 'dictatorial leaders', who took advantage of the lack of information among the people. But then, Rao and Ibañez (2003) show that those who were in control of and benefited from the Social Fund projects in Jamaica were the well-educated and networked community members, but in many cases the projects were still deemed relevant by the poor. They therefore speak of 'benign capture'.

There is less information available about the dynamics between citizens and local state institutions in CDR, or 'the partnership' between local state institutions and communities that is deemed critical (Cliffe et al, 2003). In the CDR programmes described above, the 'partnership' is considered to exist once local communities finish their project proposals and local authorities start the implementation. This demonstrates a lack of understanding of the negotiation process and politics that constitute and lead up to a partnership. Common indicators for measuring impact are 'number of meetings', 'level of attendance', 'knowledge about duties of officials'. However, even where studies show increases in these indicators, this does not give any information about the quality of participation. If CDR has '*the explicit objective of reversing power relations in a manner that creates agency and voice for poor people*' (Mansuri & Rao, 2004, p. 3) then more convincing evidence is required.

Thus, missing from the debates about CDR is an in-depth understanding of what happens at the interface between local state institutions and citizens and how these dynamics are affected by conflict. CDR assumes that increased levels of trust and state responsiveness will follow from increased interactions between communities and local state institutions. But the cleavage between state and society is insufficiently addressed. This underlines the need to understand the relationship between citizenship and conflict.

## Conclusion

In this chapter I have introduced the important theoretical approaches to citizenship and I have explained the approach that forms the theoretical foundation of this study. The review focused upon a notion of active citizenship, which emphasises that citizenship as a legal status with a set of rights cannot be separated from its substantive features and the practice of participation. With an emphasis on agency, this approach recognises the interdependency of a sense of citizenship and the practice of citizen engagement: a strong sense of citizenship is conducive to participation, and through participation a sense of citizenship is built. It is also understood that active citizenship is learnt, partly through institutions and local associational activities. An understanding of citizenship as status and as practice requires an understanding of how citizens have agency, how they express voice, and how their identity informs their agency.

This linked then to a discussion of the ethnic identity and ethnic citizenship. In the African contexts people are members of two political communities: the state and the ethnic group. Citizens have different attitudes towards the two communities, and different behaviours. I explained the social-constructivists approach to understanding ethnic identity, which is helpful for an analysis of marginalisation and exclusion based on identity.

The chapter described a spectrum of approaches to state-society relations, from rejection to collaboration, and to strategies of engagement, from violent revolt and tacit resistance to critical and constructive engagement. The peasant revolution literature, whether approached through a focus on class relations or a rational choice framework, overemphasised revolutions as the ultimate form of engagement. Since then, other studies have focused on structural factors, social relationships and networks, and identity. Wood (2003) and Petersen (2001) have advanced the debates significantly by showing that collective action is motivated by norms about justice and dignity, other-regarding principles and emotions. The work on contentious politics is important for understanding forms of protest and resistance, but cannot explain all forms of citizen engagement. From the spectrum of approaches to state-society relations I argue that all forms of engagement – violent contention, passive resistance, or critical engagement – inform us about citizens' normative ideas about their relationship to the state, about the state itself and how they want to be part of it.

When the LRA insurgency started in the late 1980s, outlined in Chapter 4, it reflected a violent rejection of the new regime by the population of northern region of Uganda. As it developed, it narrowed to a conflict between the LRA and the government, and the population no longer participated as supporters of the insurgency. Among the citizens of northern Uganda I expected to find forms of engagement that were predominantly on the critical and constructive end of the spectrum, and largely through informal engagements. Were I to encounter ‘ruptures’ in the pattern of non-violent engagement then I would take these to have meaning and be reflective of citizen perceptions of their relationship to the state.

The second part of the chapter then outlined conflict studies literature that addresses the transformation of social and political institutions during conflict. Examples from a range of countries showed that, in many cases, silence prevailed among citizens and they resorted to hidden transcripts, avoiding public, confrontational strategies to address power. Much of the evidence suggests that in conflict situations, opportunities for citizen action narrow, but there is also evidence that new opportunities might open up. However, much of the conflict studies literature has focused on coping agency – agency that aims to ensure food and safety for survival. Informed by recent work that distinguishes types of agency (Barter, 2012; C. Moser, 2012), I show there is a gap in knowledge about what happens to citizen engagement. Using the literature on the transformation of institutions I suggest that looking at the implications of changes in institutions for *learning* and *practising* citizenship during conflict can help explain how citizenship evolves in the post-conflict situation.

The next chapter brings together the ideas on citizen engagement and conflict. It builds the conceptual framework and presents propositions about how conflict affects citizen engagement. I show how my study addresses the gap in knowledge about how citizen agency evolves during and after conflict. My own approach builds on participation and citizen engagement literature, the work of Scott on everyday forms of resistance, and Corbridge et al (2005) on seeing the state in everyday life. This literature demonstrates that small-scale instances of engagement matter, and that citizens use critical as well as contesting and constructive strategies for engagement. In the next chapter I explain my bottom-up perspective on citizen engagement that starts from the range of perceptions and practices of engagement expressed by citizens. I look at the different ways in which citizens express voice, and power dynamics between various groups of citizens and between citizens and the state. Thus, this approach constitutes an advance with respect to Hirschman’s framework, in looking at social differentiation within the citizenry who exercise ‘voice’.



## **Chapter 3    Conceptual Framework and Research Methodology**

### **Introduction**

In this chapter I set out my conceptual framework. In section 3.1 I present my definition of citizenship and position my approach to citizen engagement, by explaining how my focus on the everyday forms of engagement adds to existing approaches to state-society relations. Here I also explain how the other sets of literature that were part of the review - on citizen engagement, ethnicity, conflict, and forced migration and citizenship participation - have informed my research. I highlight the gaps in what we know about citizenship and violent conflict, and how my thesis contributes to current debates. This leads me to the focus of this study in section 3.1.3, where I formulate propositions about the nature of citizenship in Acholi. Then in section 3.2 I explain how I researched citizenship as a sense and practice and the proxies that I identified to study in the field.

Section 3.3 explains the case study design, followed by an overview of the research methodology. Section 3.4 discusses methodological challenges and data validity of the findings. Section 3.5 outlines the process of data entry. Finally, section 3.6 gives details of the analysis process.

### **3.1 Positioning my approach**

#### **3.1.1    The sense and practice of citizenship**

Citizenship literature has highlighted the interdependence of a perception of the self as citizen and the practice of citizenship, as explained in section 2.1. Awareness about the self as citizen and citizenship rights can fuel agency, and the practice of citizen engagement strengthens a sense of citizenship. Rather than using the term ‘status of citizenship’, I want to use ‘sense of citizenship’ for describing how people feel, experience and perceive their status as Ugandan citizens. My definition of a *sense* of citizenship is informed by the work of Isin and Wood (1999), Kabeer (2005), and Lister (2003), who emphasise the interaction between identity, self-awareness and agency. A sense of citizenship encompasses how people feel as citizens, how they are aware of their citizen identity, and how they perceive themselves as citizens in

relation to others and in relation to the state. This allows people's emotions to be included in an analysis of how they experience their citizenship.

Informed by the debate on the coexistence of ethnic and state citizenship (Ekeh, 1975; Ndegwa, 1997), an inquiry into the sense of citizenship allows for both the ethnic and the citizen identity to be studied, as well as the relationship between the two. As Nyamjoh (2006) argues that there are 'hierarchies in citizenship', I assume there are differences in how people sense the quality of their citizenship. People who feel marginalised may lack of a sense of citizenship or feel like 'second class citizens' while others may feel more confident. Based on social-constructivist approaches to ethnicity (Jenkins, 2008) and based on the debate about marginalised ethnicities (Hickey, 2007), the idea about the existing hierarchy and a lack of a sense of citizenship comes about in a dialectic relation to the existence and behaviour of other ethnicities, which are higher placed in the hierarchy.

In this study I define the *practice* of citizenship as the individual and collective actions undertaken by people to engage in the politics of the social and political spheres, and influence the governing institutions of society that affect their lives. In this thesis engagement in 'politics' entails actions regarding decision-making and relations in the public sphere, which is also the community. I focus on the everyday encounters between citizens and state actors. This involves an analysis of the various spaces and instances where citizens 'see the state' (Corbridge, Williams, Srivastava, & Veron, 2005). The fact that in marginalised settings of underdevelopment many citizens do not see the state directly means that perceptions of state authority are often mediated through ideas that circulate in the public sphere, or through the views of others (ibid.). Informed by this notion of 'seeing the state' and a notion of 'the everyday', but recognising that forms of authority other than the state exist, I am interested in small-scale instances of citizen engagement and the everyday practices, interactions and negotiations between communities and groups of citizens, or individual citizens, and their state and non-state authorities.

These everyday practices, citizens and their authorities are very important in the efforts of communities to improve their lives. Relying on the literature on institutionalised participation I look at formal mechanisms for participatory governance. I also study engagement outside such institutions. Such informal strategies are relevant, in particular when people considered formal channels inappropriate. Engagements can be respectful of authority or 'rude', as in the case of

'rude accountability' (Hossain, 2010). Informal strategies includes the more subtle tactics that are akin to Scott's 'weapons of the weak' (Scott, 1985).

This understanding of citizenship informs the scope and boundaries of this study. I concentrate on the sense and practice of citizenship of the Acholi and Langi in relation to their political communities of the state and their respective ethnic groups. Other possible political communities are not considered. For a focus on everyday engagements the fieldwork was limited to studying citizenship of the Acholi and the Langi in the three rural field sites, while acknowledging that citizenship would look different in the diaspora and in towns. Finally, the study emphasises recent history: from Independence to the present, but mainly since the start of the NRA regime in 1986. I acknowledge that the construction of citizenship is a long-term process that has no clear beginning.

A focus on the everyday distinguishes my approach from other approaches to state-society relations, which were discussed in Chapter 2. As mentioned, the early work on peasant revolutions took revolution by the masses to be the ultimate form of engagement. Relevant for this study are the idea that it is necessary to understand the social structure of peasant societies, and the recent insight that emotions and a sense of dignity motivate engagement (Petersen, 2001; Wood, 2003). Petersen (2001) furthermore shows the factors that encourage people to move along a spectrum starting from neutrality to armed insurgency.

My study adds to the contentious politics model by focusing on the everyday engagements and on the factors that enable or constrain the political agency that is required for citizen engagement. Claims, demands, but also discontent and disagreement are not only expressed through large-scale mobilisation and contentious actions (Tilly, 2008; Tilly & Tarrow, 2007). Where Tilly and Tarrow (2007) aim to disaggregate the mechanisms and processes of contentious political actions to find patterns, I seek to bring out the prerequisites for forms of engagement. Also, in my approach citizen engagement can focus on social and political institutions, whereas a definition of contentious politics necessarily involves the government as a party. I agree that government-related contention has distinctive properties, but a sole focus on government downplays relationships with other forms of authority. This applies in particular to the African context where the ethnic community too is important for the construction of citizenship.

Scott's work (1985, 1990) shows that the marginalised have clear ideas about justice, dignity and legitimacy, and about the relationships that maintain the social contract between them and the powerful state or non-state elites. They will resist when these are violated, carefully balancing how much of this is possible in public, and carefully treading the line between fear, resistance and support. Yet I differ from Scott over his interpretation of 'silences' on the part of the marginalised. Scott seems to think that behind every form of silence there is a form of resistance. I do not want to refute Scott's explanation that forms of resistance exist among the marginalised even when not expressed in public. But different 'forms of quiescence' exist. As Gaventa (1982) has shown, the perception of the self as 'powerless' leads to the thought that one's action would not lead to any improvement and therefore people remain silent. Many authors have demonstrated that silence can persist in situations where people have experienced repression or fear for a long time, even when the sources of repression no longer exist (Beswick, 2010; Thomson, 2011). Informed by Scott's work on weapons of the weak and by Gaventa's work on feelings of powerlessness I further explore whether silence reflects a form of fear, a fear related to the experience of violent conflict.

### **3.1.2 Towards an explanation of citizen engagement in post-conflict settings**

In this section I weave together the ideas from the sets of literature discussed in Chapter 2, which help to find an explanation for what Acholi citizenship looks like in the post-conflict situation. Based on the understanding that the construction of citizenship is a historical process, I analyse the construction of Acholi citizenship prior to, during and after the war. I have two tasks. I first need to demonstrate how Acholi citizenship evolved over history, particularly what happened during the LRA conflict. Secondly, I need to demonstrate how certain experiences are carried into the post-conflict situation. This section prepares the ground for formulating the propositions for this study.

#### ***The relationship between conflict and citizenship: including the 'sense'***

I start from the premise that the sense and the practice of citizenship are interdependent (Heater, 1990; Theiss-Morse, 1993). The literature review brings out that the sense of citizenship is hardly discussed in conflict studies, which tends to look at people's observable behaviour. Few scholars highlight the importance of emotions and sense of personhood (Petersen, 2001; Wood, 2003). Although the literature on forced migration discusses both the

sense and the practice of citizenship it does not interrogate a possible relationship between the two. The situation of internally displaced people is not as widely documented as the situation of refugees. The sense of citizenship of IDPs needs to be studied in its own right, because they need to engage with their home state to claim rights and the UN framework for IDPs is not as strong as international refugee law.

Missing from both the conflict studies literature and the literature on forced migration is the analysis of the interconnection between how people see themselves as citizens and understand their agency, and how this subsequently shapes agency. Yet Wood (2003) demonstrates that people's perceptions of themselves were very important to their willingness to participate in violent insurgency, as explained in Chapter 2. Her theory directly addresses the connection between the 'sense' and 'practice' of citizenship. In particular this 'sense' and what it is constituted by is missing from conventional collective action theory. This also applies to the studies that suggest that conflict can have a positive impact on citizen participation (Bellows & Miguel, 2009; C. Blattman, 2009; De Luca & Verpoorten, 2011). These studies do not recognise the sense of citizenship as informative of the practice of citizenship, and do not address the substantiveness of participation. My study addresses this gap in the literature by distinguishing the sense and practice of citizenship, and by studying how these concepts are related in the post-conflict setting of Acholi.

The literature on ethnic citizenship speaks of differentiated attitudes towards the two political communities of which citizens are members - the ethnic and the national - resulting in differentiated behaviour (Ndegwa, 1997). The literature on ethnic citizenship furthermore underlines the differentiated sense of belonging to the nation-state and to the ethnic group, as well as hierarchies in that sense of belonging. This means it is necessary to explore the meaning of 'Acholiness' and being an 'Acholi citizen'. Using a social-constructivist approach I view identity as something that is developed in a dialectic process (Jenkins, 2008).

If it is acknowledged that the political communities of the ethnic group and the state are both important for developing citizenship, then the sense and practice of citizenship need to be studied in both political communities. In Acholi, both ethnic citizenship and state citizenship will have been affected by the conflict, although possibly in different ways. I agree with Ndegwa that ethnic identity can shape one's preferences in relation to the national community (Ndegwa, 1997). From here it is imaginable that the way ethnic identity is affected may influence citizen identity, and vice versa. Existing literature on the Acholi shows that the LRA

conflict had negative implications for Acholi culture and therefore Dolan purposely uses the term ‘cultural debilitation’ (Dolan, 2008, p. 168). Through my concept of the sense of citizenship I want interrogate how this relates to, or informs, national citizenship and engagement with the state.

The literature on ethnicity and marginalisation provides useful ideas for thinking about how the sense of citizenship evolves in (post)conflict settings. As alluded to in Chapter 2, there are various views of what marginalisation entails. I discussed examples of regions where ethnic groups who are legally citizens have been actively marginalised in processes of citizenship formation (Hickey, 2007), as have vulnerable migrant domestic workers (Nyamnjoh, 2006, 2008). For these people, who are pushed to the margins, a lack of a sense of citizenship discourages citizen engagement. The case of the domestic workers illustrates that their sense of citizenship – or, more precisely, their lack of sense of citizenship, weakens their will and capacity for citizen engagement. Interestingly, the groups demonstrate instances of passive resistance (Scott, 1985, 1990), but they shy away from direct confrontation with the actors that marginalise them. This insight may be relevant to understanding conflict settings. An important difference is that in conflict settings citizen engagement can even be more high risk, and fear may be a dominant emotion affecting engagement.

Based on this discussion, the overall proposition of this study relates to the effects of conflict and displacement on both the sense and practice of citizenship. This is based on the notion that the sense and practice of citizenship are interdependent. The propositions will be presented in full in section 3.1.3.

### ***What happens during conflict?***

My definition of violent conflict is informed by the notion of a ‘warscape’ (Nordstrom, 1997) and Vigh’s idea of war as a social terrain that is constantly in motion (Vigh, 2006). This is partly informed by Skocpol’s argument that actions are possible within a particular structural context (Skocpol, 1982). I see conflict as a diverse set of experiences as well as a dynamic environment in which people navigate the actors and structures. This is thus firmly rooted in Vigh’s conceptualisation of conflict: a social terrain with various structures and processes (Vigh, 2006). This is different from the definitions of Blattman (2009), Bellows and Miguel (2009), who concentrate on violent acts that were committed, experienced or witnessed as central to

the conflict experience. Rather, similar to Lubkemann (2008), I want to focus on how social and political processes unfold during conflict and not make war violence itself the central question.

In the field of conflict studies it has not been common to systematically unpack '*the black box that is conflict*' (Kalyvas, 2006; E. J. Wood, 2008) and to relate different features or mechanisms of violent conflict to citizenship. In this thesis I unpack the LRA conflict into its different features, and demonstrate how these features individually or in combination affect a sense and practice of citizenship. I distinguish the pre-displacement phase of the war from the camp situation. For both episodes I look at the actors, institutions and processes that produced the warscape in which citizen engagement occurred. Different social identities within the affected population (through for instance gender and age differences) may be affected differently by the conflict. I need to be aware of different social relationships and social struggles, which may be reconfigured and shaped by war (Lubkemann, 2008).

For unpacking the conflict into its mechanisms I use the literature that highlights the transformation of social and political institutions that occurs during conflict (Justino, 2012, 2013). Pre-existing social and cultural institutions inform how people respond to conflict (Lubkemann, 2008; Finnström, 2003). New networks and institutions may emerge (Nordstrom, 2004; Vlassenroot & Raeymaekers, 2008b). Existing knowledge concentrates on changing forms of authority, in particular on the emergence of governance structures created by armed non-state actors (Vlassenroot & Raeymaekers, 2004, 2008b), and the networks that constitute informal economies (Cramer, 2006a, 2006b; Nordstrom, 2004). This work demonstrates that citizens continue to participate in economic activities and governance relationships, but these institutions take new forms. Local power dynamics are complicated due to the presence of competing powerful (armed) actors, which citizens have to navigate (Vigh, 2006). Based on the work of Allen (2006, 2010) on customary justice mechanisms in Acholi, and Finnström (2003) and Dolan (2009) on Acholi customary leadership, I make the focus on cultural institutions explicit. Political institutions in theory include customary leadership, but to understand how they are embedded in society their cultural meaning needs to be included in the analysis.

In the case of the Acholi region, displacement into camps within the war zone was another feature of the conflict. The literature on forced migration describes displacement camps as particular spaces of confinement, where camp governance regimes dictate citizenship practice. Within the camps, too, changes in institutions may occur. Dolan (2009) documented how the

camp situation undermined customary leadership. In addition to studying this institution, I focus on Local Councils (LCs) and the camp leadership itself.

A question that emerges is whether the transformation of institutions in Acholi would have positive or negative implications for Acholi citizenship. The literature review suggests that both are possible. It is not exactly clear under which conditions institutional transformation has a positive or negative impact and it is beyond the scope of this study to come up with such a meta-level analysis. Likewise, it is an interesting question: under which conditions social relations and social institutions are weakened or strengthened during war. (But this is not the question I am asking in this thesis.)

Chapter 4 presents existing literature on the LRA conflict. This literature does not show which forms of agency developed, in which spaces and institutions. Nor does it reveal which local institutions continued to operate, and how. The literature does give some indications of what local spaces for citizen engagement looked like, within a narrowing, securitised space for public engagement and through new institutions that were imposed. I assume that the LRA conflict negatively affected social relations, because this is what the literature on displacement camps particularly demonstrates (Dolan, 2009; Nyers, 2006). I ask how this subsequently affects the practice of citizenship. Since the literature on participation argues that forms of collective agency are conducive to substantive participation (McGee & Gaventa, 2011) I expect that the weakening of social institutions has negative implications for the practice of citizenship.

I want to relate the transformation of social and political institutions to learning citizenship. If, as indicated in Chapter 2, citizenship is 'learnt' through building awareness about rights, building confidence, the practice of participation in social and political institutions that builds experience through exposure, and *through* socialisation into political cultures (Delanty, 2003; Gaventa & Barrett, 2010; Merrifield, 2001), then surely we cannot ignore people's pre-conflict, or extra-conflict, histories. It requires little imagination to see that processes of socialisation look different from war-torn settings. This raises an important question. If someone grew up in conditions where basic rights were not secured and even violated, where opportunities for participation were curtailed by multiple armed, violent and oppressive authorities, where social relations 'froze' due to mistrust, where coping strategies were transmitted over generations, how can people learn and develop forms of citizen engagement? For the LRA affected areas in Uganda, this question remains largely unanswered.



The literature on institutional transformation suggests at least two implications for citizenship. First of all, where institutions were important for channelling 'voice' it is likely that expressions of citizen agency have changed. Secondly, assuming that certain institutions nurture citizenship, the transformation of institutions will affect *learning* citizenship. This includes the possibility that new institutions have emerged that offer opportunities for learning, practising and expressing citizenship. It is looking at institutional transformation from a citizen perspective that is missing in the micro-analysis of conflict, which emphasises 'how civilians cope' rather than 'how citizens act'. I therefore chose to distinguish 'coping agency' from 'citizen agency', in an attempt similar to Barter (2012) to unpack how people have agency in the midst of conflict. This helps to address this ambiguity in conflict studies.

Apart from a focus on institutions I analyse the nature of the public sphere and the perceived role of the state. The public sphere is the arena of public interaction and discourse (Fraser, 1990). The public sphere is distinct from the state apparatus, market relations and the range of civil society associations. It is the arena of language and discourse where people deliberate about, for instance, political and economic life; therefore the public sphere can be critical to the state and the economy. Trust in the state in the post-conflict situation may be determined by past experience. Citizens may have certain expectations of the state and opinions about how it responds to the conflict. In (post)conflict settings where forms of violent repression occur, the perception of public spaces for engagement is that they are unsafe (Beswick, 2010). It is furthermore suggested that the relationship between the state and the citizens 'narrows' because the public domain is dominated by security issues. I assume that such conditions have implications for citizen agency.

The literature review provided some suggestions for what citizen agency might look like. Existing studies on citizenship in conflict settings highlight the strategies citizens employ in the midst of violence: withdrawal from public spaces, silence and self-censorship, and as a form of self-protection collaborating with the forms of authority (in various degrees) that are not necessarily benign, democratic and accountable (Pearce et al., 2011; Wheeler, 2011). Like the conflict studies literature, citizenship studies points to the changes in mainly social institutions. In many cases social networks among citizens 'freeze' and can be difficult to form, and the prevalence of violence curtails the spaces for engagement (Pearce et al., 2011). As a consequence, there are fewer possibilities for citizen engagement.

Finally, a number of lessons from studies on citizen participation in relatively stable settings can be taken on board. This literature stresses the importance of institutional design and legal frameworks (Cornwall & Schattan Coelho, 2007; Fung & Wright, 2003), active bureaucrats and active citizens (Cornwall & Schattan Coelho, 2007), and citizen capabilities (McGee & Gaventa, 2011). Most of all it highlights the need to analyse power dynamics and politics between citizens and the state, but also among citizens. There is no homogeneous voice category (Hirschman, 1970). The social differentiation within the citizenry, based on ethnicity, gender and age, affects the participation of different social identities (Abraham et al., 2010; R. Lister, 2003). The collective capacity of citizens, their ability to use multiple strategies for engagement and build alliances with political and civil society actors contributes to effective engagement (Gaventa & Barrett, 2010).

Using this literature, I formulate proposition (II) about changes in local institutions and the public sphere and proposition (III) about how these changes affect citizenship (section 1.3.1).

### ***What happens in the post-conflict situation?***

This study seeks to establish the linkages between past and present and to demonstrate how the past experience of conflict shapes present-day engagement. What follows from the above is that significant events or episodes that belong to the collective memory of a particular political community can shape a sense of citizenship and inform citizen engagement. When acknowledging that active citizenship is learnt and shaped by socialisation processes, it is likely that the past experience of protracted violent conflict affects citizenship in the post-conflict situation. This informs proposition (IV) of this study, which relates to the enduring effects of the conflict (section 3.1.3).

There is not much scholarly work that addresses this question directly, which is why this study fills an important gap. The literature that is most relevant is the work done on violence and memory. These studies in (post)conflict settings emphasise the prevalence of silence in the public sphere, due to persisting fear (Hume, 2010). Due to this fear citizens continue to withdraw from the public sphere and refrain from public engagement, particularly on issues that are considered politically sensitive. Studies in other contexts show that citizens continue to use avoidance tactics and social navigation, or strategic alliances with powerful actors. This is the case for youth in Sierra Leone (Christensen & Utas, 2008). The example from Rwanda shows that people rely on hidden transcripts and silent acts of resistance (Thomson, 2011),

while public practices of engagement occur in a space where people feel safe: Ubudehe (Shah, 2011).

Also in other contexts citizens and their organisations gained confidence and skills after certain successes, after which efforts were devoted to expanding arenas for participation or other sets of rights (Gaventa & Barrett, 2010). However, as the cases of Rwanda and Angola show, building capacity for voice in one arena (service delivery and development) does not automatically lead to strengthened voice in other, often more politicised, arenas (reconciliation in Rwanda and accountability in Angola). This may indicate an important difference for conflict settings: certain arenas remain too difficult, sensitive or risk-prone to allow for citizen engagement.

### **3.1.3 Research questions and propositions**

As has been seen, this study pulls together knowledge about state-society relations, citizenship and citizen participation, micro-level conflict studies and forced migration. It aims to advance these academic debates by looking at their intersection: how is citizenship sensed, constructed and practised in a post-conflict setting like the Acholi sub-region in Uganda. The overall objective is to contribute to an understanding of a construction of citizenship in contexts of violent conflict and displacement by unpacking the dynamics of the LRA conflict.

The central question that guided the research was: *In the case of the Acholi region in Northern Uganda, how does the experience of protracted conflict and forced displacement affect the construction, sense and practice of citizenship by Acholi citizens?*

I compare how Acholi in two conflict-affected areas and Langi in a non-affected area sense their citizenship, and how they practise citizenship. I pursue four propositions. One is the overall proposition for my research, closely related to the central question. Two propositions were formulated for what happened during the conflict. Finally, one proposition was formulated for the post-conflict situation. I will now present these propositions. In the next section I present the proxies that were studied during fieldwork.

- I. The overall proposition of this study is that the experience of protracted conflict and displacement leads to a lack of a sense of citizenship and to diminished forms of citizen engagement, due to the limited opportunity for learning and experiencing the practice of citizenship.

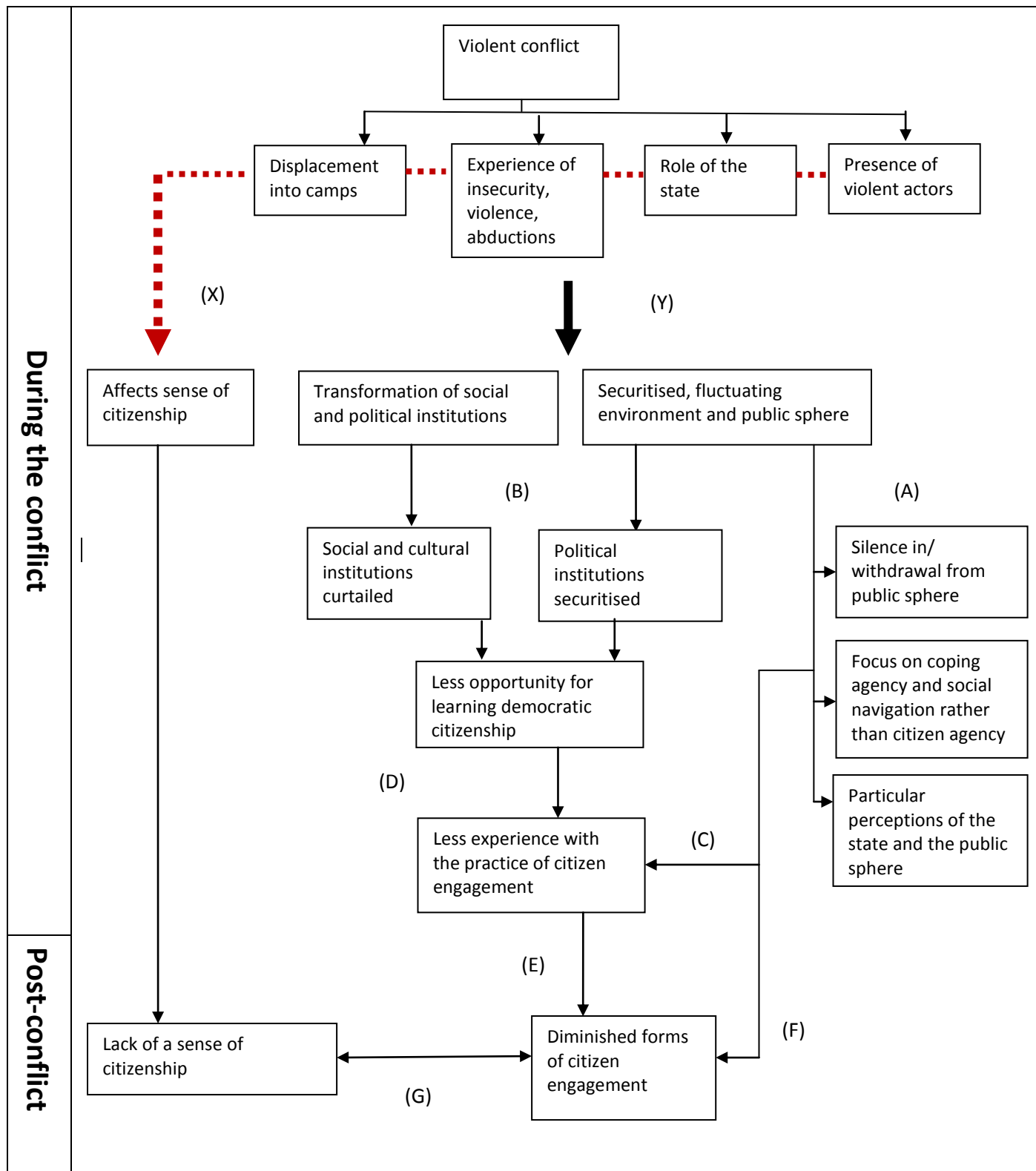
From the previous discussion it is possible to derive the conceptual model shown in Figure 3.1. I start from the premise that the sense and the practice of citizenship are interdependent, as stated in the literature (Lister, 2003). Therefore, I will analyse how the conflict affects both. I will explain present-day forms of citizen engagement by analysing what happened to citizenship *during* the conflict and by analysing the sense and practice of citizenship in the present.

I have distinguished four features of the LRA conflict: displacement; the experience of insecurity, violence and abductions; the presence of violent armed actors; and the role of the state. Three of these features *directly* affect the sense of citizenship (dashed arrow, X). All four features *indirectly* affect the practice of citizenship (bold arrow, Y) through a series of transformations at the local level. I study the changes in political, social and cultural institutions and in the nature of the public sphere, for which I formulate the following proposition:

- II. The LRA conflict led to a securitisation of the public sphere and to narrowing, securitised civic and political institutions.

In the thesis I test the proposition that the public sphere became securitised and I add empirical detail to what the securitisation of the public sphere entailed. Based on the literature reviewed, I expect to find that the presence of armed, violent actors leads to fear and the (perceived) lack of safe spaces, and therefore to a reduction in the forms of citizen engagement during the conflict. Furthermore, securitisation of the public sphere would narrow the scope of state-society interactions to security issues and affect citizen perceptions of the state (A).

**Figure 3.1: Diagram of how violent conflict affects citizen engagement**



As explained, I relate the literature on the transformation of institutions (Justino, 2013) to learning citizenship. I expect to find that the social, cultural and political institutions at local level were curtailed or securitised due to (features of) the conflict (B). As a consequence, citizens have few opportunities to learn and experience citizenship practices (C, D). This leads to the third proposition:

- III. The lack of safe space and the narrowing of local institutions limited the opportunities for learning the practice of citizenship during the conflict.

This is one of the reasons for limited forms of citizen engagement in the post-conflict situation: there is little prior experience with individual and particular collective citizen engagement (E). Finally, for the post-conflict situation, I expect that certain ideas and experiences developed during the conflict are carried over into the post-conflict situation (F). This produces the final proposition:

- IV. In the post-conflict situation, certain ideas and practices that emerged during the conflict persist and result in a lack of citizen engagement.

The 'lack of' citizen engagement is referring to a limited level and scope of citizen engagement. I expect that citizen engagement in Acholi is not as wide in scope and not as substantive as in Lango. By 'scope' I mean the range of mechanisms and tactics used for citizen engagement and the range of themes or issues engaged with. The examples from post-conflict settings suggest that the dynamics of having voice can vary for different issues. There could be themes or arenas that Acholi would consider too sensitive to talk about, whereas the Langi may experience less difficulty. That said, even in volatile or repressive environments people may develop tacit agency (Utas, 2005) and everyday acts of resistance (Scott, 1980). By 'substantiveness' I mean the extent of influence in decision-making and the intensity in the interaction between citizens and authorities.

In Lango I expect to encounter a range of 'ordinary' challenges to participation that have been widely covered in the literature in stable contexts, including for Uganda: issues to do with representation and mechanisms and micropolitics that exclude some citizens from effective participation. In Acholi, I expect these challenges would be deepened and complemented with

another set of challenges that, directly or indirectly, resulted from the mechanisms that emerged during the war.

The findings show that there is indeed a qualitative difference between Acholi and Lango. For post-conflict Acholi I have gathered evidence that fear and suspicion of the public sphere and the state persist. It was, however, a real challenge to find this out, because many Acholi are reluctant to speak about this in public. In Chapter 7 I present quotes from several respondents who did dare to express this verbally. Apart from this I relied on observations and I discuss the validity of these findings in Chapter 7. Any research to test these findings has to be equally capable of overcoming this reluctance.

The empirical material is structured in chronological order, tracing the changes that occurred during the conflict and their implications for citizenship, leading up to the present post-conflict situation. In Chapter 4 I describe the context of Uganda and the background of the LRA war. This shows the contours of the construction of citizenship of the people in Northern Uganda. In Chapter 5 I focus on characteristics of the conflict and how citizenship evolved before the period of displacement started. In Chapter 6 I show how citizenship was recast in the displacement camps. Chapters 5 and 6 thus present the data in relation to propositions (II) and (III). In Chapter 7 I test proposition (IV), about the practice of citizenship in the post-conflict situation.

### **3.2 Researching the sense and the practice of citizenship**

#### ***The sense of citizenship***

For studying a sense of citizenship I took key aspects that Acholi themselves identified as important for their membership of the wider political community of Uganda as a country, and how they relate to citizens in those regions where conflict did not occur. I adopted a historical approach to examine how a sense of citizenship developed over time. The proxies for a sense of citizenship were not predetermined before the fieldwork started. I adopted an inductive approach to use people's own definitions and the aspects they considered relevant in their relationship to the Ugandan state and to other Ugandan tribes. By looking at how the Acholi constructed their citizenship in relation to the state and in a dialectic process to other tribes I aimed to address both ethnic citizenship and state citizenship.

From the interviews about Acholi identity I derived that a 'good relationship' to the state depends on a) whether the state treats all tribes equally in terms of distribution of resources and political power, b) whether the state treats all tribes with respect and leaves them their dignity, and c) how the state responds to insecurity. The data analysis process that led to this threefold definition is explained in section 3.6. In relation to other tribes in Uganda, aspects that came out strongly were: a) equality in terms of assets and development, and b) whether other tribes respect one's tribe. The key concepts reflected here, equality, dignity and security, figure throughout the thesis when I discuss a sense of citizenship.

### ***The practice of citizenship***

From the literature on rural Ugandan communities (F. Golooba-Mutebi, 2004; Jones, 2009) I expected the predominant forms of engagement in the post-conflict situation to be small instances of day-to-day interactions with state and non-state authorities through formal and informal channels. To set the boundaries for this research and to keep fieldwork manageable my study concentrated on the forms of engagement that seemed most important: the everyday forms of citizen engagement that constitute the critical and constructive end of the spectrum described in Chapter 2. The proxies for the practice of citizenship therefore belong to this part of the spectrum.

The spectrum shows that citizens have a *range* of options for engagement. Acknowledging the full spectrum of forms of engagement I decided to analyse forms of collective action that openly resisted authority, should these occur. Thus, although the focus was on everyday engagement, I would not ignore any instance of rejection, resistance or contestation. I was mindful that expressions of discontent can be violent or non-violent, expressed through open confrontation or through hidden acts or transcripts. From the literature on Uganda I expected that instances of violence would be personal conflicts, or a riot at most. I saw such instances as events that had meaning. Scott (1990) emphasises these moments in which the codes for using hidden transcripts are broken and people transgress to the public. They reveal important information about citizens' normative ideas about relationships to authority.

For both Acholi and Lango I first established what citizen engagement had looked like prior to the start of the insurgency in 1986, during the second Obote regime (1981-1986). For the Langi the regime of Idi Amin (1971-1979) was also important for their construction of citizenship. I



then studied how practices of engagement and forms of agency developed from 1986 onwards. For the Acholi, this meant the start of the LRA insurgency, i.e. in the early stages of the war when they were still living at home, and then in the displacement camps. In Lango, citizen engagement developed in a context that was increasingly stable and peaceful. I then studied citizen engagement in the present. Of course, the level of detail was richer for contemporary life, and I had less detail for periods longer ago. From the Acholi narratives about daily life during distinct episodes of the conflict it is possible to see how practices of citizenship were adjusted to the conflict situation.

I studied citizen engagement in relation to both state and customary institutions, and also in the social sphere of the community. This was based on the notion that citizen engagement occurs not only in formal spaces as defined by the state, but encompasses engagements in local level *politics* (R. Lister, 2003). This is participation in a more general sense, encompassing all other forms of authority in society with which people need to negotiate, where decision-making takes place and problems are solved, hence including both the social and political domains of citizenship. These are the 'real-life' interactions between state agencies and population groups as political society, as distinct from the more formally organised state-civil society interactions (Chatterjee, 2005).

As explained in Chapter 2, the concept 'voice' is an important concept for citizenship and participation (Delanty, 2000; Hirschman, 1970). Informed by the conceptualisation of voice by Goetz and Jenkins (2004) I distinguished the 'petitioning voice' from the 'interrogative voice' in this study. This enabled me to be more specific about the forms of engagement observed. The former refers to engagement for material aspects of development and services, and the latter to accountability processes. For accountability purposes 'to have voice' refers to the strategies and effectiveness of people to hold leaders accountable for their performance. It is a voice that *interrogates* actors, processes and decisions (Goetz & Jenkins, 2004), and, in cases of failure, initiates the actions taken to sanction officials, or to set procedures in motion that eventually lead to punishment or correction of the responsible officials (Peruzzotti & Smulovitz, 2006).

I furthermore looked at both individual and collective voice (Fox, 2007). The importance of social relationships and social institutions for mobilisation capacities has repeatedly been emphasised by scholars working across the spectrum of state-society relations (Moore, 1966; Scott, 1976; Tilly & Tarrow, 2007; Wolf, 1969). To understand the interplay between individual and collective strategies for engagement, and between individual and collective voice, is

important for an understanding of prevailing norms about what constitutes the collective and the community (Menkiti, 1984). Cultural norms about the community prevalent in many African contexts shape people's behaviour and ideas about what is appropriate to say and do for one's own good and the common good, and thus shape forms of citizen engagement.

This led to the following proxies for the everyday practice of citizen engagement:

a) Involvement in cultural and social institutions.

This includes community groups such as farmer groups, savings groups, and social organisation through the clan, which I assumed to be 'safe spaces' for engagement with possible links to local government. Not included were the cultural dance groups and church groups.

b) Everyday interactions with state and customary forms of authority.

Regarding the state, I studied both formal openings for citizen participation and informal interactions between state officials and citizens. The proxy for formal spaces is the LC system itself, particularly the planning process. Prior to my fieldwork I had no knowledge of the informal interactions and these were identified in the field. I included all forms of day-to-day interaction between village residents and the bottom three levels of the Local Council (LC) system; LC1 (village), LC2 (parish), LC3 (sub-county), as well as technical officials such as the Parish Chief, Sub-County Chief, and the Community Development Officer (CDO).

Regarding customary institutions, I looked at the role of customary leaders in the community and the types of issues the community put to them. I examined the possible cross-over between customary and formal governance institutions and how customary leaders might play a role in mediating with local state actors.

c) Involvement for development purposes (the petitioning voice).

I looked at how people use the formal framework for participatory development planning through the LCs, claimed by the government to be the genuine 'bottom-up' structure for citizen participation. The informal interactions mentioned under b) were also analysed for the petitioning voice.

d) Engagement for accountability (the interrogative voice)

Regarding the interrogative voice for accountability, I looked at formal and informal strategies, including 'weapons of the weak' tactics' used to hold leaders accountable for their

performance. I examined which issues people find most disconcerting and how they take action and looked at the factors that inhibit any such actions.

The remaining sections present the justification for the research design, an overview of the research methodology and responses to methodological challenges that I encountered in the field. I finish with a description of the data analysis process.

### **3.3 Research Design and Methodology**

#### **3.3.1 Comparing ‘conflict-affected’ and ‘non-affected’ cases**

A comparative case study of three sites, two located in the heavily conflict-affected Acholi region and one located in a non-affected area of Lango region, was considered the most appropriate design for this study. This section presents a justification of the case study as a method and the selection process of the cases.

The case study can be considered a *method* in itself (Yin, 2009). It is suitable for seeking to understand a certain phenomenon in its contextual conditions, especially when the boundaries between the phenomenon and the context are not clear-cut. This is exactly how I see the complex reality of a (post)conflict situation. Violent conflict is a setting, but cannot be seen as an independent variable as it deeply penetrates the domain of social relations, political processes and institutions, and also the psyche of human beings. It has to be unpacked into its multiple features, or variables. A case study enquiry can cope with a plurality of variables, as it relies on multiple sources of evidence and benefits from prior development of theoretical propositions that guide data collection and analysis (Yin, 2009). I did just this, as detailed above. It is argued that case study research does not aim to be generalisable to a wider population. Rather, cases are selected to serve the objectives of the study in such a way that ‘we can learn the most’ (Stake, 1995). Furthermore, the case study is used for generalising to *theoretical propositions* rather than populations (Yin, 2009), as I do for the effects of conflict.

The criteria for selecting the research sites were formulated through an inductive approach, during a one-month pilot visit to Uganda in 2009. The important difference between the cases to be compared would be the intensity of the LRA conflict, in terms of ‘affected’ and ‘non-affected’ cases, which Gerring calls the ‘diverse case method’ for selecting cases (2007). I

carried out a mapping exercise with 35 respondents from academia and CSOs, all of whom had worked within the region for a considerable length of time. This resulted in 35 maps of Acholi and Lango that showed the areas that were heavily affected by LRA activities, based on criteria the respondents themselves had formulated.

I selected two conflict-affected sites in the Acholi region and one non-affected site in Lango region. The cases are ‘typical’ in terms of two cases representing conflict-affected areas and one a non-affected area (Gerring, 2007). The following descriptive characteristics were used to select the research sites within Acholi region:

- 1) A rural parish. A considerable distance away from the region’s main town where services and military protection were concentrated, in order to avoid regional bias.
- 2) Having experienced *sustained* insecurity and LRA attacks.
- 3) Having experienced long-term displacement to camps *within* the region.
- 4) Absence of repeated attacks/ incursions by Karamojong cattle raiders (the neighbouring region). This would add another layer of complexity and more variables, which cannot be studied within the scope of this research.

This led to the selection of two research sites in Chua and Lamwo districts (Table 3.1). Both districts are in the far north of Acholi on the border with South Sudan. The area was heavily affected by the activities of the LRA starting in the late 1980s. The rationale for selecting these two particular locations and the differences between the two require further justification.

**Table 3.1** Overview of case study locations

	Conflict affected		Non-affected
Case	Sub-county 1	Sub-county 2	Sub-county 3
Displacement	4-6 years	9 to 10 years	-
Region	Acholi	Acholi	Lango
District	Chua	Lamwo	Kole
Sub-counties	1	1	1
Parish	1	1	1
Villages	6	4	7

The research site in Lamwo is a more remote area than the one in Chua, and its population was displaced for approximately ten years, whereas the population of the site in Chua lived in camps for approximately five years. The Lamwo site is located on one of the ‘LRA corridors’ from Sudan to Uganda, and experienced extreme insecurity. The population from this research site was displaced in 1997, following a series of LRA attacks in the area. The site in Chua is

nearer to Kitgum town and therefore closer to large military barracks. Here the displacement camp started in 2002/3 when the government launched the military operation Iron Fist against the LRA in Sudan. Prior to this event, the population of Chua experienced insecurity in their homes due to frequent attacks by the LRA and aggressive behaviour by the military.

I started my fieldwork in the site in Chua. During fieldwork I found that many people referred to 'life in the camp'. I then wanted to have an in-depth understanding of how life in the camp had been and what forms of agency had developed during displacement. I therefore decided to include a research site where the camp had been in existence for a long time, which led to the selection of a site in Lamwo. Because this site was located in a more remote area there were other differences too. Security dynamics had been different: the military detachment was smaller and the site was on the LRA corridor. Also, it meant that the people in the Lamwo site had had less access to town.

Although there was a difference in the length of displacement of approximately five years, I did not observe a significant difference in citizenship outcomes. It was, however, not an objective of this study to explain variation in citizenship outcomes by looking at differences in the length of displacement. In Chapter 7 I present some reflections: although people in Chua were displaced for only five years, during the other five years they experienced other aspects of the conflict that negatively impact citizenship. It would require more research, comparing a larger number of camps in different parts of the region, to draw valid conclusions about differences in displacement patterns<sup>1</sup> and citizenship outcomes.

The comparative case was located in Lango region. Ideally the non-affected case would also be situated within the Acholi region. However, this was impossible, as the entire Acholi region and its population was heavily affected by the LRA. The matching case for this comparative case study was a non-affected area in Lango region, the southern part of Kole district. Parts of Lango region suffered extremely violent attacks and insecurity, in particular after Operation Iron Fist. However, the residents of the southern parts of Kole district never experienced attacks or displacement, nor was the work of local government institutions and social infrastructure ever disrupted by the conflict.

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<sup>1</sup> For example, there were also differences in settlement patterns: in some camps the population settled according to their villages of origin, whereas in other camps people ended up living mixed up with people from other locations and therefore other clans. In my two research sites, however, the population settled according to their villages.

Measures were taken to make the Lango case a match for the Acholi cases. Criteria no. 1 and 4 were used in the selection process. The distance to the district town, which may be a factor in access to district offices, and the year in which the district was created were also taken into account. The population of the field sites were similar in size. Each site was ethnically homogeneous: Acholi in the Acholi sites and Langi in the sites in Lango. The Acholi and Langi share the Luo language and cultural practices, as well as livelihood strategies.

As in all case study research in social sciences, cases will not be perfect matches apart from the variables one wants to single out to study. In this case, an important difference between the affected and non-affected sub-counties is that the Acholi and Langi people, though similar in many aspects of their lifestyle and language, see themselves as distinct ethnic tribes. In a multi-ethnic country like Uganda tribes have their own political histories and developed relationships with subsequent regimes.

The Acholi and Lango regions are similar in that they are part of the 'greater north' of Uganda, together with Karamoja and West-Nile, which is important for understanding the 'north-south divide' in Uganda, which will be explained in Chapter 4. Both regions have had a problematic relationship with the NRM government, which is still a factor in the relationship with the regime at present. Differences between Lango and Acholi in terms of citizen engagement might (partly) be explained by their different tribal affiliation rather than to their different experience of conflict. (I come back to this in section 3.4). However, I concluded that the distinct ethnic identities did not invalidate the selection of the Lango site as a matching pair to the Acholi case.

#### ***Within-case selection: sub-counties and villages***

Throughout the thesis I use the names of the *regions* to refer to the conflict-affected area (Acholi) and non-affected area (Lango). District names are used when quoting research participants: Chua and Lamwo districts in Acholi and Kole district in Lango.

I use the administrative unit of the sub-county (LC3) to demarcate 'the local level'. The sub-county level is an important level of decision-making and budget allocation for development in the area. Furthermore, it is from this level downwards that there are opportunities for direct interaction between citizens and elected leaders and officials, thus allowing for my focus on the everyday (Corbridge et al, 2005).

In each district one sub-county was selected. In Chua's sub-county six neighbouring villages were studied, followed by field research in four villages in Lamwo's sub-county. Field research took place from January to June 2010, and from August to September 2010. In Kole, field research took place in six villages in one parish, from September to December 2010. Within the sub-counties, the selected villages were all between five and ten kilometres away from their respective sub-county offices.

Moving from one village to the next, it was possible to replicate research methods and findings in the process. When certain patterns started to emerge for some of the central study themes from the first six villages in Chua, I used the last two case study villages as 'extra cases' *within* the Chua case to test those ideas (Maxwell, 2005). For example, when mapping the reasons why villagers are reluctant to approach local officials several factors emerged that I could then pursue in the last two villages.

### **3.3.2 Overview of research methodology**

In each research site a range of qualitative research methods was used. In this section I explain and justify the choice of methods and techniques. Respondents were sampled through stratified sampling according to age and gender, and clan based on village maps. The sample size and sampling strategy are elaborated in the next section.

In both the Acholi cases and the Langi case I worked with one male and one female research assistant. All were graduates and residents of the particular region. With both teams I intensively discussed the research objectives and questions, worked on the wording of the interview guides, and practised the research methods. In both Acholi and Lango the knowledge of the researchers was invaluable. They helped me understand people's narratives with the understanding of an insider, yet with the analytical lens of an outsider.

#### ***Life history interviews***

Life history interviews provide information about historical developments and changes in society and its culture by capturing how an individual responded to change, and what were his/her underlying strategies and motivations (Marshall & Rossman, 1995). It was considered an appropriate method for researching how the conflict - and also the situation under various

political regimes before the conflict started - affected the lives of the Acholi, how it affected social relationships and their relationship to the state. Trust-building was crucial, as this determined to what extent people dared to 'open up' (E. Francis, 1993).

In this study the life history interviews started with a very open request to the respondent to tell me about any memorable episode or event in the respondent's life, for which the respondent was given as much time and opportunity to recall any event or episode that mattered. This was followed by a semi-structured interview that took the events or episodes as reference points. There were further questions about the respondent's role, the role of other family and community members, and the possible role or expected role of government institutions, and how these roles had changed over time. Most events involved questions about different types of agency, in particular when state institutions figured in the event. The material collected through life histories was useful in analysing changes in socio-political relationships and roles over time, and how these were linked to the experience of conflict.

### ***Participatory research methods***

Participatory appraisal was used to map out general information about the field study locations, such as outlining the history of the area by time line exercises in focus groups. After that, a series of participatory appraisals was carried out to study the effects of violent conflict. These instruments were adapted from Moser and McIlwaine's participatory research instruments, which were designed to examine the effects of conflict in urban settings (2001, 2004).

### ***Semi-structured interviews***

The instrument I used most was a number of semi-structured interviews that were designed for specific themes (Annex 1). From the interviewees a number of key respondents were identified based on their knowledge and ability to explain with clarity, who participated in follow-up interviews to pursue certain themes further. I also interviewed elected leaders and government officials in each sub-county, and a small number of district officials.

In district towns and in Kampala, I met with a wide range of academics, civil society practitioners<sup>2</sup>, representatives of bilateral and multilateral donors, and national government. I

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<sup>2</sup> Most civil society organisations (CSOs) I encountered were formalised, Non-Government Organisations, but these represent only a sub-set of actors within the *arena* that is civil society (Howell & Pearce, 2002).



interviewed each of them on the role of their particular institution in the Acholi and Lango sub-region, and their perspectives on the central themes of this study.

### 3.3.3 Sample size and sampling strategy

The fieldwork was carried out at the level of the sub-county and below. At this level, a total number of 156 focus groups and 369 semi-structured and open interviews were carried out. Table 3.2 shows the final sample size for each research site. At district and national level a total of 75 interviews were carried out with government officials, Ugandan and international NGOs, and academia (overview – Annex 1).

**Table 3.2** Final sample size per research site

	Acholi – Chua	Acholi – Lamwo	Lango – Kole
Focus groups	67	42	47
Interviews	148	62	157

At village level, I used stratified sampling for identifying participants (gender/age/ethnicity). As a sample strategy I relied on the maps that indicated clan territories and homesteads to ensure each clan would be represented. In each clan area we then identified men and women from different age groups (youth<sup>3</sup>: age 18-35; adults: age 35 – 60, elders: age 60 and above). To have each clan represented was important for understanding interactions between clan members and local authorities, over issues like patronage and land disputes in which clan membership may play a role. I had no reason to believe that different clans experienced the conflict differently, since all of them are Acholi, which was confirmed by the findings.

In total, 109 focus groups were held in Acholi and 47 in Lango. All participatory methods were used in the focus groups: timeline, institutional mapping, leadership mapping, leadership ranking, flow diagram and well-being ranking. Time line exercises were carried out with relatively more focus groups composed of elders, in order to gather data about citizenship under different post-colonial regimes. For other exercises all social categories were included in equal numbers. Annex 1 shows how many of each type of focus group took place. In every village and clan area, we held separate focus groups for men and women, and organised them according to age groups within each clan territory.

<sup>3</sup> In the Ugandan context, the category ‘youth’ is a broad category that includes adolescents under 18 years old as well as young adults up to the age of 35.

A total of 210 individual interviews were carried out in Acholi, and 157 in Lango. I had developed ten interview guides for semi-structured interviews, each interview guides covering a particular theme. In Annex 2 these different interviews are listed, the title representing the theme of the interview, and how many were carried out in each site. For individual interviews I used the same sampling strategy: identifying gender and age groups in each clan territory. Because some of the women were sometimes very shy I included more women for some of the interviews in order to get better data about their experiences.

I also carried out open interviews with key informants. Key informants in the community were particular leaders, such as the clan leaders or LC members, who were identified in the community profile. Open interviews focused on their particular roles in the community and patterns of interaction with state authorities. Clan leaders were also interviewed about inter- and intra-clan relations, and Acholi identity.

### **3.4 Methodological challenges and data validity**

#### **3.4.1 Adjustments in research instruments**

In the course of the research changes were made in methodology. Here I describe the reasons for the adjustments made, in order to account for dependability in this study (Marshall & Rossman, 1995; Miles & Huberman, 1994).

First of all, the word 'citizen' and 'citizenship' do not have equivalents in the Luo language. I had to go by certain 'citizenship proxies' such as how people look at membership, responsibilities of themselves and of state institutions - all words that had meaning in the Luo vocabulary. Most proxies were generated from the literature and adapted through conversations with respondents in the initial stage of the fieldwork. The wording of questions was thoroughly discussed with the research assistants, who had valuable knowledge about language and local discourse. During the interviews and focus groups, all statements were translated from Luo into English by the research assistants and written down verbatim in notebooks. Each day started with a reflection on the previous day with the research assistants, during which we discussed all the interviews done, paying specific attention to how questions

and answers were translated. This enabled me to cross-check the translation and ensured that the research assistants used the same language when doing the interviews.

Secondly, recall was a problem when trying to reconstruct the history of that particular area. To counter this problem, life history interviews became more important than initially planned. People felt much more comfortable speaking about their lives, deciding themselves where to start and what to include, than responding to specific questions in the semi-structured interview about history. Another strategy was to start interviews with descriptive questions to let people talk about how they handled certain issues, before asking for their reflections. The questions thus first connected to someone's personal life, which made it an easier start, before going into deeper understandings of assumptions and opinions.

Another challenge was how to approach local understandings of collective identity and social trust, while most interviews were carried out with individuals and thus refer to individual agency. This might lead to a bias towards the liberal understanding of citizenship that portrays the collective as the sum of individuals. This view does not correspond with the perspective on the individual and the community in many cultural contexts, especially in southern Africa (Enslin & Horsthemke, 2004; Menkiti, 1984). I therefore pursued the collective as a theme if it emerged in individual interviews, for example when respondents spoke about 'unity'. Again the research assistants identified the correct language to discuss this. In addition, I dedicated a small number of focus groups to discuss such concepts as the community and co-operation.

### **3.4.2 Validity of my argument**

The most important validity threat in this study is the risk of attribution effect: to what extent can the patterns of engagement in Acholi be attributed to their conflict experience? Aware of this risk I tried to mitigate it in several ways.

This problem was first addressed by establishing a 'baseline' of what the sense and practice of citizenship had looked like prior to the conflict. I asked older respondents to compare their citizenship over time, under different regimes, and how they had interacted with local government officials in the past. Of course, recall was again a potential problem. To include a research site in Lango into the research design as a matching pair for the war-affected Acholi

sites was another strategy. Here, many people – mostly men – did speak openly about the state.

Cultural norms of behaviour formed the main alternative explanation for observed patterns of engagement. This emerged in Lango, where the clan structure in Lango was more organised than in Acholi. This raised the issue of whether the level of clan organisation helped explain forms of citizen engagement. I then pursued the overlap between clan leadership and formal leadership, and the extent to which clan leadership mediated the relationship to government institutions. I also investigated how the clan structures had developed over time. Lower levels of clan organisation in Acholi turned out to be another effect of the conflict.

In interviews I addressed this by asking people about their motives for behaving in a particular way to towards their leaders. I then traced changes in this behaviour by asking about differences before the conflict. I also focused specifically on norms and values underpinning social relations and interactions in different types of relationship (e.g. between husbands and wives, villagers and leaders). On several occasions I tested emerging ideas through respondent validation in the villages. I also asked informed outsiders to validate my ideas: Acholi people who have the capacity to reflect on it from an outsider's perspective, because of their professional background. In Chapter 7 I elaborate on culture as a factor for citizen engagement. It is difficult to distinguish culture and conflict as separate variables, as the way people have dealt with insecurity is also informed by their culture (Finnström, 2003; Lubkemann, 2008).

Also, I realised that my research methods relied on the capacity of people to communicate their ideas and perceptions verbally. But certain experiences were not directly communicated to me, because they were not put into words. Few people were able to articulate how past experiences affected their present behaviour. I did not have methods that could bring out tacit knowledge, or behaviours that were adopted almost unconsciously. That said, a number of life story interviews did strongly suggest such information. To establish connections between the past and the present I relied again on my own interpretation. In interviews about perceptions of the state certain silences occurred and I relied on observations and interpretation to understand their meaning. I started to write silences down and discussed their meaning with the research assistants to interpret them correctly.

Finally, personal ideas and biases influence the researcher's selection of data or lines of enquiry (Marshall & Rossman, 1995; Miles & Huberman, 1994). As a researcher, I select the issues I want to focus on and this selection influences the course of the research and which data are generated. I therefore needed to interrogate my assumptions about the post-conflict setting and citizens' attitudes, and my strategy for mitigating research bias in data collection and interpretation (Bloor & Wood, 2006, p. 21).

When I started the fieldwork I hoped to find clearly identifiable examples of citizen participation. What I encountered was far from institutionalised forms of participation or participatory spaces. Formal structures for participation did not function in practice, and at first sight citizens did not demand anything at all. Yet there were numerous occasions where people organised to develop their area, sometimes involving the local state authorities and sometimes not. Broadening the lens opens up understandings of other forms of engagement than the 'active and vigilant citizen' that are much more embedded in the local context.

Another strategy was to maintain a level of 'thick descriptions' (Marshall & Rossman, 1995). All interviews were transcribed verbatim, not leaving out a single line or section. Where respondents seemed to 'wander off' this was allowed, and only when they had finished that part of the story did I return to the intended topic of the interview.

### **3.4.3 Triangulation**

To enhance the validity of my data and findings, data was triangulated in three different ways: by data source, data type and by using different research methods (Maxwell, 2005), depending on the availability of sources for the particular themes in this study. Because of scholarly interest in the war there is a rich literature about Acholi, while there is none for Lango. For Lango I could therefore not triangulate my data with findings from other studies. Here I used various methods to investigate issues during the fieldwork, and tested the findings in other interviews.

For specific sub-themes within my study, like for the political history of Uganda, its decentralised governance system and the LRA conflict, a rich documentation exists. Regarding the local governance system, my data corroborate the weaknesses in the system that have been identified in other research. My data also points to more variation in reasons why citizens

are reluctant to engage with the system, which had not been discussed in other studies. For historical events the literature allowed me to cross-check information that came out during focus group discussions. At the same it helped me to concentrate on how respondents had *experienced* local life during episodes of the conflict or under previous regimes.

For other themes it was necessary to triangulate by using different methods and (groups) of respondents, for example, the development of the local government system in Acholi during the war. To triangulate data about these themes I compared data from the interviews with focus group discussions and observations, in particular when evidence was contradictory. Data was also double-checked by repeating the interviews and focus groups. In the process inconsistent data was continuously filtered out and re-examined.

For present-day forms of engagement, two perception surveys carried out in the Acholi region are relevant for this study (Pham & Vinck, 2010). A USAID (2009) funded study by the Northern Uganda Transition Initiative (NUTI) shows, among other issues, citizen perceptions of state institutions and their levels of trust in the national and local governments. Pham and Vinck (2010) present survey results on perceptions of authority, a sense of security, the prevalence of social conflicts and perceptions of unity. In Chapter 7 I refer to these studies where relevant. I identified no contradictory findings in these studies. The Pham and Vinck study confirms that the Acholi have limited contact with authorities. Both studies confirm the importance of LC1 as a channel to report issues.

#### **3.4.4 The ‘munu’ without projects**

Apart from the effect of my assumptions about the situation, my own presence affected the social setting where I stayed. Perhaps, it resulted in social behaviour and reactions by respondents that otherwise would not have occurred. Here I explain how I dealt with this problem of reactivity (Maxwell, 2005).

The people in Acholi are quite used to seeing foreigners (*munu*) in their area, which are all expected to be related to UN agencies, humanitarian and development organisations. At the start of every meeting and every interview it had to be carefully explained that this research is for study purposes only. And as the word spread, people knew I was not ‘bringing projects’. Of course, my presence affected the research in various ways. Simply *being* there, even without

doing research, was something different from ordinary local life in the village. People made all kind of assumptions about me.

Conscious of the importance of rapport building (Bloor & Wood, 2006; E. Francis, 1993) I followed the required protocols for accessing the community: reporting to the sub-county authorities and then down to the LC1 level, followed by meetings with 'respected community members' such as elders, teachers and clan leaders. I 'integrated' by shopping at the local market, hanging out in social spaces, chatting in the 'drinking groups' and attending services at various churches. The priests and reverends introduced me to the community. I was as just as conscious of the risks of 'over-rapport building' (Bloor & Wood, 2006, p. 71) and I reflected on my interactions with people in the research journal.

#### **3.4.5 Ethical issues**

At the start of each interview or discussion people were informed about the objectives of the study, the themes that would be addressed in the interview, and anonymity. They were then asked again whether they were willing to be interviewed and give their consent. Consent was not given in written form, because many people could respond with anxiety to a formal-looking document. It was explained to respondents that they could pause or end the interview at any time, if they so wished. The personal details of each respondent were recorded and stored separately. This was primarily for the purpose of finding someone for a possible second interview at a later stage. The interviews were numbered to guarantee anonymity.

Many people expected 'sitting allowances'<sup>4</sup> for their time. However, I considered monetary allowances inappropriate, because of the prevailing alcohol abuse by both men and women. After consultation with the residents all respondents were therefore given consumer goods such as soap, salt or sugar.

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<sup>4</sup> The term commonly used in Uganda for money, soda or snacks to compensate people for the time they spent in a meeting.

### 3.5 Documentation and data processing

In this section I explain how I stored and coded the interviews using the NVivo programme software. I used NVivo only for the data that was generated at village level. Interviews that were carried out with NGO workers, academics and government officials at the district level and at national level were analysed separately.

I typed all the handwritten notes up using Microsoft Word. All interview notes, notes from focus groups, the research journal and observation notes were imported into NVivo. Details of each interviewee and focus group participant were recorded (stored separately from the interview notes): name, age, gender, clan name, and name of his/her village. The respondent details were imported into NVivo and respondent numbers were linked to their interviews. After the coding process was finalised this allowed comparison between men and women, and different age groups in the analysis.

In the coding process in NVivo all trees, nodes and child nodes were created inductively while going through each individual interview. I created separate trees for Acholi and Lango. The names of the trees (highest level) represented key topics of the research. Where relevant under each tree in NVivo levels of child nodes were created, representing sub-themes, depending on the topic. Some trees had one level of child nodes, while other trees had more than one. Table 3.4 below is an example of a tree and child nodes for the sub-themes. (A) represents the tree, (B) the first level of child nodes, (C) the second level, etc.

**Table 3.3 Example of a part of the NVivo ‘tree’ – Acholi history\***

A	B	C	D
Acholi history	Obote II	Daily life in this period	Food
		Forms of citizen engagement in this period	Myumba kumi Nyampara/ Mokungu
		Forms of coping	Livelihoods
Acholi history	Early NRA period 1986-1993	Daily life in this period	Food Security
		Forms of citizen engagement in this period	RCs Customary
		Behaviour of the military	Incidents
		Forms of coping	Coping for security

\*Please note this is only a small section of the tree. For Lango I created a separate tree on Lango history.



The tree 'Acholi history' (level A) was formed of the child nodes that represented key events identified in the data from focus groups and individual interviews, like 'Karamojong cattle raids', 'regime Idi Amin', 'regime change NRA' (level B). When talking about such events or time periods, interviewees often explained how daily life was at that time, how citizens engaged with leadership, and coping strategies. Sometimes these themes were raised because of interview questions. These different themes were coded at the next level child nodes (C). A number of themes at level C could be unpacked further during the coding process. For example, when talking about coping mechanisms (level C), people mostly talked about how to secure livelihood and food, and security of lives. These strategies were categorised as such in the next level of child nodes (D). Another example of a tree, 'camp life', is shown in Annex 2.

The coding system allows for gaining insights in terms of frequencies of - or patterns in - certain attitudes and behaviour, although not in the same way as survey research which allows claims about significance to be made. For instance, coding with which leaders people interact about community problems clearly shows that the Langi interact with many different types of leaders (Chapter 7). Also data collected through participatory methods could be aggregated. Moser & Horn (2011) explain that when methods are consistently implemented in the same way, as I did it, ranking exercises from various groups can produce a community-level picture. Institutional diagrams and leadership rankings often produced similar results, i.e. the relative importance of certain institutions.

### **3.6 Data Analysis**

The coding process helped to structure my thoughts and make a start with the analysis. During the analysis process I went back and forth between the propositions, the data set and my research journal. I analysed the data in NVivo by selecting the sections (trees, nodes and child nodes) in NVivo that corresponded to the propositions, and the historical period of a specific thesis chapter. When analysing the data on, for instance, coping strategies, I selected this child node and NVivo gathered everything participants had said about this issue for different episodes of conflict and insecurity, grouped by location.

For the descriptive analysis I looked at the structure of the child nodes that were created in the coding process to see which patterns had emerged per theme. Using the tree on Acholi history as an example: each important moment/episode was captured in a child node. Comparing

Lango and Acholi this showed that the Langi had spoken more about the Amin era than the Acholi. For current patterns of interaction between citizens and authorities I looked at the range of leaders (each on a different child node) approached by Acholi and Langi, as well as the range of issues raised with them, and the challenges they encountered. I looked at the differences between men and women, and different age groups. From here I wrote the synthesis of the themes and sub-themes that related to the propositions, for Acholi and Lango separately. Where significant differences between men and women or between age groups had appeared, this was woven into the analysis and descriptions in the chapters. Examples are the gendered experience of displacement and how the legitimacy of Acholi elders was negatively affected during the war. I often went back to the original interviews to review them as a whole, to understand how respondents had viewed a range of issues. Of course particularly the life history interviews had to be analysed as a whole, in order to see how agency had developed and how perceptions had changed over time.

To test the propositions I looked at the differences between Lango and Acholi. The coding structure also allowed me to look for alternative explanations, for instance to look for how culture influences patterns of engagement. Here I give a concrete example of differences between the Langi and Acholi trees coded for 'interaction with authorities'. In Annex 2 I describe this process in detail for the sense and practice of citizenship, showing parts of the relevant trees that were coded in NVivo.

For Lango, there were many more records under the child nodes that captured interactions with various leaders at different levels. There were also more nodes that described engagement in local accountability mechanisms. In Acholi, few people had taken an issue to the sub-county and many issues were 'stuck' at LC1 level. This related directly to the overall research proposition. One of my arguments in this thesis is that persisting ideas and fears cause diminished levels of engagement in Acholi. This emerged from NVivo from the range of reasons people gave for not following up issues or criticising leaders (Chapter 7). In Lango, child nodes referred to lack of education and offensive attitudes of officials. But in Acholi the fear of reprisal was an additional reason, also captured in a child code.

After analysis and writing up from NVivo, which contained the village-level data, I looked at the relevant sections of interviews carried out at the district and national level for comparison, to see whether they confirmed or contradicted data from the sub-counties. Note that this was also done *during* fieldwork in order to verify certain information and I pursued contradictory

information when back in the villages. I consulted literature and secondary sources where relevant, for triangulation purposes and to fill gaps (e.g. accurate names, years).

Using this process of coding and analysis I worked from chapter to chapter, comparing Acholi and Lango; from past to present. The next chapter presents the contextual background of the study, describing the contours of the construction of citizenship in Northern Uganda. My empirical findings are presented in Chapters 5 to 7.

## Chapter 4    Citizenship in Uganda: A Historical Perspective

### Introduction

This chapter explains the historical and political context for the construction of Langi and Acholi citizenship. It outlines the political history of Uganda and the post-colonial regimes, with references to the northern regions Lango and Acholi. Since 1962, subsequent governments have consolidated their power base and handled the issue of ethnic identity, and the distribution of power and wealth, in ways that would have significant implications for ‘the North’ as a region and its tribes<sup>5</sup>. This chapter explains how the Acholi, as a northern tribe, experienced a process of ‘adverse incorporation’ (Hickey & Du Toit, 2007a) into the Ugandan state and elaborates how these historical developments led up to the Lord’s Resistance Army (LRA) conflict.

Considerable attention will be paid to developments in the local level state apparatus from when Yuweri Museveni and his National Resistance Army (NRA) came to power in 1986. The introduction of Resistance Councils (RCs) was a guerrilla tactic to regulate contact with the civilian population, but also an attempt to reform the top-down system of rule. These Resistance Councils were institutionalised and transformed into ‘Local Councils’ (LCs) in the 1990s to become the formal local government system. The RCs/LCs could not consolidate in the Acholi region as long as the LRA conflict went on, but the literature on Acholi does not clearly say what happened to the LCs there.

This chapter outlines the chronology of the LRA conflict: its major events, the role of the government, and what happened at the local level. This provides the background of the conflict as a ‘warscape’ (Nordstrom, 1997). The rich literature on Uganda enables me to explore the key concepts of this study for the Acholi context: local institutions, the public sphere, and forms of agency. This shows the gap in knowledge concerning citizen agency during the LRA conflict. The following chapters present my empirical findings and describe how local life evolved from 1986 onwards, in order to test the propositions presented in Chapter 3.

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<sup>5</sup> Although the word ‘tribe’ is associated with the labelling of ethnic groups by the colonial regime it is commonly used in contemporary Ugandan English when referring to ethnic groups like the Baganda, Acholi, Langi, Karamojong, and others, and I use this term in my thesis in this way. The greater ‘North’ is formed by the West Nile, Acholi, Lango and Karamoja regions. The southern regions are populated by predominantly Bantu tribes, whereas the tribes of the northern region are of Nilotic and other origins.

Section 4.1 describes the political developments under the post-colonial regimes in Uganda, after which section 4.2 discusses the developments in the local state apparatus since the National Resistance Army (NRA) came to power in 1986. It must be noted, however, that the history of the Acholi region is much better documented than that of Lango due to academic interest in the conflict in Acholi. Contextual information for Lango, especially empirical work at local level, is scarce. Hence less detail is provided for the Lango context. Section 4.3 gives an overview of the LRA conflict in the North, after which section 4.5 focuses on existing knowledge about the transformation of institutions during the war. The last section, 4.5, describes the Northern Uganda Social Action Fund, a Community-Driven Recovery intervention for Northern Uganda.

#### **4.1 State formation in Uganda**

Ethnic and regional differences have been important factors in Uganda's colonial and post-colonial history. Different regions and their ethnic groups experienced each regime very differently, partly depending on how each group developed relationships with the political leadership, including the colonial regime, whether or not it supported the leadership, and what alliances were formed. These factors played a role in the process leading up to the LRA war in the North, and still affect the position of Acholi and Lango regions today. This section explains the history of state formation in Uganda from the colonial time to the present day, and a number of mechanisms that furthered a process of adverse incorporation (Hickey & Du Toit, 2007a) of the Acholi region. I will also indicate how each regime organised its administration at the local level. This will show that Ugandans had had little experience of direct participation in governance when the NRA/M rolled out a multi-layered governance system from 1986 onwards.

##### **4.1.1 The colonial heritage for ethnic identities in Uganda**

The British colonial regime had organised and divided the population of Uganda around assumed ethnic identities to form administrative units, which Branch (2010) refers to as the process of '*ethnification*'. As in many of the colonies of the British Empire with multiple ethnic groups, the territorial boundaries defined by the colonial regime did not necessarily

correspond with the actual boundaries of ethnic groupings. In many cases the ethnic groups had not even clearly existed prior to the colonial era. The colonial government in Uganda did not grant an equal level of authority to all ethnic groups. The kingdoms of southern Uganda enjoyed a degree of autonomy, with most powers given to the Buganda kingdom, whereas the rest of Uganda, including Lango and Acholi, was divided into districts with district authorities.

Lango region illustrates the principle of indirect rule in the districts. In pre-colonial Lango the authority of clan leaders was localised and limited (Hayley, 1947; Tosh, 1978). In 1912 the British divided Lango into sub-counties for which 'chiefs' were appointed, who often were clan leaders. By 1920 a four-level chiefly hierarchy from village to county was instituted. Effectively, certain clan leaders were placed in higher positions over others. The result of this policy was increased inter-clan competition, and increasingly abuse through patronage networks when the chiefs were allowed to appoint lower level chiefs (Tosh, 1978).

Scholars agree that the Acholi shared cultural and linguistic characteristics, but before the colonial regime came there was not a sense of a unified Acholiness with an overarching political identity. Finströmm (2003) emphasises that the Acholi identity was not only imposed by the colonial regime, but also formed as the result of factors internal to the region and through interactions between the Acholi and other ethnic groups before the colonial regime. On the eve of colonialism, approximately sixty clans (kakha) existed in what is now Acholi territory, which were autonomous from one another and each ruled by a customary chief (Rwot Moo). Certain clans were larger and had developed political alliances with other ethnic groups like the Bunyoro, and they were therefore stronger. This is the case for the Payira, and for this reason the Payira provided the Acholi paramount chief in 2000. Because the Acholi leadership was dispersed, the colonial regime felt there was a 'lack of' government, comparing it to the centralised powers of the King of Buganda. The colonial regime therefore sought to create a political entity, not to empower the Acholi, but to make the administration of the district easier. Administrative chiefs were appointed (Rwot Kalam, or the 'chief of the pen'), who were not perceived to be as legitimate as the Rwot Moo. Even in present-day Acholi Allen (2006) found there was wide disagreement about who the 'real' chiefs were, as some descended from chiefs appointed by the colonial regime or those involved in pre-colonial slave trade (Allen, 2006).

Near the time of Independence, Acholi intellectuals encouraged changes in the Acholi authority structure. According to some this was a direct response to Baganda demands for

self-determination in the transition to Independence (Carbone, 2008). A paramount chief from the Payira clan was endorsed, a decision contested by other strong Acholi chiefs but realised with the support of Obote's *Uganda* People's Congress (UPC) party. Already during the colonial era the tribes had gradually started to organise according to the level of authority granted to them to make claims based on a 'created' tribal identity. Thus the ascribed ethnic identities subsequently became political identities (Branch, 2010; Finnström, 2003). These boundaries were largely maintained in the post-colonial era. Although political and ethnic identities did not necessarily overlap the political leaders used them to strengthen their position within a region.

Branch describes how such a political ethnic identity evolved for the Acholi region. Here, the customary hereditary chiefs aligned with the emerging petty bourgeoisie to influence decision-making in the district councils. When political parties started to organise in the 1950s these became an important mechanism for the lineage-based leaders and bourgeoisie to link to national level politics. They used this not only to make claims based on an overall Acholi identity, which was perceived to be the legitimate thing to do at national level, but also to confirm their authority *internally*, within the region (Branch, 2010).

To many, the beginning of a politicised north-south divide started under the colonial regime. The small chiefdoms in the north were considered 'backward', leading to stereotypes about the north (Finnström, 2003, p. 98). The British even considered themselves instrumental in creating an overall sense of unity among the Acholi and Langi to unite them in tribes (Finnström, p. 61). In reality, however, they failed to recognise the socio-political organisation of the chiefdoms among the groups in the northern region as 'real' government. The hierarchically structured kingdoms in the south were more easily identified as a political structure that the colonial regime could use for its model of indirect rule. The small chiefdoms in the north lacked an overall authority and were scattered, and therefore deemed to lack coherence. Economic development, such as the tea and coffee plantations, was concentrated in the southern parts of the country. By contrast the northern tribes, in particular the Acholi, were recruited into the army. At independence, there was a vibrant productive economy in the south that was lacking in the north, and in the north the youth considered recruitment into the army their 'natural' vocation. Branch (2010) argues that this created the divide between the Bantu south and the Nilotic north, which he refers to as 'regionalism'. He contends that this regionalism gave rise to another political identity, also ethnic in nature, alongside the ethnic identity of the different groups that made up the northern and southern regions. This divide

was politicised by the regimes, especially by the first President, Obote, to further their own political agendas.

#### **4.1.2 Post-colonial regimes**

After Independence in 1962, the politicisation of ethnic identity and regional territory was strongly reflected in how the political system developed. Uganda remained with the political institutions that had been established by the colonial regime. It was a semi-federal state that maintained the asymmetric distribution of power between the kingdoms in the south and the districts in the rest of the country. At national level the prime minister's office, parliament, and multi-party elections were in place, but any form of local representation with institutional linkages to the national level was lacking (Carbone, 2008).

The first government was formed by a coalition of the Uganda People's Congress (UPC) with the party of the Baganda kingdom, Kabaka Yekka (KY- 'the King alone'), with UPC leader Milton Obote as prime-minister and the Buganda King as the president. However, since the UPC was essentially anti-Buganda, the coalition collapsed in 1964. Tensions rose high and after a coup Obote proclaimed himself President. He abolished federalism and the Kingdoms, and the King was forced into exile in 1966.

At this point in time, political parties were new, poorly organised, and divided along religious and ethnic lines (Kasfir, 1998). They lacked any experience with political organisation and the political and economical alliances they formed were unstable due to the many differences within each region. Two broad divisions existed along which political parties aligned: Catholic versus protestant and pro- versus anti-Baganda dominance (Carbone, 2008). The Democratic Party (DP) found its support mainly among Catholic Christians in the North, in Acholi and Lango, and among the Baganda Catholics in the south.

Subsequent constitutional reforms increasingly undermined power sharing mechanisms. The 1967 constitution merged the roles of the head of state and head of government into the presidency, rendering political parties practically insignificant. Democratic institutions such as political parties and the Consitution were abolished, and the kingdoms lost their autonomy and were divided into ordinary districts (Carbone, 2008).



Obote, who originated in Lango region, expanded the army from 700 troops in 1962 to 9,000 by 1970, of which more than one third were Acholi. Both Langi and Acholi were appointed to important positions in the government, the military and other security forces, which resulted in a system of intense patronage (Branch, 2010). Under his regime the division between the north and south was further politicised. After the coup of Idi Amin in 1971, which forced Obote into exile, this trend only worsened.

During Amin's military dictatorship (1971-1979) tribal politics figured strongly. He recruited his security forces from his West-Nile region and members of his ethnic group were favoured for important positions. Amin purged the army of the Acholi and ordered the killing of thousands of Acholi and Langi. His regime is often described as a targeted oppression: violence targeted particularly at the intellectuals and businessmen, the elite and middle-class. The immigrant Indian population, owning and running most of the companies, was expelled in 1972 and this led to the breakdown of the economy (Kasfir, 1998). Acholi and Langi elites were specifically targeted, and either were killed or fled the country. The two regions were now deprived of the political leadership that had previously connected their regions to national level politics (Branch, 2010; Mamdani, 1976). Large sections of the rural population did not experience violence directly, but since the local administration was run by the military they lived under constant threat (Sathyamurty, 1986). Customary leadership, the kings and clan leaders, could potentially generate political opposition and were therefore disempowered. The orders imposed from above severely circumscribed social life and clan-based organisation. In Lango this had major implications for community life, as will be explained in Chapter 5. Amin's troops were defeated in April 1979 by two Ugandan armed groups that had formed in exile and were backed up by Tanzanian forces: the UPC-driven Kikosi Malum troops and the Front for National Salvation (FRONASA) led by Museveni.

A transitional government was installed. Obote returned from exile in May 1980, when the run-up to the national elections began. The new army, Uganda National Liberation Army (UNLA) was again dominated by Acholi and Langi, who were UPC loyalists. Obote won the December presidential elections after a campaign of intimidation and violence by the UPC and UNLA. Obote maintained the majority of Acholi and Langi soldiers in the UNLA. However, the patronage system of political appointments as existed under Obote's first regime (Obote I) was not restored to the same degree. The Acholi and the Langi now had little opportunity to re-establish their local and national political leadership base, because many of their people

had not returned from exile and they were no longer favoured for political appointments (Carbone, 2008).

The second Obote government (Obote II) introduced a local government system, 'Mayumba Kumi' (adapted from the Swahili *nyumba kumi*: 'ten houses'), which was copied from the Tanzanian local governance system. Units formed of 10 households selected a local leader to preside over the unit. The main function of the Mayumba Kumi was security, to monitor the presence of 'strangers' in the area, and to serve the administration of the regime. Mayumba Kumi were thus not in place to check state power, they were exclusive, and citizens were not allowed to elect the local chiefs (Mamdani, 1996, p. 201). Tidemand (1994) finds that the Mayumba Kumi had little influence on local level politics.

In the south, resentment against the UPC was growing. There the UNLA was known for its lack of discipline and for using terror and ex-judicial killings to counter any form of opposition. Again Obote refused to restore the authority of the kingdoms, since these were still perceived to be a source of political opposition. Many southerners thus felt Obote's second regime was again one of 'northern domination'. When tensions between the Langi and Acholi factions within the UNLA started to rise and the Acholi generals Tito Okello and Bazilio Okello ousted Obote from power, these feelings only deepened.

Yuweri Museveni had dismissed Obote's 1980 election victory and started a bush war in Luwero, Central Uganda, with his National Resistance Army (NRA). This civil war would last until Museveni seized power with a coup in 1986, overthrowing the Okello regime. The NRA was largely made up of Banyankole, Museveni's ethnic group from Western Uganda. When it established its base in Baganda it thus had to start building relationships with the local population in order to overcome ethnic divisions, gain support and recruit more fighters. One way in which the NRA gained local support was to play to anti-northern sentiment, exploiting and reinforcing the regional division between the Bantu and Nilotic populations (Branch, 2010). Another way they mobilised support was by creating the Resistance Councils (RCs) at local level, elaborated below.

As the bush war in Luwero intensified the UNLA became all the more violent, which only fuelled anti-Acholi sentiment. When the Okellos ousted Obote from power they invited Museveni to join their side. He signed the agreement, but within 6 months after the Okello

coup Museveni overthrew Okello. The following section will discuss how the NRA established its authority at national level.

#### **4.1.3 From Movement System to multi-party politics**

After years of political repression the NRA was left with a country in ruins: an impoverished population, huge economic debts, social and political cleavages. Its own support base was still narrow and limited to the southern and western regions. Rebellion and resistance broke out in the northern and eastern parts of the country. *'The NRA was caught in a dilemma. Having taken power by force, it nonetheless aspired to a democratic justification for its rule'* (Kasfir, 1998, p. 52). The NRA promised a radical break-away from the post-colonial authoritarian regime. Parliamentary democracy, popular democracy and rapid economic transitions became the cornerstones of the NRA's manifesto and its Ten Point Programme (Hickey, 2005; Kasfir, 2000; Mamdani, 1996).

As multi-party politics was considered a threat to national security and unity, the democratic reforms took the form of the creation of a 'movement system' (Mugaju, 1996; Mugaju & Oloka-Onyango, 2000): a form of no-party democracy and a system in which all voices and interests would be represented under one body, the National Resistance Movement. Especially in the beginning the government used 'movement' democracy to build its legitimacy, reaching out to diverse groups in society. Increasingly, it would use the Movement system to entrench its powers in the state apparatus and diminish the possibilities for political opposition. Although presented as something 'new', the Movement system would in fact be a single-party system that was supported by the state, and marked by an increasing fusion between state and party. The term 'movement democracy' hid the fact that Uganda was, effectively, a single-party system (Kasfir, 1998, 2000; Oloka-Onyango, 2000).

The restrictions on political parties, initially presented as temporary, were enshrined in the 1995 Constitution. It was prohibited to organise public rallies and party conferences, to set up local party branches, or support election candidates. Candidates had to contest on the basis of individual merit, running individual campaigns, and not on a party ticket. Only in Kampala was some party activity allowed. The 1997 Movement Act banned political organisations altogether. It integrated the powers of the Movement into the state and provided for NRM

structures across the country, thus consolidating the single-party state structure (Oloka-Onyango, 2000).

Then in 2003 the intention to return to multi-party politics was announced, arguably due to declining support for the NRM in the 2001 elections. The internal conflict within the NRM, exposed in the 2001 elections when Kiisa Besigye challenged President Museveni from within the NRM, would have been a strong factor in pressuring for change (Makara, Rakner, & Svasand, 2007). A referendum in July 2005 let the Ugandan public decide whether to maintain the Movement system or to adopt a multi-party system. After a 92.5% vote in favour of multi-party politics the transition was formalised in December 2005 (Atoo, Okiror, & Tostensen, 2008). Both the ruling party and opposition parties had consented to the transition, but the NRM shaped the rules of the game in its favour. A controversial amendment to the Constitution in 2005 removed the two-term limit of the Presidency, which made it possible for Museveni to stand for the Presidential elections in 2006. The 2006 elections happened so soon after the multi-party system was formalised that the opposition parties had very little time to organise for them (Atoo et al., 2008). The NRM won the elections and Museveni entered his third term as President. Since 2006, the political parties have been trying to strengthen their capacities and relations to their local constituencies, but are still considered to be weak and too fragmented to form an effective opposition to the NRM. In 2011, it was again Museveni that won the presidency.

#### **4.1.4 Acholi identity and adverse incorporation**

The historical processes described above played a major role in the construction of the Acholi identity. As explained in section 4.1.1 there is a literature that describes the social-political organisation of the Acholi ethnic group before, during and after the colonial regime. Here I elaborate on what constitutes the Acholi identity by linking their ethnic identity to the process of their marginalisation, which links back to the issues of ethnic identity, citizenship and marginalisation as outlined in chapter 2. In subsequent empirical chapters I will describe how the Acholi themselves described their identity.

The historical process of state formation in Uganda, as described above, led to marginalisation of the Acholi region. As part of the greater North, the Acholi experienced economic marginalisation from the colonial time onwards and political marginalisation deepened when

the NRA came to power. Similar to what Bastian (2000) observed to have led to marginalisation of the Tamils in India, marginalisation was also the result of a regime that failed to create a sense of national unity or a national Ugandan identity or to establish political institutions that were representative of all regions. Although the Movement system was to be all-inclusive on paper, certain ethnic groups were not well represented.

The situation of the Acholi region is an illustrative example of 'adverse incorporation', as explained by Hickey and Du Toit (2007) and Hickey and Golooba-Mutebi (2010). Hickey and Du Toit consider the structure of the economy under the colonial regime, which banned plantation development in the north, and the incorporation of the people from the North into the state solely through the military and security sectors to be key features of the process of adverse incorporation in Acholi. Northerners were scarcely employed in the civil service sector and also lacked representation in the Movement System (2007, p.14). They draw a link between state formation and violence, following Bates (2001), by pointing out that it was not in the interest of the regime to end the LRA conflict. This argument is also made by Finnström (2003), who - referring to Barth's (1969) social constructivist approach - explains how the NRA/M regime needed to construct the ethnic identity of the Acholi as violent and oppressive to gain support among the southern tribes. This was reflected in the debate over who caused the atrocities in the Luwero bush war: the Acholi-dominated UNLA, or the NRA. The NRA subsequently used the LRA war to perpetuate stereotypes about the Acholi. The Acholi, for their part, experienced the NRA regime as southern domination. This concurs with Petersen's work (2001) about the resentment, frustration and a sense of injustice as the result of a transformation in social hierarchies after a political regime change. The anger among the Acholi about the NRA as a southern oppressor is indeed described by many (Branch, 2010; Finnström, 2005). The Acholi felt betrayed when Museveni cheated Okello in 1986. The subsequent role played by the NRA in the LRA war was felt as a form of dominance.

Thus, diverse groupings that formed the Acholi initially shared territorial and linguistic characteristics and an origin - much like Fearon (2004)'s definition of ethnicity. They became a political identity when the colonial regime forged a tribal grouping, which was used by Acholi politicians used to strengthen their authority vis-à-vis the state as well as internally within the region. The construction of ethnic boundaries between the north and south reflects a dialectic process (Barth, 1969; Jenkins, 2008) between northern and southern tribes, with post-colonial governments as important actors (Dunn, 2009). The North-South divide became increasingly

politicised, which contributed to the adverse incorporation of the Acholi region into the state. The adverse incorporation of the Acholi was deepened by the LRA war.

## **4.2 The state at local level**

### **4.2.1 Resistance Councils: a guerrilla tactic and democratic innovation**

The NRA introduced the Resistance Councils (RCs) in Luwero as a guerrilla tactic to gather intelligence from and build relationships with the local population, but also with the intention to reform Uganda's political system and to democratise local rule. As an instrument of guerrilla warfare introduced in an unstable political environment, the RCs embodied a new form of order. Thus, the RCs were part of a new governance order, theorised in conflict studies literature (Justino, 2013), and they subsequently transformed the hierarchically structured systems of rule and brought about a radical change in local level politics.

Depending on how the population perceived the new regime, the regions responded differently to the introduction of the RCs. In Luwero, the population either actively or passively supported the RCs and the NRA, which promised to counter northern domination and put an end to UNLA violence (Weinstein, 2007). Moreover, the population responded positively to the opportunity for self-rule, which allowed them to break away from the hierarchical leadership structure of the kingdom and hereditary chiefs (Karlström, 1996; Weinstein, 2007). This, too, was a deliberate NRA strategy to muster support among the population, especially the peasantry, against the Obote (II) regime (Mamdani, 1996). A significant departure from the past was that participation in RCs as a right was extended to *all residents* of a particular area and not to members of a particular ethnic group. This brought indigenous and migrant groups together in the struggle for regime change (Mamdani, 1996, p. 208).

In the North, however, particularly in Lango and Acholi, the populations perceived the RCs not as democratising but as a mechanism of control. Indeed, the nature of the RC system in Acholi was to a certain extent different from how the RCs were implemented in the rest of Uganda. As in other parts of the country, the RCs were made responsible for security and intelligence: to liaise with the NRA and report on the armed resistance, and to supervise the Local Defence Units (LDUs). Where in other regions the LDUs were meant to serve as a form of community policing and a check on military power, this was not the case in Acholi (Finnström, 2003). The

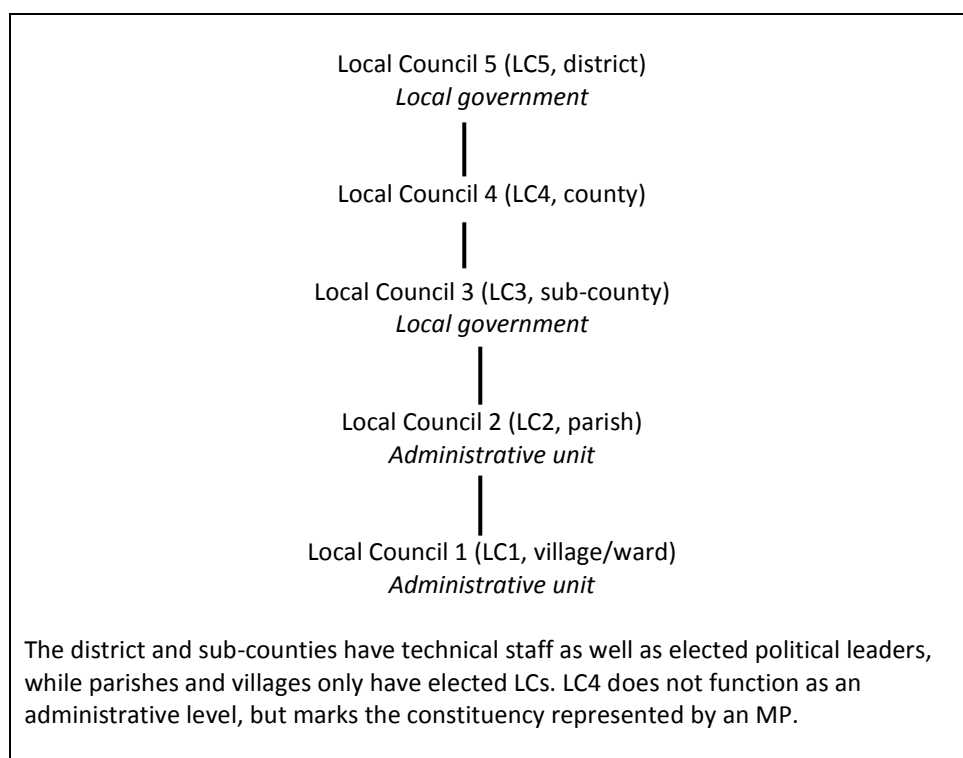
NRA anticipated widespread resistance from the Acholi people and therefore they had no intention of using the RCs as a mechanism for democratic empowerment. Thus, unlike in Luwero, there were no efforts to democratise local self-rule in Acholi. In Acholi the RCs were used for security purposes only and, as I will show in the next chapter, cooperation was coerced. Due to the insecurity and difficulties the NRA faced in controlling the remote areas, vast areas of land were without RCs for a long time<sup>6</sup>.

Much as there is written about the regime change and the RCs, there is very little documented about how the Acholi population interacted with the RCs in everyday life. In 1987 a country-wide assessment of the RCs was carried out, which was tasked with reviewing their functioning. The report mentions that the team was unable to carry out the assessment in Acholi due to the ongoing insecurity (GoU, 1987). A comprehensive content analysis of newspaper articles concerning the Acholi region during that period reveals how people mistrusted the RCs and were reluctant to cooperate after the RCs were increasingly used in the NRA's counter-insurgency in the North (Branch, 2007). Still today, many Acholi continue to think of the LCs as the intelligence agents of the state (Finnström, 2003, p. 129).

After the victory of the NRA in 1986, the RCs were rapidly institutionalised to become part of the new democratic system. Already in 1987 the Resistance Councils and Committees Statute formalised the RCs, which formed a multi-tiered system from the village level, RC1, up to the district level, RC5. Only the RC1 was directly elected by the adult village population: the executive committees at each level elected the committees at the level above (Carbone, 2008, p. 33). The democratising effect of the RCs was, however, reduced in many parts of the country post-1986, when the NRA started to 'discipline' the RCs into following NRA directives (Mamdani, 1991; Oloka-Onyango, 2000). Moreover, as I will demonstrate in subsequent chapters, the RC/LC system in Acholi never had the chance to transform and adopt the democratic functions that it developed elsewhere in the country. Whilst the LCs outside the conflict areas consolidated during the 1990s, in Acholi this was not possible due to the insurgency.

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<sup>6</sup> Interview, Gulu NGO Forum, 05/03/2010.

**Figure 4.1      The Local Council System of Uganda**

The local government system was further developed throughout the 1990s. Initially, deconcentration and accountability mechanisms were weak (Ahikire, 2007, p. 49). Measures were required to enhance the democratic potential of the RCs as well as their capacity to implement policies. With the 1993 Local Government Statute, decision-making authority was transferred from line ministries to districts, which were now in control of expenditure on the services for which they were responsible. The 1995 Constitution firmly consolidated decentralised governance and democratic mechanisms, and the Resistance Councils (RCs) were renamed Local Councils (LCs) (Figure 2.1).

The 1997 Local Government Act adopted more gender inclusive language, and stipulated that 30% of council members at all levels should be women (Ahikire, 2007). From now on the population could directly elect the chair persons and councillors for the levels of LC1, LC3 and LC5, for a 5-year term. However, in the 2006 local elections there were no elections for LC1 and LC2 level, because in the change to a multi-party system the government could not reach agreement about whether the candidates at LC1 and LC2 level should stand on a party ticket. Officially the LC1 and LC2 thus served for 2 terms, although many members dropped out along the way, effectively leaving gaps in LC capacity and in the chain of communication to other levels.



Thus, until the arrival of the NRA/M government in 1986, structures for participation in local governance barely existed. Under the British system of indirect rule, appointed chiefs had wielded substantial powers, which they used for self-enrichment. Under Obote (I) the institution of chiefs remained in place, as well as their patronage networks. Amin abolished the local governments altogether and replaced them with a military administration. The system of Myumba Kumi under Obote (II) was the first instance of village level participation, but it served the interests of his government rather than the people. Thus until 1986 Ugandans had not experienced local government as emancipatory self-rule, but as a form of top-down control by the state. To conclude, rural Ugandans thus had little experience with citizen engagement in local public affairs prior to 1986. Although the system for decentralised governance developed under the NRA/M, the insecurity in Acholi did not allow the LC system to consolidate. This does not mean, however, that the implementation of the LC system in stable regions of Uganda was without challenges. In the following section I explain the most important flaws in the system that have been described in the literature on local governance in Uganda.

#### **4.2.2 Functioning of the Local Council system at present**

In the Ugandan 1995 Constitution ‘citizen participation’ figures prominently. In particular chapter 11 on the functioning of Local Government explicitly states its importance, but participation is considered crucial for all levels of governance, as well as ‘empowerment’. The Local Council system is one of the key policy frameworks for citizen participation. However, existing literature on the LC system in Uganda has identified major gaps between the design and implementation of the reforms carried out in the 1990s (Dicklitch, 1998; Steiner, 2008). These gaps reflect the challenges in local governance, participation, and accountability observed elsewhere, which were elaborated in Chapter 2. I will discuss some of these criticisms in terms of Uganda. Others have concentrated on aspects that I consider beyond the scope of this review, although not unrelated, like the technical capacities of local governments (Manyak & Katono, 2010; Steiner, 2010), and on challenges for fiscal decentralisation (P. Francis & James, 2003; Steiner, 2007). Given the focus of this study on citizen engagement, I will concentrate on the problems experienced in the LC system that pose a challenge to the promise of popular participation for local *democratic* governance.

### ***Relation of centre state to local state***

The political context and state-centre relations matter for the functioning of local government institutions (Crook, 2003). In this chapter I have underlined the importance of the historical context: the roots of Uganda's local government system are in the guerrilla war. Despite the explicit commitment in the legal frameworks and in public speeches to enhancing democracy and citizen participation, the NRM state has retained a high level of control over local governments (Wunsch & Ottemoeller, 2004). Political, and – particularly – governmental stability have often had priority over devolution of powers. In his attempt to hold on to power, Museveni diminishes the democratising potential of the LC system. The NRM government uses various strategies to stay in control, of which I will discuss a few.

Compared to other Sub-Saharan countries, Uganda's functions and funds are more devolved. However, in 2006, certain technical offices were recentralised, to be appointed by the central government instead of by the districts (Manyak & Katono, 2010; Tidemand, 2009). Line ministries, then, limit the autonomy of local governments by having the power to determine development priorities, and by maintaining financial control. Local governments largely depend on Conditional Grants, and the conditions for spending them are stipulated by the line ministries. In 2003/4 about 80% of the grants were conditional (Steiner, 2008).

Secondly, the appointment of the President's representative to the districts, the office of the Resident District Commissioner (RDC) is considered a form of control<sup>7</sup>. RDCs are charged with the monitoring of government programmes and district security, which is considered a factor that undermines local democratic politics. The RDCs are all known to be NRM loyalists (Manyak & Katono, 2010).

Thirdly, the NRM consolidates support through creating new districts, which the district population associates with the creation of jobs and better service provision. The number of districts increased from 45 in 1993 to 81 in 2009, with many more up for discussion. For the NRM, a new district helps to ensure loyal supporters among local leaders, by promising them important district posts (Manyak & Katono, 2010).

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<sup>7</sup> Interview, Makerere University, Kampala, 26/01/2010; Interview, donor agency, Kampala 20/01/2010

Finally, the NRM government, the party and the state have become deeply entangled (Oloka-Onyango, 2007). It is argued that the NRM used the decentralised system as a patronage network to further entrench the party into the state apparatus (P. Francis & James, 2003; Tripp, 2010). In the past, then, the NRM has effectively used the LC system to mobilise its local support base. Whether it still uses the LCs in that way is subject to debate. One academic interviewed argued other strategies are even more effective<sup>8</sup>: through political appointments Museveni ensnares the political elite who will mobilise local support. Also, the NRM is able to dominate politics because it has much greater resources than any other party and uses state resources during elections. It therefore has more local presence. Another academic interviewed emphasised that most LCs are dominated by the NRM, which at local level sends a strong message to people that there are no alternatives to NRM leadership<sup>9</sup>.

### ***Micro-politics of participation in the LCs***

The LC system is designed to ensure bottom-up planning and participation in decision-making (MinLG & UNDP, 2009). The channelling of interests through the LC1 and LC2 to the sub-county and from there to the LC5 at district level is the central mechanism for communicating issues to the higher level. Village priorities are submitted to the Parish Development Committee (PDC), a committee of nine members from one parish, assisted by the Parish Chief. The PDC is supposed to function as a forum for development planning at parish level, and writes a Parish Development Plan based on the village priorities. The sub-county collects all parish plans and consolidates them into a sub-county development plan, which is sent to the district to be included in the District Development Plan (DDP) (P. Francis & James, 2003).

As for local authorities, their technical capacities still need improvement, as the annual Local Governance Assessments demonstrate (MinLG, 2006). Primarily concerned with the internal institutional mechanisms of local governments, this assessment ignores another major weakness in the system: accountability to the population. Critics argue that LCs have failed to transform into inclusive, accountable institutions (P. Francis & James, 2003; Ssewakiryanga, 2004). Although participation for planning purposes is stipulated, the framework offers no mechanism for citizens to monitor the functioning of local government.

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<sup>8</sup> Interview, Makerere University, Kampala, 26/01/2010

<sup>9</sup> Interview, Makerere University, Kampala, 10/08/2010

The framework for planning offers a set of 'spaces' for citizen engagement. The literature on the LCs shows that challenges commonly associated with the 'micropolitics' of participation in spaces like these are also common in Uganda. Patronage, kinship and ethnicity continue to dominate council politics (Brock, 2004). Exclusionary practices exist that disadvantage people of a certain age, ethnicity or gender in becoming involved in the LCs. Another flaw is that LCs rarely involve the wider community, resulting in a widening gap between the people and local government and leaving decision-making in the hands of a select few. Furthermore, rather than true deliberation, the meetings adhere to strict rules: *'there seem to be few opportunities to use the spaces on offer to create solutions, rather than to carry out a ritualised series of exchanges between a narrow range of actors'* (Brock, 2004, p. 152).

Prevailing attitudes in society and public opinion affect how people evaluate and use opportunities for participation, and their relevance. Golooba-Mutebi (2004) challenges the assumption that local citizens would want and have the ability to participate once those opportunities emerge. Both leaders and citizens lack the knowledge of rules and procedures. Many people feel it is the duty of LC members to make decisions and take initiatives on development problems, since they were elected and hence 'delegated' to decide on their behalf. The LC members themselves are stuck in trying to find solutions to non-participation in meetings and community work; there are no resources to reward participation, nor do they want to impose fines that would make them unpopular.

Brock (2004) and Ahikire (2007) have described the gender dimension of this process. At every council level, women encounter challenges in deliberative processes, including lack of education and self-confidence, the use of formal/English language, and the masculine political culture that seemed more 'defensively patriarchal' (Ahikire, 2007) at the local than at the national level. The gender identity of female councillors was more emphasised in politics than that of men, which undermined their political power and prevented them from doing anything 'radical'. Norms about 'a good woman' also guide the LC election process. The morals that dominate the existing conceptualisation of femininity include e.g. humility, obedience and respectfulness to men. In campaigns women *'had to prove that they were "real" women despite the fact that they sought public office'* (Ahikire, 2007, p. 118) by kneeling and begging for votes.

The reality in certain areas of Uganda is that the state does not even have a presence. In his ethnography of a rural area in Teso, Jones (2009) describes how 'the state' exists as a paper

administration in towns. In rural villages it is unseen and largely irrelevant since districts barely have any resources to make any visible improvement in services. The churches and burial societies are the social institutions through which people assist one another and which matter for their livelihoods. This can be seen as another form of marginalisation: geographical isolation exacerbated by the lack of Iteso people holding high-level positions in government. In this context, in the absence of conflict, the Iteso exercise agency outside the state in numerous ethnic and community institutions.

Finally, a few authors discuss the legacy of previous regimes for participatory governance at present. Steiner mentions how past authoritarian rule in Uganda has affected the 'culture for participation' in the country. People were not at all used to participation and developed a sense of cynicism towards public affairs, resulting from years of experience with dictatorship and a strict social and political hierarchy (2007). Golooba-Mutebi states that the world view of Ugandans simply favoured a top-down model of decision-making rather than one based upon popular participation (2004). The effects of long-term authoritarian control are hinted at by others in similar contexts, raising the question of how receptive society is to participatory governance (Blunt & Turner, 2005; Unsworth & Uvin, 2002). As I will show in Chapter 7, my findings suggest that, contrary to Golooba-Mutebi (2004), the Acholi *do* have a normative understanding about how citizens should be involved, but the legacy of the conflict - and particularly state repression - limit their opportunities. Concerning the difficulties there have been in citizen engagement with the LCs ever since their inception, the literature does not take into account that the LCs in Acholi only started functioning as 'ordinary' LCs from 2006 onwards, when stability returned to the region. It is, however, important to view citizen engagement with the LCs against the historical background of the war.

### **4.3 The LRA conflict in Acholi**

The LRA conflict is well documented from different angles. A chronology of events and stages of the war are described by various authors and institutions (Accord, 2010; Allen & Vlassenroot, 2010; ARLPI, 2001; Dolan, 2009) and they discuss both the peaks and lulls in the intensity of the conflict, government interventions and peace negotiations, how the conflict played out at national level, and its international dimensions after the involvement of Sudan and international actors. The events leading up to Uganda's referral of the case to the International Criminal Court (ICC, The Hague, The Netherlands), the subsequent ICC

indictments and how this affected the dynamics of the conflict internally is discussed by Allen (2006). Detailed descriptions exist of the structure and organisation of the LRA as a rebel group and of its leader Joseph Kony (Allen & Vlassenroot, 2010; Bevan, 2007; Dolan, 2009).

Finnström has done valuable and detailed ethnographic work on Acholi life during the war (2003, 2005). Several authors have analysed the situation in Acholi IDP camps and the work of humanitarian actors (ARLPI, 2001; Branch, 2009; Dolan, 2009; Hurifo, 2002, 2006). Work exists on the lives of (returned) child soldiers and the psychological effects of the war on youth (C. Blattman & Annan, 2008; C. Blattman & Annan, 2010); on the effects of the war on gender relations (McKay, 2004; Oosterom, 2011); and the international dimensions of the war (Allen, 2006; Atkinson, 2010; Perrot, 2010).

The findings from my study do not contradict what others have found about what happened during the conflict period, but add new empirical detail about the functioning of the Resistance Councils and forms of citizen agency. Concerning the post-conflict situation, my findings are different from what Blattman (2009) found about increased levels of participation among ex-combatants. I reflect on his findings in Chapter 8, where I suggest that my focus on the general community may explain the difference. Allen (2006) and Branch (2009) have written about the crisis in customary leadership in the post-conflict situation. Here too, my study generated different findings. Whereas their findings suggest a weakening of the customary leadership, I show, in Chapter 7, that there are signs of its recovery within the ethnic political community, although it has not re-established a brokering role in the political community of the state. A possible reason for this difference is that I carried out my study later than Branch and Allen, so customary leadership had had time to revive old practices in the home areas.

The history of the conflict and certain sub-themes have been documented in detail. Section 4.3.1 therefore presents a summary of events to depict the warscape that emerged in Acholi from when the NRA came to power in 1986. Section 4.3.2 highlights what the literature has said about two central themes of this study: agency and institutional transformation. This shows the gap in existing knowledge about citizen agency in Acholi.

#### **4.3.1 Northern rebellion after regime change**

After the coup in 1986, the NRA started to extend its control across the country. When the NRA expanded its power base to the North it expected intense armed opposition. The NRA

thus went into the Acholi region to counter all forms of resistance and break the rural support base of the UNLA. In the areas where the NRA managed to penetrate, many atrocities took place. Whereas the political wing of the NRA had previously controlled and disciplined its soldiers, it could now not prevent them using physical violence against civilians, and looting large stocks of cattle (Finnström, 2003; Gersony, 1997).

In response, various insurgent groups became active in Acholi and Lango, as well as elsewhere in the country where the NRA met with resistance. UNLA fighters had quickly retreated to their home areas in the north, afraid of reprisals, and many reorganised as the Uganda People's Democratic Army (UPDA). Joseph Kony fought the NRA as a member of the UPDA from 1986 (Finnström, 2003, p. 111). The UPDA signed a peace agreement with the NRA in June 1988. This did not bring an end to NRA violence against the Acholi population, however, as the NRA continued the war all over the region (Finnström, 2003).

The Holy Spirit Movement (HSM), led by Alice Lakwena, was formed in 1986. Behrend describes the emergence and organisation of the movement, and the spiritual mobilisation of its followers (Behrend, 1999). In August 1986, a woman called Alice Auma, possessed by the Lakwena spirit, was ordered to build up forces to fight 'the evil'. 'The evil' consisted of a threat to Acholi soldiers - and their families - from the spirits of those whom they had killed. This belief is one expression of a number of cultural belief systems among the Acholi in which various spirits play an important role. The goal of Alice's war was the reconciliation of the various ethnic groups in Uganda, and to that end she was fighting the NRA as well as the UPDA. The organisation of the movement and its battle techniques were entangled with rituals and symbols. It fought and sometimes even defeated UPDA as well as NRA troops in the region. The HSM went further south as far as Jinja with the ultimate goal of reaching Kampala. In October 1987 the movement was defeated by the NRA. Her father, Severino Lukoya, attempted to continue her struggle and formed a group of his own. Lukoya's movement was, however, not as popular as the HSM and he surrendered to the NRA in August 1989.

As the NRA violence against the Acholi went on, from 1988 groups of UPDA defectors as well as former HSM fighters and Lukoya soldiers joined Kony in a new insurgent group called Holy Spirits. At that time it was a former UPDA commander, Odong Latek, who led the movement's military force and Kony gave spiritual guidance. After Latek was killed Kony took over and renamed the movement the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA). There are believed to be links between the HSM and the LRA. Joseph Kony is an alleged second cousin of Alice Lakwena

(Finströmm, 2003, p.77) and her father Lukoya served directly under his command. As in the HSM, new recruits in the LRA underwent spiritual initiation rituals and spiritual rituals characterised the LRA methods of warfare. Among the Acholi there are people who believe that the spirits that had possessed Alice Lakwena were taken over by Joseph Kony, while others disagree and feel that the spirits that guided Kony were far more 'evil' and not even Acholi spirits (Finströmm, 2003).

#### **4.3.2 From insurgency to protracted conflict**

By 1990 the LRA was the only active rebel group in the north. Especially in the early stages of the war the NRA seemed to consider the LRA as a highly localised, internal issue to the Acholi region, and would only respond with armed attacks, not sparing the local population. Museveni even appointed a Minister of State for Pacification of Northern Uganda in 1988, the Acholi Mrs. Betty Bigombe, which signals that the NRA perhaps considered the insurgency insignificant. When the LRA violence waned between about 1989 and 1990 Bigombe and Museveni declared the war to be over. The LRA however stepped up its activities in 1991. This partly provoked the first major military operation, Operation North, in 1991. Another reason for this offensive was that the World Bank had agreed a stabilisation grant on condition that the situation was secure. A key feature of this operation was that Bigombe mobilised Acholi civilians into 'Bow and Arrow groups' to counter the LRA. Initially, the LRA had attacked only government agents and soldiers, but now the LRA found the Acholi populations guilty of collaboration with the regime and reacted brutally, with symbolic acts of violence such as maiming to punish the disloyalty.

The first attempt at peace negotiations was initiated by Bigombe in 1993. The talks ended abruptly, however, after Museveni imposed an ultimatum in February 1994 for the LRA to surrender within one week. The LRA immediately resumed its violent operations. From now on the LRA also had bases in Sudan, which gave substantial financial and logistical support to the LRA as retaliation for Uganda's backing of the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA). Uganda cut off all diplomatic relations with Khartoum in 1995. After mediation by the Carter Centre in 1999 diplomatic engagements gradually, though carefully, resumed (Dolan, 2009). LRA activities were intense from 1997 until early 1999, when a lull in the conflict occurred. However, within two weeks after the agreement with Sudan, the LRA renewed its operations because it had not been involved in the negotiations (Dolan, 2009).



From 1996 the NRM embarked on what would become another key feature of the war: forced displacement. It established 'protected villages', mainly in the western parts of Acholi. These camps were not primarily for the protection of civilians, but to cut off the supply links between the rebels and the population and to allow the military a free fire zone. Many people were forced into the camps by the Uganda People's Defence Forces (UPDF). After a wave of LRA attacks in Kitgum district in January 1997, the people in the affected sub-counties fled their homes and formed camps around the sub-county trading centres. The NRM launched Operation Iron Fist against the LRA on Sudanese territory in 2002, which caused a deepening of the humanitarian crisis (Perrot, 2010). The LRA retaliated with a series of attacks across the Acholi region and beyond, going deep into Lango and Teso regions. This provoked the last phase of displacement. Between 2002 and the 2005 the number of IDPs had increased from 400,000 to 1.6 million (over 90% of the Acholi population) (UNOCHA, 2004). Camps were also established in Lango.

The Amnesty Act was enacted in January 2000 following the efforts of various civil society groups, despite huge resentment by the political establishment, notably President Museveni himself. The situation stabilised locally and attempts to negotiate with the LRA were undertaken by the Carter Center, though without success. While the Amnesty Act was considered part of a peaceful resolution of the conflict, Museveni remained reluctant to implement it. Only from 2003, after developments in the international context, did the process of implementation become more serious. By 2004 around 5,000 LRA fighters had made use of the act to return to their homes in Acholi (Allen, 2006). That so many LRA fighters returned caused, unfortunately, a backlash when the LRA responded with a period of attacks, which were the last to take place in Uganda – at the time of writing.

Meanwhile, several events at international level had profound implications for the local situation and the role of the Government of Uganda. First, during the 1990s Uganda had built up a reputation of being a 'success story' in terms of economic reforms and development, meaning its strategies towards the north were not questioned by the international donors (Mwenda, 2010; Perrot, 2010). This changed after 2000 when the Nordic countries in particular denounced the military approach to the conflict and argued for a much harder diplomatic line.

However, the United States (US) government put the LRA on its list of terrorist organisations in

2001 and this led to some US support for Operation Iron Fist (Allen, 2006, p. 72). In March 2002 the Government of Uganda adopted the Anti-Terrorism Act, which greatly undermined the possibilities for implementing the Amnesty Act. In the war on terrorism President El Bashir of Sudan was pressured to cut his country's support to the LRA. He agreed to the joint military operation Iron Fist. With US involvement, the Government of Uganda was under more pressure to improve the performance of the military and open up space for political negotiations and the implementation of the Amnesty Act. Then in 2003, the UN Under-Secretary for Humanitarian Affairs, Mr. Jan Egeland, visited the Acholi region. He declared it required the immediate attention of the international community. This led to an influx of humanitarian organisations from 2004. Finally, in late 2003 the Ugandan government referred the case of the LRA, Kony and some of its top commanders to the International Criminal Court (ICC) in The Hague, the Netherlands. The ICC issued arrest warrants in July 2005. Ugandan civil society feared it was now impossible for the LRA leadership to surrender or for abductees to return.

Then in 2006 peace negotiations started in Juba, South Sudan, known as the Juba Peace Talks. These were mediated by Riek Machar, then vice-president of southern Sudan. These were the most promising talks in years of repeated attempts and repeated failures. The Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) was signed between North and South Sudan in 2005, which offered the Government of South Sudan incentives to end the LRA conflict (Atkinson, 2010). The LRA moved its bases to south-western Sudan and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). The Government of Uganda, Museveni's public statements especially, expressed conflicting messages about engaging in the peace talks, undertaking military offensives in the DRC, and withdrawing/supporting the ICC warrants. In the end, a delegation was sent to Juba.

The Juba Peace Talks did not evolve smoothly and there were many barriers to success. At least the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement was reached (August 2006), which was crucial for restoring stability. Yet at the same time, the ICC indictments formed a major obstruction to the negotiations (Atkinson, 2010), increasing mistrust. The talks were even suspended in late 2006 and could only resume in May 2007 after major efforts by Joaquim Chissano, then UN Special Envoy for LRA-Affected Areas.

The parties reached an agreement on comprehensive solutions to the war, which addressed the reintegration of ex-combatants, return of the displaced, and the disparity between the north and south in government institutions. The delegations subsequently reached agreement

on Accountability and Reconciliation. Thereafter, however, the talks stalled again due to divisions within the LRA delegation. Vincent Otti, who had led the LRA delegation, was assassinated by Joseph Kony. Talks resumed in early 2008. The final peace agreement was due to be signed in April 2008, but Kony failed to show up, nor did he come to sign at a second meeting in November. When in December the governments of Uganda and DRC started operation Lightning Thunder the end of the Juba Peace talks was definite. Thus no final agreement was attained, yet the region nonetheless returned to stability.

The LRA kept its base in Garamba national park in the north of DRC, from where it occasionally attacked villages in the border area of Central African Republic, South Sudan and DRC. Operation Lightning Thunder in 2008 also failed to bring out Kony, and the LRA reacted with attacks and abductions in the border area. In October 2011 the US government agreed to send a relatively small number of soldiers to DRC to work as military advisers to the DRC army, in order to track down LRA leaders.

#### **4.3.3 The role of the NRM government**

The way the Government of Uganda responded to the ongoing conflict has been heavily criticised. Although the LRA was the aggressor in the war, the actions of the government, and of the military in particular, often harmed the Acholi population directly or indirectly. I argue that the role of the government and the army had lasting effects on how the Acholi perceive their citizenship. In this section I highlight some of the actions of the Ugandan government that have damaged its relationship with the Acholi region.

In the first stages of the war it seemed the government significantly underestimated the power of the LRA, and even purposely ignored it to convince the rest of the country and the international community of its own strength in consolidating peace and democratic institutions. This partly explains the government's discourse portraying the LRA as 'bandits' (i.e. without a political cause, such as establishing an alternative regime or representing the interests and grievances of the Acholi people) and its attitude of belittling and humiliating the LRA during negotiations.

The discourse of state actors about the war, most notably of President Museveni himself, deepened the Acholi region's sense of alienation from the rest of the country. On several

occasions Museveni expressed his view of the LRA conflict as an internal Acholi affair, perpetuating the stereotype of the Acholi as barbaric and as warriors. Customary institutions such as the role of the Acholi elders and certain ritual blessings were misrepresented so as to demonstrate that the Acholi inflicted the war upon themselves by supporting an anti-government insurgency. In this way the government attributed the cause of the war directly to the Acholi ethnic identity (Finströmm, 2003, p.219).

Throughout the conflict the government has alternated between military offensives and peace negotiations to stop the LRA. Also in public statements, in the media and in speeches, Museveni often mentioned openness to dialogue and military threat in one breath. This undermined possibilities for negotiations by closing down any space for dialogue as soon as it had been opened. In the late 1990s various civil society organisations were trying to establish talks with the LRA which were disrupted by UPDF attacks (Dolan, 2009, p. 98). The government persistently ignored the pleas of Acholi civil society and parliamentarians to resolve the war through mechanisms for reconciliation, reparation and compensation. Their efforts were compromised by the referral to the ICC, which provoked a huge debate about the relevance of international law versus 'domestic' justice mechanisms. The Anti-Terrorism Act was seen as a major fall-back that compromised the Amnesty Act, which Museveni had always been reluctant to extend to the LRA. Finally, Operation Iron Fist put a definite end to the Juba Peace Talks, stalled as they were.

Altogether, the Acholi received strong signals that the government was not willing to end this war and that it was in its own interests to prolong and even deepen it. Although the government often declared it was unable to defeat the LRA due to a lack of resources and army personnel, huge corruption scandals about e.g. defence procurements, large numbers of 'ghost soldiers' on the payroll (Mwenda, 2010), and the deployment of Ugandan troops in DRC and later Somalia contradicted these statements. The Acholi population was therefore inclined to think that the main reason for the government's failure was a lack of political will. Findings from my own research show that people continued to think that the government had prolonged the war on purpose, which will be elaborated in the next chapter.

#### **4.4 Transformation of institutions in Acholi**

In Chapter 2, I discussed conflict studies literature that points to the transformation of social and political institutions during wartime, which has implications for local power dynamics.

Vlassenroot and Raymaekers (2005, 2008) therefore speak of a 'war complex'. I related institutional transformation to 'learning citizenship', as the practice of citizen engagement is partly learnt through involvement in the institutions in people's social environment (Heater, 1990; Merrifield, 2001). In this section I recount what the literature says about institutional transformation during the LRA conflict, focusing on the introduction of the Resistance Councils and the changing role of customary leaders. I point out how the issue of citizen engagement remains underexposed.

The historical literature outlined above shows how the introduction of the Resistance Councils was closely entwined with the origins of the NRA as a revolutionary power, and the institutionalisation into the Local Council system was entangled with the political consolidation of the Movement System. As a new governance institution that was part of the NRA guerrilla warfare, the RCs illustrate how a new governance order can emerge during conflict (Justino, 2013). Their creation was enabled by the openings in the unstable political order that existed in Luwero (Weinstein, 2007). The case of the RCs shows how the transformation of political institutions can have lasting effects in the post-conflict order, as the RCs were formalised and consolidated into a major component of the country's formal institutional democracy. They were, however, used by the NRA/M to entrench its power. This illustrates another point in the literature: political actors seek to transform state institutions that influence the future distribution of political power (Acemoglu & Robinson, 2006; Cramer, 2006a; Justino, 2013).

In section 4.2 I explained the differences in the nature of the RCs between the North and the South. This is relevant for this study when thinking about the implications of institutional transformation for the practice of citizenship. Because the RCs in Acholi were associated with NRA oppression and control this may have affected the ways in which the Acholi engaged with them and other leaders. There is, however, little information about how this affected everyday practices of engagement with the RCs. I address this gap in subsequent chapters.

The changes in cultural institutions constitute another instance of institutional transformation that is well-covered in the literature on Acholi. The institution of Acholi customary leadership changed because its legitimacy had deteriorated during various episodes of the conflict (Allen, 2010; Finnström, 2003). Section 4.1 showed that this was explained by the inability of customary leaders and elders to help reintegrate Acholi UNLA soldiers into society (Behrend, 1999; Branch, 2010). On top of that, numerous customary leaders had encouraged participation in anti-NRA rebellion, including the LRA, but as the war evolved they condemned

the activities of the LRA (Finnström, 2003). Therefore ex-combatants often lacked respect for the elders. The situation in the displacement camps also weakened the legitimacy of customary leaders (Chapter 6). Chapter 7 explains how this affected social relations and the leaders' role as political brokers. Interestingly, Jones (2009) shows how Iteso elders in the Teso region (western Uganda) try to re-establish their authority over young men by disciplining them through court rulings, whenever a case comes up involving young adult men. He argues that such rulings by the elders are informed by the idea that disobedient, rebellious young men were the major cause of the Teso insurgency (1986-1993). The wider community supports the elders and endorse the norm that young men need to learn to respect authority. This is an example from a different post-conflict situation in Uganda that illustrates proposition (IV).

Cultural institutions changed not just because of the internal conflict dynamics but also due to the involvement of local and international aid actors in the field of justice and reconciliation. Aid agencies supported 'traditional reconciliation' mechanisms, starting from the end of the war. However, Allen is critical of claims that these are more 'appropriate' and states that traditions were 'invented' (Allen, 2006, 2010). Historically, different Acholi groups had practiced a variety of rituals to solve social problems and there had not been a uniform approach to reconciliation in the region. The ritual '*mato oput*' ('to drink a bitter potion made from the leaves of the 'oput' tree') was originally performed only in cases of homicide committed by individuals within their own social circles, not after warfare. Allen found that at the local level, even in the displacement camps, spiritual healers adapted some of their rituals, other than *mato oput*, to reintegrate ex-combatants. But aid actors promoted *mato oput* for use by former LRA combatants. In the process it became misinterpreted as a generic term for reconciliation, using aspects of different rituals. The aid community carried on supporting the material requirements for rituals and the reinvigoration of the customary leaders to perform them. Allen (2010) shows that not all the Acholi were in favour of reintegrating LRA combatants and instead preferred a formal court procedure and imprisonment. But support for traditional justice had become so entrenched that any critique was considered provocative. Allen (2010) points out the risks of codifying and reifying selected practices and external support to forms of authority without understanding the historical and cultural complexities.

Thus, important changes occurred in both the sphere of the local state, through the RCs, and in the customary sphere. As argued by others, both are important spheres of citizenship and one may affect the other (Ndegwa, 1997). Allen's work (2010) brings out some of the attitudes the Acholi have towards the state and towards customary authorities. But his work does not

indicate how this informs everyday interactions between Acholi citizens and authorities, especially for other issues than reconciliation. The literature does not specifically address social institutions, or the public sphere. My study contributes to empirical knowledge about Acholi by addressing both.

Finally, although the conflict itself has been well documented, less has been written that links this history to the present and the implications of the war for the future prospects for local and national democratic governance. What is missing is in-depth knowledge of how the Acholi sense of citizenship has been constructed against this background, and how it informs Acholi practices of citizen engagement.

#### **4.5 Post-conflict recovery in Acholi**

In Chapter 2 I discussed a number of Community-Driven Recovery Interventions. In Northern Uganda, too, a recovery intervention based on the principles of community-driven development (CDD) is funded by the World Bank and bilateral donors. At the time of research, this Northern Uganda Social Action Fund had just entered its second phase (NUSAF 2, 2010-2014). The design of NUSAF 2 was meant to overcome several weaknesses experienced in Phase 1 (NUSAF 1, 2006-2010).

Robinson (2007) and Golooba-Mutebi and Hickey (2010) reviewed NUSAF Phase 1 and presented a critical analysis of the discourses around poverty in the North. The studies show that the framing of the northern region as needing to 'catch up' was crucial in how the solution to its poverty was understood: the communities had to do it themselves. In essence, local communities were made responsible for overcoming their situation of chronic poverty and for 'catching up'. NUSAF failed to address the underlying causes of poverty through which the north had structurally been excluded and alienated from the rest of country over a long period of time.

*'It was hoped that communities would identify conflict mitigation measures to overcome the legacy of violence and address its underlying causes.'* (Robinson, 2007, p. 263). It was recognised that the grievances in the north were about fear and anger towards the NRM regime. The design team had acknowledged the wider political grievances, according to Robinson, but had translated this into the need to include a community reconciliation

component. NUSAF thus addressed horizontal relations in communities, between citizens and ex-combatants, rather than between communities and the state (Frederick Golooba-Mutebi & Hickey, 2010; Robinson, 2007). This component did not reappear in Phase 2.

Golooba-Mutebi and Hickey (2010) examined whether NUSAF had made a positive impact on citizenship by looking at three dimensions: social citizenship (horizontal relations in communities), economic citizenship, and political citizenship (relations between citizens and the state whereby citizens are actively engaged and state institutions are responsive). They found no evidence that NUSAF had strengthened horizontal relations or forms of 'social citizenship'. On the contrary: they came across many cases in which engagement in projects had led to social tensions. Concerning economic citizenship, their findings showed that projects did have some effect on asset-holdings among the poor. However, these were not used to start sustainable businesses, but to fulfil short-term needs. Regarding political citizenship, there were some instances in which more frequent interactions between citizens, NUSAF staff and local government had increased people's confidence that it was their right to follow up on applications. For the majority of the people, however, the prevalent unresponsiveness of state institutions was discouraging. It confirmed their idea that citizen engagement was pointless and that the state was not interested in them.

Golooba-Mutebi and Hickey identified the failure to address historical and political causes of poverty, as explained above, as an important cause of the ineffectiveness of NUSAF. Another problem was that communities were expected to have a high degree of agency in order to make community-driven development work. However, they found that many failures were caused by the communities' lack of skills to handle budgets and to contract and monitor constructors, which made them vulnerable to abuse by private companies. There were no adequate mechanisms in NUSAF to give guidance to community groups to perform such tasks. Golooba-Mutebi and Hickey thus questioned whether CDD is an appropriate instrument in settings like these, where the causes of chronic poverty lie in higher politics and the political economy. It makes poor people responsible for their own recovery without genuine empowerment (Craig & Porter, 2006).

However, none of these challenges has been addressed in the design of NUSAF 2. What *has* improved is that the implementation no longer runs parallel to local governments. NUSAF2 funds now need to be aligned with district planning cycles and local governments are in charge of the monitoring, thus giving them a bigger role. But NUSAF 2 is based on the same



assumption that the people are able to exercise agency and fully participate in the programme. In Chapter 8 I will present my reflections on this assumption, based on the empirical findings of my study. Populations in a post-conflict setting like Acholi cannot be expected to have the high levels of political agency required to fulfil their roles in a community-driven recovery programme. Such interventions could improve with a focus on learning citizenship and facilitated interactions between communities and the state.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter presented the historical background against which the sense and the practice of Acholi citizenship developed. It showed that the process of Acholi citizenship construction needs to be seen against the wider historical background, in which the colonial era and the continuation of the North-South divide are important markers. In Acholi, the war was a consequence of the North-South divide, as well as a mechanism that deepened it and furthered the process of adverse incorporation. Although large parts of Lango region were unaffected by the war it nevertheless belongs to the marginalised north.

The chapter described what constituted the 'warscape' as it emerged in Acholi. From 1986 to 1990 various rebel groups were involved in fighting the NRA, which shaped the dynamics of the warscape. The Resistance Councils that were introduced were part of the securitisation in the north. From 1990 onwards the LRA and the military were the two violent actors that remained and perpetuated physical violence, while the national government played its own role in deepening the insecurity of Acholi citizens.

The LRA conflict has been documented from various angles, some of which shed light on the Acholi sense of citizenship. Scholars have described the negative perceptions of the state among the Acholi as the result of the conflict (Branch, 2005, 2009; Dolan, 2009). This indicates a link between ethnic citizenship and state citizenship: the Acholi felt that the war targeted them as an ethnic group.

The chapter also outlined what happened to local institutions. This contributes to a reflection on the second proposition presented in Chapter 3, about the securitisation of the public sphere and institutions. The following chapters add the empirical detail that allows me to test the propositions. Chapter 5 describes the start of the insurgency in Acholi through a citizenship

lens, providing Acholi commentaries on their history. For the Lango it shows how their sense and practice of citizenship developed in a relatively stable context from the late 1980s. For the Acholi it describes the events and episodes they themselves identified as important for the construction of their citizenship. It also describes how, in Acholi, forms of agency, including citizenship practice, were adjusted to a context of war. As later chapters will demonstrate these experiences informed forms of citizen engagement in Acholi in the post-conflict situation.

## Chapter 5 Construction of Citizenship in Acholi and Lango

### Introduction

History is one of the many contextual factors that shape a process of citizenship construction, but is often 'invisibilised' since the historical legacies of a country are enclosed in people's minds (Cornwall et al., 2011). The previous chapter highlighted historical episodes and events that preceded the conflict in Acholi, and the LRA conflict cannot not be interpreted in isolation from them. This chapter is written from the perspective of Acholi and Langi citizens and reflects their commentary on the political history described in the previous chapter, thus focusing on what happened on the ground.

What has been called historical memory is valuable precisely because it is not necessarily an accurate memory – that is, it is not the historical veracity of a statement or memory that gives that statement or memory constitutive power. The thing that happened, and the ideas transmitted by its distorted reporting, silencing, or even and most especially invention, reveal a space of colonial and postcolonial conflict. (White, Miescher, & Cohen, 2001, pp. 15-16)

In line with this quote, the objective of this part of the research was thus not to obtain a chronological and accurate, factual representation of what happened, but to get an empirically informed citizen perspective on history. Using important historical events, brought forward by participants, as anchor points in my interviews I explored people's own accounts of their process of citizenship construction.

After a description of the moments and events that are important for the construction of Acholi citizenship the chapter continues with an analysis of the warscape that developed from 1986 onwards. I discuss the forms of agency that developed during the 1986-1997 conflict period, when the Acholi were still living at home. I then describe the changes in local institutions: the Resistance Councils as new political institutions on the ground, the challenges for customary institutions, and the disruptions in social institutions. The chapter ends in 1997 when the displacement camps started in this part of Acholi, marking the start of a new episode in the war.

After the presentation of empirical findings about the Acholi region, I present the historical narratives from Lango. After a brief period of political turmoil in 1986 the region remained

stable. I show how in Lango certain social and political institutions were consolidated over the past twenty years, while in Acholi they were curtailed as a result of the LRA conflict.

### **5.1 Citizenship construction in Acholi: milestones in recent history**

In this section I discuss the events that were identified by the Acholi as crucial moments in their history, starting from when the Obote II regime ended, after Okello's brief regime was overthrown and the NRA took control in the north. I start with this period because when asked about their history most Acholi were inclined to start with the moment when the NRA came to power in 1986, which they strongly associated with other events in the years that followed: the emergence of various insurgent groups, the cattle raids by the Karamojong, sustained violent repression by the NRA, and the LRA insurgency. The narratives of how these events were experienced are elaborated in this section, which will illustrate a number of concepts and mechanisms that were explained in Chapter 3.

Data was gathered in three ways. First of all, participatory time-line exercises were elaborated in separate focus groups for men, women, youth, and elders<sup>10</sup>. I took an open approach to the exercise, meaning that participants were not restricted in how far back they wanted to go. Secondly, life story interviews were carried out with individual respondents. Interviewees were asked to identify and explain events or episodes that had been important in their lives. Starting from the events and stories that the participants themselves came up with enabled them to give a lot of detail, because the issue was something they cared about. Most of their events and stories could be related to citizenship. For example, for many events it was possible to ask what the interviewees expected from the state or customary authorities, what these actors did, and how their actions were perceived. The narration of events was followed up by questions about feelings and agency in response to these events. This provided detailed accounts of people's histories and local life, as well as about their process of citizenship construction. Thirdly, semi-structured interviews about everyday life during different episodes of the conflict generated data that could be used to study forms of agency.

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<sup>10</sup> The social category of 'elders' includes both male and female elders. I carried out a number of mixed focus groups with elders and several for men and women separately.

### 5.1.1 1986: The regime change to NRA

Yoweri Museveni and his NRA started extending their control over Uganda soon after they had seized power in January 1986. Northern Uganda was declared a 'war zone' and in March 1986 the towns Gulu and Kitgum were taken (Behrend, 1999, p. 24). But since the NRA met with strong resistance locally it could not immediately control the entire region, particularly the remote parts.

Acholi soldiers in the UNLA retreated back to the north as soon as Museveni captured Kampala. There they spread the news of Museveni's victory and also the rumour that '*this government will come and kill all Acholi!*': a phrase often used by my research participants. The Acholi became frightened of a backlash, knowing that the Acholi soldiers had committed large scale atrocities in other parts of the country under Obote and Okello. Many Acholi civilians therefore decided to leave their homesteads and, in the case of those in my research locations, fled to Sudan, often accompanied by ex-soldiers. Fear of NRA violence was so great that 'flight' (Barter, 2012) seemed the only viable option to survive the regime change. The Acholi stayed in various places along the border for a couple of months, but a few people stayed as long as a year. Many remembered this abrupt departure and their stay in Sudan as a period of intense fear, and hardship.

We stayed 2 months in Sudan. From January. We were not getting any assistance from any government or NGO. We just stayed in Pajok. The major problem was food. By the time Museveni came in we still had cattle, we were living from the milk from our cattle. There was no other problem, but we got a hard life in Sudan, until we got back. [...] When we were there, a few of us went to Pajok in Magwi, there was a camp. They were kept by Sudanese soldiers, who did security. It was a big camp for Ugandan refugees. Those stayed for 1 year. The SPLA rebels made them come back to Uganda, because they were fighting the government about Magwi.

*Acholi: focus group, 3 Elders, Chua district*

We went to a place called Pajok in Sudan and the journey took 3 days. There we had not enough food. The little we had when we went, finished. From this area, we decided to come back and witness the situation. Three men and six women came to see the situation here.

*Acholi: focus group, 5 men, Chua district*

Their living conditions as refugees in Sudan were so challenging that the 'flight' option was no longer sustainable and people looked for ways to come back and see whether life was at least manageable. Some Acholi went to inspect the situation at home and whether it would allow their return, or enquired around when they went to the home villages to look for food. People

from my research sites found that the situation was not as bad as they had expected: in their sub-county only a relatively small battalion of NRA soldiers was stationed. They had been afraid that the NRA intended to systematically kill all Acholi, but according to the few remaining residents this was not happening. It surprised me that there had not been incidents of large-scale violence, since in other parts of Acholi, and around Gulu town particularly, the NRA behaved extremely violently against the population (Dolan, 2009). A possible explanation is that around late 1986-1987 the NRA did not yet have a sizeable presence in this remote area. What was clear from many accounts is that many Acholi decided to move back from Sudan, calculating the risks of living with NRA presence at home or facing scarcity on the border. Their careful analysis of the situation, of the risks and possibilities for making a livelihood, mark the start of their social navigation (Vigh, 2006).

When they came home, the NRA was still trying to round up ex-soldiers or potential 'rebels'. At times there were opportunities for voluntary demobilisation of ex-soldiers, or they were invited to join the NRA. There were, however, plenty of stories about coerced demobilisation, night searches, arbitrary arrests and violations.

When people went to Sudan, they [government soldiers] deceived them to come back and said they would peacefully stay with them. When people came back, they started arresting people at night and killing them at the barracks. They gave the excuse that they were killing former soldiers of the former government, but even civilians were being killed. This made many men and boys join the Lakwena [insurgent] group.

*Acholi: man, age 40, Chua district*

Not long after the majority of the people had returned, a massacre did occur. An NRA general known as Abiriga had many men killed in the trading centre of the Lamwo sub-county. A mass grave was said to exist near the river<sup>11</sup>. The general population avoided encounters with the NRA as much as possible and therefore restricted their movements to the villages. This severely limited local trade and economic activities, because people were afraid to pass through the trading centre of the sub-county where the NRA was based. Parents also stopped sending their children to the only school in the centre. At some point, one man who was a parish chief had the courage to go and talk to the military. He persuaded them that they should allow people to come to the trading centre, because the standstill in economic life was also harmful to them. It was one of the few expressions of political agency, or engagement through negotiation (Barter, 2012), that I found.

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<sup>11</sup> This general was believed to be a Resident District Commissioner in one of the West Nile districts at present. This contributed to negative perceptions of the state later on.

At this point in time, the Acholi were uncertain about how the situation would evolve and expected the worst. Military violence was the face of the new regime and this prompted many men to join insurgent groups.

### 5.1.2 Organised resistance by the '*Cilil*'

Groups of UNLA soldiers decided to counter the NRA after the NRA battalions had used extremely violent measures against the population in search of ex-soldiers, and especially after a general disarmament of Acholi was ordered (Behrend, 1999). Under the command of Odong Latek they formed the Uganda People's Democratic Army (UPDA). The UPDA members were nicknamed '*cilil*' by the Acholi, which means '*you go and report* [to government]' and referred to how they were threatening the civilians in case they tried to report them to the NRA. The *cilil* operated across the region, launching attacks on the NRA.

The *cilil* were the first people who were against government. When we left for Sudan, they were soldiers for Tito's regime. So when the new government took over, they went home with their guns. The soldiers came from Kampala and told us the new government would kill all people. They then organised themselves. [...] By that time, anything that happened in the community, instead of going to local government and following the right procedure, they go to report to *cilil* if you know someone there.

*Acholi: Focus group, three men, Chua district*

The *cilil* had overwhelming support from the population, due to violence inflicted upon them by the NRA (Gersony, 1997, p. 23). UPDA factions were based in the bush around the villages and collaborated with the population. They needed the people for supplies and respondents related examples of how people sometimes called in the *cilil* in case of problems, e.g. in case of a fight among neighbours. However, the *cilil* also exerted a level of control. They started to restrict people's mobility, became violent, and supplies were sometimes taken by force (Finnström, 2003, p. 105).

This rebel group stopped people from eating anything that contained salt<sup>12</sup>. Like food and sauce people could only eat without salt. They stopped people from going to town and once you go to town, they would kill you. They also didn't want people to reach the sub-county. They considered people who went to town and to the sub-county that they supported the new government.

*Acholi: Focus group, 8 women, Chua district*

<sup>12</sup> Sugar, salt and soap are goods people need to buy in the trading centres or town. These products were prohibited, as purchasing them implied moving to town and possible contact with the NRA.

The *cilil* thus attempted to establish a governance regime (Justino, 2013). But the Acholi now found themselves in an ambiguous situation. They strongly opposed the new regime, but the *cilil* did not provide a viable alternative and was itself abusive at times. People were often caught in between; soldiers suspected the population of collaborating with the *cilil*, whereas the *cilil* exercised control to prevent collaboration with the NRA. This situation ended in June 1988 with a peace agreement, after which numerous *cilil* demobilised or joined the ranks of the NRA. Some were unable to re-integrate into the rural life (Behrend, 1999, p. 19) and joined other insurgent groups that were active in the region, such as those led by Alice Lakwena and Joseph Kony.

### 5.1.3 Alice Lakwena's Holy Spirit Movement and Severino Lukoya

Customary leaders and elders were unable to perform reconciliation mechanisms, cleansing and demilitarising rituals to help UNLA soldiers reintegrate back into society (Behrend, 1999). The ex-soldiers no longer respected their authority. Having difficulties in readjusting to rural life, many ex-soldiers were drawn to insurgent groups. The insurgents gained support from the population, which was facing NRA repression. To some, joining an insurgent group seemed the only viable option to protect their homes and properties, and resist the NRA (Finnström, 2003, p. 107).

In the field research locations in Chua and Lamwo, several villages experienced the activities of, first, Alice Lakwena's Holy Spirit Movement (HSM) and, later, the group led by her father, Severino Lukoya. Their activities did not extend to all areas in the Acholi sub-region, but the stories about Alice Lakwena especially were widely known. The populations in the villages where I was based remembered Lakwena's groups not as violent, but as the groups that convinced the youth to come and join their ranks. Not everyone supported her strategies and goals, associating them with the loss of their family members.

In that same year [as the Karamojong], Alice Lakwena's rebels came. She was around for 2 to 3 years. They never did many bad things here, but she recruited people to fight and most of them died in the fights in Kitgum town. Those years, Lakwena and the Karamojongs were the most important problem.

*Focus group, 5 men, Chua district*

After Alice Lakwena was defeated her father, Severino Lukoya, made an effort to continue her



work by starting a new rebel group. In one of the researched villages Lukoya had established a base camp, a *yard*, for some time. The village population had to provide food and firewood, and participate in its spiritual activities. As for the HSM, the men who formed the youth at that time were intrigued by the rituals, but their parents were afraid this insurgent group would take away their sons and were reluctant to support Lokoya. Although the different insurgent groups enjoyed some support among the Acholi, they also threatened their security. Many respondents looked back and felt they had 'lost their children' to these groups. To an extent they blamed the NRA too: a 'good' state would have prevented this from happening.

#### **5.1.4 Karamojong cattle raids**

Another event that marked recent history was the Karamojong cattle raids, which took place between August 1987 and early 1988. The Karamojong is the neighbouring tribe on the eastern side of Acholi, and is formed of several pastoralist groups. Cattle raids along the Acholi – Karamoja border have been a regular phenomenon for decades. This time however, the Karamojong reached as far as Gulu. The cattle of the Acholi formed their wealth, their pride and their social security system. To own cattle meant to have assets that could be used for paying school fees, and for health care, funerals and dowry. It was all taken away within a short period of time. Apart from the raids, the Karamojong carried out many atrocities against the population. That this has been a traumatising experience is reflected in the following quotes:

The Karamojong raided all the cattle, the goats. They did not kill anyone from this ward, but in the nearby villages they killed many people. The Karamojong looted many things like clothes, and household items like saucepans. They seriously beat people using anything. They undressed people to take their clothes.

*Acholi: focus group, 6 women, Chua district*

When the Karamojong asked my father in law to show him where he had hidden the cattle, he refused to show them. The Karamojong beat him seriously, but still he did not show them the cattle. The Karamojong decided to look by themselves. They left some people to guard my father in law. When they found the cattle, they told my father in law to go and look after the cattle as they moved out of the ward. But before even moving any long distance, they shot him and he died immediately.

*Acholi: woman, age 29, Chua district*

There is widespread suspicion about why the NRA did not intervene. In many instances people reported the moves of the Karamojong to the NRA soldiers, but they never took action. Others

even witnessed men dressed in army uniforms among the Karamojong, which encouraged them to believe that the NRA collaborated for its own gain.

They [Karamojong] had guns. There were soldiers among them, in military uniform. You could see the ranks on their arms, some of them were corporals or like that. If they were not soldiers, then the government had provided them with uniforms and guns. That is how we know that government was behind the Karamojong raids. They wanted to make us poor.

*Acholi: man, age 55, Chua district*

It must be said that uniforms were used by both the NRA and Acholi insurgents, and that during that period of upheaval the Karamojong could also have acquired army uniforms. But to many Acholi, it meant that the big cattle raid was 'a government plan'<sup>13</sup>. The Acholi region was being punished for resisting Museveni's regime and weakened to prevent further resistance as an opposition area. The data shows that the loss of cattle is one of the major reasons why they have little trust in this regime even today, and vote for opposition parties. Because of the timing of this event and because of the ways it is narrated by the Acholi, I see the raids and the loss of cattle as part of the conflict dynamics of this period. It is therefore included in the analysis of how conflict affected citizenship: the sense of citizenship in particular.

As elsewhere in Uganda (Jones, 2009), in Acholi cattle are important for social identity. With the raids an important part of their identity and dignity was taken from the people. They related this event to their feelings of identity and belonging, but also to the roles of the state. The impact of the raids on their wealth and self-esteem and the scale on which violations took place was directly related to the failure of the state to protect their bodies and properties. When Acholi compared themselves to other tribes in Uganda they felt inferior due to the cattle that were lost.

The government is the owner of authority and has power to make something bad stop happening or continue happening. I wanted the government to stop the Karamojong. On the Karamojong it did nothing.

*Acholi: man, age 40, Chua district*

This has made us to hate the government so much, because we are not happy with what the government did. The wealth of the Acholi was taken away. The government promised years later to pay back our cattle, but up to now it did not do it.

*Acholi: man, age 40, Chua district*

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<sup>13</sup> Jones (2009) finds this in Teso, where Karamojong raids occurred in the same period of time. Also the Iteso experienced the loss of cattle as incredibly harmful to their social identity.

Ever since the raids, the Acholi have not been able to restock due to the war. The government has initiated a restocking scheme, but most ordinary villagers did not know about it or did not trust that they would benefit from it. The procedures seemed too complicated and the courts that handle cases were not trusted. Most Acholi I spoke to felt the loss of wealth and dignity had not been adequately addressed, a problem that continued to stand between their region and the state.

### **5.1.5 'Then Kony came in': the start of the LRA insurgency**

After the defeat of Lakwena and Lukoya in 1987, Joseph Kony's group emerged. The previous chapter indicated the possible links between the HSM and Kony's rebel group (Behrend, 1999). Also in my field sites the people thought that Kony might be 'another HRM', because of the similarities in the rituals and Kony's claim to be possessed by spirits. Also, they knew of people who had been members of the earlier rebel groups and who had crossed over to Kony. Initially the LRA only fought the government troops. From 1991/2 the LRA actively turned against the Acholi population, after the NRA had mobilised civilians in 'home guards' to fight the LRA. The population, who had initially supported an anti-NRA insurgency, quickly changed its perceptions of the LRA, as illustrated by this man:

Kony started fairly. He proved to be a good rebel leader, good fighter, respectful to the people. They confused<sup>14</sup> people that they would take over the government. Those were the words they used; people admired and believed them. Later the people realised that they were lies, they were deceiving us. When people started criticising them they started killing. The government used the people to direct them to the rebels. Then the LRA started killing and abducting.

*Man, age 62, Lamwo district*

As the LRA became increasingly violent and the NRA repression continued, the Acholi became aware of how this affected local life. The following quotes show emerging effects on social and political institutions in the early stage of the LRA conflict. Fear was widespread and restricted mobility and communication. How this trend proceeded is the topic of the following sections.

Then the LRA came. In the beginning they were not so bad, but the people had just fear, but they interacted ok. They got worse, especially for local leaders. But from here they didn't get anyone. It was not easy to work with the sub-county, because they also feared the LRA. We could not go to Kitgum town to buy things, because we

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<sup>14</sup> This word is often used to describe the (alleged) behaviour of political actors who try to manipulate the population. It can refer to e.g. forms of propaganda, politicians making false promises, telling lies etc.

also feared the NRA. There was no security. The UPDF was only posted at the border with Sudan, not yet within our area.

*Focus group with three women, Lamwo district, on 27/08/10*

During the insecurity I expected government to settle the people in an area where we would not be affected by rebels. To protect people from rebels by preventing that they would be abducted and killed. The conflict lasted so long, because the relationship between civilians and soldiers came late. In the end, soldiers came to the civilians to give them information and that was part of a solution to the problem. We could direct them where to go and advise them on the location if they wanted to lay an ambush. Before that, soldiers did not ask for such advice and they were just beating the people.

*Man, age 45, Chua district*

The narratives about historical events have generated insights about key concepts of this study: forms of agency and the nature of the warscape that was emerging. The narratives relate to the literature about human agency during conflict, by showing how the Acholi used social navigation and expressed agency for their survival, while insecurity was fluctuating constantly. Secondly, these narratives add empirical detail to our understanding of the warscape in Acholi, by showing how it was lived and how certain institutions were transformed that were important for learning citizenship practices. Thirdly, these events, the Acholi felt, had implications for their sense of citizenship.

## **5.2 The warscape, 1986-1990**

The events narrated above demonstrate the intense fluctuation in the actors and structures that constituted the Acholi warscape: the social terrain of actors, institutions and processes that is constantly in motion (Vigh 2006). In the period 1986-1990 the NRA and various insurgent groups were the main players and shapers of the warscape. It is a clear example of a conflict situation where multiple forms of authority exist and compete for power (Pearce et al., 2011): because not only did the insurgent groups challenge the state, the HRM even contested the UPDA.

The population had to navigate these different actors and developed different relationships with each. The UPDA attempted to establish governance mechanisms and collaborative relationships with the Acholi population, in a way that has been discussed in conflict studies literature about the transformation of political institutions and the emergence of non-state governance (Justino, 2013). At this point in time, the LRA employed tactics similar to the HSM

to cleanse the population, but it had not yet started to use the types and levels of violence against the Acholi for which it later became known. The insurgent groups thus enjoyed various levels of support (Barter, 2012).

In relation to the NRA, the general population had no other option than to endure and minimise the contact with NRA soldiers. The instance of the former parish chief who negotiated access to the trading centre, described above, was exceptional. Local leaders had to be careful not to be labelled as *cilil* and ordinary people who refrain from such engagements. For their own protection the local population sometimes had to collaborate by supplying the NRA with food and firewood, in line with what Petersen (2001) has written about giving in to collaboration when a regime is violent and abusive. The aggressive behaviour of the NRA as a 'southern' army, compounded by the perceived role of the NRA in the Karamojong raids, would have lasting impact on Acholi perceptions of the state and influence post-conflict citizen engagement with state actors.

The warscape changed, however, after the reconfiguration of its main actors from 1988-1989. The HSM was defeated, Lukoya surrendered and the UPDA signed a peace agreement with the NRA. From 1989 the LRA was the only insurgent group left. Initially, the violence experienced was between the LRA and the NRA and due to NRA repression. The subsequent turn of events, when the LRA decided to subject the Acholi population to violence, marked a second change. The actions of both the military and the LRA were meant to control the population. The NRA had to counter the LRA attacks and tried to limit any form of civilian collaboration with the rebels. The LRA engaged in acts of violence, often very symbolic and exemplary acts of violence, to send out signals to the population not to collaborate with the NRA.

Kony's insurgency developed into a situation of protracted conflict, marked by peaks and lulls in intensity, by various military interventions and peace negotiations, and later on by the displacement camps. Insecurity dominated the physical environment and restricted the mobility of people. High-risk areas were shifting: at times the road between Gulu and Kitgum could not be used, other times between Kitgum and Lira. At the higher level, leaders decided about peace negotiations or military interventions. At the local level, the political environment was dominated by powerful actors such as the state military and the LRA. Military detachments were scattered across the region. Power dynamics evolved among these actors and the population. Only few aid agencies were operating in the region at this stage. This was now the warscape that would last until the peace agreements were brokered in Juba in 2006,

dominated by the army and the LRA as the main players and by both as perpetrators of violence against the Acholi.

The change in the nature of the warscape was accompanied by a change in forms of agency. The next section shows how people adapted to the conflict situation and expressed agency in various ways. They were still navigating the terrain (Vigh, 2006). But, using Barter's (2012) categorisation of flight, voice and support: the Acholi population had given support to rebel groups earlier on, but now there was a shift from support for insurgent actors (a political form of agency) to coping agency for survival. Furthermore, in the face of sustained conflict dynamics important social and political institutions changed. Subsequent sections elaborate how types of agency developed in Acholi in response to the conflict. They describe how important local institutions changed during the conflict and explain to what extent there were opportunities for citizenship practices. I focus on forms of authority, social and cultural institutions. I then reflect on how this had implications for engagement for development purposes ('the petitioning voice').<sup>15</sup>

### **5.3 Adjusting livelihoods: coping agency for food and security**

Insecurity had become the new social order in Acholi. As Vigh emphasised, during war the environment is constantly in motion and a population continues living life using social navigation (Vigh, 2005, 2006). This means that the environment is constantly scanned and reflected upon and actions are adjusted accordingly. Indeed, the intensity of the LRA conflict fluctuated. LRA activities decreased at times, which made the conflict recede to the background, but it was always present. The population thus lived in a constant state of alertness. Respondents described how LRA activities were often seasonal; they could stay in Sudan for months during the dry season. During the rainy season, when the landscape was bushy and crops were harvested they would come into Uganda, attack the population on the way down and abduct and loot on the way back. The Acholi demonstrated a great deal of resilience and creativity in coping with the ever changing terrains of uncertainty. My findings show how they focused on what they considered as their primary needs: food and safety.

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<sup>15</sup> The proxies for citizen engagement (Chapter 3) refer to forms of engagement in the present. Narratives in this chapter are based on people's memories and the proxies could not be applied in the same manner.

People adopted various strategies to ensure these were maintained at a minimum level in order to get by.

Acholi adjusted their farming activities to the seasonal pattern of the rebels. They selected crops that would not take long to yield and did not have to be stored at home, for they would be violently taken away by the rebels.

We used to dig, sometimes we had good produce that the rebels took away. We had some people who could dig well and they were abducted. Those were our problems. In the early 1990s we were working in farming groups like now, but rebels would come to our garden, surrounded the garden and would pick the people they wanted, mostly young boys. The only solution was to spread big groups of twenty people over small groups of four to five people. It reduced the number of gardens to dig. They were taking seeds away that we used to store for next year.

*Acholi: Farmer Leader, age 45, Chua district*

Farming is an important collective activity, for which several institutions are in place. These include the Farmer Leader (*Rwot Kweri*), farming groups (*grup mephu*), norms of reciprocity among group members such as working on each other's lands by rotation, and social gatherings after a day's work to drink the local brew. These social institutions adjusted to the insecurity. Because gatherings increased the risk of rebel attacks, many groups split up and many people said they even preferred to work alone at that time. Working hours were shifted; people would no longer walk together and took different routes home. They rarely met for sharing the local brew after work. This did not just affect the levels of productivity, but also the intensity of social interaction decreased.

As the war evolved, livelihood opportunities closed and opened up, even offering new opportunities to a few people (Shaw, 2003). Cramer (2006a) and Vlassenroot and Raymaekers (2005, 2008) have demonstrated how complex war economies emerged. In this study I did not investigate large-scale war economies that involved civilians and high-placed individuals in the warring parties, but I did ask how citizens at local level developed economic activities as part of their social navigation. The story of Otim, from Lamwo, is an example of this. He started selling sweets and biscuits in the early 1990s. With the little profit he made, he moved on to selling soda. When he was able to buy a second hand bicycle he could ride around the area and sell to the soldiers. With four others, two men and two women who also sold small goods, he used to cycle to market days in nearby areas. From them he learnt how to select his products, and he picked up some Kiswahili from the soldiers, so 'he could socialise'. One day, his companions were ambushed by rebels, and killed. Otim stopped his trade for a few years. In 1997 he

started again with a friend, now selling goats to the soldiers. Sometimes they cycled to another sub-county to buy goats and came back the next day, tying three goats at a time to their bicycles. They cycled up to the border, to Waligo, where a big battalion was stationed. They made good profits and were able to start trading cows. They travelled between sub-counties on foot now, making a tour of several days and ending in Waligo. Otim said it was not too risky, as long as the rebels were in Sudan. Once he took cows to Waligo as the rebels came to Uganda, but they went south to Pader. He always listened carefully to any information about where the rebels had gone. *'I was very sharp in listening to where the rebels were moving. Then I would sneak through.'* The soldiers in Waligo contacted the barracks in his sub-county when they needed meat and other goods. They informed him about the security situation along the road and an escort would meet him on the way. When the insecurity became too tense he stopped the trade and opened a shop in his trading centre. He had established a good network among soldiers and 'other high people', who bought his goods. From the money he saved he built a brick house.

During intense LRA activity people left their village homes and stayed in hideouts they had created in the bush. This could last a couple of days, until rebels moved away from their area. In the hideout people had to make do with little food and water. Women sometimes slept separately from the rest of the family, as otherwise crying babies might reveal the hideout. Young boys had to keep watch and alarm the families when rebels were seen. Neighbours tried to communicate their presence as quickly as possible. During the day some people sneaked back to their gardens and huts, where the women prepared food to take back to the hideout.

If someone was cooking in the house, at least one person would climb up the tree to see if rebels were coming. That person will climb the tree with some stones in his hands so that in case he sees the rebels, he will throw the stones to the house. Because if he would shout, then the rebels would hear this. Sometimes the bigger children were put in different locations to hear and see if the rebels are coming while someone is cooking in the house

*Acholi: Man, age 40, Chua district*

We used to time the rebels; we would wait until 9am and then go to the garden, come back and cook so fast, then go back to the bush at 3pm. This is because the rebels liked to move in the morning and stop at around 8:30am, and at around 3pm they would again start moving. The soldiers used to go on patrol at 9am and stop at 3pm, maybe the rebels used to fear them. People used to pass information to each other on hearing that the rebels were nearby. People could be home between 9am and 3pm and the rest of the time they would spend in the bush.

*Acholi: Woman, age 33, Chua district*



The army was considered the responsible source of protection. Communication mechanisms between the population and the barracks were in place, mediated by the Resistance Council members. However, numerous accounts told how the military failed to provide security. The lack of army responsiveness is something many Acholi were frustrated about. To many, it was a sign that the government was not willing to end the conflict.

It was the government that made [the] insecurity last so long, because the government soldiers did not follow up the rebels, even when report was taken to them. They used not to follow up. Sometimes they could come after three days to fight the rebels, yet they even had enough and better weapons than the rebels.

*Acholi: Man, age 40, Chua district*

In this early war period the Acholi had to find ways to protect themselves by adjusting their daily routines. Indeed, as Vigh (2006) has shown, it was not possible to have routines. Even where people developed strategies for cooking and fetching water, described above, the decision to use them had to be made ad hoc. Many of my respondents recalled they had sometimes stayed in the bush for days without food, when they felt it was too unsafe to go out.

During various stages of the war civilians were involved in protecting communities and fighting off the LRA rebels in 'home guards' and groups that operated under various names. The Bow and Arrow Groups of the early 1990s were formed after a government order. This provoked a violent response by the LRA, which accused the civilian population of collaboration with the government. People felt strongly that participation in the home guards made them rebel targets (Finnström, 2003, p. 126). Also, the home guards themselves sometimes formed a security threat to the population. In later stages of the war groups formed spontaneously, although they were quickly brought under the control of the military (Dolan, 2010). While the Bow and Arrow Groups were very poorly equipped, over time these home guards became increasingly militarised in terms of training and equipment. People's responses to recruitment of civilians seemed to vary from place to place.

In my field work locations in Chua and Lamwo districts, respondents talked mainly about the Local Defence Units (LDUs) that came into existence from 2002 onwards. By that time the majority of the Acholi lived in displacement camps. Engagement in the LDUs is discussed in Chapter 6, which describes camp life in detail. Apart from those periods of the war when people were actively engaged in the LDUs they mainly relied on their own strategies for self-protection, which usually meant withdrawal, hiding and isolation.

Thus, the Acholi navigated the threats of unpredictable LRA attacks as much as sustained military repression. In this situation the Acholi were preoccupied with securing food and safety as their two main priorities, which were always short-term goals. Although their tactics demonstrate creativity, emphasised by various authors, this section showed that the emphasis of their agency was coping, for survival. As Justino (2013, p.8) notes, in these circumstances people's preferences and time-horizons changed. I disagree with Nordstrom's argument that this is a form of political agency. There was no opportunity for 'voice' other than limited forms of engagement (in Barter's sense) to collaborate with the army through the RCs. The next section explains how insecurity and repression impacted the public sphere.

#### **5.4 Local institutions and everyday engagements**

In Chapter 2 I explained how conflict studies literature addresses the transformation of social and political institutions. This literature recognises that the transformation of institutions has implications for the onset and duration of conflict, as well as for changes in conflict dynamics, and for post-conflict developments (Justino, 2013). I argued that the transformation of institutions has implications for citizenship when those institutions changed that are important for learning and experiencing citizenship. This subsequently affects the nature of state-citizen interactions in the post-conflict situation.

##### **5.4.1 The Resistance Councils**

In this section I elaborate the changes that occurred in political, social and cultural institutions: the Resistance Councils and customary leadership. In Chapter 4 I explained how the Resistance Councils (RCs) were introduced as a new institution and instrument in the NRA revolution. In Luwero they had a reformist purpose (Karlström, 1996; Weinstein, 2007), while in Acholi they were used as a control mechanism. I also indicated that there is not much information available about how Acholi citizens engaged with the RCs on a daily basis. In this section I show that the RCs were indeed perceived as control mechanisms initially, but the Acholi increasingly needed them for their security.

The military, although challenged by the LRA, was a powerful actor in the lives of the Acholi, but the Resistance Councils (RCs) became another important authority at local level. When the NRA started, the RCs in Acholi primarily functioned as the local security organs of the regime and mechanisms of control (Branch, 2010). The local population therefore strongly resisted the RCs. My findings show that, indeed, the population felt the system as being imposed and perceived it to be another mechanism used by the NRA to subordinate the Acholi people. This was reflected in interviews when respondents told how they had to elect the RC members with the military present, and described the RCs as the 'eyes and ears of government'. Afraid that any skilful leader would be killed by rebels, because of this association with the NRA, they elected 'drunkards' or people who were 'not social and useful anyhow'.

However, the population increasingly needed the RCs when the LRA turned against the population, because the RCs mediated with the army for their protection. RCs became vital channels for information about the rebels. It was members of the RCs who communicated between the sub-county, the military and the village population. The RCs had to report to the soldiers about the whereabouts of the rebels, about incidents involving rebels, attacks, abductions, and the return of youth that had escaped from the LRA. During the episodes of the war when home guards were mobilised the RCs/LCs usually mobilised and led them. Furthermore, the population needed the RCs to secure the wellbeing of family members who were arrested by the military on suspicion of being/supporting rebels, or when a family member had escaped from the LRA.

Their work often put the RC members at risk. As agents of the NRA regime they had become LRA targets. Respondents told how the rebels were always '*looking for the homes of the RCs*'. They often had to walk long distances to report to local authorities and the military, which made them extra prone to being caught by the rebels. Moreover, if rebels were thought to be in a certain place it was an RC member who had to guide the soldiers to that location, unarmed. I spoke to former RCs who felt that '*the first bullet would be for them*' when it came to a confrontation with the rebels. One of the RCs said he did not even dare to go work in his garden, fearing he would be singled out.

For their own protection, RC members would keep their notebooks, pen and stamp outside their huts, often buried somewhere, so they could not be identified as RCs if rebels searched the home. Like other people, they would stay in hideouts. Many of them would keep a low profile as much as possible, avoiding any unnecessary activity. Others simply resigned.

If the rebels got you while [the community was] having a court, they just started by killing the LC and continued with the committee members, which made that I did not hold any court because of fear of losing my life.

*Acholi: Former RC, age 42, Chua district*

During that time the war interrupted my work. You had to be cautious all the time. You hear they [LRA] are on this side, that they abducted on that side, that they took an LC on the other side... I was always outside. I was not settled. All the time, I had to think what would happen. During the night I thought what could happen to me. I could not do my work optimally. I had already married and had children. They were supposed to go to school, but could not go. It affected my family life.

We had village meetings about the insecurity. We used to go to the Sub-County where we got information about where the rebels were moving. After that meeting, I had to call a meeting with the community and tell the people 'the rebels were here and here, you have to be careful'. We only called village meetings to discuss the insecurity. Maybe a bit on education sometimes, but insecurity dominated.

*Acholi: LC chair person, age 60, Chua district*

During lulls in the conflict the RCs were able to organise other activities, such as mobilising the people for community work. However, throughout the 1990s their work was dominated by security issues and protecting their own lives and families.

Thus, formal local leadership was very security-oriented. Whereas the RCs/LCs were meant to serve local democracy and development, especially after the 1995 constitution and the introduction of the Local Government Act, the situation did not allow them to be used or even seen in that way. Although some RC members remembered they had had to submit development priorities to the sub-county, they said they would do it with two or three members and security was much more important to discuss.

It must be said that the RCs were often very capable of organising around security matters and they demonstrated courage in interacting with the army, still not a reliable and trustworthy force at that time, in circumstances that were very risky for them. However, as a result of the circumstances, generations of leaders did not experience what it implied to mediate between citizens and higher authorities about development in their areas, nor could they set the example for younger generations. Many people said that '*leaders at the sub-county were as much affected as the people*' and expected little from them.

### 5.4.2 Customary leadership

The changes in the position of the customary leadership as a cultural institutions had implications for the relationship between them and Acholi society. This is an example of changes in social relations (Justino, 2103) with possible implications for power dynamics in the post-conflict situation. As explained in the previous chapter, the Acholi clans (*ateke*) were organised according to the leadership of the *Rwot* (plural *Rwodi*) with clan leaders or *Rwodi* at different levels of the clan's territory (Finnström, 2003; Allen, 2006). Historically there was no Acholi paramount chief, but numerous *Rwodi* heading their clans. Later the *Kal Kwaro Acholi* was established: the paramount Acholi chief who comes from the Payira clan and to whom all *Rwodi* report. The clan leadership is inherited and the *Rwodi* are supported by committees of elders. The most important roles of the clan leaders are performing cultural rites, dispute resolution and reconciliation, demarcating the borders of land that belongs to clans and resolving land disputes, and educating the youth about Acholi history and culture and on how to live a good life. Two other forms of leadership other than the clan leaders came out as important. 'Opinion leaders' (*mio tam*) are elders that play an important advisory role in the community, and are not necessarily clan leaders. They are often invited by the LC chair persons to participate in LC courts. Then there is the *Rwot Kweri* (leader of the hoe), which is an elected function at village level. The *Rwot Kweri* heads the farmers, appoints the portions of land to be cultivated by a group, and resolves minor disputes over gardens and cattle. Group members often come from different clans and therefore the *Rwot Kweri* may settle minor land disputes between two clans, while the more difficult cases are forwarded to clan leaders.

In Chapter 4 I outlined how the literature on Acholi has highlighted how customary leadership lost legitimacy in the course of the war (Allen, 2006, 2010), particularly with respect to performing reconciliation rituals. This started during Amin's oppressive regime when the Acholi intellectual and political elite was decimated (Branch, 2010) and the remaining form of authority was the customary leadership of the *Rwodi* (clan leaders). During the war, certain prominent customary leaders have played a role in the peace negotiations with the LRA. Research participants commended their role, and that of the religious leaders, for speaking to the government on behalf of the Acholi. In terms of ethnic citizenship these high-level customary leaders thus maintained their authority in the Acholi ethnic community to a certain extent. But, as Branch (2010) and Allen (2006, 2010) have argued, the populations in my research sites questioned to what extent the *Kal Kwaro Acholi* from Payira (Gulu district)

represents other Acholi clans. Therefore the question of who should perform the 'real' reconciliation rituals remains. My findings however suggest that, because of their involvement in the negotiations, the authority of high-level customary leaders from Gulu district accrued some legitimacy in the eyes of the Acholi of Lamwo and Chua.

At lower levels, however, the LRA war seriously exacerbated the weakening of the customary leadership of the numerous clans and sub-clans. Like Allen (2006, 2010), I found that the weakening of their position was associated with the inability to perform certain rituals due to the insecurity. Public gatherings in which their positions were confirmed through cultural practice did not take place. Yet these institutions and the practices that take place are important for how customary authority is established (Ndegwa, 1997) and confirmed (Jones, 2009). Customary leaders lost an important source of their legitimacy: their ability to practise and perform functions. Especially after displacement had become permanent and leaders were dislocated from their areas, they no longer had the natural sites they needed to perform the rites and were rendered 'useless'. Secondly, the camp situation further undermined their legitimacy, which is similar to what Dolan (2004) found. In the camps they had to line up just like anyone else to receive relief. '*They became ordinary people,*' is what respondents said about them. This went contrary to Acholi culture in which certain customs confirm social hierarchies, especially of elders and leaders, which were now eliminated. At the same time, younger generations and RC members gained authority, because they were active in the protection of communities.

Thus, other scholars have emphasised the implications for ethnic citizenship, because the authority of customary leaders in the local Acholi communities was destabilised. My findings suggest this had a spill-over effect on social relations in the community and on state citizenship. See the following quotation:

The role of clan leaders has changed. Those days they could perform rituals on the hill and the river side. But starting from the time of insecurity, these were no longer performed because they lacked the items to perform them, like goats and cows. This changed the role of the clan leader in the community. Before the people came to the camp, a clan leader could advise the youth in the clan. Due to the insecurity and the camp it has changed. Community members lived in different parts of the camp. Gathering people together was a problem for clan leaders, they could not advise them.

Their status in the community changed. Clan leaders are no longer respected as before. People are now mixed up, bad ones and good ones. They cannot listen to clan leaders, so they lost their power as leaders that they had before the camp and insurgency. What also changed their role and also their status is religion. Because what the clan leaders used to do, like ritual and cleansing, is what the Pentecostals take as coming from Satan. So clan members and youth follow religion and no longer listen to clan leaders.

It worries the clan leaders. The rituals are inheritance they have to follow. Now members are not following their advice, clan leaders get annoyed and leave the rituals, which leads to problems in the community. I myself am worried about change. When children meet others, they despise our advice. They say we are now old and that we are giving them old advice, which annoys us. Before, the clan leader advised the LC1 during meetings, when LC1 meets with the community. Then they had a chance to tell LC1 how to handle issues or how to behave. Now, people are not listening. They call us stubborn. Now people are '*a rwot ki oda*', which means everyone is a chief in his own home, the head of the household. Only when someone kills another man they need the *Rwot* for a court.

*Clan leader, man, Lamwo district*

The quotation shows that the conflict did not just affect the legitimacy of customary leaders. Their weakened positions subsequently affected the community and mechanisms for linking with the local state. As I will demonstrate in Chapter 7 the erosion of the position of clan leaders and elders had effects on their role as 'brokers' (Corbridge et al, 2005): their capacity to speak for their people was weakened. This undermined their capability for holding leaders to account, which had hitherto been an important function of elders and opinion leaders. Secondly, it created friction between the elders and the younger generations. This, too, would have implications for local governance in the post-conflict situation.

Before I discuss changes in social institutions, I need to reflect briefly on the possible emergence of rebel governance mechanisms. As indicated in Chapter 2, this is a key issue in the literature on institutional transformation during conflict (Justino, 2013). There is no literature that suggests that the LRA ever established governance mechanisms. I briefly pursued the issue, but I did not find any evidence for any form of LRA governance. My findings show that only the UPDA attempted to establish governance mechanisms in 1987-1988, but was unsuccessful.

Comparing my findings and the existing literature on the LRA to Weinstein's framework (2007, p. 170), there seemed to be few incentives for the LRA to establish governance systems. Weinstein argues that the incentives to establish power sharing mechanisms are shaped by: 1)

the rebels' stake in the (economic) productivity of the population, as a resource base; 2) whether they fight for short term gain or longer term political power; and 3) the capacity to credibly commit to an agreement with non-combatants, which relates to their capacity to discipline the behaviour of members and control defection.

It seemed unlikely that the LRA wanted to gain territorial control of the area or take over the rule in towns or camps, which would then require a form of governance. They controlled the population by using force and by instigating fear, not by forming collaborative relationships to get what they needed. Frequent support from the Sudanese government made the LRA not completely reliant on the local population. The level of violence inflicted upon the population and the ways in which the LRA would sometimes breach peace negotiations left them with little credibility, even though the NRM government itself equally failed in the negotiations.

#### **5.4.3 Social institutions**

Scholars emphasise that people living in conflict areas continue to experience the 'ordinary' problems they already faced prior to conflict, such as drought and famine, and social problems such as inter-clan rivalries and patron-client relations. The existing social structures and networks in place to address such problems may change during war (Lubkemann, 2008; E. Wood, 2008). In Acholi, I found that certain social institutions and spaces for engagement were affected by the insecurity. Compared to the RCs and customary authority, these social institutions have not been addressed in the existing literature in as much detail. In this section I show how the functioning of certain important institutions was limited, and how existing spaces for engagement were securitised. Possibilities for collective voice were limited and local leaders were preoccupied with security issues rather than public services.

In Acholi, social life and all kinds of mechanisms that regulated community affairs were extremely constrained by the insecurity. Individual families spent much time in the bush on their own and communication was limited. As indicated above, this affected group work such as farming, an important institution for collective organisation and co-operation. The farming groups do not just have a function in livelihoods and productivity. The groups are important for maintaining social relations and norms of reciprocity. Group members come from the different clans in the area, thus group work is said to be important for ensuring that '*people stay well together*'. But they also constitute important entities where information and politics



is discussed. To me, groups were spaces where a collective voice could emerge and be strengthened. Furthermore, youth often have groups of their own, where norms for co-operation and also the new generation of farmer leaders (Rwot kweri) are nurtured.

Another social institution that was disrupted, highlighted by respondents, was the '*Wang oo*'; the social gathering around the fireplace at night in which elders teach the younger generations about how to live a respectful life. Particularly the adults and elders expressed how its disruption had been damaging for Acholi culture, for community cohesion and especially for the relationship between youth and elders. It was in the *wang oo* that the elders could expose their wisdom and experience, for which they were respected by the youth. Here they could also give examples of good leadership by telling stories from the past about how issues had been resolved. Often this was done through the telling of stories and parables about the Acholi ancestors. Both *wang oo* and group work were considered institutions where people learn good behaviour and practice Acholi culture. Respondents brought forward that particularly the youth had suffered the consequences of their disruption and had developed 'bad morals', like alcohol consumption and sexual relationships between young boys and girls. Furthermore, not only had social institutions in the community been disrupted: youth experienced gaps in formal education, which for many only resumed in the camps.

#### **5.4.4 The public sphere**

Concerning the public sphere for engagement, narratives about the past show that the public space narrowed and became securitised, similar to what Ben Porath (2006) described about Israel, and Beswick (2010) about Rwanda. It has been widely accepted that the politics of the local political sphere matter for citizen engagement (Brock, 2004; Harriss et al., 2004) and that conflict impacts on power dynamics. In Acholi, the LRA and the military and the ways in which they controlled the population affected the public sphere (Fraser, 1990) and spaces for engagement, to the point that the only 'safe space' was an isolated hideout in the bush.

In the Acholi social set-up public village meetings and court meetings are important for deliberation and decision-making. But it became practically impossible to hold public gatherings, because noise could attract the rebels. As rebel targets, LCs often refrained from convening meetings. Many respondents did not recall any meeting during that time, saying there were 'hardly any disputes', which were settled by very small groups of elders. If meetings

*did* take place security was the most important issue for discussion, during all those years before the camps were established.

People were hiding in the bush, which made mobilisation very difficult for me, in case I had to call a meeting or announce information from the Sub County. There was no gathering as we do right now, because it would be a good opportunity for the rebels to either kill all of you or abduct all of you and make you carry heavy luggage.

*Acholi: LC2 member, age 42, Chua district*

Yes, village meetings were there. Always about the movement of rebels and LC was also advising people not to report to rebels where the ex-soldiers and LC members live. The boys were advised to take care when they go drinking so that they were not abducted by the rebels.

*Acholi: Man, age 48, Chua district*

Also the military shaped the public sphere. Although challenged by the LRA, the army was the most dominant authority throughout the war, overshadowing local political leaders. On top of its lack of response, army misconduct continued to be a problem in Acholi also after UPDA had signed a peace agreement (Finnström, 2003, p. 99). The Acholi were often caught in between, as both the LRA and the military could easily accuse someone of collaboration with the other side. Finnström (2003) found it was often used by local political leaders to discredit their opponents. Respondents recalled various forms of harassment, violent assaults and arbitrary arrests, and felt subjected to this military control, lacking the power and mechanisms to hold the army accountable. Afraid of being labelled rebel collaborator, people (youth in particular) refrained from any overt criticism and suppressed their interrogative voice. Apart from reporting LRA activities to the army, mostly done by members of the Resistance Council, the populations preferred to stay away from the soldiers. This shows that *withdrawal* became an important coping strategy in situations where public contestations of powerful state actors are likely to be punished, just like other studies have found (Beswick, 2010; Thomson, 2011). Not just physical withdrawal into the bush, which was mainly a tactic to stay safe from the LRA, but also withdrawal from the public space in the sense of avoiding public discussions and contestations out of fear for a very powerful military. The only kind of everyday resistance against the military I heard about was in the form of jokes, in the Luo language and spoken 'quietly at home'. The general perception of the public sphere was that it was unsafe, and that engagement was risky.

Not only had the public sphere for resolving social problems at community level narrowed down. Also the scope for interaction with higher level authorities was limited. During the early stages of the war the main *object* of citizen engagement with formal institutions concerned

their security, for which citizens tried to seek the right pattern of interaction with the sub-county and the army. This shifted attention away from engagement around ordinary government functions such as service delivery, as illustrated by this quote:

The war disrupted the voice of people in that it brought a lot of trauma and fear. They could not think of any developmental issues, but only survival to the next day. There was a lot of psychological torture to many people, so they could not do much to raise any issue affecting them. They only mourned the dear ones they lost during the war.

*Acholi: Man, age 52, Lamwo*

Reflecting on Acholi narratives about life during the war I noticed that service delivery hardly came up as an issue, not even in the interviews with former RCs. I therefore went back to some of the respondents to specifically ask about this.

According to the research participants the provision of services such as health care, water and education was limited during this period, or in their words: *'they were unseen'*. There may be some truth in this statement: the policy for bottom-up development planning had not yet been put in place and district authorities had very few resources. In the Acholi region the implementation of services was further complicated by the unstable situation. But already in the early 1990s there were government programmes, partly funded through international aid, also in Acholi. However, in the perceptions of the respondents security issues dominated the state agenda, not services. It is possible that this is an instance of what Ben-Porath (2006) described about Israel: insecurity alters the priorities citizens expect the state to fulfil. Many research participants thus stated that *'there was no such thing as development those days'* and that development of services only took off in the camps in the late 1990s, due to the humanitarian actors. One former RC2 chair person remembered:

The government services rarely reached the village those days. The boreholes started late, the community roads started of recent. Before the camp there was nothing like that. (...) Most times, when the government brought something, it was without asking the people what they need. They just bring and you received without complaining. Later you had to ask for it, for [school] blocks and other materials. When Universal Primary Education started they gave you a fixed budget and a school facility grant for building blocks. But before the camp, you just waited for what comes. (...) Most development started in the camp. We worked directly with NGOs, [we did not] mind to go to government, because government was just there by name. Especially at Sub-county level they were dormant.

*Acholi: Former RC2 chair person, age 62, Lamwo district*

Before the camp started, people were unfamiliar with asking the government for services. People only asked the authorities for assistance in case of disease outbreaks, i.e. the guinea

worm disease. There was minimum provision of health and education services, but as the quote demonstrates there was not much sense of actively engaging in enhancing service provision. Also other respondents indicated that, generally, people would wait and see 'what came down' and were mostly concerned with security anyway. There was thus little opportunity to exercise the 'petitioning voice'.

As indicated in Chapter 2, the literature on citizen agency and voice emphasises the importance of social interactions for developing collective voice and political consciousness (Kabeer, 2005; Martin, 2003). This section demonstrated that a number of social spaces that were important in Acholi social life were disrupted. Due to the insecurity the possibilities for social interactions were limited in the rural areas. From the narratives about what was going on in such social institutions prior to the war it showed these institutions were not just important for Acholi culture and social fabric, they had also been important spaces for learning and experiencing the practice of citizenship.

The public sphere that people grew familiar with was one that was heavily securitised, which shifted the attention from public services to security. The public sphere was dominated by the military that acted unaccountable to the population. In line with Thomson's (2011) findings on Rwanda, this suppressed the exercise of voice in the public sphere and led to withdrawal. Although the use of violence by the NRA subsided from 1992, the sense of military repression persisted and continued in the IDP camps. This implies that the Acholi population has lived in a narrow public sphere for a long time and this, I will argue, limited their experience with active citizen engagement.

### **5.5 The Acholi sense of citizenship**

In Chapter 2 the relationship between citizenship, ethnic identity and marginalisation was discussed, referring to the debates on autochthony (Geschiere, 2011; Geschiere & Jackson, 2006), adverse incorporation (Hickey, 2007; Hickey & Du Toit, 2007b), and hierarchies in citizenship (Nyamnjoh, 2006). In Chapter 4 I explained how authors have argued that the situation of the Acholi region is a case of adverse incorporation, emphasising that this part of a longer historical process of state formation. In this section I want to show that the process of adverse incorporation and the LRA conflict created a sense of marginalisation and a sense of inferior citizenship. A sense of inferior citizenship was described in Chapter 3 as awareness

about marginalisation and attributing the causes of marginalisation to other, dominant actors. Thus, in this section I relate the notion of adverse incorporation to how this *felt* by the Acholi people and show how there is awareness about a hierarchy in citizenship. As other scholars have argued for other contexts (Eriksen, 2002; Hickey, 2007) the Acholi identity is constructed in dialectic relationship to other ethnic groups, namely those tribes that have not experienced war and are higher-placed in the citizenship hierarchy.

As explained in Chapter 3 the proxies for a sense of citizenship were not predetermined before the fieldwork started. From the narratives about historical events and how they were experienced it was possible to inductively derive an understanding of the sense of citizenship in Acholi. From the analysis of the narratives in NVivo it showed that, according to Acholi citizens, a 'good relationship' to the state depends on a) whether the state treats all tribes equally in terms of distribution of resources and political power, b) whether the state treats all tribes with respect and leaves them their dignity, and c) how the state responds to insecurity. In relation to other tribes of Uganda aspects that came out strongly were; a) equality in terms of assets and development, and b) whether other tribes respect one's tribe. I will discuss each of these components.

When asked about what it means to be a citizen of Uganda in the present, the Acholi strongly associated this with their ethnic origins. Almost all interviewees defined 'citizen' as being born in a certain area and in a certain tribe. Indeed, since they were born in Uganda they acknowledged that they officially belonged there, but people felt first and foremost Acholi. Many respondents therefore said that a 'citizen' refers to tribe and answered the question with the simple answer: *it means being an Acholi*. This illustrates the sense of belonging to both the political community of the state and of the ethnic group. However, in terms of belonging to the state they did not feel they were equal members, a point I elaborate below.

In my conversations about Acholi identity the experience of insecurity and resulting poverty were brought up very often. It was as if the experience of the LRA conflict had become a defining element of their identity. '*The Acholi are the ones that experienced war, no peace*', was a common phrase used to describe themselves. When speaking about their relationship to other tribes in Uganda many used the metaphor of a hill: '*Other tribes are on the upper side of the hill, while we Acholi are on the slope of the hill.*' The experience of the war and the level of poverty were the distinguishing factors that made them say so. '*Other tribes did not have to run, they could stay in their homes and dig [cultivate]. We Acholi were always moving up and*

*down, in the bush and in the camps*'. While leaving the IDP camp to return home marked another change in the experience of citizenship, it did not immediately reconstitute it. In their home areas they lacked the basic services and livelihood assets that would give them a sense of equality, and moving back did not overcome the damage done by the state to their sense of dignity. Although now no longer threatened by the presence of the LRA the Acholi still felt uncomfortable knowing that Kony was still 'out there' and on top of that their physical security was still at risk due to the lack of livelihoods and services.

A sense of insecurity was directly related to the role of the state in the war. When looking back on the war the narratives of research participants reflected strong feelings of being abandoned by the state, grief and anger about its failure to protect lives and properties, and suspicion of purposely trying to weaken the Acholi tribe. Respondents often acknowledged that government did 'fight the rebels' and 'bring us home from the camps'. However, the actual *actions* of the state did not match people's *expectations* of a responsive, responsible state.

Respondents felt the state had never made enough efforts to stop the war in its early stages and had undermined the peace talks. Others have documented similar findings from across the region (Dolan, 2009; Finnström, 2003). This was attributed to the regime's alleged wish to break Acholi opposition to the president and the 'hatred against the north'. While people admitted that the LRA was hard to fight, because it operated in small factions from Sudan and was from time to time supported by the Khartoum government, they strongly felt this could have been mitigated by better interventions. The sense that the NRA/M regime purposely prolonged the war was still felt by many. The weak response by the army and its continuous misconduct deepened these feelings. During the next stage of the war, when displacement camps were formed, the forced internment of the Acholi into the camps and the fears that the NRA government tried to grab their lands exacerbated the sense that the NRA government fought a war against the Acholi.

Because the Acholi people were fighting among themselves, that is why government did not take it serious. We are not united here and we are not supporting government.

*Acholi: Man, age 28, Chua district*

During insecurity, government just let Acholi people to suffer, because the rebels could not defeat government anyway. If rebels were too powerful [e.g. a serious threat to government] then government could have called soldiers from other countries. Like now, Ugandan soldiers were fighting in Somalia, Rwanda and Sudan. The president left us like brothers fighting among ourselves. He recruited Acholi to

fight Acholi. In the camp and even before, the Arrow groups those days. The president gave us the task to fight rebels. At first government gave us bows. Yet the rebels had guns! Later they gave us guns.

*Acholi: Man, age 55, Chua district*

The behaviour of the government also damaged the dignity of the Acholi, which is the second aspect of their sense of citizenship. They felt that the NRA used the war to stigmatise the Acholi as 'primitive', 'barbarian', and violent. The feelings of stigmatisation that they expressed resonated with what other scholars found in their studies (Doom & Vlassenroot, 1999; Finnström, 2003). A frequently quoted statement by Museveni was how he compared the situation in Acholi to putting grasshoppers in a jar, which evidently leads to the situation in which *'they will eat each other'*. The regime used the image of the Acholi as a violent group to convince the southern regions that it could prevent future domination by northerners.

The Acholi dignity was also undermined due to the loss of cattle during the Karamojong cattle raids in 1988 and subsequent years of war, and due the loss of the ties to their land when they were displaced (both when the Acholi fled to Sudan in 1986 and in the displacement camps). This has directly to do with the meaning of land and cattle in Acholi culture. Land and cattle constituted the building blocks for self-fulfilment as citizens. With this, their wealth and pride were lost, a feeling that extends to the present and continues to limit opportunities for social becoming, adulthood and exercise citizenship. It meant that the government had failed to protect their lives and security of their bodies, their homesteads and properties. The right to be protected in one's own home was considered of great importance, because the clan's soil is crucial for one's identity. In the next chapter I elaborate how confinement in the camps further undermined this sense of dignity.

Regarding the first aspect of a sense of citizenship, equality, the Acholi strongly felt that the state was not working for all Ugandans and disadvantaged the Acholi by allocating resources in other parts of the country. *'This government is not treating tribes equally'* was a common phrase heard among Acholi. They acknowledged that poverty was also caused by the war, but felt they were actively discriminated against by the NRA/M, throughout the war *and* in the post-conflict situation, in terms of development. Most respondents found an explanation in the distribution of power over the tribes. First of all President Museveni belonged to a different tribe and the Acholi had opposed the NRA regime when it came to power, making them an 'enemy'. The Acholi continued to vote for the opposition, making it 'their own fault' that this government neglected them. One elder explained, almost justified, the tendency of

the regime to 'favour' other tribes; *'If I as a father have eight children, I cannot love them all in the same way'*.

Comparing themselves to other tribes the aspects of dignity and equality figured strongly in their descriptions of the Acholi identity. The label of the Acholi as a violent ethnic group is still felt by every Acholi I spoke to about this, and by most people were convinced that other tribes perceived them as such. When I spoke to Acholi youth that attended higher education in other parts of Uganda, for example, this became very clear. They felt being treated rudely by teachers or lecturers, were ignored in class, given lower marks, and were called 'Kony'. To prevent being excluded by fellow students, they avoided speaking Luo to one another and did not tell their surnames that would reveal their ethnic origin. This, compounded by the idea that the southern tribes were better-off in terms of wealth and the allocation of resources, led to the notion that the Acholi were on the 'slope of the hill' and contributed to a sense of inferior citizenship.

## 5.6 Citizenship construction in Lango

About eight months into the fieldwork I settled in a village in Lango region. On Friday afternoons I made my way to a weekly village market. Three or four groups of men waited for the local brew to arrive. They were 'Akiba' groups: group of 10 to 15 members that shared an alcoholic brew and ran a saving scheme together. Men and women from surrounding villages arrived with their produce to sell. From further away tradesmen came to sell salt, soap, cooking oil, and clothes. The market chair person made his round among the sellers to receive the rent for the market stalls. In front of a row of brick stone shops the 'workshop' of a group of bicycle repair men produced the noise of hammering metal.

On one of those market days I was accompanied by an Acholi friend. He was amazed by the liveliness of the market, pointing out that having those at the village level was a sign of welfare. *'In Acholi you will barely find these occasions. People are still busy to grow food to eat, they have nothing to sell'*. He also identified markers in the landscape that were evidence of progress and stability in this region, like the many families that had several huts and a brick house on their compounds. But also, the incredible numbers of bicycles people were riding. Though the Langi in this area had experienced considerable political turmoil in the past, these markers indicated they had experienced long-term stability to develop all this.



When I asked the population in the Lango research site about their history, they often started with narrating how life was under Idi Amin. They would then discuss Obote's 2<sup>nd</sup> Presidency, their subsequent fear and anger when the Acholi general Tito Okello ousted Obote, and mixed feelings when soon after that Museveni's NRA seized power. The fact that most participants started their historical narrative with Amin's regime, thus starting from much earlier in history than the Acholi narrative that often started in 1986, already signalled a different process of their construction of citizenship. Whereas in Acholi the regime change to NRA formed the start of a lot of political turbulence, in Lango it meant something different.

In Lango I thus found out a lot about their perspectives on the current political context and how their citizenship had been constructed, by comparing the different regimes. By narrating how daily life looked under previous regimes, especially what had been difficult, Langi could reflect upon their expectations of a state and how it should behave towards the citizenry. The next sections therefore start with accounts about life under Amin and Obote II, followed by sections that describe the evolving relationship between Lango and the NRA/M, and emerging opportunities for citizen engagement.

### **5.6.1 Life under Idi Amin**

Respondents referred to Idi Amin as the 'military regime' under which they had fear all the time, had to struggle to sustain a minimum livelihood, and limit the social activities that were most important to them. In the Langi research site, the sub-county chief was killed and the entire staff replaced with soldiers from Amin's tribe from West-Nile. More soldiers were stationed in the trading centre. The Langi were very afraid of them and their aggressive behaviour. Although violence was not used very frequently in the rural areas, it mainly targeted the intellectuals and business men in Lira town, the threat of violence made people use avoidance tactics and stay away from the army. They would often sleep in the bush and they were reluctant to use the roads, especially the road to Lira town. Usually only the men would travel and women remained home.

Amin's regime was also remembered for the difficulties in making ends meet. Commodities like soap, salt and sugar were almost impossible to get. After Amin had expelled the Indian-Ugandan population, descendants from the Indian immigrants, in 1972 many industries

collapsed, as many of them had run those industries and trades. As in Acholi, having to miss these goods were considered signs of hardship and isolation. The cotton industry was suffering for the same reason. There were no more markets where the population could sell its surplus and they resorted to subsistence farming. At the same time, the production of cotton and payment of taxes were imposed and non-compliance was punished.

Social gatherings became prohibited and this greatly affected social life. Farming was no longer done in groups, limiting productivity. One could attend funerals only briefly. The Akiba drinking groups and any saving and loan group were prohibited, to prevent people saving money to send out to Amin's opponents. The regime's most disruptive effect was on the Langi clan organisation. The clans and their support for Obote were considered a great threat to the regime. The Won Nyasi, the highest cultural leader presiding over all Langi, was killed and the clan leadership forbidden. At the local level this had implications for day-to-day governance of the clan. Members could not carry out the elections for clan leadership and those in positions stayed on for the length of Amin's era. Gatherings like courts and clan meetings could not be organised and in case of disputes one would secretly call two or three of the 'most able' clan leaders and elders to come and settle it. The constant fear and violence people had to live with and the way the regime suppressed their clan organisation constituted their sentiments against Amin. Great was their relief when 'their' Obote came back to power in 1980.

Although the forms of agency during Amin's regime were not studied in great detail in my study, a number of similarities between Amin's regime and the situation in Acholi during the LRA conflict can be observed. The militarisation of the social environment and the repression of social activities were similar. To an extent, the source of threat was visible. The repressor was known, and so were the rules for behaviour that would not provoke violence and the places where the violence could be encountered. Like in Acholi, public gatherings and social institutions were disrupted and spaces for citizen engagement shut down completely as the military regime replaced the local administration. But in a way, social navigation was easier in this context. A regime of political oppression was more stable, at least in rural Lango, and easier to read, interpret and navigate than in the fluctuating war context of Acholi during the LRA.

### **5.6.2 Obote's second Presidency**

'The clans woke up again' was what the Langi remembered the most of what happened after Obote returned to power. The people were allowed to perform all their functions and gatherings at local level. However, the position of the Won Nyasi was not recognised due to Obote's tense relation with the kingdoms. Equally important was the resumption of agricultural work and proper management of the cotton societies, which made productivity increase. To help the impoverished population, basic necessities as soap, salt and clothes were distributed by the Obote II administration, and seeds and insecticides to support the agriculture. What the Langi especially appreciated was that social services were provided again. Pupils did not have to buy any materials since the schools were provided with all.

The local government system introduced by Obote 'myumba kumi' (Chapter 4) grouped 10 households together, led by a committee that would settle minor issues and organise collection of taxes. After Amin's regime that had muted citizen voices this was welcomed, and Langi felt that the Langi officials at the sub-county were open to them. Above all, Obote was a Langi; *'People were happy. This [Obote] was our son. Even if he did not do many things he is still our son!'*, one man said. However, Obote did not re-introduce the patronage of political appointments among the Langi and under his second presidency fewer Langi occupied important positions in the government (Branch, 2010, p. 30). Nonetheless, after the devastating Amin era the relative improvement in living conditions, a government that was 'theirs' and, at least in Lango, provided basic services and recognised the clans were characteristics most appreciated.

This came under immediate threat when Tito Okello took over. The Langi were afraid they would return to the situation as it was under Amin. Okello's soldiers were mainly Acholi and caused a lot of havoc in the area while chasing Obote's soldiers, making it very clear that Obote would not return to power.

We were angry about the new government. Nothing good he did. He was not educated, he had little knowledge and could not run a country. Obote had put Acholis on high positions in the army and they [Acholi] used it to overthrow Obote. There is now tension between Acholi and Langi, up to today. During Tito they looked for the Langi with good jobs and killed them.

*Lango: Focus group with 6 male elders, Kole district*

### 5.6.3 Return to stability under the NRA

When the NRA ousted Okello the Langi initially did not know whether it was for better or for worse. Definitely, it was better not to have Okello as a ruler and the NRA put an end to arbitrary killings by Okello's army. But clearly, the NRA would consider Lango an opposition area and would do anything to keep it under control. Also here, Obote's ex-soldiers formed an insurgent group referred to as '*olum olum*' [in the bush], joined by young men from the area. However, the respondents in my field location considered them more as armed robbers, men who did not know what to do with their lives, known for harassing the population and robbing local traders. The *olum olum* were pro-Obote, but were not thought of as serious insurgents, contrary to the *cilil* in Acholi, neither seemed the Langi to believe they would actually overthrow the NRA.

The arrival of the NRA was thus initially treated with great suspicion and fear, but the fact it ousted Tito Okello was a relief. The NRA did not launch a lengthy violent operation to round up Obote's soldiers and in the research site there were few incidents involving violence against civilians and cattle raiding. In my research site the NRA soldiers were not as omnipresent and aggressive as expected.

The army was brought here at the Sub-County to take care of life and property of local people. The NRA did not much disturb this place. People were arrested if they suspected you had a relationship with Obote. They looked for Obote's soldiers, but not disturbing local people. Some of Obote's soldiers were taken, some came back and others not. We don't know whether they joined the NRA and were taken somewhere.

*Lango: Focus group with 6 male elders, Kole district*

Starting from the 1990s, the population started to witness the reconstruction of social infrastructure, but much to their regret the cotton societies were not revitalised. Yet there was slow progress in service delivery. Respondents narrated how the Langi thus gradually came to terms with the NRA regime and with the fact that Obote would not come back. '*We wanted Obote to come back at first*' was a common phrase when talking about the regime change. But as the situation evolved Langi developed what they called a '*working relationship*' with the NRA/M, in which they acknowledged that some progress was made in terms of service delivery. Although many believed Obote could have done even better, as a Langi, people showed a certain acceptance, as expressed by this proverb: '*We are like widows; when someone comes to inherit me to help me, I must simply accept [it as it is]*'.

## 5.7 Consolidation of social and political institutions in Lango

### 5.7.1 Political leadership

Political representation had been a sensitive issue under previous regimes. Then the NRA made a step towards Lango when it formed a broad-based coalition at the start (Kasfir, 1998):

He [Museveni] put his effort on the few Langi that went to parliament. He put them in position of ministers. One Langi was a prime minister, the 1st minister. Very important ministries were given to Langi, like the Ministry of Land. We have fertile land, people used to fear Museveni would overtake it.

*Lango: Man, age 68, Kole district*

Many respondents referred to the fact that political representation of Lango under the NRM was to them a signal that the NRA would not be a military government 'like Amin'. This resonates with Bastian's emphasis on inclusive political institutions (Bastian, 2000). He wrote that adverse incorporation of a group is furthered when political institutions do not include certain groups. With its initial broad-based coalition the NRA countered such feelings and perceptions.

At the local level, the NRA initially appointed individuals from the West of Uganda as sub-county officials. Then ordinary local government institutions were put in place and the Resistance Councils (RCs) were formed. As in Acholi, the RCs were initially treated with suspicion, but this changed in a few years. What appealed to the Langi was a form of self-rule, which was very different from what had taken place under Amin and therefore countered citizen perceptions that the NRA would be a military regime. It gave people the confidence that they were allowed to rule themselves and would not be subject to the authority of another tribe. The following quotes refer to the early days of the NRA and illustrate the difference vis-a-vis the Acholi region.

At first people feared the NRA a lot, but when the government brought in the policy that people must elect their leaders as RCs it was fair. We elected RCs. People expected there would be no peace, we feared for most of us supported UPC and since this was a new party NRM we thought they might kill. Fear decreased when we elected the RCs.

*Lango: Focus group with 6 male elders, Kole district*

Under the NRA, at first people had fear. The RCs, people did not like to be RC initially. They thought it was a military government [...]. After some years it changed, due to

proper management and policies of the government. And they did not harass people. They realised Obote would not come back and they started to get to know Museveni.  
*Lango: man, age 67, Kole district*

Despite the flaws in the functioning of the RC system, which occurred in Lango just as in the southern regions (F. Golooba-Mutebi, 2004), it gave Langi a sense of regaining control. But there was more to it. Without the disruptive effects of the war, the RCs could start and consolidate from the very beginning. This had implications for the practice of citizenship. Whereas in Acholi the RCs were predominantly involved in security issues, in Lango they started to mediate about basic needs and services, and engaged in dispute resolution. People had the chance to develop leadership practices and experience with the RCs/LCs as channels that mediated with higher level authorities, right from the start. Also the population itself had the chance to learn about the procedures.

### **5.7.2 Social and cultural institutions**

#### ***Clan organisation***

In Lango clan leadership is multilayered, each layer having a name, a leader with a committee, and area of jurisdiction. The lowest level of clan leadership is the Won Pacu, who presides over 10 households. The next level is that of the Jan Jago Atekere who heads several clusters of 10 households, followed by the Jago Atekere who is responsible for the clan in a territory comparable to the size of the sub-county. The next level is that of the Rwot County, followed by the Awi Tong, which is the highest level of leadership for one and the same clan. The ultimate leadership position is that of the Won Nyasi, who heads all the Langi clans. Interestingly, in Luo some titles of local government officials resembled clan titles; the Jan Jago is the Parish Chief and the Jago is the Sub-County Chief, but 'Atekere' indicates that it is a clan position. Ethnographic work suggests titles were copied from the clan functions (Curley, 1973).

Historical sources describe how the structure of the clan leadership developed over time, diversifying its functions. Tosh writes about how in pre-colonial Lango the authority of clan leaders was very localised and based on a combination of lineage and territory, but their authority was limited (1978). People organised themselves in neighbourhood groups (*wan tic*) for agricultural work, in which clan leaders were expected to participate. Under British rule

Lango was divided into sub-counties for which 'chiefs' were appointed, often clan leaders, and eventually a four-level tier chiefly hierarchy from village to county was institutionalised. Effectively, certain clan leaders were singled out and placed in a higher position over others. The system became increasingly corrupted as it was abused by the chiefs for patronage networks, which eroded their legitimacy. In post-colonial Lango, the multiple levels persisted, but each clan now installed their own leaders at the different levels. Hence, no longer one clan was in a 'chief' position over others.

What was remarkable was that clan leaders at all levels are elected. At the very local level clan members elect their leader, whereas for the higher levels clan leaders constitute the electoral assembly that elect the leaders for the next level. All respondents, including the elders and clan leaders that were interviewed, were confident that clan leadership had never been an inherited function, but Tosh writes that it certainly *had* been in the pre-colonial era. However, the elders would select the right 'son' based on individual merit and if there were no capable sons even a remote cousin could be identified (Tosh, 1978, p. 189). The electoral system for clan leaders developed in the post-colonial era, and is now a key characteristic of clan governance:

Langi look for competence in leaders, which is not possible if leadership is inherited. In the past there was always election but the way we elect has developed. Now all clan members participate. Under the British I heard there was no proper election, but the people would see that if you are capable, like had some education, and then they appointed you. Roles were quite different. There were less people and now some clan leaders do some tasks that government is also doing.

*Lango: man, age 62, Kole district*

The election system became more sophisticated over time. Nowadays both men and women vote and the process is done by lining up behind (representatives of) candidates at local level and by secret ballot at higher levels. Aspiring candidates even campaign, but people hastened to say that these campaigns are very different from the formal political elections in that candidates will 'not use money', e.g. buy votes. It is also possible to remove a clan leader from office when people are not content with his/her performance. It is even considered easier to hold a clan leader accountable than government leaders, an issue I return to in Chapter 7.

At present, clan leaders at every level chair committees that in composition are very similar to the LC secretarial posts; a chair person, vice chair person, general secretary, treasurer, and secretaries for youth, women and widows, health, education, environment, and security. In

addition, there are secretaries for land (*Adwong Kila*), for Culture, and for Reconciliation (*Adwong Kwor*), which did not exist in the formal local government system. The committees expanded after Amin's regime, but during fieldwork it did not become clear how much later. Many respondents said that it was copied from the LC system introduced by Museveni.

The clan system had benefited from over 20 years of stability during which several clans had accumulated assets with which they assisted their members, using complex loan and distribution mechanisms. Meanwhile the clan committees had expanded functions and responsibilities to maintain reciprocal, social security networks. Many of my respondents were in leadership positions of their clan at some level, depending on the size of the village population and number of clans present. As such, the clans formed an important basis where the capacities for social organisation and co-operation were learnt.

Thus, as Lango region remained peaceful and stable the clan leadership in Lango at local level could further consolidate. This is an important difference with the Acholi region. Although the Acholi benefited from the reinstatement of the paramount chief, who could act as a spokesperson in the war, the functioning of local level clan leaders was interrupted during the LRA insurgency. Their status was seriously undermined in the beginning of the conflict and later on in the displacement camps.

### ***Social institutions***

Community groups figure prominently in the daily life of rural areas. The most important groups are for farming (*grup mephu* in Acholi, *Alulu* in Lango) and saving systems (*'bol i cup'*), which have been in existence for long. Government facilitated credit and loan programmes (Village Saving and Loan Associations - VSLA) have encouraged new groups to form. Across Lango region the 'social drinking groups' (*Akiba*) were widespread, which combines sharing local brew with a saving and loan system. Also in Acholi the sharing of local brew was an important social event, but mainly an activity for a farming group after cultivation work and convened at the compound of the person whose land was cultivated that day. This had been the case in Lango (Curley, 1973), but nowadays *Akiba* groups also existed independently of the farming groups; *Langi* may cultivate in one group in the morning and then join an *Akiba* group with other members in the afternoon, though these naturally often overlapped. Burial societies did not exist in contrast with other parts of Uganda (Jones, 2009), because funerals and financial contributions were organised through the clans. Only recently people have



started to form 'emergency groups' with mixed clan membership, for savings and loans in case of death and illness.

Farmer groups are led by farmer leaders, *Adwong Wan Tic*, whose function is similar to that of the *Rwot Kweri* in Acholi. But in Lango the farmer leader had several other responsibilities, like the organisation and monitoring of organising community work such as clearing the roads. The *Adwong Wan Tic* decides the type of community work to be carried out and communicates with the LCs to mobilise the community members. If someone fails to show up the person is fined by the *Adwong Wan Tic*.

Community groups are vital social institutions in which villagers from various clans collaborate. As such these groups offered opportunities to learn norms of co-operation, leadership skills, and skills for local problem-solving and decision-making. Previous sections demonstrated that groups in Acholi could not function properly due to the war and especially the younger generations had missed out on years of group membership. Yet in Lango, groups were able to consolidate and sophisticate their functions. As will be elaborated in Chapter 7, this built their experience with citizenship practices over time.

### 5.8 The Lango sense of citizenship

I feel we are equal members of Uganda but the government does not treat us equally. We don't have resources like other tribes. I mostly look at wealth as the major issue that has divided the Langi and other tribes.

*Lango: Man, age 27*

In the beginning we were not in good terms with the government. We rejected his words. He was leading us astray. We are beginning to like him now, entering the yellow bus. We have learned he is also someone who can be good in the future, so we need to come together. We had the UPC party, but the person who maliced Obote became president of the UPC; Otunu. But not to our liking. So people started looking for other presidential candidates and started to follow Museveni. We dislike one thing about Otunu: he Acholi and this is a confusing tribe. They maliced Obote, created rebels and they have a bad culture, we know this as we are near to them.

*Lango: Man, age 52*

In terms of security, the Langi did not complain much about the NRA. Where the NRA committed atrocities when it took power in 1986, it was to round up former the UNLA soldiers that had regrouped as the *olum olum*. The fact that the NRA had stopped a potentially oppressive regime of Acholis had been such a relief that any NRA violence against the Lango

population seemed forgiven and irrelevant. In this way, security did figure as an important aspect of the relationship between the ethnic group and the state. In this part of Lango, where the LRA had not reached, there was no mentioning of how the state had failed to protect the population against the LRA, even though other parts of Lango region had suffered rebel activity from 2003 to 2006. The two other aspects that were identified in Acholi, dignity and equality, were more prominent in the narratives that described the relationship between Lango and the state.

Important for the dignity of the Langi was the official recognition of the clan leadership by the NRA regime. In 1993 the Traditional Rulers Statute was adopted through which the powers of the kings and traditional leaders were restored. This was a measure by the NRA to prevent political parties from rallying support in Buganda when it was still consolidating its own power (Carbone, 2008). But in Lango, after strong repression of the clans under Amin and the Obote's cautious approach to the kingdoms and chiefdoms, this act was important in reconstituting the cultural component of Langi citizenship. The highest level of clan leadership, the Won Nyasi of Lango, was elected for the second time in history after the first Won Nyasi had been killed under Amin's regime. In Lango, feelings of stigmatisation did not figure as prominently as in Acholi. There was a sense that southern tribes considered the Langi to be more 'backward', but this was not as prominent as the Acholi had talked about themselves.

The biggest complaint about the state, illustrated by the first quote above, was the perceived inequality in the distribution of resources, along the same lines as the Acholi has mentioned this. Although the NRA/M had started off with a notion of inclusiveness, in the present there was a strong sense that the NRM was more a regime for southerners than for northerners. Like the Acholi, also Langi felt that their region was not being developed as fast as other (southern) parts of the country, because of Langi support to the opposition. This sense of inequality based on tribal difference continued to stand in between Lango region and the NRM regime. Thus, although service provision had somewhat improved, respondents felt development could have been more rapid if not for the NRM's tendency to 'favour' other regions.

Thus, in Lango the stability that followed the initial turbulence when the NRA came to power allowed the (re)construction of important aspects of the Langi's citizenship. Although the Langi by and large felt that the NRM regime was not 'theirs' they did acknowledge the NRA/M had contributed to their security. To re-establish the important institution of the clan leadership had enhanced their sense of dignity. The most important strain on their relationship to the

state was constituted by their sense of inequality and the belief that their region remained underdeveloped compared to southern tribes.

## Conclusion

In this chapter I described the nature of the warscape that developed in Acholi and demonstrated how this affected local institutions, the public sphere and forms of agency. I also described which historical moments were identified as important for the construction of Acholi citizenship. This was then compared with political developments in Lango, where social and political institutions developed in a relatively stable context.

The chapter provided the empirical data in relation to proposition (II) about the securitisation of the public sphere and narrowing, securitised civic and political institutions. Both the activities of the LRA and the military directly impacted on the security of Acholi civilians and on the public sphere. This set in motion a process of institutional transformation. Social institutions and spaces where people could come together as collectivity, for co-operation and decision-making, were curtailed. These spaces were important for learning the skills that are important for *citizen* agency, for leadership skills and norms for co-operation.

Securitisation of political institutions occurred when Resistance Council members gained importance because of their function as mediators between communities and the military. This only increased during periods when Local Defence Units were organised. At the same time, the customary leadership weakened, which changed the relationship between youth and elders. Change in political institutions thus entails more than the emergence of new governance mechanisms; it is about changes in existing forms and patterns of authority too. The public sphere securitised as the military presence dominated the lives of the Acholi and as security became the most important issue. It was also reflected in how people had to adjust their language in the public sphere, in order to avoid being labelled 'rebels'.

In discussing different forms of agency, it became clear that immediate needs such as safety and food were prioritised over 'ordinary' development and governance issues with a longer time-frame. Forms of coping agency were more important than citizen agency. As collective life became more fragmented there was less opportunity to build collective voice for development, what I called the 'petitioning voice' (Chapter 3). Furthermore, the situation did not allow the population to express and develop an 'interrogative voice' and hold the state and

military accountable for its failure to protect Acholi citizens. This, too, had implications for citizenship as the Acholi gained less experience with citizenship practice, which relates to proposition (III).

In Lango, a consolidation of social and political institutions was observed. After the turmoil of the regime change in 1986 had subsided, Langi citizens started to build certain experiences that were useful for engagement in local governance and community institutions: with RCs, in the clan institutions, and in community groups. The Langi contrasted this period of time with the period of Amin's regime when all of these activities were impossible.

This chapter highlighted key aspects for the relationship between citizens and the state, as defined by Acholi and Langi citizens: equality, dignity and security. This also shows the connection between ethnic citizenship and national citizenship. Both Langi and Acholi reflect on their own citizen identity by referring to the relationship between their *tribe* and the state.

The next chapter focuses entirely on the Acholi region at a time when displacement became a structural feature of the war, from 1996/7 onwards, and examines how the Acholi sense and practice of citizenship unfolded in the camps.

## Chapter 6 Acholi Citizenship Recast during Displacement

### Introduction

The long-term displacement of the Acholi into camps within their region was one of the key characteristics of the LRA conflict. Occasional displacement had occurred in the early 1990s, particularly in Gulu district, but it became more permanent in parts of the region from 1996. At its peak, over 1.4 million (92%) of the Acholi lived in camps across the region as Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs). Formally living within state boundaries, they remained under the sovereignty and responsibility of the Ugandan state. In practice, the rights and entitlements they experienced were different from those accorded to ordinary Ugandan citizens.

The camps reconfigured the nature of the warscape. In this context, how did a sense and practice of citizenship develop? Given that many people lived in these camps for five to ten years, some even longer, this was a considerable period of people's lives, especially for the youth that grew up there. In interviews the period of displacement came up as significant in the construction of Acholi citizenship. It is therefore important to study how people have experienced this episode of the war in detail.

This chapter presents a description of the lived experience of the camps in Acholi with an analytical focus on forms of agency that developed in the camp setting, how displacement reconfigured social and political institutions, and the nature of the public sphere. I show how the camp led to particular forms of citizen engagement and to the repression of others, the implications of which are elaborated in Chapter 7. These findings relate to propositions (II) and (III) about changes during the conflict, but in the camp setting.

The findings show how the camp situation undermined and recast an Acholi sense of citizenship, using the characteristics of a sense of citizenship explained in Chapters 3 and 4: equality, dignity and security. Already reconfigured prior to the camp situation, these characteristic were further eroded in the camps. This discussion addresses an important gap in forced migration literature: the link between the practice and perceptions of citizenship for the *internally* displaced.

The chapter starts with a discussion of the nature of displacement in the Acholi region in section 6.1, based on existing literature. Section 6.2 then describes forms of coping agency in

the camps and how life in the camps was experienced. Section 6.3 explains the transformation of social institutions. In section 6.4 I describe the challenges to exercising the petitioning voice and the interrogative voice in the context of repressive power structures in the camps, and show how political agency was discouraged. A number of observations about the implications of camp life for the practice of citizen engagement are made in section 6.5. Section 6.6 presents a reflection on the implications of camp life for Acholi citizenship: pointers that inform Acholi citizenship at present.

## **6.1 The IDP camps in Acholi**

In Chapter 2 I described key characteristics of international refugee camps found in other studies (Kaiser, 2004; Malkki, 1996; Nyers, 2006; Turner, 2006). Many of these apply to the IDP camps as they existed in Acholi: the basic needs of the population were fulfilled by humanitarian actors, the military was present for camp security, and a camp governance system was institutionalised. There are also important differences. The state remained present: physically mainly through the military and with limited operations at sub-county and district level, but also in how it handled the conflict at higher levels. Then, the camps were located *inside* the war zone and on-going insecurity had an impact on camp life. Finally, the camp population was ethnically homogeneous, although social stratification occurred through other factors.

This section describes the Acholi IDP camps: under which circumstances they were formed, the governance regime put in place, and the security situation. I complement existing literature with the perspectives of former camp residents from my field data. I show how the camps were characterised by a markedly hierarchical set of power relations, in which the military and camp leadership had significant powers over the camp population.

### **6.1.1. Phases of camp formation**

Displacement in the Acholi region occurred in several phases, starting from 1996.

Displacement patterns were not uniform across the region. Due to the phases the displacement experience of people varied in duration, the magnitude of the population that got displaced, the extent of humanitarian assistance, and whether displacement was coerced

or voluntary. Detailed studies exist on the camp situation as well as reports produced by the many aid agencies that have been active in the region (Allen, 2006; Branch, 2009; Dolan, 2009; Finnström, 2003; Hurifo, 2002; NRC, 2003). Many of the camp studies were carried out in Gulu district, while camps in my research sites were less researched.

In Gulu district people experienced short-term displacement periodically during the early 1990s. Then rebel activities worsened from 1995 as the LRA operated from its bases in Sudan. People began commuting: they worked their gardens during the day and slept in safer areas at night (Dolan, 2009, p. 46). In late 1996 the government began to establish 'protected villages', using military force to move people to the designated areas. The excessive violence used by the military made people feel more afraid of staying in the 'protected villages' than at home. From 1996-2006 the overall number displaced increased steadily. The first World Food Programme (WFP) operation in January 1997 provided relief to 20 protected villages in Gulu district for an estimated number of 110,000 people. In May 1999 this went up to 325,000 people, including 81,000 persons in villages in Lamwo and Chua districts (Dolan, 2009).

In Lamwo and Chua districts displacement started in January 1997 following a series of attacks by the LRA in the border area of Lokung, Padibe and Palabek. These attacks resulted in a massacre in which over 400 people were killed within a few days. Here, people went for protection to the sub-county centres, which is how displacement started in seven sub-counties on the border, and around the 'LRA corridor' leading south. District authorities responded quickly and started to coordinate the settlement with the help of Oxfam GB, which had previously carried out development programmes in the area. The process of camp formation in this area was therefore said to have taken place in a 'more orderly' fashion than in other districts (Olaa, 2001).

In 1999 the situation seemed to calm down and there was a period of relative stability. All over the region people started to go back to their villages, though carefully, and initially only to cultivate their gardens. Then in December 1999, following a peace agreement between the governments of Uganda and Sudan in which the LRA had not taken part, the LRA launched new attacks all over the region, forcing the people back to the camps.

Military operation Iron Fist (March 2002) caused the last wave of displacement. The LRA reacted by rapidly expanding its violent operations across and outside the Acholi region into Lango and Teso. Now also the population of the remaining east Acholi sub-counties, thus far

not displaced permanently, was ordered to form camps at sub-county centres. By 2004 over 90% of the Acholi population was displaced.

The visit of Jan Egeland, UN Secretary General's Special Representative on Humanitarian Affairs, in November 2003 sparked an influx of humanitarian agencies across the affected regions. The United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) rolled out its cluster system<sup>16</sup>, which effectively sidelined the district authorities. Nonetheless, local government structures continued to exist at different levels. Throughout the conflict, friction emerged between district local governments and humanitarian actors about who was managing whom. Both sides claimed the coordination role. But from interviews with humanitarian actors<sup>17</sup> and with district officials<sup>18</sup> it appeared that the district authorities were back in charge only after 2006, when the camps started to be dismantled. After the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement in August 2006 and subsequent protocols for comprehensive solutions, people gradually started to leave the camps. A little later the formal 'camp phase out' process began.

The population of my two research locations in Acholi moved to the camps at different moments in the conflict. The site in Chua is ten kilometers away from Kitgum town. Throughout the war members of the communities in that sub-county periodically sought refuge in town, in an area called Gangdyang [*place where the cattle graze*]. Due to the proximity of their villages the population from the Chua research site was inclined to go home when the situation improved. Then in 2003, after operation Iron Fist, the entire sub-county population was ordered to form a camp at their sub-county centre. They lived there for about five years before the return process started. At the time of research in 2010, most had moved home.

The research site in Lamwo was in located the area where the wave of attacks happened in January 1997. Immediately after these attacks the entire population of the sub-county ran to the trading centre near the army barracks. Then the organisation of the camp started. A small group of villagers who had the means fled to Kitgum, specifically to Gangdyang. Gangdyang developed into a big camp inhabited by people from all over the district. At some point it became too big to manage and the district made an effort to decongest the site by sending

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<sup>16</sup> When a cluster system is in place the UN agencies and implementing humanitarian actors take over the coordination and implementation of service provision from the government for, e.g. water, sanitation and hygiene, protection, livelihoods, education.

<sup>17</sup> Interviews with AVSI (11/02/10), AVSI (14/02/2010), NRC (04/02/2010), Oxfam GB (18/12/2010)

<sup>18</sup> Interviews with RDC (06/05/2010), Assistant CAO (18/080/2010)



people home. The villagers from my research site returned to Lamwo and settled in the camp at the sub-county. The people spent at least ten years in the main camp, after which they moved to smaller satellite camps near their homes. In 2010 many were still living in the satellite camps and busy constructing homes again on their original land.

The reason for including the Lamwo site in the study was to gain in-depth understanding about life in the camp. This raises the question about a comparison between Lamwo and Chua, because the length of displacement may affect engagement. It was not, however, an objective of this study to explain the effects of variation in the length of displacement and its implications for citizen engagement. In Chapter 8 I present concluding observations about the differences between the sites in this respect, but these are reflections and not based on substantive empirical evidence. Rather, Lamwo was a case that allowed me to learn about camp dynamics in their own right.

#### **6.1.2. Camp governance regime**

In Chapter 2 I explained that camps become places where a myriad of actors are involved in governing them (Morvaridi, 2008). Since humanitarian actors are important in shaping the parameters of camp governance, Nyers refers to the camp as a 'humanitarian space' (2006, p.114). In the Acholi IDP camps a multi-layered structure of camp governance was introduced. During fieldwork I heard that, initially, existing governance structures such as the LCs, elders and *Rwodi Kweri* (farmer leaders) had coordinated the settlement of the people. In Gulu district the existing cultural leadership of *Rwodi Kweri* were incorporated into the lower levels of camp leadership<sup>19</sup>, but I did not hear of this in Lamwo or Chua. In the Lamwo research site, the early organisation of the camp in 1997 was done by LC2 and LC3 members. Thus, before the humanitarian actors took over the coordination role and rolled out the camp leadership structure, the Acholi population first used existing social and political institutions to respond to this new crisis situation.

Humanitarian actors then introduced a system of self-governance in the Acholi displacement camps, with slight variations between districts. As a structure to 'create order' in a humanitarian crisis situation this was a political institution, although different from what has been discussed in conflict studies literature regarding the transformation of political

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<sup>19</sup> Interview, Gulu NGO Forum (03/02/2010)

institutions (Justino, 2013). It was introduced by external aid actors. This authority would profoundly shape the local politics (Harriss et al., 2004) in the camp and affect the political voice of the camp residents, much as Turner (2006) described for the refugee camps in Burundi.

The camp leadership (or later: camp management system) was intended to enable efficient distribution of relief and to act as a communication channel. The hierarchical structure started from the top with the 'camp commandant', a camp resident who chaired a committee composed of other camp residents. The next level was the zone, called block or parish in some cases, which was headed by the Block Leader or Parish Leader and again a committee. The lowest level was the cell or village level, headed by a village leader and committee. In my two research sites people had largely settled according to their original parishes and villages, while in many camps such orderly settlement had not been possible and people from different areas lived mixed together.

The camp leadership structure was thus established parallel to the formal LC system. On top of that the clan leadership continued to exist, forming another form of authority with different functions again (Dolan, 2009, p. 113). The reason for separate camp leadership was that humanitarian agencies considered the LC leaders to be politicians, hence unsuitable for relief structures that needed to adhere to the concept of humanitarian neutrality. Yet the LC system in the North was not suspended during the insurgency. Since the Lamwo/Chua camps were in most cases established at the sub-county centres, the LC3, LC2 and LC1 levels formally continued to exist and all Local Government elections were carried out. According to many aid actors the LCs became completely 'redundant', while officials themselves said they were 'dormant' but insisted they were in place. Field data in this research suggested they continued to perform certain tasks, but were definitely overshadowed by the camp leadership. The introduction of camp leadership often led to friction with the LCs, because the LCs felt deprived of their functions, authority and status:

During camp time, we had some difficulty. Even with the NGOs. Most of the NGOs who were coming here, were coming directly to the camp leadership, not to the LCs. They were thinking, the LCs are somehow political. So when it comes to distribution of materials, maybe they will take sides with somebody who has voted him or her, who is a supporter. But they were going to the camp leaders. So that one created gaps between the LCs and the camp leaders.

*LC3 chair man, Lamwo district*

Since the humanitarian agencies communicated directly with the camp commandant they legitimised that authority and undermined the legitimacy of LCs. However, in many cases LC members doubled as camp leaders. For example, the camp commandant that had been in charge of the camp in Lamwo was LC2 chair person before the camp started. A former camp commandant in Chua declared he had been 'a rebel' in the UPDA fighting the NRA when it took over, but had later crossed over to the NRA. People had elected him as camp commandant, because he was educated and knew how to engage with the military.

Humanitarian actors organised the election of camp leaders in all camps. In the Lamwo camp, which started in 1997, the LC3 and LC2 chairmen had coordinated the settlement process prior to the election. They registered people and planned their settlement, village by village and parish by parish. One of these LC2 chairpersons was elected camp commandant, as he recounted:

In February 1998 I was elected as Camp Commandant. This was a directive by the Community Development Officer at the district and was implemented under surveillance of Oxfam GB. They [the camp residents] started by electing village leaders, nine people in a committee for each village. You nominated a name, and they were seconded by someone. People discussed and the nominees got some time to talk to the people. Then there was election by lining up behind the candidate. Then in the parish, the village committees formed the electoral college. They selected a committee for the parish, from among themselves or outside. The parish leaders came together and elected a Camp Commandant from among themselves. Also the vice, secretary, women affairs, mass mobilisation and education, health, security, treasurer, information & publicity.

*Former camp commandant, Lamwo district*

Initially the main task of the camp leadership was to oversee the distribution of relief, starting from the registration of camp residents and people with special needs, to supervision of the distribution when relief arrived. The scope of its responsibilities soon broadened to overseeing all basic services in the camp such as water and sanitation, health and education, in close collaboration with the aid agencies. The camp leadership was the implementing body. The secretaries on the committees of the camp leadership had designated roles and responsibilities, e.g. for water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), health, education etc. For example, the secretary for WASH at the village/block level inspected whether the residents maintained hygiene in their compounds, the secretaries at parish level checked the maintenance of latrines in the zone, and at the camp commandant level the NGO interventions were discussed. The levels of the camp leadership structure also became the channel for

information from humanitarian agents downwards. Dates for 'cleaning the camp', special distributions and projects were announced following the structure.

As the responsibilities of the camp leadership expanded they gained increasing control over the camp residents. Not only did they have control over food distribution and services, but also over people's mobility and behaviour. When someone wanted to travel to town or to visit relatives in a different camp he/she had to obtain a letter from the camp commandant, stamped by the LC1. For security purposes the camp leadership played an important role in interacting with the UPDF. Furthermore, they were involved in managing social relations and dispute resolution, although this also remained a function of the LCs.

To manage the camp affairs, camp leaders created 'by-laws' or let the zone population create rules themselves in the same way it was done in the LC system. They also oversaw compliance with the regulations, thus adopting 'judicial powers', as reflected in this quotation from the camp commandant:

When I was in office I thought, how do I manage so many people? How do I put them down [discipline them]? The idea of the by-laws just came to me. I sent the secretary for security to explain the situation everywhere. By-laws were passed: fighting and violence were not allowed. If you do so, you will be caned. In each village they had to make by laws to protect themselves. [...] I put in a by-law prohibiting the selling of distributed food. If they make an offence, a person is brought in front of his village committee and the entire community. If it meant strokes, then this is given. That system eased my administration.

*Former camp commandant, Lamwo district*

To the camp residents the camp leadership was seen as the highest authority in the camp. Due to their multitude of tasks and formalised powers they were considered more important than the LCs. As the roles of camp leaders expanded, the functioning of the LC system was severely disrupted. Dolan writes how the Gulu district authorities appealed to NGOs and UN agencies to '*respect the legal basis of the Local Council Government when working in or visiting the camps and always approach them first*' (2009, p. 114). In the last stage of the conflict the district government started to restore the authority of the LC system, until the camp leadership was formally abolished in 2008. The camp commandant in Lamwo remembered that especially after the 2006 elections '*The government wanted that the government leaders started to work with us, because people were forgetting them. So from now there was a bit change and we had to work hand in hand with them.*' However, as explained in Chapter 2, due to the change to a multi-party system no elections were carried out for LC1 and LC2 level in 2006. This meant LC1

and LC2 members that were elected in 2001 officially continued to serve up to 2013. Yet many positions became vacant because members had died or migrated, or simply 'lost interest'. This was a problem all over Uganda, but further complicated in Acholi due to the camps.

### **6.1.3 Camp security**

The UPDF was another powerful authority in the camp and the key actor to deliver protection. Some argue that the government actively intended to use the camps for political suppression, in which the military played an active role. Aware that the failures in relief could lead to resistance the government stepped up the security in order to prevent popular protests (Branch, 2009). This may be one explanation for the fact that no large-scale protests against the failures in humanitarian relief emerged in Acholi (2009, p. 495).

Military barracks were located in the middle of the camp, surrounded by the huts of the residents, prompting the question of who was protecting whom (Dolan, 2009). In various ways the military contributed to the insecurity Acholi experienced, first of all by not taking action when rebel movements were reported to them, or responding late. Respondents gave numerous accounts of when the UPDF told people off and refused to leave the barracks. Secondly, the military itself engaged in criminal activities against the population, like theft, rape and other violent forms of abuse, which have been widely covered (Dolan, 2009; Hurifo, 2002).

In various stages of the conflict the government stimulated the formation of groups of armed civilians to fight alongside the army, against the LRA. In 1992 'Bow and Arrow groups' were formed, as explained in Chapter 4, which provoked a backlash. Later on the government again recruited people, now as Local Defence Units (LDUs), provided them with training and armed them with guns. This intervention was heavily criticised by civil society, but since the security situation had deteriorated significantly this made many men join the LDUs to engage in protection activities. From mid-2003 more than 30,000 male civilians across Acholi, Lango and Teso took up arms (Dolan, 2010).

Insecurity persisted in the camps. During periods of high-intensity LRA activity the LRA attacked the IDP camps. They looted shops, stores and markets, and killed and abducted residents. Branch explains how residents in camps in Gulu left the camp to sleep in the bush

after distribution of relief due to the likelihood of the rebels coming for it (Branch, 2009). There were also attacks on camps that were of a symbolic nature: to demonstrate that the LRA disagreed with the displacement camps as a government measure, to demonstrate their strength or avenge attacks launched against the LRA. They could destroy a large part of the camp by setting only a few huts on fire, since the fire easily spread. Several camps experienced massacres in which many people were killed in a matter of hours.

To conclude, the ‘myriad of actors’ (Morvaridi, 2008) involved in governing the camp population did not just create a ‘humanitarian space’ (Nyers, 2006) in the camps. It also meant a continuation of insecurity due to LRA activities and an extension of the militarised environment due to military control, like people had experienced at home. The population in the Chua research site continued to experience the warscape at home, until they were displaced into camps in 2003. Until 2003 they continued their way of life as described in Chapter 5. The population in the Lamwo research site was displaced in 1997 and lived with camp leadership from that moment onwards, until the camp started to be phased out in 2007. The following sections describe how life evolved in the camps, elaborate on the camp politics and show how the configuration of powers in the camps affected the ‘petitioning voice’ and the ‘interrogative voice’ of the population.

## **6.2 Daily struggles: coping agency in the camps**

It is not difficult to imagine that camp life, thousands of people confined on a small area of land, was full of hardships. The harsh living conditions, deteriorating health situation and social problems have been described in detail by others (Branch, 2009; Dolan, 2009; Finnström, 2003). In individual interviews and ranking exercises in focus groups respondents prioritised the problems they experienced in the camps. Food and security were people’s primary concerns, just as before the camps, and stood out head and shoulders above all other problems. Next in priority was a category referred to as ‘social problems’, signalling changes in social institutions (Justino, 2013). Health and water were ranked next. The overpopulated camps and poor sanitation facilities made the population extremely vulnerable to epidemics, especially the young children.

In this section I elaborate the forms of agency the Acholi developed in response to camp life and the problems they faced. I start with how they sought to maintain their livelihoods, including the gendered experience of it, followed by security.

### 6.2.1. Securing food and livelihoods

The distribution of relief by humanitarian actors did not guarantee that households had enough to eat. When the camps had just formed it was particularly hard, since food distribution started later and sub-county centres offered few facilities for so many people. Food and water were the first issues that were addressed by humanitarian actors, but involved many challenges. Respondents said that the rations were too small and were finished before new supplies were brought. Often the relief did not come on the expected date, sometimes being delayed for weeks. In a few instances it happened that the relief supplies were of bad quality or even rotten. One woman said: *'In the camp I had the problem of food. My children and I would sometimes sleep without eating food'*. A major problem was that names were regularly missing from the distribution list. This could take months to be rectified, leaving entire families in a difficult situation. The problem could be caused 'in town' e.g. at the WFP office by a 'computer problem', but the camp leadership itself was notorious for 'embezzling' the food rations.

My life was not fine when I was in the camp, because my name was not included among the names of the other community members who were getting food. I stayed for 8 months without getting relief and then later my name was entered. I went together with other members to the camp and our names were written together, but when the cards came out my card was not there and you cannot get food without a card.

*Man, age 48, Chua district*

Security regulations, such as the restrictions on mobility, limited livelihood opportunities around the camp. One woman said with much frustration: *'My life during the insecurity was hard. I had no land for digging. I just had to wait for food from the government, yet I was capable of digging!'* As a consequence, it was a daily preoccupation of the camp population to secure food, and a livelihood more generally:

I used to come and collect firewood from our village for sale to earn a living since my name was not included among the people who were getting food. I also dug for the people that had gardens near the camp and in return they either gave me food or money. I was also doing metal work like making hoes and axes.

*Man, age 39, Chua district*

People tended to sell the *posho* or maize from WFP to get money and buy better food. Women mostly used *posho* to make the local brew called '*kwete*' and then sell it to buy better food for themselves.

*Man, age 46, Lamwo district*

The land directly surrounding the camp was cultivated by its owners, at least when the security situation allowed. Some of them rented out plots to other camp residents. Numerous small petty businesses developed. Local smiths who had brought their tools continued their work. Men worked at construction sites in the centre as 'helpers'. Women started small canteens to cook for the military and later for the NGOs to cater for their 'training lunches' in large numbers. They also did paid work for the army, like fetching water, sweeping the compounds and washing clothes. A big business was to brew and sell the local alcohol.

Apart from these economic activities a range of informal strategies developed. Stealing from neighbours, renting out the same plot of land to several people and getting away with the money were some examples. Tricks with relief supplies constituted another. Though it was prohibited to sell relief supplies some people did so to get money for buying basic necessities or simply to 'diversify their diet'. Some people lied about the number of persons in the household to increase the food ration. Around Kitgum town, where mobility was easier, some people were registered in more than one camp and received food in both places. Most camp residents considered these activities not as a form of cheating, but as a necessary response to shortages or poor quality relief supplies. Then there were instances where cheating with relief became a 'business', usually organised by better-placed actors such as camp leaders. The trade in sacks that 'dropped off the trucks' (sometimes to the disadvantage of other camp residents) must have involved networks of residents, volunteers of agencies and sellers in town.

There was also a darker side to these coping mechanisms. Parents were accused of forcing their older children to engage in prostitution. Other people took the real risk of breaking the rules and secretly left the camp to cut firewood or bamboo or find crops still remaining in home villages, and sold these things in the camp. These activities reflected the gravity of the situation, and what people were forced to do in order to make ends meet.



The daily struggles of camp life disproportionately affected women. Fetching water was traditionally a woman's responsibility in Acholi, which in the camp meant lining up for hours in the sun. Another task was to collect firewood. With military escorts they moved further away from the camp to find wood, which was a safety risk. Women described it to me as something they feared. On the way back they were told to slash the bushes on the sides of roads leading to the camp to enhance visibility: a security measure to prevent rebels from approaching unseen.

Then, given the shortage of food and cash, while under pressure to feed their children, respondents explained how women engaged in highly unequal sexual relationships with men in camp leadership positions, shop keepers, soldiers and even humanitarian volunteers. Abuse of power was even clearer in a few cases where women were denied food rations if they refused to have sex. Though the specific vulnerabilities of women in displacement camps must be recognised, so must their agency. Their strategies to meet the livelihood needs of their families, the caring for neighbours and relatives demonstrated their strengths. Their agency is a double-edged sword, however, because in practice it meant they had more responsibilities than men.

### 6.2.2 Engagement in protection

People in any [camp] meeting could try to talk to the government officials and leaders to add more soldiers to the place, but always little was done. Then the issue of recruiting 'Acholi Okeco' [*Acholi are angry*] came in and the ex-soldiers, youth and LC1 got recruited to protect their own people, since they complained that government was doing very little to protect them and they got trained by the soldiers and got guns and fought off the rebels from their different areas.

*Man, age 46, Lamwo district*

When asked who were important for the protection of the camp population, the majority of respondents first spoke about the Local Defence Units (LDUs) and not about the army. In the past there had been strong resistance against the Bow and Arrow groups, mainly because it had put all people at risk. But later on the security situation worsened and the military responded so badly that the balance tipped over to the other side. Any form of protection was better than none and the LDUs could provide it. Naturally, there was also a downside to it. Many lost their lives or were permanently injured. But also, membership of an LDU gave a form of power, which led to instances of abuse.

Opinions about the recruitment of civilians in both research sites were diverse. Many respondents first of all showed their appreciation for the work of the LDUs, since they played such an important role in the protection of the population. '*We thank the government for providing them with guns*', was what I heard several women say in the focus group discussions. However, the wide appreciation of the intense work of those who joined the LDUs did not mean that people uniformly agreed with the creation of the LDUs as a security intervention by the government. In various parts of the region people opposed this action (Finnström, 2003, p. 145). But the government's failure to provide adequate protection left people with no other option than to engage in LDUs. On top of that, for many men the LDUs offered a way to regain control over one's life and enabled them to fulfil their male responsibilities, which were important aspects of an identity that had been lost.

Few respondents commented that *in principle* protection ought to be a state responsibility. However, given the state of emergency people were in, many now perceived the arming of civilians as a form of state support. The following quotations show this contrast:

That [LDUs] was a brilliant idea, because if it wasn't for the LDUs the rebels could still exist up to now. LDUs could fight seriously and had proper coordination with the civilians and therefore the civilians could show them the direction of the rebels.

*Man, age 26, Lamwo district*

It was a bad decision because the soldiers were the ones to fight the rebels, not civilians themselves. If the soldiers were not enough in number, the government should have recruited more and also could have brought them from other divisions from other parts of the country. But it was the plan of the government to finish the Acholi as a tribe by letting them fight their own brothers.

*Focus group, 2 men, age 45 and 32, Lamwo district*

It was a good idea because if they had left only the soldiers to protect us I think almost every one of us would have died. It was a good decision, because we were going to be finished by the rebels.

*Woman, age 30, Chua district*

To see this intervention as government support first of all reflects the hard situation, and secondly it shows that people's ideas about state responsibilities had shifted. I come back to this issue in section 6.5. The second quotation shows how the Acholi felt the government was against them, which is telling for their sense of citizenship at this point. I will now discuss forms of social organisation and how social roles changed in the camp

### 6.3 Social institutions in the camp

The camp was a unique but enduring setting for social life. The proximity of neighbours and relatives definitely helped in surviving the harsh camp conditions. However, with thousands of people in a confined space, with huts sometimes only a metre apart, social problems were bound to emerge. This section describes both the positive and the negative consequences of the camp for collective life, with specific reference to how social roles altered. On the one hand, the narratives demonstrated how important social relations are for coping with war (Colletta & Cullen, 2000). On the other hand, it shows that the challenging camp conditions put pressure on social relations, and led to a transformation of certain roles (Justino, 2013).

In the autonomous social spaces for engagement that existed independently from the camp governance regime a lot of activity and initiative occurred. Numerous support networks were formed to help neighbours and relatives in times of need. It was mostly women who were involved in caring, taking responsibility for the sick, widows and orphans. Through these networks the Acholi managed to secure livelihoods and care in a variety of ways:

People used to help each other by selling food at lower prices to those whose names were not on the list for food distribution.

*Man, age 39, Chua district*

Through borrowing from the neighbour and relatives. Through giving things on credit if someone has a problem and needs help, like money and also help in providing transport like a bicycle in case someone is sick and unable to walk.

*Man, age 40, Lamwo district*

Social networks and institutions were also important for maintaining a sense of collectivity. Funerals were important social gatherings where everyone paid a small contribution, but also confirmed their relationships through mourning with the family of the deceased. Forms of organisations like the farming groups (*grup mepwu*) and savings groups (*bol i cup* or *kalulu*) were already in existence before the camp started. In the camp many groups stopped functioning, but the *system* of group work continued to exist. New groups formed to cultivate the small plots around the camp.

Many NGOs that came in from 2004 onwards started to form a diverse range of groups for their projects: for farming, youth and women's groups, and cultural groups for traditional dances. Savings groups were boosted with credit programmes that introduced modern features such as interest rates and loans.

There were very many small savings groups in the camp which brought many people together. In those groups, members have specific amounts that they have to save every week, then after some time like 6 months they open the box and count the amount and give it to each member of the group; the exact amount they contributed, because a member is entitled to get a loan from their groups. Not more than the amount he/she contributed, in case they want to start a business or have a problem.

*Man, age 26, Lamwo district*

Later on groups formed in response to government programmes such as Northern Uganda Social Action Fund (NUSAF). Many NGOs selected group members from different villages in order to realise broader coverage of beneficiaries. Now that most people have returned home many of these groups have been dismantled, because the distances between villages are too big to maintain the group. In Chua, where the displacement lasted about five years, I encountered instances of 'old' groups that had existed prior to the camps and reunited after their members had returned home. In Lamwo, where displacement lasted ten years, I did not hear of this and I only encountered new groups. This suggests that the duration of displacement affects how easily people can resume old institutions, as too much may have changed in the meantime.

However, many social problems arose in the camps. Increased crime and violence were part of the daily reality, often as a result of excessive alcohol consumption among both men and women, but also due to boredom as the result of '*having no garden, no work, no purpose*'. And as much as the Acholi formed supportive relationships to secure food, the scarcity of food and commodities also formed a source of social conflict.

People never wanted their things to be touched - for example: jerry cans - and some people never wanted other children to get into their compounds. For example if they lend your child a jerry can and it gets broken, they would make you pay.

*Woman, age 33, Chua district*

There was jealousy between people or groups. For example, during the registration in the camp, I have registered seven people in my house. When the list came out, I found that I have 8 names. People started shouting at me that I have included a ghost person and they went and reported me to the village leader.

*Woman, age 43, Lamwo district*

Social divisions in the camp and politics formed another source of low-level tension. These often played out between ordinary camp residents and the family members of camp leaders, and between supporters from different political parties. Around election time tensions between supporters of different political parties occurred. But party membership also became

a mechanism in the distribution of the scarce resources that were available to people, e.g. when the camp leadership only hired NRM supporters for paid work.

People felt strongly that social problems such as disputes, petty crime and alcohol abuse had worsened significantly due to camp life. At the same time, the social structures and mechanisms for dispute resolution that were part of the Acholi culture were affected (See Mariana's explanation, Annex 3). Elders and clan leaders traditionally played a leading role in reconciliation between those involved in a fight. However, their social status had been eroded in various ways. First of all, when they moved to the camp they had to leave behind objects used in reconciliation rituals and could no longer access sacred areas such as hills, rocks and streams. Secondly, the teaching of the younger generations was disrupted. *Wang oo*, the evenings sitting around the fire in which the elders educated the youth about adult life, as explained in Chapter 5, were now disrupted due to the curfews. Thirdly, clan leaders lost authority over people, since they left the soil that formed the basis of that authority. Finally, in the camp they became 'ordinary persons', because they had to line up for food like the other camp residents. This loss of status was exacerbated by their drinking, since they now no longer led an 'exemplary life'. Thus, during the camp situation the legitimacy of elders and customary leaders suffered, which came on top of the challenge to their legitimacy at the beginning of the war, as explained before. They were, however, important authorities when it comes to ethnic citizenship, which I come back to in the last section.

The war and encampment impacted heavily on social relations between men and women, among youth, and between youth and elders. This became clear from the many 'social problems' that were brought up by respondents. The elders felt that their authority was challenged. On top of that the generation gap between the elders and the youth widened, because the opinions of elders did not relate to the camp situation and problems of the youth. Adults, and especially the elders, pointed out the difficulty of 'raising children in the right way'. *'The war spoiled the relation between men and women. They were young and not mature'* said women in a focus group. The youth developed habits such as playing cards and drinking. Boys and girls became sexually active at very early age, with girls often bearing the burden of early pregnancy, school drop-out and sexually transmitted diseases.

Female respondents always raised 'problems between men and women', which underlined the impact of the war on gender relations (Annex 3). Domestic violence increased tremendously in the camps, which is considered as a symptom of the broader impact of the war (Dolan, 2009).

Alcohol abuse resulted in child neglect, domestic violence, and spending the little money families possessed on alcohol rather than fulfilling household needs. Since people have returned home, this situation seems to have reversed very little. Women indicate they are still the ones who bring up and 'teach' the children and do the bulk of the household and gardening work. Even though men work in the gardens, according to the women they work less than before the camps.

My difficulties in the camp were domestic issues. My husband was not responsible in taking his duty as a man because he got things like food in the house, and my husband could sell it off and drink the money without doing something productive. My husband was beating me time and again. My husband could sell the food we get from UN and the little we cultivate. There was serious domestic violence which made me go back to my parents, up to only two months ago. There was a quarrel between me and my husband, and he chased me away. Chasing me from his home was something that made me very upset until when I came back. Quarrelling was a daily problem that I had with my husband when he is drunk and could abuse me.

*Woman, age 38, Chua district*

Dolan (2009, p. 191) explains how the war affected gender relations by altering masculinities and female identities. A common complaint among Acholi men, also in my data, was that the war 'made them lose their masculinity'. In the camps men were deprived of their providing roles due to the distribution of relief, which moreover was allocated to the women in the households. Previously existing imbalances in the workload were exacerbated. Masculinities 'collapsed' in two ways. In the first place, a 'hegemonic masculinity' emerged in the course of the war and the space and opportunities for alternative interpretations of masculinities disappeared. Secondly, this hegemonic masculinity forced forms of behaviour on men, while at the same time undermining their lived experiences of masculinity. The hegemonic masculinity Dolan (2009) writes about involved particular relationships of power over women and youth. Men were unable to meet gendered expectations of them, which led to frustration and the experience of feelings of impotence and humiliation. This caused various social and psychological problems such as alcoholism, suicide, engaging in violence (domestic, inter-personal), but also found expression in enlistment in the armed forces.

In the last phase of the war, from 2004-2006, the number of humanitarian actors that worked in the camps increased. Many of them created 'IDP groups': beneficiaries of skills building programmes, such as farming and saving, and 'sensitisation' campaigns on rights and various issues such as health and hygiene. People valued some of this training, in particular farming

skills and health-related knowledge. I return to how this has nurtured citizen engagement in section 6.5.

#### **6.4 Forms of citizen engagement**

Within the boundaries of the confined space that is the camp, living with a military presence and a hierarchical camp leadership structure, how did people organise themselves and what spaces did they find for citizen engagement over issues that critically affected them? The camp leadership structure and the committees offer potential channels for engagement. But Kaiser (2004, 2005) criticises such institutions, arguing that they do not offer opportunities for camp residents to participate in decision-making in camp affairs, but are mainly used for top-down dissemination of information. Turner (2006) and Malkki (1996) demonstrate that certain 'stronger' actors may emerge from the camp population that take control of the mechanisms for engagement. In the Acholi case these were mainly the members of the camp leadership itself.

The sections above showed the various strategies people developed to secure their food and safety, again demonstrating the creativity of the people in responding to a crisis situation as they had before they came to the camps (Lubkemann, 2008; Nordstrom, 1997). These were forms of coping agency. As for citizen agency, I sought to identify how it was expressed by asking about how people brought two priorities, food and security, into the public sphere, as the public sphere is a defining characteristic of citizen agency (R. Lister, 2003). As I was interested in political agency I asked how they exerted the petitioning and interrogative voice in their interactions with the camp authorities, as engagement with power holders is what Barter (2012) considers distinctive about political agency vis-a-vis coping agency.

##### **6.4.1 The petitioning voice**

To bring issues regarding relief into the public sphere, the camp leadership imposed a structure of strict procedures that forms of engagement had to follow. Basically, the population had two options. First of all, residents could report to one of the individual leaders. For example when the quality of relief supplies was below standard or even rotten this caused a lot of anxiety among the camp population, and they expressed themselves quite angrily to

the camp commandant, and let him take it up with WFP. Most of the time, however, people raised issues through the camp hierarchy:

People could have voice through the camp Village Leaders, because they were the ones with much power during the camp situation, more than LC1. The welfare of the community was given in their hands and the Camp Commandant, for they could easily send the voice of the people to Camp Commandant and later it goes to WFP. The LC1 could not do much because some of their powers were taken away by the Camp Commandant, therefore they could handle only small cases of theft and assault.

*Man, age 26, Lamwo district*

Both the camp leadership and the aid agencies strongly adhered to using the system and camp leaders discouraged any direct engagement with the NGOs. The effect was that the population was drilled to use the system as the primary channel for engagement.

People were not having any power at all, but they had a say. When things are not good they should talk about it. I was very strict on them. They should not go directly to an NGO but come to me. At times the agencies brought rotten food. I would tell them '*We are also human beings, we are in problems but we have the right to have food that is good for human consumption*'. I would say this to the field staff of WFP and to the NGOs. The people respected me. They know I could talk better to NGOs than them. The NGOs also responded well to me.

*Camp commandant, Lamwo district*

Secondly, concerns could publicly be addressed in camp meetings, which frequently took place at the village and parish level, and at overall camp level. These were formal, invited spaces (Gaventa, 2006) called by the camp leadership, in which Block Leaders and the camp commandant, NGO representatives and sometimes LCs addressed the community. The agenda was set by camp leaders, who followed the agenda of the agencies. Although meetings did offer a space for people to react, it was largely a top-down channel of communication to inform the people about distribution of relief, day-to-day matters concerning the basic services in the camp, and to give instructions about the maintenance of the camp, e.g. dates for communal cleaning, work at the schools, and slashing the vegetation alongside the roads around the camp.

In essence, the Acholi had very little power to actually influence or change how matters were run in the camp, including the nature of the governance regime itself. Their *petitioning voice* was to be exercised through the systems that were in place. Even the camp committees, which



the humanitarian actors considered a form of citizen participation, were mostly used for information transfer and consultation.<sup>20</sup>

The community itself rarely called for public meetings, nor did I encounter instances of spaces created by the camp population in which they collectively mobilised to ensure better quality of relief supplies. Mostly they relied on smaller, informal strategies to express issues of concern, for instance, waiting for any meeting to be called by the camp leaders and raising their problem at the end. Also, people used other public gatherings attended by the camp leaders to raise issues, such as funerals or when food was distributed.

The community themselves were putting pressure on the leader especially during food distribution which tends to bring together all the leaders and people, then people could express their views to the leaders with a lot of anger.

*Man, age 46, Lamwo district*

One of the reasons that people were not more persevering in pressuring the camp leaders and agencies was that they were to a great extent dependent on them to fulfil their most basic need, food. Although they would express their discontent about relief, their negotiating powers were severely limited:

People brought into the [camp] meeting what they needed. They don't demand. Any organisation can come in and give and they just appreciate it, for they were in problems.

*Camp commandant, Lamwo district*

In general people thus refrained from openly challenging the gaps in relief and other services. I now present the barriers to exercising *the interrogative voice*, including challenging the systems and discipline exercised by the camp leadership. Instead, they abided by the formal mechanisms and filled the gaps with the livelihood strategies they developed. These were also their main strategies regarding security matters.

#### **6.4.2 The risks of exercising the interrogative voice**

As described in section 6.1, the military and the camp leaders were the most powerful actors in the camp, having significant control over the mobility of the camp population, access to food and services, and information. In this section I zoom in on some of the problems

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<sup>20</sup> Interview, AVSI (02/08/2010); AVSI (14/02/2010)

associated with the complex web of power relations between the military, the camp leadership and the camp population. In both research sites the presence of the military was experienced as a source of insecurity and control. In this section I show how the Acholi experienced their power and present the various strategies used to negotiate the power of the camp authorities and hold them accountable.

Respondents highlighted the repressive characteristics of the military power. The curfew and mobility restrictions were implemented with force: anyone seen outside a certain distance from the camp was considered to be rebel and risked being shot. Whoever left the house at night after curfew could be arrested, jailed and beaten. If someone openly resisted, they risked being labelled a rebel or rebel collaborator. The army thus used its formal powers, but its more hidden coercive strategies of control were what people feared the most. Individual soldiers often harassed camp residents, but there were no functioning accountability mechanisms that could be used to seek redress. The following quotation is an example of this, which shows how connections between the military and the camp leadership created barriers to the Acholi using their interrogative voice.

Soldiers were defiling our daughters and when you take the issue to leaders, then soldiers give them money and as the parent of the girl you are poor, you will be dodged by the leaders because of the money they took from the soldiers.

*Man, age 36, Lamwo district*

The camp leadership itself could not be held accountable either. The camp leadership united crucial functions: implementing powers (directed by the humanitarian agencies), maintaining law and order, and formulating by-laws (sometimes with input from the population). In other words, it was the legislature, executive and judiciary in one, with no separation of powers. Moreover, there was no form of 'camp parliament' or other body to provide the necessary checks and balances. Nor were there any mechanisms in place to make the camp leadership answerable or to give the population some control over their performance and hold them accountable<sup>21</sup>. Possibly because the entire camp situation was seen as something temporary, leaders were only elected once and there was no 'term limit'. The population could thus not vote leaders out of office. Only towards the end of the camp phase did the district authorities in Kitgum town decide that new elections were to be held for the highest level of the camp commandants, after widespread complaints about their corruption.

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<sup>21</sup> This information was validated in interviews with camp residents and humanitarian actors in Kitgum town.

Probably as a consequence of a lack of accountability mechanisms there was widespread abuse of power among camp leaders. Respondents listed numerous ways in which they had seen the camp leaders use their powers in their own interest, mostly to accumulate wealth. Some of their strategies did not necessarily harm the welfare of other camp residents, such as registering 'ghost names' or leaving the names of deceased camp residents on the lists in order to appropriate their food rations. Other practices actually did have negative impacts on other camp residents, as in the cases where camp leaders said that people's names were 'missing' from the list and stole their relief, either to sell or consume it. They also corruptly diverted special distributions for vulnerable groups, for example when they were charged with the registration of orphans, widows, elderly or disabled people, they registered their own relatives and thus further disadvantaged already vulnerable camp residents.

Camp residents encountered various barriers to using their interrogative voice for protesting such abuse. Because the camp leaders decided who was on the relief list many camp residents were reluctant to challenge their abusive behaviour.

If you were an enemy of the camp leader your name would be removed, if it was already registered. Or your name would be registered but would not appear on the list when relief came. For example, I registered several times but did not get food relief.

*Woman, age 43, Lamwo district*

Camp leaders used to have many cards and with those cards they used all of them to get items for themselves. Sometimes they retain your card, instead of bringing those cards to everyone, they keep some of those cards. If you would go to them, they'd tell you that your card is not there. But when you leave they use those to get items for themselves.

*Focus group, women, Lamwo district*

Since any form of discontent was to be channelled through the camp leadership only, this made it difficult for people to complain about the leadership itself. At higher levels the leaders tended to protect one another. Only lower level leaders could in some cases be held accountable, depending on how well-connected they were with higher-level camp leaders or with security actors. This would usually occur in public meetings.

There was a block leader who kept some of the things for himself, like a saucepan, after a Red Cross distribution. People called for a meeting and pointed out the bad things the block leader was doing. People decided that the block leader should be removed but he was not removed.

*Man, age 30, Chua district*

Spontaneous citizen mobilisation against abusive camp leaders could be a risk. The arbitrary use of power by the camp leadership undermined the will of citizens to openly resist or challenge camp authorities, because the possible consequences of losing food rations or one's freedom were too great. The only options the Acholi were left with were in the informal, often 'hidden' domain. Discontent found its outlet in 'quietly complaining at home', gossip and jokes. But the main strategy to deal with misconduct was to fill the gaps: the livelihood strategies people developed, finding loopholes in the systems to cheat, and engagement in LDUs. These strategies cannot be seen as active *resistance*, only as signs that the system was not adequately working for the displaced population.

The geographical location of camps and the security hazards influenced people's opportunities for voice and accountability strategies. The camp in Lamwo was on one of the 'LRA corridors' with high prevalence of rebel activity during the war. It meant that relief was delivered with longer intervals and the camp was thus less frequently visited by officials or aid workers, especially in the late 1990s and early 2000s. Possibilities for information and communication in this period were also limited. It meant that the camp population had limited access to Kitgum town and thus to higher levels of authority or the offices of the humanitarian agencies. Many respondents cited this as a major problem for raising complaints about relief itself or about the camp leaders in charge of distribution, although many also said that complaints could only be raised through the hierarchical system and it would be hard for ordinary camp residents to visit the offices anyway. Also, the population of this camp could make less use of social networks connecting them to town. It was only during the last phase of displacement that humanitarian actors started to open 'complaints desks' in the camps, where people could raise concerns, and at least they were informed about any misconduct. Whether this led them to hold leaders accountable from the top down was not clarified in this study.

There have, however, been instances where open protest and mobilisation did occur. In two events at the Lamwo site the camp population revolted at points where misconduct by powerful actors had reached the limits of what people would bear. It resonates with Scott's point (1990) about under which conditions hidden transcripts may cross into the public

domain. In these cases people's top priorities, food and safety, were at risk and led them to cross the boundary of keeping up a docile appearance.

The first instance occurred when the district authorities announced that new elections for camp commandants should be organised, in response to grave misconduct in most camps. This happened only in 2006. The sub-county chief in the Lamwo site then misinformed the camp population that the current camp commandant was ousted with immediate effect and that he would take over. In this particular camp, people disagreed with the behaviour of the camp leader who had cheated with relief, but their overall opinion was that he had done a good job in negotiations with the agencies and the military. The truth soon came out and a large crowd gathered in the centre, carrying sticks and stones to teach the parish chief a lesson. They believed he was incapable and an even a bigger liar and could pose a risk to the quantity of relief they received. He had to hide in a shop to prevent aggression from escalating. The camp commandant intervened and released him.

A second event was a major failure of the UPDF to protect the camp against the LRA. The LRA had often launched attacks on the camp to loot relief, abducting people on the way out. Then once it happened that the rebels came in as deep as the centre of the camp, by the main street and the army barracks. They looted and destroyed shops along the main street, they burned huts and killed as well as abducted a number of camp residents. Anger and protest erupted among the camp residents. The next day, they marched to the army barracks to express their grievances in protest. The camp commandant said he had to intervene to '*cool them down*'.

The people went up to the army barracks. They yelled: 'Instead of coming out of your trenches around the barracks you are going in it!' Some people were former soldiers. 'Give us your guns!' they said, 'you just sit down getting your allowance!' I then called that meeting. People were very vocal in that meeting. They demanded the Resident District Commissioner<sup>22</sup> to be there. He came a few times. Also the commander of the army, who is based in Gulu, came here. People were very serious: 'You talk to your soldiers. They drink too much. They only sleep in the barracks and do nothing!'

*Camp Commandant, Lamwo district*

These events were confirmed in various interviews with other inhabitants of the sub-county. As a result of this protest the battalion of soldiers responsible was transferred and replaced – without further retributive action. Another effect was that the population stepped in to

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<sup>22</sup> The Resident District Commissioner (RDC) is a Presidential appointee to the district who oversees security and government programmes.

engage in protection activities. Together with the soldiers they dug a security road surrounding the camp where army vehicles could patrol. The event was an important incentive for youth and former soldiers to join the LDUs in the recruitment wave around 2002.

## 6.5 Implications for the practice of citizenship

What Harrell-Bond wrote in 1999 would still be a valid statement: *'What is not known is how growing up or living out one's old age as a camp refugee dependent on international aid for survival impacts on these different age groups; for example, on children, adolescents and the elderly'* (1999, p. 138). Knowledge has progressed on understanding the differential experience of the camp for youth and women. Still little is known about the *lasting* effects of the camp experience after return. Methodologically this is a challenging issue. After all, how can we be certain that current attitudes and behaviour are a result of living in displacement camps and not anything else? This section describes what the Acholi themselves said about this in relation to citizenship practice. I will also make some observations about the more intangible experiences.

Regarding practices, most respondents described concrete skills they had learnt while in the camp, but a few also identified new habits that had emerged. People referred to 'socialisation' and practical skills as positive outcomes of the camp situation. The Acholi explanation of 'socialisation' was understood as the various activities that brought people together, which especially younger generations considered important.

I learnt staying together in groups. I joined a group of youth whereby we could advise ourselves, especially students on how to stay in congested places where prostitution is practised, alcoholism among the youth as well. So in the evenings we could come together for discussions of questions and advise fellow group members on how to stay for the well being of the camp.

*Man, age 26, Lamwo district*

As mentioned, a number of humanitarian actors initiated activities and groups, thus creating new social institutions in the form of beneficiary groups or sensitisation groups. Given the emphasis on social institutions for learning citizenship, these institutions could potentially be safe spaces for learning. Certain individuals, who had been 'NGO focal persons' and were therefore exposed to many activities, seemed to have gained experience with engagement (see Alfred's story, Annex 4). Those respondents who had been 'ordinary beneficiaries'

acknowledged that certain skills had been interesting and helpful, but that their own social networks had been more relevant in surviving the camp. NGO activities were short-term, and groups were put together based on needs assessment and therefore members did not always know each other well enough for a group to be sustained for the project. Furthermore, the skills and knowledge gained in NGO-induced social institutions seemed thin and text-book style. For instance, several aid actors carried out training on human rights. When asked what people had learnt about rights literally everyone answered ‘women’s and children’s rights’:

They used to teach that everyone has rights, also children. We came back with these skills and try to apply them. [...] We learnt children have rights, for you do not beat bad children. With your wife you sit down and discuss instead of beating her.

*Man, Chua district*

It was beyond the scope of this research to study the impact of rights training, but the manner in which people talked about rights in individual interviews gave some indications. For children’s rights, respondents were aware they should not be beaten, and that parents were obliged to send them to school and foresee in all aspects of care. In general, children’s rights were more appreciated than women’s rights, since women’s rights were often understood as ‘handing over’ the authority from men to women. In a context where men already had the feeling that their manhood was threatened, as explained earlier, women’s rights were thus treated with suspicion by most male respondents. What was remembered is that one should not beat his wife, but ‘*sit down and discuss with her*’<sup>23</sup>, yet the high prevalence of domestic violence demonstrated that this was not practised. Also shared responsibility over chores and child care remained a precarious issue. Thus, while many rights awareness training sessions provided *knowledge*, it was not enough to challenge male domination of institutions for decision-making or at home.

Concrete skills and training were relatively easy to identify. Less obvious were certain practices that developed during the camp time and have become embedded in the way things are done. One of these practices was how community issues were discussed and resolved in meetings. The pre-existing practice of community meetings was ‘extended’ with the formation of sub-committees with specific responsibilities, such as water management committees, and including women. Partly as the result of training, but also due to the many years these institutions had functioned, some of them continued after the camp. Saving groups had existed before, but adopted new mechanisms in the camp that continued to be used at home.

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<sup>23</sup> This phrase was often used in individual interviews with the men.

Although these institutions built citizen capacities to cooperate among themselves I found no clear examples of groups starting to interact with local government.

Another practice had to do with leadership styles and ways of communicating with the leaders. Whereas when at home the LC1 is practically the only leader they engage with, and sometimes the LC2 and a parish chief, in the camp they encountered many leaders at different levels of authority, each with their own style of leadership. Respondents expressed that it was very important for leaders to be honest and transparent, that they carefully explain everything that was going on to the wider community in public meetings, and not 'favour' or 'segregate'<sup>24</sup> people. Some respondents said they had learnt that good leaders should first of all cooperate among themselves in order to do good for the community. Others emphasised they had learnt to work the multi-level system of governance to raise concerns:

People learnt how to raise their voice: they should make follow-ups with the leaders if they want their voice to be represented. Also people learnt that if you want your issues to reach the district you can do it through LC 1, but you don't go direct.

*Man, age 35, Lamwo district*

There was also a downside to this. People had learnt to work within a hierarchical system, which was imposed as the only way to channel concerns. Any engagement that by-passed the system was discouraged. The Acholi thus had little experience of what could be done if issues remained unresolved at the very local level.

They know about their right to correct leaders. They do not do it in front of the community. But as executive they take LC1 aside and tell him. It is easy, because if he does something bad it will affect the whole community. Only to LC1. If you correct LC2, he might think you are minimising him. So you stop at LC1.

*Man, Chua district*

The effect of the population's long-term subordinate position to the camp leadership and the military was one of the key intangible, yet salient, factors that emerged. This difficult position intersected with prevailing cultural norms about authority, as will be explained in Chapter 7. It thus deepened existing cultural barriers to 'speaking truth to power' by instigating the fear of reprisal.

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<sup>24</sup> The words 'favouring' and 'segregation' are often used to refer to patronage along clan/ ethnic lines.



## 6.6 Implications for the Acholi sense of citizenship

In Chapter 2 I indicated that displacement often has an emotional impact on the individual refugee (Kaiser, 2004; Malkki, 1996), due to feelings uprootedness and uncertainty. The literature on forced migration shows that the understanding of citizenship among refugees, as a political community in a particular territory, is shaped by humanitarian agencies, the host state, and refugee regimes. Nyer's (2006) 'humanitarian space' and Fassin's concept of 'humanitarian government' (Fassin, 2007) in refugee camps hint at citizenship being recast. It is argued that humanitarian interventions shape, even make, subjects (Malkki, 1996). Feldman (2007) demonstrates that humanitarian practice on the ground, especially the creation of refugee categories, shapes the political vocabulary and expressions of community and citizenship. Authors highlight that refugees have little power to influence humanitarian actors or make claims (Harrell-Bond, 1999, 2002b; Malkki, 1996; Nyers, 2006). These issues have not been addressed in depth for the *internally* displaced, but it suggests that Acholi citizenship unfolds in a dialectic relationship to the actors that govern the camp.

Here I argue that Acholi citizenship was recast to become 'camp citizenship', which undermined their sense of citizenship. I use 'camp citizenship' for two reasons: first of all, to highlight the notion of confinement that restricted the freedoms of Acholi citizens; secondly, humanitarian actors were indeed important for delivering services and fulfilling basic needs, but a number of other actors played a role in governing the camp. The camp leadership was not a state institution, and although invented by the humanitarian actors it was not made up of these actors. The military had to deliver security and was a key actor in camp governance. And also those state actors involved in taking decisions over the interventions during the LRA war shaped the lives of the camp population. Camp citizenship thus addresses the particularity of confinement, and the relationship between the camp population and the multiple actors that govern the camp.

The fact that the Acholi had not 'lost' their nation-state clearly did not mean they did not experience the same 'sense of loss' as refugees do. If the meaning of citizenship comes with a set of entitlements and rights, in particular related to the state's responsibility to protect and provide for basic needs, then clearly the situation of internal displacement meant that the Acholi lost full citizenship. Finnström (2003) therefore questions whether the distinction between IDP and refugee was useful at all in their case. Their case demonstrates that also the

existence of IDPs challenges the state-centred focus of citizenship and the state-nation-territory triad (Nyers, 2006).

I reflect on the implications of the camp experience for a sense of citizenship by looking at how it affected the dignity, security and equality of the Acholi. What happened to the Acholi sense of citizenship needs to be seen in close relationship to the constellation of powers that dominated the camp. Their primary relationship to authority was no longer to the state, but to the military and camp leadership, with implications for each of the three key aspects of Acholi citizenship.

Regarding security, the creation of the camps goes back to a fundamental question: did it demonstrate state failure to prevent a situation from escalating, or an adequate response? The government itself claimed it initiated the camps as a protection measure. For the population of the Lamwo site, the move to the camp was their way to find protection after the LRA attacks of January 1997. Living in the camps, despite the harsh conditions, was seen as an improvement in their situation. A large number of respondents therefore said that the government had helped them by establishing the camps. Others were more critical and argued that if the government had done enough the camps would not have been necessary at all. The same can be argued for the LDUs. The security situation had deteriorated to such an extent that the organisation of armed civilians was seen as a resolution, while it proved governance failure.

The camps affected Acholi dignity in several ways. As explained in Chapter 5, losing the (ties to) one's land is harmful to Acholi dignity, as land is entangled related with one's ancestors and livelihoods. The subsequent dependency on relief was considered a humiliation. Despite the many activities the Acholi developed to secure their livelihoods they were unable to cultivate their land, which was crucial for preserving a sense of dignity.

Secondly, confinement and the political order that was in place were associated with feelings of subordination. This resonates with what others have written about 'victimisation' due to humanitarian operations and the tendency to conflate people with numbers in their activities and assessments (Müller, 2013). It shows that a sense of subordination did not occur just due to the humanitarian actors, but also due to the military and camp leadership, and due to the government which kept the camps in place. Many Acholi respondents stated they had felt like *'refugees in their own country'*. Some even said they felt like slaves, because *'when you wanted*

*to get out of the camp to relieve yourself you had to ask for permission*'. These statements directly reflect how the Acholi qualified their citizenship. 'Slaves' and 'refugees' embody very different relationships to authority from 'citizens'. In using these labels they referred to the government as a 'slave owner' or as a foreign government that treats the Acholi as strangers. This related closely to the equality aspect of citizenship. The Acholi felt strongly that it was their *tribe* that experienced the war, and the period of displacement was part of that.

Displacement also affected Acholi ethnic citizenship. First, it affected the holders of authority in the Acholi political community at the local level. In terms of ethnic citizenship, the camp situation undermined the authority of customary leaders more seriously than insecurity had done prior to the camp. Removed from their context, this limited the abilities of customary leaders to perform their functions, and the camp leadership was involved in dispute resolution that would ordinarily be done by the elders. Their social status was seriously affected by alcoholism and absence of respect for their customary status in how the camp was run. Secondly, as explained, the dignity of the Acholi as an ethnic group was damaged. This subsequently weakened their sense of state citizenship, which shows how ethnic and state citizenship are linked. This proves Ndegwa's point (1997) that experiences of ethnic citizenship can shape attitudes towards the state.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter showed how, with the encampment, the structures and processes that constituted the Acholi warscape were reconfigured. LRA activity and a militarised environment persisted in those camps that started in 1997, as well in the areas where people remained at home until they were eventually displaced in 2003. In relation to the second proposition, I showed how the power dynamics of a particular camp governance regime contributed to the securitisation of the public sphere and the narrowing of civic and political institutions.

Certain political institutions changed quite radically when the camps started. The camp leadership and the humanitarian actors added to the complexity of parallel governing structures. Although introduced by external aid actors this was another change in the political institutions that shaped the lives of the Acholi, after the introduction of Resistance Councils from 1986 onwards. At the same time the challenges to Acholi customary leadership worsened and RCs/LCs were completely sidelined. The nature of the camp governance regime had implications for the public sphere in the camp: the fear of reprisals discouraged people from

critically engaging with the camp leadership and the military in the public sphere. This was reinforced by a discourse that represented camp residents as docile recipients of relief.

In terms of transformations in social institutions, the period of displacement seemed to have had more negative impact on social relations than the earlier period of the war. Especially gender relations and the relationship between youth and elders suffered. New social institutions were introduced by humanitarian actors, mainly later in the war, from 2004, which were potential safe spaces for learning citizenship. People seemed to have picked up a number of practical skills (for farming and saving), but rather fragmented, text book-style knowledge of rights. The NGO activities did not seem to contribute to a strengthening of forms of citizen agency in the camps.

In relation to proposition (III) the chapter demonstrated that the conditions in the camp narrowed down the opportunities for learning citizenship. The constellation of power in the camps offered limited spaces for citizen agency and discouraged Acholi citizens from engaging with structures of governance in a way that would overcome their subordinate position. The hierarchical governance regime, dependency and the ongoing insecurity produced a situation in which there was little space to exercise political agency. Even for the two main priorities, food and security, it was difficult to use existing channels for engagement. Instead, creative coping agency filled the gaps in food and security. Coping agency often occurred through cooperative relationships, while some people were forced to engage in crime and prostitution. But the camp experience was not uniform. To some individuals NGO activities meant exposure to leadership skills, as Alfred's story illustrates (Annex 4). The Acholi built up skills and expressed agency in certain domains, mainly their own social institutions, while it was discouraged in public spaces.

Concerning the sense of citizenship, the chapter has provided empirical evidence in relation to the first proposition: the camp situation further eroded crucial aspects of the Acholi sense of citizenship in terms of their sense of equality, dignity and security. Their sense of citizenship was 'recast' into what I referred to as 'camp citizenship', because of the relationships to the diverse set of actors that shaped the parameters of camp authority. The chapter also showed a connection between the sense of citizenship and the practice of engagement in the camps: the sustained experience of powerful, largely unaccountable camp authorities led to a sense of subordination, which the Acholi closely related to the loss of a sense of citizenship. This fills an

important gap in forced migration literature, which has not previously made the link between the status of being a displaced citizen and the practice of engagement.

Chapter 7 discusses forms of citizen engagement in the present, in the Acholi and Lango sites. Through the comparison I will continue the discussion about how the experiences of the war and encampment affect citizenship practices today. As will become clear, the memories of camp citizenship continue to shape the practice of citizen engagement in the present, because it has also led to certain perceptions and expectations of the state.

## **Chapter 7 Acholi and Langi Practices of Citizenship Today**

### **Introduction**

How do Acholi and Langi people act as citizens of Uganda today, only a few years after stability returned to the region? This chapter compares the forms of citizen engagement in the Acholi and Lango case studies, with particular attention to the micropolitics of participation. It shows that, indeed, the forms of citizen engagement in Acholi are not as wide in scope and not as substantive as in Lango. The Langi use a wider range of tactics for citizen engagement, for both development and accountability purposes. I show how the experience of conflict and displacement in Acholi intersect with certain barriers to citizen participation. In addition, the past experience of conflict generates specific problems that are not observed in non-affected areas.

In the previous chapters I explained how the Acholi sense of citizenship has been constructed over time and during the different episodes of the war. The findings confirmed that the experience of conflict and displacement had led to a lack of a sense of citizenship, a feeling that still persists today. In this chapter I do not present new evidence on the sense of citizenship, but I discuss the relationship between this lack of a sense of citizenship and citizen engagement in the post-conflict situation.

In previous chapters I presented the evidence for propositions (II) and (III) about what happened to citizen engagement during the war. In this chapter I trace which aspects of the war have had lasting effects and how they have shaped Acholi citizenship. Here I present the evidence in relation to proposition (IV): certain ideas and practices that developed during the conflict persist, and result in a lack of citizen engagement in the post-conflict situation. In Acholi, fear of state reprisals and the perception that the public sphere is unsafe have been internalised. This limits citizen engagement, but it particularly undermines the interrogative voice. Furthermore, a lack of prior experience with citizen engagement now results in diminished forms of citizen engagement. Moreover, changes in social institutions mean that there is no strong social foundation for developing collective voice. Finally, because the Acholi customary leaders are struggling to regain legitimacy they cannot act as political brokers.

I first present the findings about forms of engagement in Lango and Acholi, concentrating in section 7.1 on how the petitioning voice is exercised, and in section 7.2 on the interrogative

voice. The first two sections thus describe the differences observed between the two regions. For Acholi I then unpack what the 'legacy of conflict' entails in section 7.3.

### 7.1 The petitioning voice: citizen engagement for 'development'<sup>25</sup>

This section concentrates on the social organisation of community life and how people exercise the petitioning voice for development purposes. I start with engagement in community institutions, followed by engagement with LCs and in the formal government system for development planning. A major contrast between Acholi and Lango is that the density of relations between the people, their leaders and local government institutions was 'thicker' in Lango than in Acholi. Fox defined societal thickness as the '*breadth and density of representative society organisations*' (1996, p. 1089) in the debate on social capital in the 1990s. In the context of this research, thickness refers to the frequency of citizen-leadership relations. I observed that the density of relations between people and local leaders was higher in Lango. Concurrent with their higher level of awareness about the tasks of various leaders, the Langi also made more use of these institutions. Although the *nature* and the *range* of the community institutions were more or less the same, in the Acholi cases these institutions had fewer resources and did not perform as many functions as in Lango. This confirmed my expectation that the scope of interaction with authority is wider in Lango (Chapter 3).

#### 7.1.1 Day-to-day forms of community mobilisation

*'Myero icak yito yat ki piny pe ki malo onyo jange'*

(*'You must climb the tree from its roots, not from up or its branches'*)

This phrase, a famous Luo proverb, reflects a certain value in Acholi society. It is a reaffirmation of existing hierarchies, which is manifested and adhered to in various ways. In the context of this research the phrase is one of the most cited proverbs regarding the relationship between citizens, their voice, and higher levels of leadership.

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<sup>25</sup> In this context respondents gave rather narrow definitions of 'development' in terms of income, agricultural production and the available basic services, rather than broader definitions that include e.g. equality and well-being. Local officials often referred to the development planning process. The local definition of development is adhered to here.

### **Community meetings**

Community meetings are the most common mechanism for resolving community issues and addressing development needs in the community. The word 'voice' has its equivalent in Luo language (*dwong*) and refers to the communication of needs and concerns. The first answer in both the Acholi and Langi cases usually is: *'In case of any problem the community will sit down and discuss.'* Depending on the issue, it is decided who should take the issue forward, which in the case of any development issue is likely to be the LC1. Minutes of a meeting are written down and taken to the sub-county LC1 together with the attendance list and a letter stamped by the LC1. This is the default mechanism for informing the authorities. The second part of the answer would thus be: *'The LC1 takes it [dwong] to LC2, who takes it to the LC3 and from there it goes to the district'* – which is the practical translation of the proverb above and so frequently cited that it seemed a text book phrase everyone had learnt by heart. The answer would usually end with *'and then we wait.'*

Meetings are 'called' and 'mobilised' by people in leading positions. The LC1 chairperson calls meetings when the issue concerns the entire village, the elders call them for issues to do with social harmony, and clan leaders can call their clan members together. Numerous factors determine the micropolitics of such spaces and their outcomes.

As observed by Brock (2004) and Ahikire (2007), prevailing gender relations determine the extent to which women can exercise voice. In community meetings which I observed, it was the men that spoke most of the time and women engaged only in the end. The women had a short time slot to express their views and only a small number of them would take that opportunity. Women expressed the lack the confidence, feelings of powerlessness, and norms that dictate that men speak on their behalf. As one lady mentioned:

Mostly men talk [in meetings], sometimes only two or three women give their opinion. The rest of the women fear, they feel the people's eyes on them. That is the nature of women, they have public fear. At times perhaps the LC1 listens to women, it depends on how you speak.

*Acholi: woman, age 42, Chua district*

The women did not attend community meetings as often as the men in the first place. The prevailing norm that it was a 'men's affair' made them reluctant to attend. Attending women thus felt like a minority voice, and as a result were less involved in decision-making.



An obvious difference between Acholi and Lango was that meetings were organised less frequently in Acholi. Though everyone in Acholi mentioned that community meetings were the most important occasions to raise a voice, respondents could often not recall when the last one had been held. Some declared the last one happened a year ago. The Acholi LCs themselves, on the other hand, complained that people 'were not interested' in meetings. People did not attend at all, or asked for a sitting allowance. In the case of Lango, the LCs faced similar challenges and therefore used other social gatherings to discuss issues, such as funerals and church services. Yet it is not surprising that community meetings were *in principle* important social spaces for engagement, since it was the most widely accepted form of community decision making. Finally, especially in Acholi I found that the remote households did not know when meetings took place. In Lango events were announced by pinning notes on the trees at junctions and near water points.

### ***Community forms of organisation***

Chapter 5 explained how groups for farming, saving and loans are important for social and economic life in Acholi and Lango, maintaining livelihoods and social relationships. In Lango the social drinking groups (*Akiba*) are also important. The groups are spaces for engagement where important skills such as group leadership, reciprocity and collective decision-making are nurtured. They are also used to share information, from all sorts of gossip to the latest news on local politics. The groups represent a form of organisation where people feel comfortable expressing voice. 'Being social' is considered a virtue everyone should possess. Not to be in any group could be interpreted as being anti-social. Pham and Vinck (2010) find that 59% of the Chua/Lamwo population are members of at least one group. I found that most men and women from the age of twenty are members of one or several groups. The groups bring together people from different clans and villages, and vary in size.

Lango and Acholi groups share the same set of governance mechanisms for managing their internal affairs. Each group has a name, such as '*Ribe aye teko*' (joining hands), a chairperson, treasurer and secretary, as well as a constitution, by-laws and a registration book. The by-laws usually stipulate the rules for membership, social behaviour, and punishment for failure to abide by the rules. In farming groups, clear regulations exist for when a group member may be unable to attend the group work: the member must either pay compensation in cash or catch up with the work individually. At the start of the 'sitting' members pay their contribution to the

treasurer: one share to pay for the brew and another share for the savings account, which is carefully written down by the secretary.

What the regions had in common was the relevance of groups to local life. In institutional mapping exercises the various groups were well represented, while local government institutions in some cases did not even appear on the graph. One possible explanation for the limited engagement between the groups and the sub-county is that the sub-county has few resources to support groups<sup>26</sup>, does not function adequately<sup>27</sup>, and is consequently not very relevant to group functioning. When I asked group members about this it usually led to expressions of discontent with the local authorities, about how they were corrupt and not responsive.

I also found differences between the Acholi and Langi groups. The groups in Lango were more established in terms of long-standing membership and diversity of functions. Lango groups were also more 'monetized' and operated with relatively greater cash flows, especially the Akiba groups. Langi were often members of more than one group, which showed they had more monetary assets to pay for membership.

According to scholars in the civic republican tradition, particularly Putnam (2000), community groups can potentially function as a forum for mobilising political agency and reach out to state institutions on behalf of their members. To my surprise, neither in Lango nor in Acholi did I find many linkages, other than the formalities of registering at the sub-county, to increase the likelihood of accessing government-led development programmes such as NUSAF, or in the National Agricultural Advisory Services (NAADS). The numerous groups operated on their own, managing themselves perfectly well, regardless of the work done by the sub-county. Nor have I seen them play an advocating role. Even groups participating in NAADS, which formally has a multi-layered structure for farmers' representation and a 'Farmers' Forum', did not report ever to have used internal NAADS mechanisms for channelling their concerns.

In Lango, the non-conflict case, a citizen-initiated community association existed: the Electricity Committee, formed by a group of citizens from across the sub-county. They started a process to bring electricity to the sub-county, in order to provide the local Health Centre IV (at the sub-county centre) with electricity. All households were supposed to contribute 1,000

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<sup>26</sup> Interview with Community Development Officer, Lamwo (24/08/10)

<sup>27</sup> Interview with Parish Development Committee member, Lango (01/11/10)

shillings each, and the task of collecting it was delegated to the LC1. At the time of research the collection process had just started. After the committee was formed and its constitution registered at the sub-county, the sub-county offered an office. Further negotiations led to a contribution of 2 million shillings and the sub-county requested more funds from the district. An interesting aspect of the association was that the committee purposely excluded the sub-county from the process until 2 months after the January 2011 elections, afraid that candidates would appropriate the initiative for their campaigns. The chairperson explained: *'We wanted to stay away from politicians, because they create confusion'*.

When I re-visited the Lango sub-county in 2012, I heard that a new initiative had started, to open up a road from the parish to Lira town, where there was now only a footpath. The footpath was used by men and women who transported sacks of cassava on the back of their bicycles to the market in Lira. To have a proper road would save them a lot of time. Different farming groups had joined hands and had made a start with clearing the way. They hoped this would convince the district authorities that the population would play its part. Farmer leaders had, together with their LC1 chairpersons, contacted the sub-county chief and LC3 chairperson to make enquiries of the district. They had chosen a representative from among the farmer leaders and together they supervised the participation of group members in clearing the road.

Both the Electricity Committee and the groups involved in opening the road initiative in a way replicated the mechanisms of a community group, but in more institutionalised form and on a larger scale. In the two Acholi case studies I have not encountered any similar form of organisation. In the Chua site (Acholi) I encountered one important instance of collective action that involved engagement with local state authorities, although it did not succeed. The military stationed in the barracks in Chua district had started to encroach on the land of some villagers by fencing it off. They thus deprived a number of families of their land for cultivation. A group of elders had joined together to discuss the issue with the sub-county. Since it was a land issue the elders were the most appropriate community members to represent the village. The LC3 had responded and together with the sub-county authorities the elders tried to follow it up at the district level. The sub-county seemed to support the elders and their LC5 councillor had once visited the site. However, since it involved the military the situation was complicated. The sub-county said this was not at their level of authority and therefore they could not take action. Sub-county officials told the elders the RDC needed to be involved and that the elders would need a lawyer. Particularly the issue of hiring a lawyer, which would cost an amount of money the village could never raise, seemed to have deterred the elders from taking further

action. This is where it seemed to end. It was the only instance in Acholi where citizens had organised themselves to talk to higher level authorities. Apart from this case, the Acholi referred to the LC system as the *only* channel to negotiate with local government.

### **7.1.2 Formal mechanisms for engagement**

#### ***Engagement through the LCs***

An important finding from this study is that the Langi use more avenues for connecting to the sub-county than the Acholi. Langi are more aware of existing functions and respective responsibilities of various village-level leaders and sub-county leaders and officials. In Lango these forms of leadership are more actively involved in raising local development and public services than in Acholi. These findings are based on institutional diagrams carried out in focus groups, whereby participants were asked to map and prioritise the leaders and institutions that were important for the development of the village and linking to the sub-county. In addition, and for triangulation purposes, this issue was part of the semi-structured interview on the patterns of interaction with leaders. I now discuss these findings.

In both Lango and Acholi it was the LC1 members, especially the chairpersons, who were most 'hands-on' in handling community affairs. This is also shown in other studies (Pham & Vinck, 2010; USAID, 2009). As they could be anyone's neighbour or relative they are also the most socially embedded. Anything concerned with development or public services is considered the work of the LCs, since it required the link to formal government authorities: the LC chairpersons would 'forward the issue' to the higher levels. The LC1 chairperson is the most important channel to link the village population to the higher levels of governance: any information is passed via him/her. The LC1 chairpersons call community meetings for a broad range of issues under the rubrics 'sensitisation' and 'development': to discuss lack of or broken water points or classroom blocks; theft in the community; other government programmes, etc. On top of that the LCs play an important role in dispute resolution and holding local courts, although this task is also performed by elders and customary leaders. The LC1 chair also provides people with reference letters authorised with the LC1 stamp. Given the range of responsibilities of the LC chairpersons, it is not surprising that they were considered the most important community leaders in both Lango and Acholi: with no exception they were ranked

first in ranking exercises and institutional diagrams. Even when participants were critical of his/her performance, the LC1 was ranked number one.

Of the 15 institutional diagrams that were made in Lango, all showed the LC3, sub-county chief and parish chief, and eight showed the CDO and NAADS coordinator. This did not mean people in Lango were satisfied with their performance. These officials were seen as important, yet could be much more relevant if they performed better. In Acholi only 5 out of the 33 institutional diagrams showed any of the sub-county officials or LC3 councillors. All of them started with the LC1 as the most important institution. A commonality was that in both Lango and Acholi the LC3 chairperson was perceived to be a very formal office and hence more 'distant'.

When asked who was in direct contact with the sub-county to raise community concerns at LC3 level, Lango respondents were able to name many more individuals, their positions and activities than the Acholi respondents. Findings are shown in Table 7.1. I discuss the most important differences in more detail below.

**Table 7.1**                      **Institutions involved in brokering between village and sub-county**  
Figures represent the number of respondents who indicated a particular leader interacted with the sub-county.

	<b>Conflict affected Acholi (N=40)</b>	<b>Non-affected Lango (N= 40)</b>
<b>LC1</b>	40	40
<b>LC2</b>	1	12
<b>Area councillor LC3</b>	9	25
<b>Youth leader</b>	5	-
<b>Village Health Team</b>	-	9
<b>Parish chief</b>	2	9
<b>PDC</b>	-	6
<b>Area councillor LC5</b>	-	2
<b>Elder</b>	4	-
<b>Clan leader</b>	3	3
<b>Farmer leader</b>	9	5
<b>Former camp leader</b>	2	-
<b>Important farmers</b>		6
<b>Apart from LC1 nobody can</b>	4	

**LC3 councillors** - Pham and Vinck (2010) show that 21% of the Acholi had interacted with LC3 members (compared to 49% with the LC1 and 62% with religious leaders). The table shows that the LC3 councillors in Lango played a more prominent role than in Acholi. As an elected

office, these councillors were supposed to represent the parish at sub-county council meetings, and monitor the implementation of government programmes and sub-county expenditure. In Lango most respondents knew the names of their LC2 and LC3 councillors and people cited some of their achievements. One LC3 councillor in Lango was educated in Kampala. He was the Secretary of Finance to LC3 and also chaired the School Management Committee of the nearby primary school. He used church services, burial gatherings and school meetings to make public announcements, because if he called separate meetings people would demand an allowance or refreshments. Respondents gave examples of the issues he took up, mostly to do with boreholes and the schools. One comment about him shows that people expect a brokering role as well as social behaviour from their councillors:

The AC3 of Bala parish is a development oriented person, very easy to approach and he listens to people's problems. He always helps where need be. He is someone who sacrifices his time, like he does not fail to attend a meeting, and any kind of call by the community, and he does not miss a funeral. He is open, transparent and accountable to us, for instance when a project is supposed to come he always comes to the targeted people or group.

*Man, age 27, Kole district*

When interviewed, the LC3 councillor said he often received community members at home, who ask him to raise particular issues in LC3 meetings. He cited an example:

The elders of a village came and see me here at home. It happened once from village [A]. There people had really a problem with water and the LC1 was reluctant to solve it. Elders came to my home. We sat and discussed. I went to see the water source and found it was very dirty. I went to the SC [sub-county] and brought the LC3 to see. The LC3 told the SC to give them a borehole, which they have now.

*Lango: LC3 councillor, Kole district*<sup>28</sup>

The other LC3 councillor was a woman: the 'women representative'. She came from one of the wealthier families in the sub-county, was better educated than most women (secondary school) and some of her in-laws had been quite involved in politics. An aunt had been an MP for Apac district and her father-in-law had been an LC5 councillor in Apac (before Kole split from Apac). This LC3 councillor was known for her involvement in women's affairs. She had made efforts to link several women's groups from the parish to the NAADS office at the sub-county and several groups had received cassava cuttings and seeds for red chilli plants. She was also respected for 'giving advice' to the women, for example regarding testing for HIV and

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<sup>28</sup> This story was confirmed in conversations with people from that village, who said that three of their elders had gone to see the LC3 councillor.

how to save money for school fees. She had raised the problem of poor roads from the parish to the sub-county, which was addressed by the sub-county.

The activity of the LC3 councillors was a sharp contrast with the Acholi cases. Few Acholi participants knew the names of their area councillors at all, and claimed that ‘they only help themselves’ and not the community. In the Chua site, people only knew the name of the women representative, who was the fifth<sup>29</sup> wife of an important clan leader. The six respondents who had mentioned her only said that she ‘could take issues’ to the LC3, but were unable to explain what those issues were and commented that she ‘never reported back to the village’. I interviewed a male LC3 councillor in Lamwo, who clearly made up a story of proper representation. He lived in the trading centre and claimed to visit all the ten villages in his parish at least once a month, riding out on his bicycle. The people from his parish, however, said they had only seen him there when he came to campaign in 2006. I observed his campaign meeting when he ran for internal party elections in 2010 as the LC3 chairperson candidate. The audience, from four villages, only applauded for his rival – an LC2 chairperson.

**Parish officials and LC2** – In Lango, the Parish Chief and members of the Parish Development committee were mentioned as active people. They were all residents of the parish and were active in collecting development priorities. Here, the Village Health Team (VHT) came up nine times, mostly in relation to malaria prevention and distribution of medication, but also for raising health concerns at the sub-county. The Parish Chief at the Chua site in Acholi was also from the parish, from the same family as the women representative to LC3. I did see him often at the sub-county head quarters, near his home, but the interviews showed the villagers were largely unaware of what he did. At the Lamwo site the Parish Chiefs were not originally from the area and nobody in the village knew them. Although VHTs did exist in both Acholi sites, nobody mentioned them. I discuss the PDCs and planning process separately, below.

**Other brokers** – Table 7.2 shows that Acholi respondents reported that the Youth Leader and farmer leaders could go to the sub-county. Perhaps because LC1 were not perceived to be very active, and their actions often did not lead to results, the youth group and the farmer groups were trying to organise things themselves. For the youth leader, four respondents said he reported fights among the youth. One youth leader said he had once asked the sub-county for

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<sup>29</sup> The fact that someone has five wives signifies the status and wealth of a family. In the Ugandan context, this can be an enabling factor for a councillor to function as a broker, but in this case most respondents that spoke about her made allegations that she was only helping her family.

funds to take the youth's football team to another sub-county, which was refused. Farmer leaders were reported to ask the sub-county for seeds. Interestingly, these community leaders did not figure so strongly in Lango. In Lango, two particular farmer leaders were very active on a number of issues and had gained a lot of respect. They did not just convey issues of concern to the sub-county, they played a coordination role to follow up issues and mobilise the community, for instance when the sub-county and the villages had to work together to clear a main road. This shows a difference in the substantiveness of the engagement by the Acholi and Langi farmer leaders.

In the Lango site, there were three farmers that were wealthier and had real farms, where a small number of villagers did seasonal work for a small wage. These farmers were said to have influence at the sub-county. Although this was often for their own interest, e.g. opening a road to their farm or, in one case, having a borehole on the compound, respondents felt this had benefitted the wider community.

In Acholi I found two cases in which individuals had played a mediating role with the sub-county, but were not LC chairpersons. In one case it was the vice chairperson of the NRM party at sub-county level. Since the LC3 chairperson was the chair of the NRM at that level, the vice chair used this link to get a borehole in her village - on her compound. The second person was a Secretary of Information to the LC1, so not outside the system himself, who followed up procedures with the district water office to bring a borehole to his village. This man was literate, bright, and had been in the LC1 since it was established in 1986. Using his title of Information Secretary he had taken LC letters himself to the LC2, LC3 and from there to the district.

#### *Individual interactions*

Table 7.2 shows the answers to the question 'To which of the following leaders/persons have you ever taken an issue?' – followed by a list of all state and non-state authorities at all levels. Respondents were then asked to explain what the issue had been, how it had been handled exactly, how they had felt during the process and whether they were satisfied with the outcome. Findings show that, on an individual basis, the Langi had more frequent, direct contact with leaders than the Acholi, and they interacted with more and different types of leaders. For the Acholi, LC1 was the most prominent leader for all kind of *personal* issues



(domestic problems, disagreements with other villagers), whereas the Langi actively contacted LC2 and LC3 level leaders for personal issues *and community issues* (water, education, roads).

**Table 7.2****Number of issues raised by individuals with their leaders**

Figures represent the number of times an issue was raised with a leader by respondents.

	<b>Conflict affected Acholi N=40</b>	<b>Non-affected Lango N= 40</b>
<b>LC1</b>	17	22
<b>LC2</b>		12
<b>LC3</b>	2	4
<b>Area councillor LC3</b>	1	6
<b>Village Health Team</b>		8
<b>Parish chief</b>		
<b>PDC</b>		1
<b>Area councillor LC5</b>		
<b>District office</b>		
<b>Elder</b>		1
<b>Clan leader</b>	7	6
<b>Farmer leader</b>	7	6
<b>Family or friends</b>		5
<b>NGO</b>		2

Individual interviews revealed that the Acholi primarily interacted with the three most local institutions: LC1, farmer leaders and clan leaders. They barely engaged with higher levels of authority, as others have found (USAID, 2009). Of the 40 Acholi respondents who were interviewed on everyday interactions, only three people had ever taken a personal issue directly to the sub-county. One man needed to resolve land issues as the result of a divorce, but they were not resolved. Another man in Chua had gone to the LC3 to ask about cassava seeds, for he had heard an NGO was distributing them. He declared the LC3 asked him for UGX 30,000 (£8). He refused, because he had no money, and also thought the seeds should be free if it was an NGO programme.

Acholi respondents commented that, in general, one could only report a divorce, birth or death, and land disputes after mediation at the lower levels had failed. Nobody reported a community issue to LC3 level personally. The major reasons for this were that a) this was considered an LC responsibility (citing the proverb), and b) people felt that such issues were not supposed to be raised individually, but would only be listened to if the whole community came together. Many Acholi respondents argued that individuals lacked ‘the authority’ to take problems to higher offices directly.

Also in Lango, individual interactions with leaders involved mainly personal issues: theft; arguments over land, borders and inheritance; loss or damage due to others. But here, interactions with LC2 and LC3 level leaders reflected what has been set out above: people had raised community issues such as bad roads or the need for boreholes. In one case, a shop owner had gone to the LC3 chairperson and the Sub-County chief about the bad road that made transporting his goods very expensive. He was dissatisfied with the way his LC3 councillor's response and decided to go to the sub-county himself. An instance like this, where a leader is bypassed, was not encountered in Acholi, apart from the mechanism for land disputes, which was more actively used.

**Customary leadership** - Colebridge et al. (2005) stress the importance of political brokers for rural, poor communities. In the Ugandan context, customary leadership comprising the clan leaders (*Rwodi Mo*), elders (*mio tam*, *atekere*) and farmer leaders (*Rwot Kweri*) could in principle play such a role and mediate between their communities and government institutions. Though certain functions of LCs and customary leaders overlapped, many functions were considered to be 'typical' for LCs or clan leaders. Institutional mappings in both regions clearly showed their relevance to local life. I therefore studied in which ways citizens called upon them to advance community interests.

A number of studies have demonstrated the importance of Acholi customary leaders in justice and reconciliation (Allen, 2006; Komakech & Sheff, 2009), and their function of guarding social harmony. In Lango, no ethnographic material about customary institutions has been documented since Tosh's study in 1976. I interviewed 13 respondents and 5 elders and clan leaders about clan leadership and clan organisation. Based on these interviews I can say that the role of Langi clan leaders was the same: they played an important role in dispute resolution, especially over land, and advised the younger generations. Both Acholi and Langi customary leaders mediated in arguments and fights in the community, though once a fight resulted in bloodshed or injury it was the LC1 who was obliged to report it directly to the sub-county and police. Elders and clan leaders could then still play a role in reconciling the fighting parties afterwards by performing rites and establishing how a victim should be compensated. The entire clan of the assaulter was responsible for paying compensation. Repairing social relations and compensation for a loss was valued over a punitive system that removed the perpetrator from society. In many instances matters were settled in customary law, but when

one of the parties was not satisfied with the outcome it could still be referred to the LC system and police.

The role of Acholi customary leaders was, however, much smaller in community development. In Acholi I interviewed six elders, seven local clan leaders and one paramount chief at the sub-county level. Almost all of them stated that 'development is not our role'. Development and 'projects' were considered beyond the responsibility of clan leaders. Their only engagement in developing the area was to advise the community and motivate the youth to work hard and complete their education. They did not actively link groups to sub-county authorities or mediate for development planning, which was considered to be the domain of LCs.

In Lango I interviewed two elders and three clan leaders, of whom one was a clan leader at county level. Also in Lango, 'development projects' were considered a formal responsibility of local government. But here the clan leaders linked up with the LCs to further development in their area. Clan leaders actively advised area councillors to raise issues at LC3 level. Occasionally, clan leaders communicated directly with the sub-county on behalf of the clan. For instance, the clan leaders helped to mobilise the community when the local government wanted to implement a project for which community labour was needed. A clan leader at parish level cites an example:

As a *Jan Jago Ateke* [clan leader at parish level] I can speak to the sub-county. In courts I speak. I can go directly to the sub-county for development issues. I sit with my clan committee and write a letter, which the clan stamps. The LC1 stamp is not needed. We always get feedback from the sub-county. We requested a borehole and it was given five years ago. For this project the LC1 was also involved. The sub-county can ask for a community contribution, 2 million shillings for a borehole. Then per household 5,000 shilling. Both the Atekere [clan leaders] and the LC1 collected money. When it has been commissioned we have to take care of it. I am chairperson of the water management committee. When the land for the borehole is given by a clan, the committees of the clan and the LC sit together and the LC1 chairperson chairs, and we decide the location. The community provides sand and gravel, and feeds the people who drill the borehole.

*Clan leader, Kole district*

Langi clan leaders thus played a brokering role between communities and local government. However, clan leaders had to be cautious of having too much influence in government projects, knowing tension might emerge if a particular clan was seen as being 'favoured'. The same clan leader said: *'We discuss plans from government in our meetings, like projects. It doesn't come direct to us, government projects come for everybody and then it is up to the clan*

*to see what they can do.* Clan leaders also had to be careful that different groupings within the clan benefitted equally from projects. The Rwot County explained:

With projects from the sub-county I have never seen clan influence to appropriate them. For governments projects are universal to all community members in a village, where several clans live. So clan leaders... ah ah...no. Unless the clan comes up with its own plans to implement. But projects is government's side. The government advises the clans to apply for projects, but that is difficult. There is fear within the people to apply as one clan: to sit as a separate group creates the fear that other clan members will accuse them of creating division and differences within the clan. For example, a part of our clan wanted a school in Akalo. Then other parts of the clan said it only benefitted one part of the clan. So small projects are a problem. The project needs to benefit the entire clan.

*Rwot County, Kole district*

### ***Local Council meetings at LC3 level***

Another difference between Lango and Acholi was the functioning of the LC3 itself, which seemed to perform relatively better in Lango, despite certain flaws. In the case of Lango the council had met eight times over the last year (the number required per year) and the minutes showed that discussions had covered decision-making about the budget and services, and certain issues were forwarded to the district level. The Acholi cases showed the typical institutional deficits associated with post-conflict situations: lack of staff, resources and technical capacities (Jackson & Scott, 2008). In the first Acholi site the council met four times a year. In the meeting I observed the only item discussed was the complaint by the councillors that their allowances were paid late. In the second Acholi site the council had not met for an entire year for this reason. The sub-county authorities and LC3 chairperson stated they 'had to work around it' to get anything off the ground, which effectively meant they just went ahead with services without informing the council.

### ***Participatory Development Planning***

The Ugandan decentralised governance system was explained in Chapter 4. In Acholi the planning process had only been reintroduced since the camp phase out in 2007, when LCs took over from the camp leadership. Throughout the war the districts continued to be required to produce development plans, but of course of a very different nature. To what extent planning by the LC2 and the Parish Development Committees (PDCs) functioned in the camps was

vague, and not the same for every location. Most of the sub-county officials I spoke to confirmed that the PDCs did not do their work until 2009, though in some camps efforts were made to come up with development plans for the home areas. Here, the history of conflict appears to intersect with spaces for engagement and reinforce the weaknesses in participatory planning.

At the time of research, the sub-county authorities in the Acholi cases wrote the development plans by themselves, without any community or PDC involvement. They claimed they lacked time and resources to move deep into the villages and mobilise the members. Sub-county officials expressed the difficulties:

The challenges are that 1) the community doesn't come in big numbers and also they demand for sitting allowances; 2) very few are literate. So they cannot meet the requirements of planning and the plan; 3) the items or issues that they feel are most needed, are not always most needed. It is very rare that we inform the community on what they [at the district] are not able to do [fund]. [...] Reasons for not reporting back are that the sub-county knows that it will be implemented at some point anyhow, as it is rolled over to the next Financial Year. Secondly, the workload is too much, there is no time. Thirdly, there are no resources, for instance no fuel to go back.

*LC3 chairman, Chua district*

Among the population the PDCs were virtually unknown: a result of not functioning for years during encampment. Hardly anyone could say what a PDC was. I interviewed various PDC members in the Acholi cases, who themselves could not explain their roles and responsibilities. In the Lamwo case, the former camp commandant was among the PDC members. As a teacher and LC2 member he was very well able to explain the role of the PDC. After the camp finished he twice attended training in Kitgum town about planning. Apart from that he had not met with his fellow PDC members or carried out the actual planning work.

In the case of Lango there was more awareness about the PDCs; many respondents (though more men than women) were able to explain that it was a parish-level body that talked about needs and development. The PDC members interviewed listed a number of responsibilities and gave examples of 'data collection' activities they had carried out to provide the sub-county with information about development needs. The PDCs clearly had more experience in Lango. Yet they suffered many weaknesses that were identified by scholars studying Uganda's local government system. As the LC3 chairperson complained:

The problem for their functioning is the lack of resources. There are limited resources remitted to lower Local Governments. The conditional grants and the local revenues for co-funding. But the graduated tax was abolished and that was out main source of income. The little revenue we get is from the shops and businesses that have to pay license, some from the market and some checkpoints for revenue from produce. The Sub-County does not release funds to the PDCs. They are supposed to be funded from local revenue but mostly we don't [generate enough].

*Lango: LC3 chairperson, Kole district*

The PDC members felt that their work was insufficiently supported by the sub-county, and that their time and energy should be adequately compensated. On a positive note, they did feel that the sub-county was responding to the priorities they came up with and felt that as PDCs they played an important role in monitoring whether each parish was addressed in turn.

Thus in the Acholi cases the PDCs barely functioned, which eliminated at least one potential avenue for raising citizens' demands. The PDCs in Lango functioned mostly as a mechanism for data collection, but compared to the situation in Acholi that was relatively better. As a forum it had little negotiating capacity to influence or challenge budget allocation. This was also due to the place of the PDC within the planning system. PDC members are elected, but they fall within the technical arm of local government. Whether they should fulfil a negotiating role was thus questionable.

### **7.1.3 Challenges in exercising the petitioning voice**

In both Lango and Acholi many challenges were observed in using the formal mechanisms for the purpose of enhancing local development and services. However, the problems were considerably worse in Acholi. In this section I discuss two important challenges that were observed. Findings are based on focus group discussions in each village in the three research sites. In the focus groups, participants identified the most serious 'development issue' in the community. The discussion then focussed on an analysis of the issue and how the community had mobilised for it. In addition, interview questions addressed which were the most important challenges to voice (*dwong*).

One of the most widely cited problems in Acholi (in interview) was lack of knowledge, indicated by twenty of the forty interviewees. I also observed this during the focus group discussions: participants did not know how to make use of the various openings for citizen engagement, including through representatives. This is part of the reason why in Acholi people

did not use all available avenues to channel their concerns to sub-county level. They solely relied on the LC1 to connect them. This was reinforced by certain socio-cultural factors, like the strong adherence to '*You must climb the tree from its roots, not from its branches*'. If an issue was not taken up by the LC1 chairperson the Acholi were extremely reluctant to bypass that LC1 and take the issue directly to the sub-county. Respondents literally said there was no other way to have voice than by sending letters through the LC1, and then '*all we can do is wait*'. If an LC1 was inactive, and most of them were, the process got stuck at this level straight away. Even when confronted with this dilemma, respondents acknowledged it and simply said it was 'very hard'. When asked if someone else could follow an issue up they would reply with the tree proverb. Officials at the sub-county at both Acholi sites said that the LC1 chairpersons were 'hardly seen' at the sub-county offices<sup>30</sup>, suggesting that LC1 chairpersons were indeed not very active. They said that they saw the LC2 more often, but usually only after the sub-county had sent for them to share information.

In Lango, on the other hand, less than half of the interviewees highlighted this as a problem. From discussions and observations it was clear that communities *did* try other options, both formally and informally. Here the local population had better access to information and better relationships with various leaders, which helped to channel their interests to the sub-county and even the district. Citizens talked to their LC3 Councillors or went to the sub-county directly to look at the notice boards. Some, though few, attended council meetings.

A second challenge that was cited more frequently in Acholi than in Lango was that sub-county officials tended to discourage direct engagement. The few respondents that knew about someone going to the sub-county offices declared that officials would ask people '*Who are you?*' implying '*Who do you think you are?*'. If the respondent was not an LC they were sent back to the village and told to get the LC1 to take the issue for them. This reinforced the weight of the proverb that one should not come directly to the higher offices. Citizens also felt intimidated by the knowledge of officials and leaders, which they felt was used to keep citizens at a safe distance:

People have to come as a ward in order to have a voice. They cannot have a voice individually. Because nothing will be done for you. Some of the leaders are rarely in the office, like LC3, and even if he is, people fear going to him because he hides himself behind laws, saying that 'the law says this and that'.

*Acholi: man, age 41, Chua district*

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<sup>30</sup> Interview, Sub-County Chief in Chua (18/02/10); Parish Chief in Lamwo (25/08/10)

One of the Parish Chiefs in Chua called the people of the parish ‘primitive’ and ‘stubborn’, so assumptions made about his attitude were not ungrounded. The assumptions about the behaviour of officials greatly informed the interface between citizens and local state institutions. Afraid to encounter such a reaction, people refrained from going to the authorities with requests.

Despite the thickness of relations in Lango the situation should not be misinterpreted as a ‘good case’ in all aspects. Ordinary governance challenges existed, like elite bias and corruption through social networks, such as the clan or along party lines. At LC1 level, chairpersons would misuse their powers when a relative was involved, like ‘resolving’ a dispute to the advantage of their relatives or including relatives on NGO beneficiary lists. A common complaint about the LC3 councillors was that they used their influence to direct funds to their villages or clans. For higher levels of governance, respondents recognised that if they elected representatives from opposition parties they were likely to miss out on resources if the majority of the LC3 or LC5 council and bureaucrats were NRM supporters.

To conclude, there are qualitative differences between Lango and Acholi in the patterns of interaction between the village population and the sub-county. The differences are summarised in Table 7.3

**Table 7.3** Qualitative differences between Lango and Acholi functioning of LCs

Conflict affected Acholi	Non-affected Lango
Dependent on LC1 chairperson	Used various LC leaders to channel interests
Little knowledge of responsibilities of sub-county officials	Some knowledge about responsibilities of sub-county officials
No knowledge of formal mechanisms to hold LCs accountable	Knowledge of formal mechanisms to hold LCs accountable and had used in some instances
Hardly any direct contact between citizens and sub-county	Regular contact between citizens and sub-county
Area councillors had not mediated issues between villages and sub-county	Area councillor informed population at church services
LC3 had not held the minimum number of four council meetings for over a year	LC3 had convened the maximum of 8 council meetings in one year, which were minuted and filed by sub-county.

In Acholi the LC1 chairperson was often was the *only* leader mediating between the village and higher levels of government, while in Lango other leaders also figured. In Acholi this narrowed down the opportunities for raising concerns at higher LC levels. Furthermore, although the Acholi did express their development needs to me, this was not directly linked to government



responsibilities or translated into ‘claims’. I offer an explanation for this in section 7.3. The Langi seemed more aware of what a government ought to do and subsequently asked for that to happen, even though there were many instances of ‘participation fatigue’ after engagement had failed to produce results. In Lango the village population was inclined to use councillors as representatives: asking him/her to take issues to council meetings. Again, the situation in Lango was far from ideal and huge flaws in the representative functions of LCs remained. In this region, however, some seeds of local democratic governance were visible.

## **7.2 The interrogative voice: engagement for accountability**

Using voice to present your leader with a ‘development wish-list’ is quite different from telling that person whether he or she did a good job or not. To be able to use an interrogative voice is closely linked to prevailing norms about citizen-leader relations, power and self-confidence. In the Ugandan context, as in many African countries, citizens faced challenges in exercising voice for claiming accountability. Many challenges were similar to those described in previous sections, but additional factors appeared. This section presents the issues that raised discontent about local government performance among the village populations. I also describe the differences between Acholi and Lango in how they acted upon their concerns and held local government accountable.

### **7.2.1 Governance problems from a citizen perspective**

In both Lango and Acholi, the many development problems people encountered were largely ascribed to two problems: ‘segregation’ and corruption. Segregation<sup>31</sup> was one of the most heated topics when speaking about local governance problems. Leaders at each level favoured their own village, clan or party members in the distribution of resources. *‘Everything stops at the sub-county’* was a common phrase among villagers when talking about development programmes. Since the officials and LC3 worked ‘inside their offices’ and their work was not completely disclosed, they were the first to be suspected of ‘eating the money’ (*cam cana*: corruption). People also suspected corrupt behaviour at LC1 level, because LC1 members were

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<sup>31</sup> Also described as favouritism, though in English these are two different issues. It generally refers to patronage along ethnic/clan lines.

involved in the registration process of project beneficiaries and in communication with the sub-county.

In the Acholi cases it was a particularly tense issue, because most aid agencies channelled their aid programmes or distributions using the LC system. Resources and 'projects' were in demand and the LCs were often involved in decision-making about beneficiaries, thus making them important gatekeepers. In Acholi many NGOs targeted people with special needs, such as widows, the disabled, orphans and people living with HIV/Aids. Out of the ten Acholi villages where fieldwork took place, seven LC1 chairpersons were accused of registering their relatives as beneficiaries. This corresponds with what has been written about elite capture in CDD interventions (Mansuri & Rao, 2004). In each village several respondents would make such accusations, but it was impossible to find out whether corruption had actually occurred. Some LC members would have gone as far as registering their children and cousins on the list of orphans, while leaving out the genuine orphans. Few NGOs go down to the villages themselves to carry out verification exercises, since this comes with high transaction costs.

In both regions the perceived non-responsiveness of officials, and their inability and lack of will to take action, were considered major problems. In a context with limited resources it was quite understandable that officials could not address all the problems. Citizens quite likely reported problems for which officials had no direct responsibility, not knowing their exact mandates, which led to discontent even though the official was not actually responsible. Nonetheless, the outcome was that many citizens saw the work of officials as irrelevant.

The biggest difficulty is negligence by the authorities. You take an issue to LC1 but he does not forward the issue, only tells you that he took it to the sub-county and you can wait for the feedback for long and give up.

*Acholi: Woman, age 34, Lamwo district,*

The Acholi and the Langi *did* experience corruption and unresponsiveness as a disadvantage, behaviour that they were forced to live with, and which limited their livelihood options. In which ways, then, did they try to seek accountability for such failures?

### **7.2.2 'We want to remove the LC'**

There are few formal accountability mechanisms at people's disposal in Uganda. At the very local level of LC1 and LC2, citizens need to collect signatures and organise a 'vote of no confidence' to push an elected leader out of office, after which a by-election can be held. The

higher up the ladder, the more difficult it becomes to hold leaders accountable. Though the LC1 level is relevant in people's lives, it has far less power than the LC3 level where important decisions are taken and budgets are allocated. At this level the procedures and information flows become much more complicated. Interactions between the sub-county and district levels are even more difficult for local villagers to assess.

A clear difference between Lango and Acholi was that in Lango the formal mechanism was known to the population and actually used. The majority of Langi respondents – though more men than women – were able to explain the procedure in individual interviews. In the parish where I did the research, three LC1 chairpersons had been expelled from office in the last five years. After holding a village meeting, people had sent a letter to the LC2 chairperson with their complaints and the required number of signatures, after which the LC2 chairperson and the Parish Chief called a village meeting. In the meeting the LC1 was questioned. Then the stamp was taken away from him and a by-election was held immediately. Reasons for removing LC1s from office included favouring their own clan, bad morals such as frequent 'over drinking' (setting the wrong example), stealing or any other crime, and making decisions on his/her own without involving the committee or the wider community.

It showed the Langi population's ability to use the law and confront the LC1 with his misbehaviour. Yet focus group participants also gave reasons why such steps were not taken, even in cases where an LC1 was not performing well. Most people were afraid to create social tension; when some community members complained about an LC they risked creating friction with the clan of that LC. Social unity was an important value, which should be respected.

In Acholi, while practically every village complained about their LCs, I encountered only one example where an LC1 was removed. Otherwise, there was little awareness about this formal procedure. It was striking how frequently respondents answered that they could only 'wait for elections' as the only way to hold their leaders accountable. Even after the 2011 local elections had just taken place, respondents commented '*If this one [LC] is not working well, then we just remove him next time*', which in practice meant allowing the LC to misuse the office for the next five years.

In Acholi I encountered several examples where the sub-county had actively discouraged any action to remove LCs from office. They simply stated that ousting an LC was 'not an option' and the population had to wait for national elections. In one village people were particularly

unhappy with their LC chairperson, who had been accused of diverting NGO resources several times. Some of the elders had gone to the sub-county and complained to the LC3 about it, saying they wanted a new LC1. The LC3 answered that '*Only the President can remove an LC1*'. There were other examples that show that a lack of knowledge about procedures was reinforced by more knowledgeable officials, who used this gap to the disadvantage of the communities

About the LC1 here, other committee members complain he only works with the [Secretary for] Defence, not the others. The members did not come out clearly, they only complain from down [among themselves locally], they do not take it to the LC2 to help them. I cannot tell why, maybe they think that since the committee has no money it is useless, or they are disorganized and do not come out. People have tried to correct LC1 and sent complaints to LC3 about segregation. [...] People took their views to LC3 at sub-county, and he said there cannot be a by-election, or he has no power to carry out a by-election.

*Acholi: Man, age 40, LC2 member, Chua district*

In both Lango and Acholi people felt that corruption at higher levels was worse, but it was something they had to live with as they would never be able to challenge it. While officially it should be the council that provide the checks and balances to the sub-county officials, in many cases the council simply rubber-stamps sub-county decisions.

Those at SC are together as a team in corruption. The Area Councillors we sent [voted for] are not helping us. In elections we will change them [oust them]. The way we are being handled is not proper. We wait for the elections. (...) The civil servants: the only way we can work on them is through the strong councillors that we have to elect. We always fear to go ourselves, we can easily be arrested. When we vote the leaders into power we respect them. But when he does not represent us well we have to wait for elections. (...) The LC3 comes from up! For the government goes from LC1 to LC5 so we cannot do much.

*Lango: Focus group with 7 men, Kole district*

Citizens themselves cannot do much more than read information displayed on notice boards and attend the council meetings, but there are no mechanisms at their disposal to enforce sanctions. Most respondents therefore stated that central government was responsible for supervising LC3 and LC5 officials and controlling the flow of funds. This was congruent with the adherence to existing hierarchies. At the same time, central government was perceived to be even more corrupt and it was assumed that it would probably protect local governments.

### 7.2.3 Informal accountability mechanisms

In the relationship between citizens and more powerful actors, citizens may not have formal mechanisms to challenge the powerful, and may even consider it inappropriate to express any form of critique. Scott has written extensively on how power operates to oppress the less powerful actors in unequal relationships (Scott, 1985, 1990). Compliance is not only a reaction to repression; it is in many cases a strategy to 'stay safe' or to repress anger about humiliation. Yet in these circumstances, forms of dissent can nonetheless exist. These 'hidden transcripts' are often expressed within the inner circle of the poor, invisible to the powerful, but under certain conditions may cross the line to the public arena (Scott, 1990). Even the powerful may be susceptible to such signals. Informally, these local expressions may have sanctioning powers and forge improvement. In some cases quite impolite or rude forms of accountability are developed, such as the use of violence (Hossain, 2010).

The sense of community in both the Acholi and the Langi was characterised by values such as 'unity' and 'togetherness' that all people respected. There were therefore many social conventions which prevented frictions being created in the community, either between the leaders and the population or between clans. Misbehaving LC members could thus not simply be reprimanded using formal methods. Involving the sub-county *might* lead to fines or arrests. Fines were paid to the sub-county and would not benefit the villages. An arrest would take a community member away from the village and his/her family, which was generally perceived as negative. In principle, to oust an LC from office was a last resort, hence people preferred to resolve problems with the LC1 among themselves.

The typical informal strategy was to advise, *not* to criticise or challenge, a leader. This was a visible but discreet measure often adopted by other LC members and customary leaders. Elders narrated examples from the past or told parables that sent out messages to the culprit about his/her faults and the solutions, often in community meetings. They can also 'sit down' with the LC to counsel him. However, especially in the Acholi region, the elders were said to have lost the 'advising influence'. In the first place many elders had passed away in the war, and there were not many to fill that role. Also, they were not perceived as legitimate voices to speak about 'politics' and were expected to engage in cultural affairs only.

Given that the Acholi could not make use of formal mechanisms, I paid all the more attention to informal strategies. Informal, more hidden, pressures in the context of Acholi would not take rude forms, in fact rather the opposite. One informal strategy was non-participation; people refused to show up when a leader called meetings or for community actions, which sends a clear message to the leader. This was also used for other authoritative bodies, as in the case of an NGO that wanted to hold a meeting with a group of beneficiaries for an agricultural project, but the group members did not show up since they disagreed with the type of project.

A second strategy was to use mockery or satire by naming places or objects to ridicule particular leaders, which clearly worked to discredit them, undermining their reputation and status. A place in the road was named after a man who was so drunk that he wet his pants, as a story to 'teach people' to avoid drinking. In Gulu district a particular bean variety was named after a politician who stole many sacks for own consumption. Also, women composed songs with hidden messages to leaders. A third strategy was to reclaim an 'invited space': to wait for any kind of meeting to be called and raise issues at the end, when the floor is open for comments. A meeting called to inform people about a vaccination programme could then result in discussing a leader's actions, which was enough reason for some leaders not to call any meetings.

In recent years, community radio has become a powerful medium: a strategy for letting off steam. People call in to radio programmes and talk shows where criticism is very openly and directly aired, though with the security of being an anonymous caller if preferred. Since it can reach a larger audience, it may have more effect (Blair, 2000; Devas & Grant, 2003). Politicians and LC5 district chairpersons often participated in radio talk shows to explain their decisions. People would call in with questions to which they would respond, and over the next few days one would hear people debating what had been said. However, one civil society representative commented: *'While it [the radio programme] is important as an arena to air our grievances, it makes our people divert their attention and it weakens the capacity to work on your leader directly'*.

The question is how effective such acts of citizenship are for holding leaders accountable. Hossain (2010) demonstrated that the effects of such acts are short-term and reversible, and they did not feed into or strengthen formal accountability mechanisms. These acts are very local and unable to challenge the often bigger failures at higher levels. This also seemed to be the case in Acholi. The naming and shaming strategies were potentially effective at the very

local level of LC1 and LC2; they became more difficult at LC3 level, and were unlikely to have any effect beyond that.

Whether officials and politicians respond to the expression of discontent and attacks on their status depends on many factors combined, as highlighted in accountability literature. In rural areas like these there was little presence of organised actors with whom citizens could liaise to demand accountability, with the exception of calling in to radio programmes. In Acholi all NGOs in the area were implementing livelihood and social service programmes, with little attention to the governance dimension of each of their activities. Add to this the lack of a legal framework to enforce accountability claims, adequate information, and functioning representatives. The subtle accountability strategies could not reinforce or be reinforced by other accountability strategies.

#### **7.2.4 Cultural limitations to making accountability claims**

The interrogative voice requires certain capabilities (Goetz & Jenkins, 2004; McGee & Gaventa, 2011), mechanisms through which voice can be exercised (Cornwall & Schattan Coelho, 2007), and support and enforcement from higher-level government actors (Peruzzotti & Smulovitz, 2006). A number of capabilities came out above. In this section I focus on citizens' internalised ideas about power and authority, which inform how they perceive their agency in accountability relations. These include the cultural norm of respecting authority and the hierarchy of social relations in society, reinforced by lack of education and self-confidence. As I explained in Chapter 3, and as it emerged throughout the subsequent chapters, was that the practice of citizen engagement requires a sense of citizenship and agency, on top of knowledge of procedures.

The social distance between citizens and Ugandan state officials is large, even at the very local level. This distance can appear abruptly after elections, when candidates become 'bosses' overnight. Cultural norms prescribe a kind of respect for persons in leadership positions that forbids criticism and challenges by individual citizens, even if the leader abuses his office. In the Ugandan cultural set-up, demanding accountability by *direct confrontation* is therefore nearly unacceptable. The informal accountability strategies discussed above all avoided direct confrontation, calling in to a radio programme being slightly different, because mediated by anonymity.

In both Lango and Acholi, respondents expressed various fears that held them back from seeing local leaders or officials, which resonates with how Corbridge et al. (2005) describe the barriers between citizens and the Indian state. 'Not knowing how to speak', lacking the confidence because the official will be more 'educated', feeling that the official is simply 'higher than you' and will be 'rude' were most the frequently cited fears.

Yes, some people fear talking to leaders because sometimes they [people] can raise certain issues, and the leaders and other people end up abusing them [using offensive language]. This kind of behaviour makes people feel inferior in the community. Others fear because of lack of money and think, if I go to a leader then what will I give him?

*Lango: Man, age 49, Kole district*

Some people are scared of harsh leaders, because if they are assuming positions they decide whether to listen to your case or not. Leaders in positions think they have authority. I know most leaders are really harsh.

*Lango: Woman, age 45, Kole district*

A direct consequence of their perceived inferiority was that people adopted a certain attitude when they *did* see someone in a position of authority. The 'significance of politeness', a phrase coined by Hossain as a structuring feature of Bangladeshi society (2010, p. 914), was what the respondents in my study referred to as the obligation to be 'humble' and 'to speak with low voice':

You need to humble yourself if you are going to raise a problem, so that he/she can be of good help by solving it in a humble way. If you speak at the top of your voice then leaders will not help or listen to your problem, since you never used a good approach.

*Lango: Man, age 43, Kole district*

The image of political leaders as 'bosses' or 'Big Men' that prevails in many African societies has been widely discussed in the literature on ethnicity and politics (Bayart, 1993; Berman, 1998; Chabal, 1992). Local big men maintain power through the system of 'decentralised despotism' that was created by post-colonial regimes (Mamdani, 1996). Their ethnic kin have expectations once leaders are elected. They are not just part of an understanding of how politics is 'done'; the hierarchical relations of power that exist and the social distance between leaders and citizens that is adhered to seems culturally embedded. Once in office the boss can act and do as he pleases without impunity. What I encountered in Acholi and Lango was that the election process did not seem to offer a sense of control over their elected leaders. Rather, people acted as if they had *given away* that power, a view that was only strengthened by



rampant vote-buying practices during the campaigns. Power holders themselves used this notion of control. Sub-county leaders claimed power over the constituency by emphasising obedience, thus reinforcing the boss image:

If the LC1 comes with an idea with which the people disagree, then we have to settle it there and then. But if the Sub-County comes with an idea, we just have to follow it. Maybe it is an idea [directive/policy] for all wards. We need not react against it. (...) Those are ideas you cannot run away from, you have to abide by them. With the LC1 we sit and settle. If he refuses, we leave him alone or we vote and we then go with the majority [decision]. We cannot react against the Sub-county out of fear. If you don't obey they can take you to prison or take your properties. They always say 'This idea comes from the very people whom you have elected in the district [council], so you have to obey.'

Acholi: Man, age 59, Chua district

Although these problems existed in both regions, the situation in Lango looked better – though not ideal – than in Acholi. The findings of previous sections are summarised in Table 7.2 and demonstrate the differences in practices of engagement between Lango and Acholi, and in the functioning of local state and customary leaders. In the last section I will explain the difference by linking the situation in Acholi back to the previous chapters about the conflict.

**Table 7.4 Differences between Acholi and Lango for Citizenship Practices in the present**

	<b>Conflict affected Acholi</b>	<b>Non-conflict affected Lango</b>
<b>Community-based institutions</b>	Numerous, active and relevant, but in the process of consolidating; infrequent activities. Not used as springboard for the use of the petitioning/ interrogative voice.	High in density, high intensity of activities, consolidated. Small groups usually not used as springboard for the use of the petitioning/ interrogative voice regarding formal authorities, but for learning citizenship and leadership skills. However, the Electricity Committee did interact with sub-county <i>and</i> district government.
<b>Engagement for material aspects of development: the petitioning voice</b>	Few channels for engagement used, often only the LC1.	More diverse, various local leaders used to raise community issues.
<b>Formal development planning</b>	Virtually non-existent below LC3 level. PDC unknown by citizens and members unaware of their roles	Functioning, though with institutional challenges. PDCs function to collect household data, but not as a platform to negotiate projects.
<b>Formal mechanisms for accountability and use of the interrogative voice</b>	Not used; thought of as impossible	Used in various instances of (perceived) corruption or misconduct of lowest level leaders, but harder to do at higher levels.
<b>Informal mechanisms for</b>	Non-confrontational mechanisms	Non-confrontational mechanisms

**accountability and use of the interrogative voice**

sometimes used for the very local level, e.g. advice by elders, songs. But fear of negative consequences.

used for the very local level, very confidently for clan leaders and more carefully for formal leaders as LCs.

### 7.2.5 Reflection on the two Acholi sites

In terms of the scope and level of citizen engagement I did not observe any significant differences between the two Acholi sites. The populations of Chua and Lamwo faced similar challenges in exercising the petitioning and the interrogative voice, and expressed similar framings of their sense of citizenship. As explained in Chapter 3, the main difference between the Chua and Lamwo research sites was the duration of the camp experience - in Chua for five years and in Lamwo for over ten years. The objective of also doing research in Lamwo was to enhance my understanding about camp life, not to explain the impact of a variation in the duration of encampment. In Lamwo I dedicated much of my time to a reconstruction of camp life based on people's memories and narratives. As a consequence, in Lamwo I did not do as many interviews about present-day citizen engagement as would enable a neat comparison between the two sites. I do, however, have a tentative proposition about the similar nature of citizen engagement.

Although the length of displacement was shorter in Chua, the Chua population nonetheless experienced all the conflict mechanisms. Before the camp started in 2002/3, the Chua population experienced similar levels of insecurity and militarisation of their environment to the Lamwo site. Insecurity and militarised control curtailed spaces for socialisation and citizen engagement, and the population in Chua emphasised coping agency as much as in Lamwo. The Chua population experienced the same changes in social, cultural and political institutions. The important difference is that they experienced the camp leadership and disciplined forms of engagement for five years less. But the Chua population did not have the opportunity to build experience of citizen engagement prior to the camp. Regarding the sense of citizenship, the very fact that one had to leave one's home and resettle in the camp was damaging to Acholi dignity. Whether it was for five or ten years made no difference: the home was lost. Nor did the length of displacement matter for how the role of the state was perceived. Finally, since the major influx of humanitarian agencies started after 2003, the populationS in both Chua and Lamwo were exposed to their interventions for a similar period of time.

Thus, the Chua population had no more opportunities to learn and experience active, democratic citizenship. They too lived with the same military repression and threat of LRA attacks. This may explain why their forms of citizen engagement did not seem to differ from the Lamwo site, but I may have missed nuanced details in how camp duration affected substantive citizenship.

### **7.3 Acholi citizenship explained**

The previous sections demonstrated that, indeed, the scope of citizen engagement in Acholi, in terms of the tactics used and the issues raised, is not as broad as in Lango. The task that remains is to explore whether this difference in citizen engagement was caused by the LRA conflict.<sup>32</sup> In this final section I address proposition (IV): certain practices and ideas that emerged during the conflict persist in the post-conflict situation. I do this by referring back to parts of the diagram presented in Chapter 3. Section 7.3.1 first reflects on the validity of the findings, because of the methodological challenges I encountered (discussed in Chapter 3). Section 7.3.2 explains how a lack of a sense of citizenship and persisting fear shape engagement (Figure 3.1, G). I then discuss perceptions of the public sphere and the persistent practice of withdrawal, in section 7.3.3 (Figure 3.1, F), followed by perceptions of state responsibilities in 7.3.4 (Figure 3.1, F). I then discuss an effect of changes in social institutions that was not anticipated prior to the fieldwork, which is added to the diagram. This concerns the lack of a social foundation for exercising collective voice, which I discuss in section 7.3.5. I also discuss the effects of changes in customary institutions and how these affect engagement in section 7.3.6, and explore the differentiated effects of the conflict for ethnic and national citizenship. Finally, the lack of prior experience with citizen agency is discussed in section 7.3.7 (Figure 3.1, E).

This discussion helps confirm or refute the overall proposition of this study. Linking past experiences to present-day behaviours was the most interesting and the most important aspect of the research, and indeed the most challenging. Time and again I asked myself about attribution: was the conflict, with all its different features, indeed the cause of the observed differences in citizenship? It clearly was responsible for the difference in the sense of

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<sup>32</sup> In Chapter 3 I argued that the difference between the Langi and the Acholi could not be explained due to differences in cultural characteristics between the two tribes.

citizenship, as demonstrated in Chapters 5 and 6, but was it also responsible for differences in the practice of citizenship?

### **7.3.1 Reflections on the findings**

I encountered several challenges when interrogating the fourth proposition. Based on the findings that I present here I do, in fact, believe I have enough evidence to confirm this proposition. A major challenge was that I encountered silences when I tried to ask about the effects of fear and past experiences, just like many researchers who study the effects of war (Green, 1995; Hume, 2010). I also noticed that many of the Acholi in the research sites were not in a position to reflect upon their own practice of engagement. Many had not seen how communities in other tribes practised their citizenship, as I had seen in Lango. But mainly it was not something people reflected on in ordinary life: how socialisation in a particular context shapes present-day practice. As I will show below, it only happened when adults spoke about the youth and the 'bad behaviour' they had picked up in the camp. But this was not an example of citizen engagement. It proved easier to discuss this issue with my three research assistants and Acholi intellectuals in town, which I did at length to validate my conclusions.

As explained in Chapter 3, I pursued alternative explanations for the observed differences. The most important was culture: do differences in cultural norms that govern the interaction with authorities explain why the Acholi seemed to be less pro-active and confrontational than the Langi? I do think culture plays a major role in citizen engagement, but I did not find many differences between the Langi and the Acholi in terms of cultural beliefs or ideas that govern citizen engagement. I acknowledge this could be a weakness in this study. But I conclude that it *was* the experience of conflict and displacement in Acholi that caused the difference in their engagement. Therefore I validate my overall proposition, and in this section I present the evidence to support this.

The findings also showed that certain features of the conflict did not matter as much as anticipated - or rather, they did not have a significant impact on citizen engagement. The LRA atrocities first of all caused death, injuries, broken families, and destruction. These atrocities had a huge impact on the well-being of families, as well as a psychological impact on the wider community. This mattered for citizen engagement because of the fear, which then led to withdrawal from the public sphere. But the perceptions of the state and the public sphere,

displacement into camps, and the presence of violent armed actors all seemed to have a more profound impact on citizen engagement than the actual LRA violence.

### **7.3.2 The effects of fear and a lack of a sense of citizenship**

There was substantive evidence that fear and suspicion of the public sphere persisted in the post-conflict situation, which led to a reduced level of citizen engagement and a narrower range of forms of engagement. (See Joseph's story in Annex 5). The fear in the past was strongly voiced by this man:

The war has affected the psychology of people whereby people only think what to eat and how to protect themselves from the rebels. It also brought enmity among people as people don't have the same voice to present their issues or opinions, because some people benefited alone or pursued individual interests for personal benefits, [and] since they left people ignorant they [indirectly] killed many people. (...) Also the war created fear in people to have voice, because if you present a strong issue, you will be followed up seriously by the government. That is: if you go against the government and also against the rebels. This happened because they stayed among the people and they kill you, but nobody can know who killed you.

*Acholi: Man, age 30, Chua district*

In Chapter 2 I elaborated the prominence of 'silence' in (post)conflict settings (Hume, 2010; Uvin, 2009). In the context of war it often stems from a 'culture of fear' (Wood, 2003) that emerges in the face of violent repression. In Acholi I encountered silences, while very few such silences were observed in Lango. It is difficult to interpret silences as an outsider, because there may not be many respondents who can validate one's interpretations. Though respondents came up with valuable reflections about why fear continued to operate, other reasons for silence may exist simultaneously.

Silence operated subtly for specific aspects of the relationship between the Acholi and the regime. The silence was there to prevent any harm which might come from speaking negatively about the government. In the early stage of the field research I noticed that women especially would talk quite readily about their history and their lives during the war. However, when questions were moving into the direction of government's roles, the women would fall silent and shy, or would start to turn away from me. I started writing down at which moment in the interview silences occurred, which enabled me to identify the sensitive issues. Also men would fall silent, although several men would resume speaking after some hesitation, and

spoke quite critically of government. I felt people had created invisible, almost unconscious, boundaries in their minds about what could be spoken about and what could not. When the community got to know me better they dared to reveal more. These elders described their fears and assumptions about breaking the silence:

People still have the trauma of the past experience of war, that if you want to say something on the government you first reflect on what happened during the insurgency, then you stop talking.

*Elder 2, Lamwo*

People fear, because when you as an ordinary village person speak about the government or speak about what it is doing, the government has the security bodies and they can send those like the police to come and arrest you. They'll say you are spoiling *the reputation of the government. This keeps you from criticising the government.*

*Elder 1, Lamwo*

We take the government as our father and we are the children of the government. So it is [for] the government itself to come out and explain about how it operates and handles issues. So that when you have anything to speak about, about the government, you can feel confident that nothing will happen to you. But since it doesn't do that, there is that fear and suspicion. Because there is still that law that whoever speaks anything that spoils the government programmes or shows a bad image of government you will still get arrested and sentenced in court.

*Elder 2, Lamwo*

In focus groups with youth similar concerns were expressed. They emphasised that youth risked being labelled rebels, which in the past led had to arrests by the military. This had made them very careful about what they said and what they did not. Although the military is no longer present in the area, they felt that one can never know what will happen in the future.

The governance regime in the displacement camps had compounded the perception of the public sphere as unsafe. In interviews I asked both men and women about the differences they felt in having voice, comparing the situations in the camp and now at home. Since many people had expressed the difficulties in having voice while in the camp, I hoped to find out whether people still carried a sense of having to be silent about certain issues. People acknowledged that interaction with leaders had become easier now that they were no longer dependent on relief. On the other hand, many NGO programmes were channelled through the LCs. Because of the many development programmes in Acholi, this created a different power dynamic between the population and LCs from that in Lango. The authority of LCs to identify beneficiaries thus undermined the power of the population to voice dissent. Female respondents in particular argued that it was therefore better to maintain a good relationship

with them, despite their corruption. Women feared that a leader would become 'an enemy' if criticised. One then risked being excluded from 'projects'. This idea that one had to subject oneself to leadership was a notion that strongly intersected with women's position in society generally, and reinforced it.

Finally, a lack of a sense of citizenship, demonstrated in Chapters 5 and 6, undermined citizen engagement. The lack of a sense of citizenship made people feel that the state would never listen when the Acholi voice was raised. Some stated that they felt they were not seen as citizens, but as 'Kony':

People have fear in coming out with the voice on government because they think government will say that they support Kony and people still have fear that Kony might come back. Those days even when the war was still intense, people had no voice because most of the time, they were thinking of how to hide and where to hide like baby rats.

*Acholi: Man, age 40, Lamwo*

How this undermines citizen agency is explained by this man with the following proverb:

*'Dyang ka dong kikolo oko woto dok ikin wadi?'*, which means 'If the bull is castrated, does it still move with the rest? It does not because it now has no ability to fertilize the cow'. This reflects the embodied experience of how the Acholi feel weak compared to other tribes.

### **7.3.3 Internalised perceptions of the public sphere**

At the time of research, the Acholi were still suspicious of openly engaging in the public sphere on various issues. In Chapter 2 it was argued that *perceptions* of available space inform current willingness to engage as citizens, and that perceptions are coloured by people's past experiences with the state (Thomson, 2011). In subsequent chapters I demonstrated that the Acholi felt the state was an actor that could not be trusted and, somewhere below the surface, was against the Acholi tribe altogether. They had also experienced the repressive actions of the military and a securitisation of the public sphere. In line with Thomson's findings on Rwanda, my findings suggest that the Acholi continue to perceive the public space as unsafe.

People have fear in coming out with their voices because for the last twenty years people have been living fearfully and up to now there is no big change.

*Acholi: Man, age 36, Chua*

Internalised perceptions about the public sphere and state behaviour, which originated from the war, undermined the confidence of citizens to speak to government officials and police, and engage with local government institutions. Not every topic concerning the regime was taboo, but it was more a matter of *how* one spoke about it while ensuring the 'government's reputation' was not damaged. Therefore, negative opinions about government performance were not readily shared outside an inner circle of family and neighbours. Thinking of the public sphere as an arena for deliberation (Fraser, 1990), a conclusion is that the Acholi lacked the capability to use this arena.

Factually, formal opportunities opened up now that the planning process resumed and recovery programmes started. The possibility to exercise the petitioning voice thus opened up, but it was treated with suspicion. The needs were great and this did motivate the Acholi to engage with certain programmes, including government programmes such as NAADS and NUSAF. It was, however, a challenge to express discontent with the way such programmes were implemented. When the quality of seeds and cuttings distributed under NAADS was poor, for instance, one was reluctant to say this openly. Rather, farmers refused to pick up the sacks. The life story of the man, at the beginning of this chapter, showed a similar reaction when the goats in a project had died. More generally, holding the local state accountable for weak performance was a huge challenge. The discourse in the public sphere was neither critical nor constructive.

These factors reinforced another barrier to engagement: the cultural respect for authority. As shown in section 7.2, respect for anyone in a higher official position (from sub-county level upwards) was an impediment to engagement with state actors in both Lango and Acholi. But in Acholi the respect one ought to have intersected with the fear and suspicion one has based on past experiences.

#### **7.3.4 Perceptions of state responsibilities**

Another idea that emerged in the post-conflict situation and informed citizen engagement in the present was a particular expectation of the state. Again, this was not something the Acholi in the research sites expressed verbally. This conclusion is based on the comparison between the expectations expressed in both Acholi and Lango and on observations of how people acted according to their expectations.



To a great extent, low expectations of the state had been caused by the securitisation of the public sphere. This first came up in Chapter 5, when I explained that ordinary service provision was less of a priority during the war. It came out strongly in Chapter 6, where I showed how some people supported government measures to establish the camps and the creation of LDUs, although some researchers encountered critical objections in other parts of the region (Dolan, 2009). I argued that this is the result of an untenable situation of insecurity in which people support measures that enhance their protection even if these outcomes are proof of a failing state.

This had direct implications for people's expectations of the state in the present. For so many years people had asked for security, and now that the situation was stable many did not seem to *demand* more, despite their expressed needs for education, health care and livelihood inputs. The population had seen little of a developmental state and knew little of development elsewhere in Uganda, including development of the markets, enterprises and infrastructure, and how these differed from previous regimes. As a result, the current breadth and depth of Acholi demands were at a lower level than in non-affected Lango. Pham and Vinck show that 79% of the Acholi are satisfied with how the government is maintaining the peace, but only 32% are satisfied with how it handles services, employment, corruption and involving the community in decision-making. Dissatisfaction, I argue, does not translate into making demands.

Despite all the weaknesses in Uganda's development policies and implementation, the Langi had seen some development being brought to their region in the form of gradual improvement to their sub-county Health Centre and the construction of several schools in their sub-county. Now that the situation had returned to stability, Acholi seemed first and foremost glad that peace had returned and would not ask for more. It even seemed they expected less from the government than Langi.

### **7.3.5 Effects of the fragmentation of social institutions**

The disruption of social institutions had more effects than anticipated in the initial framework presented in Chapter 3. Initially I related the weakening of social institutions strictly to learning citizenship. Based on the findings I need to add that the changes in certain social institutions

also had other effects. First, social institutions are indeed still fragmented and therefore they do not offer solid platforms for citizenship learning. Secondly, the foundation for collective forms of citizen engagement is not as strong as in Lango. Thirdly, changes in social relations specifically undermined the role of customary leaders as political brokers. However, there were signs that certain social institutions were starting to recover.

In my discussion of the effect of the LRA conflict on social institutions I distinguished social relations from forms of social organisation. In this section I discuss the functioning of community groups and the quality of social relations within the community. In the next section I discuss customary institutions and the relationship between the elders and the village population.

As mentioned above, the community groups in Acholi were not as well established as in Lango. Research participants themselves did not relate the way Acholi groups were functioning directly to the war. I *did* attribute the difference between Acholi and Lango groups to the conflict, because many respondents said that problems in group work were caused by the fact that groups were 'still young' or new.<sup>33</sup> Numerous groups were initiated in the camps, often induced by NGO programmes, but many dissolved when people moved home, because NGOs had included beneficiaries from various villages in such groups, who were unable to meet after everyone had gone back to their home village. In many places new groups had to be formed.

Why is the 'newness' of Acholi groups relevant? I argue that when such institutions and social practices have been stable and established for a long time they can offer a springboard for larger-scale initiatives, as the Electricity Committee in Kole (Lango) illustrated. This Committee was an instance of a community group that had 'scaled up': using the same mechanisms for organisation as the community groups do, this committee represented all citizens of the sub-county to higher levels of governance and to a national company. This committee had thus reached out to state actors (an example of Putnam's linking social capital), while community groups usually would not. The reason why Acholi groups tend to be newer is directly because of the conflict and social and organisational disruption.

This study showed that the LRA war directly and indirectly affected the social relations of Acholi communities. Like Pham and Vinck (2010) I found that the Acholi referred positively to

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<sup>33</sup> Twenty respondents mentioned this in individual interviews and it came up in several focus group discussions.

their neighbours and communities as 'good people'. At the same time they spoke of a 'lack of unity' since the war. The following quotation indicates various reasons for the lack of harmony:

The war has led to disunity: every elder now only knows their own side [clan]. The issue of drinking alcohol has spoiled the elders. Even if there is a case to be settled, the elders will first want to drink. Most of the elders do not know the history of Acholi, even if you ask them they cannot tell you. There is much corruption with the elders. If you bring a case they ask for money. There is a lot of segregation and tension among people, for example land disputes or arguments over NUSAF. People in the ward do not want to associate with those who benefited from NUSAF. People do not like the LC1 because he registered only his relatives for NUSAF. He alone had two groups on his own that received agricultural inputs from NUSAF.

*Acholi: Woman, age 30, Chua district*

Most respondents speak about the displacement into camps as the main cause for discord and social conflicts; too many people confined together and alcoholism had eroded important Acholi norms that had guarded their harmony in the past. The increase in land disputes can be considered an indirect effect of the war.<sup>34</sup> Boundaries had been forgotten while people lived in the camps and many of the elders who were the holders of such knowledge had passed away, or were not taken seriously. I came across several boundary disputes in both research sites, of which two were so serious that the parties involved refused to speak with one another. One of these cases became entangled with local politics, because one of the involved community members was the sub-county chairperson of the NRM party.

Also a new source of disharmony was cited, which was said to have started in the camps: tensions between NRM supporters and members of opposition parties. This started after the change to multi-party politics in 2006. This quotation shows how this intersects with on-going land disputes:

The unity among people nowadays is threatened because most of the party supporters are trying to spoil groups. In groups like NUSAF 2, people from different political parties are joining together. Then some will chat and make fun of others, they praise their parties so that the person who belongs to another party would leave the group and join together with his party members. Other group members give examples of how leaders are staying well together, because they don't fight amongst

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<sup>34</sup> A World Bank (2009) survey in 2008 showed that 25% of the respondents (N=1200) reported being involved in a land dispute over boundaries. This figure was expected to rise as the phase out process of the camps was on-going. In 65% of the reported cases the dispute concerned the areas that were left behind upon displacement. Other disputes concerned the land on which the camp was located and the land belonging to host communities. The report also mentions that the population has very little knowledge of the Land Act and that the majority perceived land title registration as a government attempt to grab their land. Pham and Vinck (2010) report that 35% of the respondents were involved in land conflict.

themselves. Like Museveni and Besigye have never fought and quarrelled so why should we the supporters fight and hate each other. The tension came because the NRM was rigging elections and because of tension among people because of the land wrangles. Among the people who are returning home. It becomes political, because tension is between opposition and NRM supporters. Then the NRM officials tend to back up their supporters and take away the land from opposition supporters, which brings tension among the people.

*Acholi: Man, age 35, Lamwo district*

An example of how the conflict *directly* impacted on social relations was when families had been victims of an LRA attack in which someone from the same community had been involved. It had been an LRA tactic to force abductees to attack their home areas. One example of such stories:

Now there is lack of cooperation among the people. For example, my sister was taken by the LRA and she came back with other LRA rebels near our home. And they stabbed two people, a man and a young girl of 12 years old. They were killed for trying to escape. The girl is the daughter of the brother of LC1. so conflict started seriously between the two families; the family of the girl who was killed, and mine as the family of the abductees. So the family of the dead girl hired four soldiers from UPDF to kill me, as the sister of the abductee. The UPDF pierced my chest with the bayonet. So the father of my sister reported to the police and the police carried out investigation to find out the truth. Now, we still don't talk to that family, there is still that anger. And it was difficult to go to that LC1, who passed away.

*Acholi: Woman, age 28, Lamwo*

Many respondents referred to examples like this as a possible reason for the lack of unity in the community, but I encountered only two instances in which this had happened and caused a breakdown in the relationship between two families. In the absence of a reconciliation process the families were unable to collaborate in, for instance, group work.

A lack of unity had implications for the community's collective capacities for citizen engagement, like some authors have argued (Fox, 2007; Peruzzotti & Smulovitz, 2006). When I asked respondents why the community did not act upon various governance problems they had mentioned the lack of unity was frequently cited. For an issue to be taken to a higher authority 'the community has to come up as one', notably in a community meeting. Therefore, where unity was lacking certain issues remained unsolved. In two cases the engagement of individual families was seriously hampered. One family told me they had difficulties accessing the LC chairperson, because the LC's family had been victim of an LRA attack in which a

member of the other family had participated. Another family explained they feared to speak to the LC out of guilt that one of their children was in the LRA.<sup>35</sup>

The war also directly undermined the mechanisms for repairing social relationships and restoring unity in the communities. People lacked the assets to go through full reconciliation processes, or to pay fees to customary courts. Many of the elders and customary leaders who had facilitated the process and performed the rituals had passed away. As long as a reconciliation process between families and clans was not completed, the clans and families involved could sometimes literally not 'talk' to one another or engage in other social activities such as group work. But then I also heard of families that had been forgiving of LRA abductees, knowing they acted against their will. The effect of such past events is thus not uniform.

### **7.3.6 Customary leadership challenged**

Previous chapters showed that the legitimacy of customary leaders and elders was challenged during the war. Other scholars spoke about their 'legitimacy crisis' (Branch, 2010) and the problems this created for their role in justice and reconciliation mechanisms (Allen, 2006). In the early phases of the war the legitimacy of the Acholi elders and customary leaders had been seriously challenged by their inability to resettle former UNLA soldiers. The Acholi clan system was subsequently almost dismembered in the camps, when clan authority was undermined in various ways. First of all they were no longer able to perform important rituals. Secondly, their social status was eroded because the humanitarian actors made them 'ordinary people' and because many of them failed to show respectable behaviour because of alcoholism.

In my study I found that everyone, but particularly the youth, felt that the elders had lost a certain status and respect. Also, the youth felt that not all the elders' advice was applicable to present-day problems, or felt they were incompetent. The challenge to the status of the elders is illustrated by the following quotation:

The elders are bribed by the government. So when it comes to giving advice, the elders advise people to support the government. But the youth do not support that. Most of the LCs are also bribed by the government and they call the president 'father'. But before the camp there was nothing like bribe.

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<sup>35</sup> Because of the issue being so sensitive it was too difficult to find out the exact number of similar cases.

The role of elders drastically changed. The type of life in the camp was different from at home. By then, the elders had so many responsibilities. I don't know why it changed. Our life entered a different form in there,... drinking, drug abuse. The government brought in the LCs. The LC is also in the village, just like the *rwot kweri*, the clan leader. Now which one to listen to? In the government system there is sometimes support for linking to higher level officials. The elders shied away, they also saw the LCs as somehow superior, the elders don't act as their fathers any more. They call even the LCs '*ladit*', which means honourable! That removes the respect from the elder. In many cases the elders kept quiet. Their advice is not followed.

*Man, age 62, Lamwo*

An implication of this legitimacy crisis is that, in the post-conflict situation, the elders are barely able to function as political brokers between the communities and the state (Corbridge, Williams, Srivastava, & Véron, 2005). I observed public meetings in which they were not always taken seriously by the population. In two village meetings in which LC1 chairpersons made public announcements I observed a few instances where the attendees laughed when one of the elders had stood up and addressed LC members. When I asked afterwards what had happened I was told the elder had said something irrelevant and was 'stubborn' or 'drunk'. Not only was their knowledge not always considered relevant, it seemed they lacked the status and authority to advise the LCs. However, when I observed a customary court meeting about a family issue the audience was listening carefully. Also in the case of the land encroached upon by the military, mentioned above, the village population referred to the elders as their legitimate representatives. Thus, for issues that clearly belonged to the customary sphere the elders seemed to carry out their roles appropriately, but they were still unable to play a meaningful role vis-à-vis local state actors on other occasions.

The findings from Lango show there is a tension between the LC system and the customary norms that allow elders to have a voice on public affairs: the 'public' LC system (state citizenship) is not the customary 'public' (ethnic citizenship). In both regions there is interaction between the two systems, in particular when it comes to justice mechanisms and resolving land disputes. In Lango, the LCs are therefore generally considered the appropriate channel for dealing with higher-level government issues rather than customary leaders. But, from observations of meetings in Lango, it seemed advice from customary leaders is more often acknowledged. Also, on a number of occasions elders raised issues with the sub-county on behalf of their communities, particularly around land, or instructed the LCs and opinion leaders in the community to do so.

My findings for the present-day situation suggest that there may be reason for optimism and that the crisis in legitimacy as described by Allen (2006, 2010), Branch (2010) and Finnström (2003) will not be permanent. In the post-conflict situation, elders and clan leaders - holders of authority in the Acholi ethnic community - were needed for resolving land disputes and organising clan affairs. Now at home, they no longer had difficulty accessing their shrines or performing rituals. The customary leaders seemed to be re-establishing some of their legitimacy in their own customary sphere. Now able to perform crucial functions regarding land distribution and settling border disputes, and where possible also for the reconciliation between clans, their powers were gradually being restored. As a result, customary leaders are regaining some respect.

Thus, an implication of the effects of the war on the Acholi customary leaders is that Acholi communities lack political brokers. For the practice of citizenship this means a lack of leadership figures that can engage in or mobilise citizen engagement in relation to the local state. However, within the sphere of the ethnic community there are signs that customary authority – and with it an important aspect of ethnic citizenship - is being reconstituted to some extent.

### **7.3.7 Lack of prior experience with citizen agency**

This sub-section addresses the second part of proposition (IV): that the Acholi citizens have little prior experience with forms of citizen engagement, which leads to limited levels of engagement in the post-conflict situation. Perhaps the phrase ‘we just wait’ – a frequent answer to my question about whether and how people follow up on issues raised to the sub-county - illustrates best that people were unaware of procedures. I want to argue that a lack of experience is part of the explanation for less engagement in Acholi compared to Lango. This is not something that many people explained to me in so many words, since in general people do not speak in a way that reflects on complicated processes such as experiential learning. This finding is thus based on observations of the knowledge people displayed in using formal channels for engagement, like for raising concerns about a public service or for raising a complaint about the performance of an LC.

As explained in section 7.1 and 7.2, the Acholi were unaware of most of the formal procedures in place for using the petitioning and interrogative voice. The majority of the people did not

know the responsibilities of the sub-county. Also local leaders themselves, such as the LC1 and LC2 and members of the Parish Development Committee, were not aware of all its functions. Apart from such knowledge, people had little practical experience in interacting with state authorities. I deliberately use the word 'experience' to underline that this goes beyond a gap in knowledge about laws and procedures (although these are of course a component of it) and includes the lack of skills and awareness that people would have built up over time through exposure and learning through practice.

My reasoning is that the Acholi have not had the same opportunities to gain experience with the functions and channels of the LC system as the Langi. Before the RCs/LCs were introduced in 1986, there was no system in place in either Lango or Acholi that ensured bottom-up participation and representation. During the war the RCs/LCs in Acholi were used for security purposes, not to channel citizen demands or for the planning process as in Lango. As mentioned before, social and cultural institutions where such practices could be learnt did not function either. In the post-conflict phase, having lost out on several years of the development of the LC system that had been advancing elsewhere, citizens thus had little experience to fall back on in mobilising the LCs system for the recovery. Everyone knew that 'development comes through the LCs', but there was a tendency to wait for it rather than organising for it, with the exception of a few active LC members.

The functioning of the LCs showed a number of shortcomings which were caused by the war: PDCs were not functioning, LC3 representatives were barely active, and the sub-county lacked staff, technical capacities and resources. LC21 and LC2 members lacked knowledge of systems and procedures, and lacked experience in using the channels of engagement at higher levels. We should not forget that most of the local leaders were themselves as much affected by the conflict as anyone else. The LCs had functioned in a very particular way during the war, and had barely performed their representative functions. They had had few opportunities to perform ordinary leadership roles in terms of development and mediating with higher level authorities. Both the population and the lower level LCs thus lack years of experience in raising issues and following them up.



## Conclusion

This chapter presented the difference in citizen engagement between Lango and Acholi. It showed that the Langi used a wider range of tactics for engagement: they used various formal and informal avenues to exercise the petitioning voice as well as the interrogative voice. They engaged with sub-county and district-level authorities. They had active community-based forms of organisation, both within the clan and comprising members of various clans. Modelled after the local groups, one initiative had developed into an association at sub-county level. The issues on which they engage ranged from the welfare of the clans, to government services, to the accountability of lower level leaders.

In Acholi, citizen engagement was neither as wide in scope nor as substantive as in Lango. Where instances of citizen engagement occurred this was mainly to use the petitioning voice in an attempt to obtain much-needed services. The LC1 chairperson was the most important avenue through which this was pursued, and often the only one. Apart from that people tended to rely on their own efforts to improve their living conditions. The Acholi barely used the interrogative voice for accountability purposes. Discontent about a local leader, often the LC1, was expressed through hidden transcripts in the form of gossip and 'talking quietly at home' and various passive resistance tactics.

I then described how ideas and practices that emerged during the conflict continued to shape current practices. Based on the findings presented in section 7.3 it can be argued that there was not simply 'less' or 'a lack of' engagement. In Acholi, the practice of citizenship was characterised by a persistent fear of the state and suspicion of the public sphere that had been internalised by Acholi citizens. As a matter of routine people were careful in their interactions with the state. On sensitive issues, disengagement was the more likely strategy. In addition, a fragmented social base for collective action and the lack of political brokers compounded the challenges to a collective voice.

The findings presented in the last section suggest a differentiated effect of the conflict on ethnic citizenship and citizenship of the Ugandan state. Although the security aspect of a sense of citizenship had much improved, the *dignity* and *equality* of the Acholi tribe had not been restored. A sense of inferiority, fear and suspicion continued to characterise the practice of citizenship in relation to the state. For the ethnic community, on the other hand, the chapter

showed that important institutions like the community groups, practices like *wang oo*, and the involvement of elders in clan affairs were being revived.

In the final chapter I go back to the propositions of this study and present my conclusions. I explain my contributions to the literature and I discuss the implications for policy. If the problem of citizen engagement in Acholi is not simply the lack of engagement, then interventions should not be oriented simply to increasing the frequency of state – citizen interactions.

## Chapter 8 Conclusions

### Introduction

This final chapter presents the main arguments and conclusions about how protracted conflict and displacement affect the ways in which citizenship is sensed and practised. I return to my initial propositions and then explain how my study has contributed to existing knowledge in this field. This includes a critical engagement with other research done. I discuss policy implications, in particular for community-driven approaches in (post)conflict settings.

The overall proposition is that the experience of protracted conflict and displacement leads to a lack of a sense of citizenship and to diminished forms of citizen engagement, due to the limited opportunity for learning and experiencing the practice of citizenship. What has been learnt in this study is that in order to understand citizenship in a post-conflict situation, both the sense and the practice of citizenship need to be studied. This requires a historical analysis of how they are constructed, deconstructed and reconstructed over time. Regarding the period of conflict itself, one needs to unpack the features of the conflict and follow the mechanisms through which the conflict may have affected citizenship practice. In Acholi, a combination of mechanisms diminished a sense of citizenship and forms of citizen engagement, as was observed at the time of research in 2010.

The proposition (II) for what happens during the conflict is that certain social and political institutions narrow down and that the public sphere is securitised. The consequence of these changes, stated in proposition (III), is that there is a lack of opportunities to learn and experience active, democratic citizenship. In Acholi, political institutions and the public sphere were securitised due to military presence and threats of LRA attacks. Social and cultural institutions were disrupted, customary institutions lost authority and local state actors were preoccupied with security issues. It was demonstrated that the focus of the Acholi during the insurgency was on forms of coping agency for short-term needs. Younger generations did not gain experience with forms of citizen engagement like their elders had. The study also demonstrated how the conflict led to a lack of a sense of citizenship in terms of a lack of dignity, security and equality. The last proposition (IV) states that certain practices and ideas developed during the conflict persist in the post-conflict situation. The study shows how the practice of citizen engagement in Acholi is characterised by fear and suspicion and weakened by a lack of prior experience with citizen engagement.

My main conclusion is that protracted conflict diminishes a sense of citizenship and radically changes the social environment in which active citizenship is learnt, through the narrowing and securitisation of institutions and the public sphere. Especially if the state is considered hostile to its citizens, this compounds suspicion and fear of engaging with state actors, or in the public sphere more generally. In addition to what scholars have highlighted about the importance of a consciousness of one's citizen identity and agency, one's dignity, and one's previous experience with forms of citizenship practice, I draw attention to the sense of citizenship as something that is a prerequisite for active citizenship. Since conflict breaches a guarantee of security, dignity and equality, a sense of citizenship fails to develop, or diminishes.

In section 8.1 I summarise what citizenship looks like in the Acholi and Lango case studies and highlight the main differences between them. In section 8.2 I return to the propositions and diagram presented in Chapter 3 to discuss the causal relationships between features of the conflict and present-day citizen engagement. In section 8.3 I explain how my study contributes to existing knowledge. I reflect on my approach that focuses on everyday forms of engagement and the spectrum of forms of engagement, followed by a discussion of the intersection between citizenship and conflict. The section finishes with a discussion of how my findings compare with the work of other scholars. I then discuss the implications of my findings for Community-Driven Recovery interventions in section 8.4. Finally, I suggest topics for further research.

### **8.1 Acholi and Lango compared**

I compared two LRA-affected areas in the Acholi region with one non-affected area in Lango. They were compared in terms of how people in these areas perceived themselves as citizens in relation to other tribes and in relation to the state. From their narratives, key aspects emerged that I took to be their understanding of a *sense of citizenship*; a) Equality: their perceptions of whether the state treats all tribes equally in terms of distribution of resources and political power, and equality among tribes, b) Dignity: their perceptions of whether the state treats all tribes with respect and leaves them their dignity, and whether other tribes do the same, and c) Security: their perceptions of how the state responds to insecurity.

In terms of active citizenship, or *citizenship as practice*, I formulated proxies that applied to the right-hand part of the spectrum (Figure 2.1), which corresponds to the focus of this research on everyday forms of engagement: a) involvement in different forms of community organisation, b) interactions with formal and customary forms of authority, c) engagement with development and in formal development planning (the petitioning voice), d) engagement in accountability mechanisms (the interrogative voice). Table 8.1 summarises the differences between Acholi and Lango, at the bottom of this section. Here I will summarise the findings for people's sense and practices of citizenship for both regions separately.

### ***Acholi region***

The findings showed that the Acholi lack a sense of citizenship, in each of the three aspects: equality, security and dignity. Section 8.2 explains how this can be attributed to past experience of conflict and the role of the NRA regime in particular. The predominant impression among the Acholi is that the NRA/M regime is not a regime for all tribes and is, in fact, 'against the Acholi'. Their understanding is that to be Acholi in Uganda is to be a second-class citizen, unworthy of development and dignity. Certain phrases used to describe themselves as Acholi illustrate their narrative as citizens of Uganda, such as the expression '*being on the slope of the hill, while others are on the higher parts*'. The statement of one woman that '*We are like slaves being brought into Uganda*' reflects the alienation of the Acholi people. Even among the youth that pursued higher education in the southern regions, and thus have better prospects, these perceptions exist. They feel that other tribes replicate the stigmatisation of their tribe as 'warriors', a representation used by the NRA regime during the war.

Regarding citizenship practices, the Acholi are not in a state where they could look beyond day-to-day needs. They are preoccupied with rebuilding the basics of their home. Chapter 7 demonstrated that the scope of citizen engagement in Acholi is limited mainly to the use of the petitioning voice, both informally and through formal institutional channels. The LC1 is the primary channel for engagement. Although it is not hard for people to *identify* needs, using their petitioning voice to channel their issues and follow them up proves to be challenging. They lack the knowledge of the planning process and the functions of LCs, the meaning of *representation* of interests, and a notion of development as entitlement. Certain norms, such as respect for leaders - especially if they are in formal offices - limit direct engagement particularly at higher levels of governance. People therefore tend to rely on their own

institutions and do not use other avenues to link up with higher levels of state authority. The depth of engagement is limited to reporting an issue to LC1 and when this does not lead to results they would just 'wait' and not follow up further.

Chapter 7 furthermore showed that exercising the interrogative voice and engaging for accountability is even more challenging. Despite the many complaints about local state authorities, holding them accountable is usually not within the scope of engagement. Instead, everyday forms of resistance are used to air discontent; not showing up for meetings is a tactic of passive resistance. The Acholi are reluctant to use the interrogative voice to check up on a leader, whereas Langi citizens are more willing and likely to do so. It is particularly in this domain where internalised ideas about power, some of which are the result of the war, intersect with 'ordinary' challenges inherent in holding leaders to account, such as lack of awareness about suitable mechanisms (this will be further explained below). People's reluctance stems from fear of negative consequences: either one risks being excluded from recovery programmes, or the state might punish you for spoiling its reputation. Findings showed that the Acholi are less demanding than the Langi, and less familiar with state responsibilities. Expecting less from the state, and relieved as they were that the situation is at least stable, they would not confront the authorities with their concerns about the slow recovery process.

Important for maintaining social relations and livelihoods are community-based institutions like the groups. These had resumed in the satellite camps and home areas. Many groups are recently formed and experience various vicissitudes. Community groups for farming and saving are running, though often irregularly. Cultural institutions such as clan leadership functions and teaching the youth around the evening fire (*wang oo*) have resumed, but the adults feel they have weakened. Many elders are struggling to generate respect, and feel that young people are not listening and are drinking too much. Nonetheless, people are glad cultural institutions are in place, and they play an important role in responding to daily needs.

People are more active in their own groups than for community issues beyond immediate household subsistence, such as general health care, water and sanitation. These *are* identified as important needs, but primarily a responsibility of government. Community meetings rarely take place. The limited interaction between Acholi citizens and various leaders for development purposes and to access formal authorities is what I have called a lower 'density of relations'. People think that the only way to channel their needs to local government is

through the LC1, and thence upwards through the LC system. Other mechanisms, such as going through elected LC3 councillors or elders, are not used. The formal planning process and the functioning of PDCs are virtually non-existent below LC3 level, and the sub-county itself is hampered by institutional deficits. This level of local government is only remotely present in people's lives.

Finally, within the Acholi ethnic community the customary leaders are unable to function as political brokers, or 'fixers', or to mediate with the local state. They have re-established their legitimacy within their cultural domain to a certain extent. Capable of performing much needed cultural practices like dispute resolution and educating the youth, they are starting to regain respect. However, they are not credible as actors to liaise with the LCs about government services and they have lost the power to monitor the behaviour of LCs.

### ***Lango region***

In Lango region citizenship looks very different. The Langi have a stronger sense of citizenship and demonstrate forms of citizen engagement that are broader and deeper than in Acholi. There are gaps in both the sense and the practice, but overall the situation in Lango is better. This is attributed to their having lived in a more stable political environment since the late 1980s, so that experience with citizenship practice could develop. After a brief period of turmoil due to Tito Okello's coup, this potential oppressor was stopped by the NRA. Initially, the Langi were afraid the NRA would be a military dictatorship as under Idi Amin, but from 1988 the area became stable.

In terms of how the Langi perceive themselves as citizens of Uganda, the north-south divide is experienced due to the notion that the NRM favours the south in terms of development, but it is not as sharply felt as in Acholi. Three factors were particularly significant in building the relationship to the state. First of all, the restitution of cultural leadership by the NRA affirmed their identity as a cultural group and acknowledged them as a collective political subject. Secondly, the appointment of several Langi to important bodies and levels of government offered a form of representation. Lastly, people are aware that the region did experience some development under the NRA/M, despite its southern bias. Lango remains a stronghold of Obote's party UPC, now under new leadership, but its support for the NRM has increased.

However, this increase can be interpreted as people's buying into the patronage system of the NRM, which channels resources to its support areas.

In Lango there is a higher density of relations between citizens and local leaders. People know their local representatives and communicate various concerns to them to be taken up at higher levels. Generally, people are aware of the different types of leadership functions and how to use them, even though responsiveness from higher levels remains inadequate. They use formal and informal accountability mechanisms to hold local clan leaders and LCs to account, although this is clearly harder at higher levels of governance. The LC system itself is functioning relatively better, though generally under-resourced and facing capacity gaps. PDCs primarily play a role in data collection for the sub-county about existing needs and do not attempt to negotiate about the allocation of resources. Some of the LC3 councillors are actively following up sub-county budgets, which is not at all the case in Acholi.

Generally, mediation with the sub-county about public services is seen to be a task of the LCs. Elders and clan leaders sometimes function as political brokers to raise concerns with the sub-county. But Lango is characterised by vibrant community-based institutions, which sometimes serve as collectivities that reach out to formal state institutions. Active clan committees and community groups are wide spread. They function as spaces for learning citizen engagement and leadership. The example of the Electricity Committee shows that a form of citizen engagement organised at sub-county level is very able to negotiate with the sub-county and even the district. This committee had adopted and aggregated the same mechanisms for cooperation as exist in the local groups. It is an instance of citizen engagement that has spilled over into an organised collective at a higher level. This was not encountered in Acholi.

An entertaining debate, with no clear outcome, is which of the institutions is more important to community development: state-led or community-led initiatives. Perceived misappropriation of funds by local authorities makes people feel their own initiatives are more reliable and relevant, but they are aware that the state is indispensable for schools and health centres. These discussions thus reflect some of the problems experienced with the state, but also Langi expectations about state responsibilities, and their standards of state performance. In Acholi the same discussion reflects their more substantial needs, which they expect to have to deal with themselves, and although they acknowledge the state's responsibility for service delivery they expect very little.



The situation in Lango remains far from ideal and is characterised by all 'ordinary' problems associated with local governance and participation. Citizen engagement in decision-making is rife with the micropolitics of participation such as elite capture and bias, local leaders who know how to abuse the lack of education of citizens, and instances of corruption or suspicious funding/project allocations through clan or party networks. Citizen voice is hampered by a lack of knowledge as much as by cultural constructions of authority and respect, in which even elected leaders are seen as 'bosses'. Also a lack of trust in local state institutions and certain leaders, and the limited outcomes of engagement discourage citizen participation. Common factors limiting gender equality prevent women from active engagement in decision-making. Despite these problems, the Langi are better equipped than the Acholi for citizen engagement, partly learnt through community-based institutions and through growing up within stable clan governance structures, and partly through having more experience with stable state institutions.

All these 'ordinary' factors are observed in Acholi too. In the case of LC corruption of recovery funds and projects, it must be noted that one contributing factor to this problem is not so much the conflict itself as the higher level of resources made available through the influx of aid agencies. Projects and distributions are mainly channelled through the LC system with little control from outside, which affects people directly if they are excluded from the list of beneficiaries. Many 'ordinary' challenges are, however, deeper than observed in Lango. I argue the problems are deeper due to the conflict. The war has also generated conflict-specific problems that limit citizen engagement. These problems exist at the deeper levels of how agency and voice are informed, and therefore intangible. Table 8.2 summarises the differences between Lango and Acholi.

**Table 8.1 Differences between Acholi and Lango Citizenship**

<b>Proxies</b>	<b>Acholi (conflict-affected)</b>	<b>Lango (non-affected)</b>
<b>Perception of the state</b>	Potential threat, discriminating against Acholi, war reinforced north-south divide	Favours other regions, but some development came under the NRA
<b>Perception of the self as citizen</b>	Second-class, the lower tribe.	Relatively inferior in terms of equality and development compared to southern tribes.
<b>Expectations about role of government</b>	Very low. Expectations related to immediate subsistence. Strong feelings about the state's responsibility to protect, the need for comprehensive reconciliation process, and cessation of threat and discrimination.	Higher than in Acholi. Longer-term expectations, which addressed the broader service delivery issues.
<b>Sense of ethnic citizenship</b>	Strong. Proud of being Acholi. Definition of Acholi identity includes references to the war experiences, marginalisation of the region	Strong. Proud of being Langi. Definition of Langi identity includes references to lack of development due to being an opposition area.
<b>Perceptions of customary authority</b>	Affected during the war, less respect.	A respected authority in the clan and in relation to issues that are formally part of the domain of the LCs.
<b>Engagement in customary institutions</b>	Active engagement in principle, but activities were irregular. Only funeral activities were moments of high-level clan activity.	Active engagement, high level of organisation and activities outside funeral gatherings.
<b>Community-based institutions</b>	Numerous, active and relevant, but in process of consolidating, infrequent activities. Not used as springboard for the use of the petitioning/ interrogative voice.	High in density, high intensity of activities, consolidated. Not used as springboard for the use of the petitioning/ interrogative voice regarding formal authorities, but for learning citizenship and leadership skills.
<b>Engagement for material aspects of development: the petitioning voice</b>	Few channels for engagement used, often only the LC1.	More diverse, various local leaders used to raise community issues.
<b>Formal development planning</b>	Virtually non-existent below LC3 level. PDC unknown by citizens and members don't know their roles	Functioning, though with institutional challenges. PDCs function to collect household data, but not as a platform to negotiate projects.
<b>Formal mechanisms for accountability and use of the interrogative voice</b>	Not used, thought of as impossible	Used in various instances of (perceived) corruption or misconduct of lowest level leaders, but harder to do at higher levels.
<b>Informal mechanisms for accountability and use of the interrogative voice</b>	Non-confrontational mechanisms sometimes used for the very local level, e.g. advice from elders, songs. But fear of negative consequences.	Non-confrontational mechanisms used for the very local level, very confidently for clan leaders and more carefully for formal leaders such as LCs.

## 8.2 Mechanisms of conflict and their effects

The previous section established the differences between the two regions. In this section I go back to the propositions formulated in Chapter 3 to explain the observed differences and to show how conflict affected the sense and practice of citizenship in Acholi. In Chapter 3 I explained that conflict was understood as a warscape (Nordstrom, 1997): a dynamic, fluctuating social and political environment (Vigh, 2006). The study distinguished four key features of the conflict (Figure 3.1), which were detailed in Chapters 5 and 6:

*Displacement:* The displacement camps that were scattered across the region became a structural feature of the war. They affected the mobility and livelihoods of people, the strategies of the LRA and the military, and humanitarian operations. To citizens the camp was a confined space with its particular governance regime in an insecure environment. Life in the camp was no guarantee of either physical or food security, since the military often failed to protect the residents and relief was not reliable. The Acholi were highly dependent (a) on the state for its willingness to resolve the conflict, (b) locally on the camp leadership, (c) on humanitarian actors for food, and (d) on the military for safety.

*LRA atrocities and insecurity:* Although I argue for a broader understanding of conflict than the acts of violence committed during warfare, the LRA activities do need to be mentioned separately. The direct experience of violent atrocities created a sense of insecurity and vulnerability, and the sense that the state refused to protect the population.

*The role of the state:* In any type of conflict the state is an actor. Even if it is not among the fighting factions, or chooses not to intervene, refraining from taking action is also the result of a decision. The role played by the NRA regime profoundly shaped the Acholi sense and practice of citizenship. This compounded negative perceptions of the state when the NRA established its control in the region in 1986.

*Presence of armed actors:* The presence of a powerful military, which used its powers to control the population and left gaps in the protection, influenced the nature of the public space. Also the LRA itself: not only their actual atrocities but also their mere presence and the continued threat of violence caused the public space to be unsafe.

The study shows that a warscape as a social and political environment generates structures and processes, and changes local institutions that shape people's lives. This demonstrates that, if we are to understand the effects of conflict, the experience of the LRA conflict cannot be narrowed down to the atrocities that were committed by the rebels. In unpacking the concept of violent conflict I seek to avoid making grand statements and assuming problematic linear relationships about the effects of conflict on citizenship, which are both highly complex concepts.

### 8.2.1 Reflections on the propositions

The features of the conflict created the new social order that reconfigured local life and set in motion other changes that affected citizenship. The overall proposition (I) of this study is that the experience of protracted conflict and displacement lead to a lack of a sense of citizenship and to diminished forms of citizen engagement, due to limited opportunities for learning and experiencing the practice of citizenship. In turn, this is linked to three further propositions:

- II. The LRA conflict led to a securitisation of the public sphere and to narrowing, securitised civic and political institutions.
- III. The lack of safe space and the narrowing of local institutions limited the opportunities for learning the practice of citizenship during the conflict.
- IV. In the post-conflict situation, certain ideas and practices that emerged during the conflict persist and result in a lack of citizen engagement.

In this section I summarise the evidence in relation to the first part of the overall proposition: there is a lack of a sense of citizenship in Acholi. Subsequent sections summarise the evidence in relation to the three specific propositions that were formulated for how the practice of citizenship evolved during and after the conflict

The four conflict features above, separately and in combination, *directly* affected the sense of citizenship (Figure 3.1 – X). These factors implied a failure to protect the lives and properties of Acholi citizens. As explained throughout the empirical chapters, this eroded a sense of security, dignity and equality. Having to experience violence created a vulnerability that deeply penetrated people's sense of being. The loss of their collective dignity was expressed in stories about the Karamojong raids (Chapter 5). But also the loss of ties to the land and the

dependency on relief meant an erosion of the Acholi sense of citizenship. This started right from the beginning of the war when farming was disrupted due to LRA activities, but was significantly worsened when the displacement camps started. Displacement led to citizenship being recast as 'camp citizenship': the life of camp community was largely defined by the military and the camp leadership. Individual loss of dignity came out strongly in the camp situation. No longer providing for one's family and being confined in the camp was experienced as losing Acholi pride.

The role played by the Ugandan state has direct implications for the Acholi's perceptions of the state and their sense of citizenship. The socio-economic *inequality* that was the result of the historical north-south divide was severely worsened by the war. The Acholi feel the state has had a major role in letting this happen. The state further alienated the region from Uganda. This it did by discriminating against Acholi by failing in protection, by using a political discourse that furthered stigmatisation of the Acholi as an ethnic group and by unequal resource allocation. This undermined the trust in the state, which is nearly conflated with the NRA/M.

The negative perception of the NRA/M was only strengthened by how politics operated in Uganda. In present day Uganda, the NRM regime has been quite successful in establishing the notion that development is only 'given' in return for support to the NRM.

This study shows the importance of understanding the historical dimension of the Acholi construction of citizenship. Though I had planned to look at historical developments from the outset, their importance came out more strongly than I had initially anticipated. This first struck me when the Acholi included the Karamojong cattle raids in their historical narratives. I had expected people to start the narrative with the arrival of the LRA, yet they chose an event that predated the insurgency. It then re-emerged in how they compared the current regime to previous regimes and framed their sense of citizenship in terms of the inequality between the north and the south. These narratives reflected the north-south divide, which can only be understood when taking into account the colonial history, and the way different regimes developed different relationships with each region. Thus, the current experiences of citizenship in Acholi cannot be understood separately from the political history of Uganda.

The sense of citizenship incorporates feelings of belonging to the ethnic community, being Acholi, as well as to the political community of the state, being a Ugandan citizen. The findings show a relationship between the two. Among the Acholi there is a strong sense that they were,

*as an ethnic group*, affected by the war and abandoned by the state. This resonates with Ndegwa's (1997) thinking that membership of the ethnic community affects the attitudes towards the political community of the state. Concerning the practice of citizenship, however, the conflict impacted differently on engagement with the state compared to engagement in the Acholi ethnic political community. This will be discussed in later sections.

### **8.2.2 Securitisation of the public sphere and institutions**

Proposition (II) states that local political and social institutions narrow down and that the public sphere becomes securitised during conflict. I first discuss the changes in local institutions during the LRA war, followed by nature of the public sphere (Figure 3.1 – Y). The study highlighted changes in social, political and cultural institutions during both phases of the war: before and during displacement. Other Uganda scholars have presented detailed analyses of changes in the customary institutions (Allen, 2006, 2010) and how the Acholi created culture to make sense of the LRA conflict (Finnstrom, 2003). The creation of culture, accompanied by new social institutions to maintain social relationships during war, has been acknowledged as an important coping strategy (Nordstrom, 1997).

My study contributes to empirical knowledge about Acholi by looking at interactions between political institutions and citizens during the conflict, which has not been discussed in the literature. In Chapter 5 I showed how the Resistance Councils (RCs) in Acholi were resisted when the NRA took power, but that they fulfilled a particular security role during the first few years of the LRA conflict. As a consequence, the RCs did not develop experience in their 'ordinary' representative functions and in mediating between the community and higher levels of government about services. In Lango, however, the RCs did start gaining experience with this type of work, especially from 1995 onwards when they had become the Local Councils (LCs) and after the Local Government Act in 1997 was adopted. In the Acholi camps, the LCs were sidelined by the new political institution of the camp leadership. This often caused friction between the two forms of authority. At the time of research the Acholi LCs were only just growing into their roles.

The conflict affected citizen engagement through changing certain political institutions and social relationships at the local level in a way that was not anticipated prior to the fieldwork. The changes had fragmented the social base in communities which is conducive to the

collective voice (Figure 3.1, G). The political authority of the customary institutions, clan leaders and elders was undermined from the outset of the war, first of all because they were unable to reintegrate former UNLA soldiers after 1986; secondly, because their basis of legitimacy had dissolved when they could not perform crucial cultural functions; and finally, because in the camps their social status was not acknowledged by the camp systems and regulations. The frequent remarks that the clan leaders had become 'ordinary people' and 'drunkards' showed that their position was undermined. Their function as role models and teachers of the younger generations was thus discredited. Apart from the customary leadership itself certain cultural institutions could not function either. Of these, the '*wang oo*' and local community groups were important places where the youth were 'taught' about norms and respectful adult behaviour, including issues to do with leadership. These findings corroborated the conclusions of other scholars (Allen, 2006, 2010; Dolan, 2009; Finnström, 2003), but because my study was carried out later I was able to show that there are signs of customary leadership recovering.

Regarding social relations, I explained in Chapter 2 that conflict causes social relationships and trust to deteriorate (Colletta & Cullen, 2000; Justino, 2013; Steenkamp, 2009). Interestingly, survey research in post-conflict Acholi shows that social bonds there are generally strong: 76% report that they trust the people in their village and 91% say they have good relationships with their community (Pham and Vinck, 2010). Ex-combatants continue to have difficulties in the community. Though 70% of the people stated they had no problems living together with former LRA soldiers, attitudes had not improved since an earlier survey in 2007.

My study shows that community members generally comment positively about the Acholi communities as 'good people', but that specific relationships were challenged. I looked at the relationship between younger generations and customary authority. Social relations were affected before the camps, but it seemed that the confinement and the hardships of camp life had even more detrimental effects on social relations. Younger generations lost respect for the elders and clan leaders. In addition, while doing fieldwork I came across a small number of cases whereby tensions existed between those specific families that were victim of an LRA attack and the family of an LRA combatant who was known to have taken part in the attack<sup>36</sup>.

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<sup>36</sup> I have however not been able to find out at what scale such frictions occurred.

I also looked at forms of cooperation in community institutions, which previously had been 'safe spaces' for learning about leadership and decision-making. In the Acholi context these were primarily the farming groups and savings groups, and community gatherings. Existing literature that discusses citizenship in violent and conflict-prone settings has demonstrated that the *spaces* for engagement alter dramatically, in particular due to the presence of multiple (armed) authorities and the narrowing boundaries of safe spaces (Pearce et al., 2011). The groups could barely function before the camps and stopped completely when the camps started and people could no longer cultivate their gardens. Later on during the camp phase, plots of land surrounding the camps were used by a small number of groups. In the last stages of the war more NGOs were active in the region and they started group activities. These groups were often functioning only temporarily.

In Chapter 2 I distinguish 'safe spaces' for citizen engagement (Gaventa 2006, Pearce, 2007), from the more general public sphere as the domain for deliberation (Fraser, 1990). My findings show that in particular military repression and the threat of LRA attacks made the public sphere unsafe. The military was constantly present and especially in the camps it closely monitored the population. As an armed actor the military was far more powerful than civilians, able to control their lives and movements. Furthermore, securitisation of the public domain led to a focus on security by all actors: the military, Resistance Councils, customary leaders and the population. This is similar to what Ben-Porath (2006) found for Israel. The scope for engagement on other issues was thus limited.

In response to the militarised environment, self-censorship and silence became important strategies for social navigation in order to survive. Political agency was repressed by these powerful actors, but also by the population itself as a form of reflexivity in this warscape. Withdrawal from the public sphere, as documented in other contexts (Thomson, 2011; Wheeler, 2011) also happened in Acholi. In particular, discontent with powerful actors and the use of the interrogative voice were risky. In the camps, the governance regime constituted a disciplining mechanism in which one learnt to behave and speak according to what was appropriate.

The next sub-section describes the implications of the transformation of local institutions and changes in the nature of the public sphere for citizen engagement during the conflict.



### 8.2.3 Limited opportunities for learning citizenship during the war

Proposition (III) posited that, as a consequence of the changes described above, Acholi citizens had limited opportunities for learning the practice of citizenship during the conflict (Figure 3.1 - B). The findings confirmed this proposition by showing that the Acholi emphasised forms of coping agency over citizen agency as security issues dominated the public domain, and that ordinary citizens refrained from engagements with authority and public gatherings out of concern for their safety.

The study showed there was a shortage of ordinary socialisation spaces for both citizens and local leaders. While still living at home, the insecurity caused by the LRA, compounded by a militarised environment, meant that families were more on their own and had few opportunities for social interactions and cooperation. Community activities and social gatherings were a risk to their security. This included public events such as local courts and community meetings to discuss development. An implication of this was that community discussions for decision-making were rarely organised. When these did take place, few people attended and the main issue discussed was security situation. While the RCs/LCs linked up with the sub-county about security matters, ordinary people hardly engaged with higher levels of authority. In the camps the securitised environment persisted. One could arguably say the social context became even more securitised, because the military presence was now permanently close to the people and the camp leadership was in place.

The securitised environment had implications for agency and engagement in the public sphere. The perception of the public sphere as unsafe discouraged engagement, particularly with the state and military. People refrained from citizen agency even when it concerned their security, one of their main priorities. The military deterred the interrogative voice and silence offered the people more protection than confronting army misconduct. This is a clear example of how 'voice' (Hirschman, 1970) develops in response to context. The securitisation was compounded with the lack of experience of discussing long-term governance and development issues.

In the camps, people developed a range of coping mechanisms and demonstrated their agency through participation in the LDUs and by their engagement in new livelihood activities. Agency was also expressed in a range of informal activities that challenged the systems: stealing, cheating with the rations, deals with camp leaders and soldiers, 'gossip at home', but also

more risk-prone actions such as secretly leaving the camp to look for fire wood and crops that could be sold. However, it was much harder to interrogate the existence of the camps, the nature of camp governance, the failure of the military and the state, and the gaps in humanitarian interventions. Not only was it more difficult, it would also be a risk to their security to challenge powerful actors with the means to 'punish' dissent by e.g. labelling someone a rebel, making arrests, or withholding food rations. Citizens were thus rendered beneficiaries that were supposed to receive thankfully rather than citizens whose lives and livelihoods were protected by rights, and who could actively claim those rights. Forms of collective organisation were 'dictated', having to follow the camp hierarchy and systems with less space for spontaneous actions. The camp leadership was actively used as a channel to ask for protection and relief. It is, however, not surprising that a more demanding or even confrontational approach was considered unsuitable and that people chose to fill the gaps in protection and food security themselves.

In sum, as a result of institutions and the public sphere being securitised, Acholi citizens had less exposure to learning citizenship practices. The next section explains how this affects citizen engagement in the post-conflict situation.

#### **8.2.4 The post-conflict situation**

The proposition (IV) for the post-conflict situation states that feelings, perceptions and practices which were developed during the conflict persist in the post-conflict situation. Even when violence subsides and the warscape is no longer manifested, people carry past experiences into the present and this affects their behaviour. In Chapter 3 I predicted a lack of a sense of citizenship and that the practice of citizen engagement would not be as wide as in scope and as substantive as in non-affected areas. The study has generated more details about the practice of citizenship than anticipated: it is characterised by low expectations of state performance, fear and suspicion of the state and the public sphere, an emphasis on coping agency, and a fragmented social foundation for collective voice (explained below). These perceptions and practices clearly originate from the conflict period and therefore the findings confirm proposition (IV). I recognise that my study proves this proposition least firmly of the four, because of the challenges discussed in Chapter 7. Further research would be welcome.

*Expectations of the state.* An indirect implication of the role played by the state was that it affected people's perception of state responsibilities. While the Acholi are critical of the way the regime had handled the conflict they also express support for certain measures like the mobilisation of LDUs. Some even agree with the creation of camps, although others are critical of it, feeling these were reflections of state failure. This informs current expectations of the state concerning service delivery. The predominant view is that the state does not do much. Most people therefore do not bother to engage. Some of the Acholi see the little that is done as 'generous' and do not demand more. This reflects the internalised powerlessness of the marginalised (Gaventa, 1982): as a response to living without power, the poor adjust their expectations about what is possible.

*Internalised fear and suspicion lead to silence.* The findings for citizen practices in the post-conflict situation show that silence continues to be a strategy for many people. This is similar to what other studies have shown (Green, 1995; Hume, 2010). Uvin (2009) found that people in Burundi would talk about violent events in the past, giving him factual information about what happened. But there was an unspoken boundary to what could be said. To discuss the causes of the war was impossible, since that would ultimately lead to discussing differences between Hutu and Tutsi and where to put the blame. My study generated similar findings but also shows something new: silence is observed for particular issues or domains of engagement. People continue to adhere to self-censorship about politically sensitive issues where the state is involved. Chapter 7 showed how this particularly undermines their capacities to engage in accountability processes. It exacerbates the effects of cultural norms of respecting leaders as 'bosses', which weakens the interrogative voice. Women seem to have internalised this kind of silence even more than men. This makes the barriers to their participation in community politics even greater, because they face both the cultural norms of respect for authority and the convention that politics generally is the domain of men. The absence of a strong interrogative voice is what surprised me initially. If community members are convinced that LCs and officials corrupt the funds and goods they need so desperately, then why do they not take action? Gradually in the course of my fieldwork I came to understand how much it actually takes to stand up to authority in this context, and how fear of being excluded from any project prevails.

*Coping agency persists.* What was not anticipated prior to the fieldwork was that the Acholi citizens are still focusing on day to day survival, because of the recovery challenges in the return areas. As explained in Chapter 7, people continue to dedicate their time and efforts to

food and security, but now also to the basic securities of having a home, access to water, and livelihoods. At the time of research in 2010, everyone recognised the need for health facilities and schools, but people were too busy to mobilise for long-term goals. They did, however, participate when teachers' huts needed to be constructed near the school block.

*Fragmented social foundation for collective voice.* Changes in social institutions undermine the collective voice. First of all, customary leaders are still struggling to regain legitimacy when it comes to their role as political brokers. As Lubkemann (2008) argues, social struggles (in gender or intergenerational relationships) exist in peacetime and continue during war. The study shows that the conflict itself shapes the struggle, as youth disapproved of the behaviour of elders. Secondly, 'disunity' in the community affects the ability of a village population to develop a collective voice; it is difficult, however, to say exactly to what extent this hampers collective engagement compared to other challenges that have been identified. This confirms the findings of other authors who point out that for voice to carry weight and to be a potential threat to the interests of power holders it needs to be a collective voice (Fox, 2007; Peruzzotti & Smulovitz, 2006).

*Lack of experience.* This includes knowledge about procedures and legislation, but also practical experience with engagement in formal institutions, representative leadership, negotiation and decision-making, and mobilising for collective voice. It poses a challenge to mobilisation for services and for accountability claims. This resonates with other studies that identified prior experience as conducive to engagement (Kabeer, 2005; McGee & Gaventa, 2011)

These factors inform citizen engagement in the post-conflict situation. Also the lack of a sense of citizenship results in diminished forms of engagement, illustrated by the proverb that a castrated bull will not move with the rest of the cattle. This resonates with Gaventa's (1982) conceptualisation of acquiescence of the marginalised. Together, these factors intersect with other factors in society that limit or are conducive to citizen engagement. Chapter 7 showed that the experience of conflict deepens the effects of certain social-cultural norms, like the adherence to respect for authority. It reinforces existing barriers to women engaging in community-level decision-making.

The lasting effects on active citizenship of living in insecurity and fear are hard to predict, and depend on many factors in the post-conflict situation. The *immediate* effects, first manifest

during the war and still observable at the time of research, are silence and withdrawal from the public sphere where issues to do with the state are discussed. Forms of citizen agency are not necessarily, and definitely not immediately, built or strengthened in the aftermath of the LRA conflict. Nor would people's priorities immediately extend from coping to citizen agency.

The findings in relation to propositions (II) to (IV) help to confirm the overall proposition (I) of this thesis: indeed the conflict had led to a lack of a sense of citizenship and to diminished forms of citizen engagement. However, only to say that citizen engagement in Acholi is not as wide in scope and not as substantive as in non-affected areas would not be a fair representation of reality. Indeed, as a result of the war the Acholi lack certain knowledge and experiences for engagement, including technical knowledge of procedures and state responsibilities. But this intersects with the other factors discussed in this section which have become characteristic of the practice of citizenship in Acholi. At present, citizens are less comfortable about actively engaging when state institutions are also involved. To a certain extent this is a reflection of past experience and on-going mistrust of state institutions.

### **8.3 Contributions to previous literature**

In this section I reflect deeper on the contributions of my thesis to the existing literature. Various bodies of literature were outlined in Chapter 2: active citizenship, a spectrum of citizen engagement and state-society relations, micro-analysis of conflict, and forced migration. I found the concept of agency to be particularly relevant to all of them, if properly defined for the various forms it may take and purposes it may be put to. I start with a reflection on my approach to everyday forms of engagement, which relates back to the spectrum outlined in Chapter 2. I then discuss the implications of my findings for the bodies of theory on conflict, displacement and citizenship. I finish with a discussion about how my study compares to the studies that suggest a positive effect of conflict on citizen participation.

#### **8.3.1 My approach to the everyday**

In Chapter 3 I explained my focus on everyday forms of engagement, emphasising the 'critical and constructive' engagement end of the spectrum. My definition of 'the everyday' is people's real-life experiences, interactions with, and perceptions of the state. This is informed by Corbridge et al. (2005) who argue that state-society relations can be understood by looking at

real-life moments where people 'see the state' and that perceptions of the state are mediated, for instance through ideas and political brokers. The overall advantage of this approach, as demonstrated in this study, is that it brings out the numerous ways in which people seek to improve their lives with or without the state and that, where they face challenges, these tell us about the fractures or weaknesses in state-society relations.

The spectrum of forms of citizen engagement outlined in Chapter 2 shows that many scholars focus on the left-end side of the spectrum (Figure 2.1) and study overt, large-scale and often violent forms of collective action as in revolutions and contentious politics (Tilly & Tarrow, 2007). I would not have ignored such instances had I encountered them in the field. But in the Ugandan context where confrontational tactics are usually not part of the repertoire of citizen engagement when making claims (either on the state or customary authority), a focus on small-scale and everyday forms of engagement seemed relevant for the post-conflict situation.

Using this approach my study shows: 1) a spectrum of formal and informal tactics for engagement is used at local level, but a less broad one in Acholi than in Lango; 2) people have normative ideas about government responsibilities and its performance; 3) in post-conflict situations engagement is shaped by ideas, emotions and experiences from the past, of which fear is a strong emotion. I elaborate each of these points.

First, this study showed that in the current context of northern Uganda, forms of engagement are mainly situated at the right-hand side of the spectrum. Citizens organise themselves to improve their living conditions and livelihoods, with and without the state. In the case of Lango, everyday interactions between village communities and local officials and elected leaders did in a few instances lead to better services. The planning process is one avenue for getting better services, but many informal interactions between citizens and leaders occur on the side. Failure on the authorities' part leads to gossip, shunning, informal 'advice' and sometimes more formal efforts to 'correct' the authority. In daily life, citizens thus use both constructive and critical engagement and, where state behaviour is disapproved of, both passive resistance and (modest) forms of contestation are employed. All of these tactics, used in this local web of relations, very slowly help the Langi community move forward. Of course, their situation is still far from ideal. But it makes a case for the development of an active citizenry and more responsive authorities. In the Acholi case, the local state and village populations operated more separately. Few instances of constructive engagement occurred

and contestation is never public, always hidden. Thus, in post-conflict Acholi engagement is limited to a small part of the spectrum.

During the period of field research in 2010, there was no instance of contentious politics like a riot or protest. Respondents indicated that there had not been any such instances in the past. Only in the Lamwo research site two instances of large-scale protest by the camp residents had occurred (Chapter 6): after the UPDF had failed to fend off an LRA attack and after a sub-county official had attempted to replace the Camp Commandant. In both cases an angry crowd had marched to the centre of the camp to protest. These incidents showed ruptures in the day-to-day patterns of interaction with authority, which were channelled through camp leadership and docile. The 'hidden transcripts', which had centred around dissatisfaction with the army, crossed into the public domain and discontent was aired. Such ruptures, I argue, have meaning and are reflections of how citizens feel in relation to the state.

Secondly, a focus on everyday forms of engagement reveals people's normative ideas about the state. Even in Acholi, where engagement is weak, people have ideas about what the state ought to do for the people. Thus, one need not focus solely on riots and protests to find out what 'the public' wants. A focus on the everyday is able to show this. Moreover, this approach is able to unpack social diversity within 'the public' or its 'voice' (Hirschman, 1970).

Thirdly, looking at the everyday challenges for engagement shows a relationship between ideas, emotions and engagement. This resonates with the work of Wood (2003) and Petersen (2001), who emphasise the importance of emotions for an explanation of action. Wood emphasises a sense of dignity. Petersen speaks about feelings of resentment stemming from perceived unjust social hierarchies. In this study a reluctance to engage with the state on the part of the Acholi is partly explained by emotions, in two ways. The analysis of the sense of citizenship reveals the emotional aspect of how the war had undermined the dignity of the Acholi. A sense of dignity feeds into an emotional understanding of the self. In the Acholi case, lacking a sense of entitlement then causes a reluctance to use the petitioning voice.

Other studies have shown how certain ideas, perceptions and practices that develop during conflict persist in the post-conflict situation. The nature of the ideas and practices varies across the countries and type of conflict. Jones' (2009) interpretation of customary court rulings in the Teso region of Uganda is that elders seek to reclaim authority and 'discipline' young men to prevent insurgent actions. Rebellious young men were considered a major cause of the Teso

insurgency, 1986-1993. My findings resonate with the findings of Christensen and Utas (2008), who show that forms of social navigation persist in post-conflict Sierra Leone, based on past experiences related to the conflict. A comparison must be carefully made, however, for their findings relate to ex-combatants in response to uncertainty during the election period, not to ordinary citizens. For Rwanda, authors show that the public sphere is perceived as unsafe and that 'passive resistance tactics' are used in response (Beswick, 2010; Thomson, 2011). Despite the variation, these studies show that certain perceptions of risk, the ways in which people analyse their context, and behaviours that were 'learnt' during the conflict shape forms of engagement in the public sphere. This is consistent with the findings in this thesis.

In Acholi, fear of state repression persists, among some, in the post-conflict situation. The fear of reprisal affects adults and older generations, who have directly experienced state violence. The younger generations have learnt about this from their parents and this makes them careful not to be labelled as rebels. Although they do not lack awareness about their own situation and roles of the state, so 'acquiescence' is not entirely the appropriate word to use, the young adults definitely feel that engagement with state actors is not useful. In Chapter 3 I spoke about the reasons for 'silence'. Scott (1985, 1990) points to hidden transcripts and passive resistance behind the silence, whereas Gaventa (1984) emphasises the quiescence of being in a position of powerlessness. This study shows how the emotion of fear is embedded in people's scripts. Some voice it openly, while others have internalised it, and it quietly, unconsciously limits their scope and tactics for engagement. It especially discourages the use of the interrogative voice.

Does this discussion indicate that there is a segment on the spectrum of approaches to citizen engagement that has been overlooked so far? With the exception of Scott (1985, 1990) the approaches described in Chapter 2, all focus on visible forms of engagement. Scott's work on hidden transcripts and passive resistance brings out how citizens can quietly reject the state. In my view, his work has not touched very clearly on fear and suspicion, which leads to disengagement in the case of Acholi. Thus, near Scott's segment on the spectrum, between 'Resistance' and 'Contention', I would add disengagement. In Scott's work the observed disengagement is a form of rejection or tacit resistance. In my study it is not active rejection; it is a form of apathy and a lack of a sense of agency.



### 8.3.2 Citizen engagement in post-conflict settings

In this section I elaborate three contributions of the thesis in conversation with the literature discussed in Chapter 2 and I finish the section with the overall conclusions of the thesis. First of all, understanding citizen engagement requires an analysis of both the sense and the practice of citizenship, and the relationship between the two. My thesis has shown how a lack of a sense of citizenship is part of the explanation for diminished forms of citizen engagement. This contributes to existing literature on the prerequisites for citizen agency. Underlying active citizenship is a sense of agency, and *political* agency in particular (R. Lister, 2003; Martin, 2003). This is an awareness of the self as a citizen as someone who has rights, and awareness of one's agency in relation to the wider political community. Lister (2003) furthermore highlights dignity as an important prerequisite for citizen agency. Dignity and the closely related attribute of self-confidence strengthen the sense of a citizen identity and may encourage someone to act according to the rights and entitlements that (ought to be) associated with that citizen identity. Self-confidence is an individual attribute, though nurtured by collective engagements.

The Acholi sense of citizenship is multifaceted: constituted by a notion of security, equality and dignity. All three aspects were damaged by the war. Thus, similarly to Lister (2003), I arrive at dignity as important for agency, and where Acholi dignity was eroded due to conflict this undermined agency. But a sense of security and equality are important too. In other contexts the awareness of existing inequalities leads to citizen action (Dagnino, 2007), and the sense that dignity has to be regained leads to violent insurgency (Wood, 2003; Petersen, 2001). My thesis suggests that, when crucial aspects of citizenship have been severely affected, a lack of a sense of citizenship leads to less political self-awareness: less confidence that one *could* act. This is reinforced by persistent fear and suspicion of the state and the public sphere. Citizen engagement is thus hampered by a combination of 'the culture of fear' (Wood, 2003) and quiescence (Gaventa, 1982), and the lack of a sense of citizenship. The study also demonstrates the connection between ethnic citizenship and national citizenship, confirming Ndegwa's (1996) argument that attitudes towards the state can be mediated by membership of the ethnic community. Both the Acholi and the Langi evaluate their individual relationship to the state by reflecting on the relationship between their tribes and the state. Where they feel the state has done harm to their tribe this diminishes the sense of citizenship, for them as individuals as well as the collective ethnic community.

My second contribution is the analysis of citizen agency. In Chapter 2 I showed that the literatures on both conflict and forced displacement have demonstrated that people have agency during conflict and displacement, but an ambiguity remains as to how citizen agency evolves. To explain the relationship between conflict and citizen engagement I distinguish coping agency from citizen agency. This is informed by Lister (2003, p.39), who cites Doyal and Gough (1991, p. 68) who refer to citizen agency as: *'the higher degrees of political autonomy which are entailed by democratic participation in the political process at whichever level'*. I am thus interested in a more political form of agency, which is required to engage with broader processes of governance involving state institutions, and with community (development) issues that go beyond meeting the needs for immediate survival, thus having a longer-term perspective (Cornwall, 2002a). Political agency is exercised with a focus on those powerful actors, often the state, that have the authority to take decisions, with the purpose of influencing their decisions and shifting the powers that operate in the spaces where decision-making takes place (Williams, 2004).

Conflict studies literature has described forms of coping agency in great detail, whereas citizen agency has been less documented. To make this distinction enabled me to analyse people's agency more accurately. It showed that the Acholi developed a survival mindset that focused on short-term needs of food and security, rather than on long-term development goals. This coping agency serves subsistence and basic levels of survival and contributes to people's resilience. Citizen agency was discouraged, even deterred, or limited due to the lack of safe spaces. My findings thus support the work of other authors, e.g. Barter (2012) and Moser and Horn (2011) who argue that different forms and levels of agency need to be distinguished in order to know what is going on in conflict settings.

Thirdly, this thesis contributes to existing work on the transformation of institutions during conflict (Justino, 2012, 2013 - add). I agree with those who have emphasised shifting patterns of authority (Vlassenroot & Raymaekers, 2004, 2005, 2008; Lubkemann, 2006), and with those who emphasise the continuation of participation in social relations and economic networks (Cramer, 2006a; Lubkemann, 2008; Nordstrom, 1997, 2004) – though in different forms. But as I argued in Chapter 2, this work has not investigated how changes in institutions affect citizenship. The Acholi warscape was a clear example of a 'war complex' (Vlassenroot & Raeymaekers, 2004), but more than Vlassenroot and Raymaekers I focused on how citizens engage with shifting patterns of authority, and extended the analysis into the post-conflict situation. My conclusion that certain changes in social and political institutions affect

socialisation processes and opportunities for learning citizenship is an important contribution in this field. It has been acknowledged that changes in social and political institutions during conflict affect the distribution of power, which will have implications for the functioning of an institutional democracy in the post-conflict situation (Justino, 2013). I draw attention to how these changes affect citizens, which has implications for how they are able to participate in an institutional democracy. Where new institutions emerge it is important to investigate what kind of socialisation and learning they offer. Do they offer similar opportunities for learning citizenship or very different skills? Which norms are transmitted?

In addition to studying institutions, I argue that for the study of citizenship in conflict settings it is important to understand changes in the nature of the public sphere. This requires an analysis of the *perceptions* of the public sphere and the perceptions of the actors that dominate it. Such an analysis is needed to demonstrate to what extent ordinary citizens have been exposed to discussing and negotiating public issues, and how they learnt to engage with powerful actors. This study shows that such perceptions and practices continue in the post-conflict situation to some extent. As other studies have shown (Green, 1995; Thomson, 2011), this research demonstrates that persisting fear and suspicion of the state, a dominant actor in the public sphere, continue to discourage citizen engagement. This underlines the emotional aspect of engagement, but in this case it deters and does not encourage engagement (Wood, 2003; Petersen 2001).

This discussion leads to the main conclusion for this study. Violent conflict directly impacts on the sense of citizenship and affects the practice of citizenship by radically altering the exposure to learning citizenship in institutions, through socialisation and in the public sphere. This undermines citizen agency. What citizens are exposed to depends on the nature of the warscape and how state and non-state actors shape the public sphere. The sense and practice that exist in the post-conflict situation will therefore be characterised by certain ideas, perceptions, emotions and behaviours that were developed during the conflict.

#### **8.4 Comparison with studies that suggest a positive impact of conflict**

In Chapter 2, I discussed studies that suggest that violent conflict can have a positive impact on civic and political participation. My thesis demonstrates that conflict diminishes citizen engagement. In this section I explain that this difference in findings is likely to be explained by

different understandings of violent conflict and of participation, and the interplay between the two.

De Luca and Verpoorte (2011) refer to post-traumatic growth theory for an explanation of increased social capital after conflict. In my study I emphasised the interplay between agency and the context of a warscape. This may explain the differences between my study and their findings. I have shown that the warscape did not allow people to carry out associational activities, which corresponds to their findings about low levels of social capital. It was thanks to the stability that groups were gradually formed in the home areas. Thus, looking at these changes in the structural context offers an alternative explanation to the personal growth theory, and situates participation in its context. Furthermore, I showed that the Acholi groups do not function as well as the ones in Lango. To observe an increase in the numbers of groups is important, but it is also important to look at what actually takes place in these groups to understand the recovery process.

The findings of Blattman (2009) about higher levels of social and political participation among ex-combatants are not necessarily inconsistent with my own findings. The estimated number of abductees is 30,000 (Doom & Vlassenroot, 1999) and figures about ex-combatants have been debated, but clearly ex-combatants form a minority group among the Acholi. It may be that among the Acholi, for whom average levels of engagement are low, it is the ex-combatants that are the most engaged. Blattman's study, impressive as it is, does not tell us how the levels of engagement of Acholi ex-combatants compare to ordinary citizens from other ethnic groups. My own findings show that levels of engagement of Acholi citizens are lower than those of Langi citizens, but since I did not single out ex-combatants as a separate social category it is possible they were among the more engaged citizens in the community.

Finally, based on the theories of participation, I have reservations regarding the indicators for participation that were chosen by Bellows and Miguel (2009), who argue that the war experience in Sierra Leone led to more social and political participation. In their study 'participation' was used without any attention to the debates around power and substantive participation. Studies into the micropolitics of participation have shown that 'attending community meetings' and group membership do not necessarily mean that people exercise real power in those institutions. Furthermore, these studies assume that the level and quality of participation is universal, regardless of clan, gender, and age and thus fail to unpack the 'myth of community' (Guijt & Shah, 1998).

These studies emphasised the experience of violent acts related to the war. In my study I emphasised violent conflict as a warscape (Nordstrom, 1997) and as a situation in which other social and political changes occur, which sometimes have more impact on local lives than the acts of violence themselves (Lubkemann, 2008). I related forms of engagement to this context, taking a historical approach, which brought out the scope and depth of engagement. Though the findings of the three studies described here are very interesting, they may not show the whole story of how participation is experienced.

### **8.5 Policy implications**

The findings of this study have implications for how active citizenship is understood and approached in post-conflict interventions. Given the complexity and the long time frame required for the (re)construction of citizenship and gaining experience with citizen engagement, recovery processes need deliberate measures to address citizenship. It is questionable whether citizen participation and state-society relations are strengthened as a 'by-product' of other interventions. The study also points out that conflict affects different social identities differently, for instance, men, women and youth. They therefore experience different obstacles to citizen engagement, which calls for specific measures for each of them.

Community-Driven Recovery (CDR) is an example of an approach that assumes that participation, community cohesion and (local) state-society relations improve after joint collaboration on a project. The Northern Uganda Social Action Fund (NUSAF), based on CDR principles, has these objectives for Northern Uganda. I use NUSAF to discuss the implications of my study. Based on the findings I reflect on the sense of citizenship and on the circumstances that are conducive to learning citizenship.

If the sense of citizenship is important for engagement, how does a programme like NUSAF address equality, security and dignity? It could be argued that NUSAF aims to contribute to physical security and equality by addressing poverty locally, but it has been critiqued for not addressing the deeper causes of poverty (Hickey & Du Toit, 2007a). It cannot address the forms of physical and domestic violence that occur. NUSAF does not address the lack of a sense of citizenship on the part of the Acholi in terms of their dignity. Others state that to restore the dignity of the Acholi a comprehensive process of national reconciliation is needed –

including reparation for the losses of lives and cattle – that addresses the LRA conflict and also conflicts in other parts of the country longer ago (ICTJ, 2012). Such measures explicitly address the historical reasons for the North-South divide. They go beyond the scope of NUSAF and underline the need for comprehensive approaches that address deeper causes of marginalisation.

Regarding the practice of citizenship, the study identifies the need for ‘safe spaces’ to build experience with engagement, a public sphere where one feels safe to express ideas, perceptions of the state as a genuine actor, and attention to social differentiation and inequalities within communities. In this regard NUSAF misses an important step: it opens up spaces for engagement without addressing the past experience of Acholi citizens and how conflict has affected these factors. The programme assumes that a partnership between communities and local government is established once communities start engaging in the programme. It also assumes that citizens already possess sufficient knowledge of how to engage and that everyone will participate equally.

However, this study shows that in Acholi there is no foundation for ‘a partnership’ to function. Citizens mistrust the state and do not consider the public sphere safe. They lack the experience with engagement needed to play their part in the partnership. Therefore they do not use the spaces in the ways anticipated by the programme. As explained in Chapter 7, citizen agency mainly occurs in exercising the petitioning voice (introduced in Chapter 3). Indeed, I witnessed groups in the Lamwo site filling in forms with ideas for NUSAF2. NUSAF offers people the opportunity to ‘ask’ for small-scale projects, but it does not offer them a real, influential voice in the follow-up or during the implementation of projects. To engage for accountability purposes is a challenge. Not only are people tired of being rebuked by officials, as Golooba-Mutebi and Hickey have shown, they refrain from challenging them out of mistrust. Many people who were unhappy about perceived corruption in NUSAF1 did not participate in NUSAF2: an act of passive resistance instead of openly expressing voice. The study thus complements the analysis of Golooba-Mutebi and Hickey (2010) about the Northern Uganda Social Action Fund (NUSAF) by giving a detailed analysis of what happens at the interface between the state and its citizens at local level.

Furthermore, the study points out the lack of experience, especially when it comes to negotiating with state actors about ‘ordinary’ services. Secondly, women and youth face challenges when community projects are decided on in public meetings, in which men and

elders dominate. Where CDR requires groups for smaller projects to be mixed in terms of gender, women face the same challenge. As mentioned in Chapter 7, women find it hard to question LCs.

NUSAF is not designed as a programme for citizens to learn the practice of citizenship. NUSAF does not seek to empower the Acholi as *political* agents or, indeed, citizens in a way that enables them to negotiate with the state. It uncritically assumes they will. If desirable, what can be done to strengthen a 'citizenship building' component? How can this be done for different social identities? First of all, approaches to reconstructing citizenship need to be longitudinal interventions that focus on both developing a sense of citizenship and finding or creating 'safe spaces' where the practice of citizenship may be experienced. The training components in CDR focus too much on providing information about, for instance, planning processes and local government systems. This is not sufficient to empower citizens to actively engage in governance and politics. Where citizens are new to engagement, they need mentoring.

The interaction process between citizens and state institutions requires facilitation, as the negotiation is one between unequal partners. There are social and cultural barriers to overcome in how citizens and leaders view each other. Moreover, building citizenship may not lead to the desired outcomes if state responsiveness is not addressed simultaneously (Gaventa & Barrett, 2010). The importance of facilitation is highlighted by several authors (Manor, 2007, p.9; Mansuri & Rao, 2004), as is the active role of local governments (Manor, 2007). Consider, for instance, this example of a 'community contract' in a project in Uganda (not a CDR intervention) to support community-led monitoring of the performance of local health units (Bjorkman & Svensson, 2009). Here the creation of the partnership itself was planned and heavily facilitated by a Community Based Organisation, and negotiated by local government and the communities involved, in an effort to mitigate the hierarchy between communities and local governments. Findings from this study show that people referred to this contract when monitoring health staff. It thus contributed to substantive citizen engagement.

It was noted that facilitation in NUSAF 1 was too light (Robinson, 2007). In NUSAF 2 it is intensified, but only regarding the communities. Facilitators explain the procedures, help groups write proposals and submit the forms to the sub-county. In a way, they are the brokers between the communities and the government. Although local authorities now have a role in NUSAF2, there is still limited interaction between them and the communities over NUSAF. The

programme would benefit from facilitated interactions between citizens and local government, giving the communities the opportunity to gain experience with engaging with state actors.

Secondly, women and youth need approaches to learning citizenship that respond to their specific obstacles to engagement. The issue of social inequalities and power dynamics that affect interventions is known in CDR literature (Brick, 2009; McCarthy, 2011). The requirement to have quotas for women and youth in groups and committees may simply reproduce these challenges and make women and youth feel vulnerable and powerless.

As for the prospects of citizenship and democracy, there could be scope for thinking about how recovery interventions that target the subsistence and safety of citizens (not just CDR) could be designed to offer opportunities for learning citizenship and political agency. If food and safety are people's priority, how can this serve as an entry point to work on citizenship? For example, at the time of the research, Oxfam supported water management committees (for wells and boreholes) at village level in running their own groups democratically, facilitated interaction with the CDO at the sub-county offices, and trained them how to communicate with the District Water Office.

A similar argument can be made for humanitarian interventions in displacement camps, especially concerning the camp governance structures. If, as Feldman (2007) argues, humanitarian practice affects a sense of citizenship among the displaced, their discourses and actions, how can humanitarian aid to displaced populations enable forms of citizen agency? 'Citizen participation' in the Acholi camps implied little more than helping the agencies to run the basic services in camps. Groups created by NGOs often had no influence over how relief and security are organised and do not learn how to critically engage with the powerful structures of the camp governance regime. Camp governance mechanisms need to be revisited to provide residents with meaningful avenues for engagement with camp leadership, including for holding them accountable.

Consider this example from South Africa, where humanitarian aid encouraged citizen agency among displaced persons. In 2008, undocumented migrants were displaced into camps following the outburst of xenophobic violence. Activist organisations that had been active in mobilising for the rights of HIV/AIDS patients became involved in the humanitarian assistance to the displaced (Robins, 2009). Using a rights-based discourse, building on years of experience with activism and advocacy work, these organisations promoted their rights of and helped



them articulate their claims on the state. Robin's study is part of on-going debate that seeks to improve humanitarian practice in a way that it does not just 'save lives' but ensures human dignity and enables the political agency of displaced people (Müller, 2013; Redfield, 2005).

### **8.5 Implications for further study**

I suggest two areas for further study, which would enable more nuanced understandings of the effects of protracted conflict on citizenship. The first is to study various types of conflict and the second is to compare different forms of displacement. The Acholi context has certain characteristics: an ethnic homogeneous population, a rebel group largely formed by members of the same ethnic group, displacement within the region, the role of the military and the North-South history. It would be relevant to apply the framework used in this study in settings with different conflict dynamics, to enhance our understanding of the relationship between various conflict attributes and forms of citizen agency. For example, in contexts where the conflict involves different ethnic groups and various armed actors, social and political institutions may be affected in very different ways. In an authoritarian regime context the public sphere is controlled by political violence and intimidation, with specific implications for public discourses.

As mentioned in Chapter 6, this study did not explicitly interrogate the variation in the length of displacement and its effects. For a more nuanced understanding of the difference between short and long-term displacement this is an area that requires further research. It would also be interesting to research displacement to different locations (camps, urban areas, abroad) where they experience different institutions and public spheres.

Given the conclusion of this study about how conflict affects the exposure of citizens to learning citizenship, it can be expected that this exposure looks different in contexts with different conflict dynamics. This may affect how people see the state, and themselves as citizens, what they learn in terms of citizen engagement, and how this informs how they practise citizenship. Studying this may deepen an understanding of how different conflict dynamics affect citizen agency and help to find opportunities to strengthen active citizenship. As this study demonstrates, in any context it will be important to take a historical approach to see how citizenship is constructed, in which spaces and institutions, and to interrogate both the sense and the practice of citizenship, for different social identities.

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## Annex 1 Overview of interviews and focus groups

**Table A0. Final sample size per research site**

	Acholi – Chua	Acholi – Lamwo	Lango – Kole
Number of focus groups*	67	42	47
Number of respondents with whom I carried out individual interviews**	148	62	157

\*The number of focus group participants varied between four and ten

\*\* Includes interviews with ordinary citizens, LC members at LC1, LC2 and LC3 level, customary leaders and sub-county officials. District and national level officials are included in Table A4 below.

Tables A1, A2 and A3 present the details for how many of each type of focus group and interview have been carried out, per site.

**Table A1. Overview of semi-structured interview used in the villages**

Title	Issues	Number of respondents in each research location		
		Chua (Acholi)	Lamwo (Acholi)	Kole (Lango)
Biographic interviews	Life trajectory Social roles and leadership roles in the community Life before the camp Life and role in the camp	-	3	-
Camp life	Daily activities and challenges + forms of agency. Citizen agency for food and security. Social relations, cooperation, problems. Strategies and challenges for petitioning and interrogative 'voice'. Camp leadership and other authorities. Example of issue taken up with camp leadership. Compare 'voice' before, during and after the camp. Compare camp leadership and LCs. Identify what was learnt in the camp.	9	20	-
Citizen engagement in community institutions and local leadership.	Group membership. NGO activity.  Detailed narrative(s) of any issue taken up with local leadership. Community meetings and other forms of collective action. Interactions between village and sub-county authorities. Collaboration between village and sub-county authorities. Strategies and challenges for	35	5	60

	<p>petitioning voice. Strategies and challenges for interrogative voice. Examples of NUSAF/NAADS/any project.</p> <p>Meaning of citizen, community member, state, government, and roles and responsibilities.</p>			
Clan and tribe	<p>Functions of clan leaders. Clan activities and organisation. Intra- and inter-clan relations. Characteristics of one's tribe. Compare tribes in Uganda. Compare tribes and their relation to the state.</p>	19	-	8
Comparing clan leaders and LCs	<p>Compare LCs and clan leaders for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- election process.</li> <li>- how they are valued.</li> <li>- approachable.</li> <li>- advisable or criticisable.</li> <li>- accountable.</li> <li>- required skills, attributes.</li> <li>- tasks/ roles.</li> <li>- role for social organisation.</li> </ul> <p>Interaction between clan leaders and local government.</p>	-	-	10
Guide for customary leaders	<p>Role of customary leaders. Role regarding social organisation in the clan. Interaction between clan leaders and local government. Changes in role over time.</p>	5	5	6
Guide for LC members and sub-county officials	<p>Tasks of individual. Linking between levels of governance. Which issues are raised with them by citizens and how. How they reach out to citizens. Perceptions of the villagers and their problems. Acholi only: roles during the war and camp. Post-conflict challenges.</p>	23	9	12
Life history	<p>Narratives of all important events/ episodes in one's life. Role of other community members in selected events. Expectations and actions of state institutions. Forms of collective organisation in the past + changes over time. Forms of agency for security and development over time. Changes in forms of authority over</p>	21	5	20

	time.			
Political history	What happened in research area under previous regimes. Local life under previous regimes. Local government and ways of engaging under previous regimes. Regime change to NRA. Compare regimes and one's feeling of belonging, relationship with each regime.	26	7	8
Voice & participation	Strategies and challenges for petitioning voice. Strategies and challenges for interrogative voice. Strategies to influence sub-county and district authorities. Roles played by local leaders as intermediaries/representatives. National level: compare the voice of one's tribe with other tribes. Acholi only: voice and the war.	10	10	33

**A2. Overview of focus group discussions in the villages**

Title	Issues	Number of groups per site		
		Chua (Acholi)	Lamwo (Acholi)	Kole (Lango)
Group work	History of the group and how it formed, by whom. Group activities. Group governance mechanisms and problem solving. LC members in the group and their roles. Interaction with local government.	5	5	5
Collective organisation for a development problem	Identify a 'community problem' Any form of collective action around the issue. Roles of particular individual(s) in taking issue forward. Interaction with local government around the issue. Any involvement by NGOs.	9	4	5

**A3. Participatory Research Methods used in focus groups in the villages**

Title	Issues	Number of groups per site		
		Chua (Acholi)	Lamwo (Acholi)	Kole (Lango)
Causal flow diagram	Effects of living in the conflict. Effects living in the camp.	5	3	-
Institutional mapping of leaders	Mapping and ranking of any type of leader identified in the community. Ways of accessing them.	15	8	10
Institutional mapping of social institutions	Mapping and ranking of social institutions.	4	6	5
Leadership skills ranking	Ranking of the different skills and attributes people find important for different types of leaders.	5	5	5
Time line	History of events/episodes of research site. Local life during these events/episodes.	12	4	8
Well-being ranking	Changes in quality of life over time. I.e. for different regimes; before/after camp.	4	2	3
Village map	Mapping of the village, infrastructure and resources, clans and their territory, land disputes.	8	5	6

**A4. Interviews with government officials at district and national level**

Interviewee	Location	Date
LC5 Chair person	Kitgum	05/05/2010
LC5 Chair person	Kitgum	18/08/2010
LC5 Chair person	Kole	
District CAO	Kitgum	
District assistant CAO	Kitgum	18/08/2010
District CDO	Kole	
District Planner	Kitgum	06/05/2010
LC 5 Vice Chair man	Kitgum	06/05/2010
Ministry of Local Government	Kampala	03/03/2010
Ministry of Local Government, LGSIP	Kampala	01/03/2010
Office of the Prime Minister	Kampala	11/05/2010
Office of the Prime Minister - PRDP	Kampala	08/2010
RDC	Kitgum	06/05/2010
RDC	Kitgum	18/08/2010
RDC	Kole and Apac	21/10/2010

**A5. Interviews with international and domestic Civil Society Organisations**

Interviewee	Location	Date
ACDA – Agoro Community Development Association	Kitgum	12/02/2010
ACET	Kitgum	25/02/2010
ACODE	Kampala	02/02/2010
ACORD	Gulu	09/02/2010
ACORD	Kitgum	10/02/2010
ARC	Kampala	01/02/2010
AVSI	Kitgum	11/02/2010
AVSI	Kitgum	12/02/2010
AVSI	Gulu	14/02/2010
AVSI	Kitgum	01/08/2010
Caritas	Kitgum	04/05/2010
CARE – Governance Programme	Gulu	05/02/2010
COPA	Gulu	02/02/2010
CPA	Kitgum	16/02/2010
DENIVA	Kampala	03/03/2010
FAPAD	Lira	15/11/2010
FAPAD	Lira	02/12/2010
Gulu NGO Forum	Gulu	03/02/2010
Gulu NGO Forum	Gulu	08/02/2010
Gulu NGO Forum	Gulu	05/03/2010
Gulu NGO Forum (former staff)	Kampala	12/05/2010
Gulu NGO Forum	Gulu	24/09/2010
HURIFO	Gulu	06/02/2010
HURIFO	Gulu	08/02/2010
IRC	Kitgum	12/02/2010
JRS – youth programme	Kitgum	23/04/2010
JRS – peace maker programme	Kitgum	23/04/2010
JRS – head of office	Kitgum	24/04/2010
Kitgum NGO Forum	Kitgum	17/02/2010
Kitgum NGO Forum	Kitgum	16/08/2010
Lango Cultural Foundation	Apac	21/10/2010
LWF	Kitgum	08/2010
Oxfam GB	Kitgum	14/02/2010
Oxfam GB	Kitgum	28/04/2010
Oxfam GB	Kitgum	18/08/2010
Oxfam GB (staff in Kitgum during 1997-1999)	Kampala	11/08/2010
NGO Link Forum	Apac	06/11/2010
NRC – Camp Management and Protection	Gulu	04/02/2010
NRC – Livelihoods Programme	Kitgum	14/02/2010
NRC – ICLA programme	Kitgum	17/02/2010
TAACC	Apac	09/2010
ULGA - Uganda Local Government Association	Kampala	01/03/2012
War Child Holland	Kitgum	08/2010

**A6. Interviews with Bi- and Multilateral Donor Agencies**

Interviewee	Location	Date
BTC	Kampala	27/02/2010
BTC	Kampala	01/03/2010
BTC	Kampala	08/2010
Danida	Kampala	25/01/2010
DFID	Kampala	14/05/2010
European Commission – SDP	Kampala	03/03/2010
EU – NUREP	Gulu	04/02/2010
GTZ	Kampala	08/2010
NORAD	Kampala	08/2010
Royal Netherlands Embassy	Kampala	20/01/2010
Royal Netherlands Embassy	Kampala	01/03/2010
SIDA	Kampala	08/2010
UN Cluster Meeting	Gulu	26/11/2010
UNDP	Gulu	04/02/2010
UNDP	Kampala	03/03/2010
UNDP	Kampala	04/03/2010
UNDP	Kitgum	19/02/2010
UNDP- head of office	Gulu	24/09/2010
UNDP – governance	Gulu	24/09/2010
UNHCR	Gulu	09/02/2010
UNOCHA	Gulu	04/02/2010
USAID	Gulu	08/02/2010
World Bank - LGMSDP	Kampala	08/10

**A7. Interviews with Academia**

Interviewee	Location	Date
Makerere University, Refugee Law Project	Kampala	20/01/2010
Makerere University, Refugee Law Project	Gulu	03/02/2010
Makerere University, Refugee Law Project	Kampala	11/05/2010
Makerere University, Refugee Law Project	Kampala	10/08/2010
Makerere University, Refugee Law Project	Kampala	11/08/2010
Makerere University, Faculty of Social Science, Department of Women and Gender Studies	Kampala	02/2010
Makerere University, Institute of Social Research	Kampala	26/01/2010
Makerere University, Department of Political Science and Public Administration	Kampala	10/008/2010

## Annex 2 Analysis in NVivo

### A.2.1 Example of tree and child nodes for 'camp life'

Table A.2.1 shows part of the tree 'Acholi Camp Life' (A). It shows main themes coded from the interviews: daily problems, coping, camp leaders, and voice (node, B). Some of these nodes were further coded (child nodes, D).

**Table A.2.1 Part of the NVivo 'tree' – Camp life\***

A	B	C	D
Camp life	Daily problems	Food Security Health Social relations	
	Coping	Getting food Getting cash Protection	
	Camp leaders	Opinion on leaders	Positive Negative
		Roles leaders in camp	Camp Commandant Committee Block leader Village leader
	Voice in camp	For accountability	Strategies Examples
		Petitioning voice	Strategies Examples
		Voice mechanism	Through meetings Individual complaints

\*Please note this is only a small section of the tree

### A.2.2 Analysis for the sense of citizenship

Here I summarise the process for analysing the data in relation to the two core concepts of this thesis: the sense and the practice of citizenship. To study the sense of citizenship, interviews concentrated on perceptions of the self as Acholi or Langi, perceptions of the citizen identity, and perceptions of the state. The NVivo tree was labelled 'Acholi identity' level (A). The tree for Lango was constructed separately. Interview questions addressed features of the Acholi identity, the differences between Acholi and other tribes, and differences in the relationship between the tribes and the state. These aspects constituted level B of the nodes. While coding, most descriptions of Acholi identity fitted into three child nodes (level C): narratives about Acholi culture and tradition, about insecurity aspects, and about poverty. When asked about the differences with other tribes (B2), socio-economic inequalities and the experience of war were highlighted. When discussing the relationship between the Acholi and the state (B3), the role of the state in war and in the unequal distribution of resources figured prominently. Many respondents added that the discourse of state officials about their tribe had harmed their dignity, constituting the third child node.



**Table A2.2 Part of the NVivo tree - Acholi identity\***

A	Acholi identity				
B	B1 Acholi identity features	B2 Differences with other tribes	B3 Relationship Acholi tribe – state	B4 Relationship other tribes – state	B5 meaning of citizen
C	Cultural characteristics	Inequality	Inequality	Allocated more resources	Descriptions
C	Experience of war	Experience of war	No dignity	Are given more security	Crucial moments of feeling ‘more’ or ‘less’ like a citizen
C	Poverty and inequality		No security		

\*Please note this is only a small section of the tree

Although a small number of Acholi respondents mentioned other factors, the majority framed their answers around the concepts inequality, security and dignity and in my analysis I therefore took these three concepts as key aspects of an Acholi sense of citizenship. By using NVivo it was possible to check this analysis by carrying out a search on this selection of interviews, to look for other factors that could be important for the Acholi’s relationship to the state. For example, I looked for ‘elections’ and ‘party support’ in these interviews to check whether that may have defined their relationship. But even after carrying out these checks I remained convinced that security, identity and equality, or the lack of it, were crucial aspects of Acholi citizenship.

I then synthesised the data around these concepts to write thick descriptions of a sense of citizenship, answering the research question. I was able to use the same concepts for the analysis of the sense of citizenship during the period of displacement. The negative effects of conflict and life in the camps figured clearly in Acholi narratives. In their own words they explained how they felt abandoned and treated as slaves by the state. This confirmed the hypothesis that Acholi citizenship had been eroded.

### **A.2.3 Analysis for the practice of citizenship**

Following the conceptual framework, I used those sections in NVivo where people spoke about their engagement in community groups, their interactions with authorities, voice for development purposes, and voice for accountability purposes. These were all tree level (A) themes, under which I distinguished nodes and child nodes, as shown in Table A2.3.

**Table A2.3 Part of NVivo tree on ‘engagement’**

A	B	C	
Community groups	B1 type of group B2 group leadership B3 group governance B4 link to local state		
Voice for development	B1 how/ strategies B2 challenges	Formal/LCs Formal/ PDC Informal	
Voice for accountability	B1 how/ strategies B2 challenges	Formal Informal Rude/offensive	

Within the trees that coded data for distinct periods in history (i.e. under Obote, Amin, and the NRA) forms of citizen engagement were also coded, including interactions with authorities and participation in community institutions. While doing research it was not very difficult to find out about the practice of citizenship for these different historical periods. Through time line exercises and interviews I established a 'baseline' of forms of citizen engagement during the 1980s, prior to the start of the NRA regime, which showed similar forms of engagement among Acholi and Langi in community institutions and '*muyumba kumi*'. For both Lango and Acholi I could thus systematically analyse how patterns of interaction had developed over time. This showed the limited safe space for *citizen* agency during the LRA conflict in Acholi, when forms of coping agency were prevailing. In Lango, the space for citizen agency was reduced during the Amin era, after which it increased again under Obote (II).

As shown in the table, current forms of citizen engagement were coded in separate trees. It was a challenge to demonstrate the *legacy* of the conflict, with all its features, for citizen engagement in the present. The *lower levels* of engagement and the *lower density* of relationships between citizens and various leaders could be demonstrated: as explained above, the coding showed fewer records for the Acholi on this theme. They were especially reluctant to engage to hold state actors to account. I then compared the factors that limited citizen engagement for Lango and Acholi. These were similar to a great extent, but were aggravated in Acholi. There were also factors that appeared only in the Acholi sites, for which I identified relationship to the conflict.

The challenge was thus to demonstrate that lower levels of engagement were not just 'ordinary' problems as they appear in stable settings, but the result of the experiences of conflict and displacement. I pursued the question of how fear operated in people's minds: how this is a legacy of the conflict, limiting engagement, in particular for accountability purposes (interrogative voice). A small number of respondents were able to put this in words and were able to reflect on their behaviour and that of others. Some excerpts from their statements are included in the thesis. But many people did not have the vocabulary and were unable to give a more abstract reflection on their behaviour. They could explain what they did and did not do in terms of engagement, but it could be a challenge to get them to explain underlying motives, reasons and emotions. In life history interviews respondents gave detailed accounts of interactions with different types of leaders throughout their lives, and, for instance, fear of military actors came up frequently. But for the present, when asked about the difficulties of interacting with leaders, many fell silent. In terms of the data set this is a weakness. Although nobody *denied* the role of fear, I relied on a smaller number of people who actually spoke about it. Nonetheless, those few who dared to speak gave powerful accounts of persisting fears. This was confirmed in interviews with academia and CSOs at district and national level. I therefore felt confident in concluding that fear of state and military actors continues to shape citizen engagement with state institutions.

### Annex 3 Mariana's story

Mariana narrates her life during the early phases of the conflict (Chapter 5). She expresses her fear of the state and the public sphere and how this disrupted her daily activities. She then explains the challenges she experienced in the camp, which shows how the conflict impacted on gender relations. She relates this to a lack of legitimacy on the part of the customary leaders, who were unable to maintain a level of social cohesion in the community.

*My life had challenges. It started with the Karamojong and then Kony. My first child, I had when the Karamojong came to raid our cattle. They took all the cattle from my husband and my family-in-law. My second child was born when there was the NRA commander stationed in the trading centre here. His name was Abiriga. He was bad! There were firing squads – taga taga tage tage [onomatopoeic]! We would not come to the centre any longer. The soldiers were not good. I had my third child when the LRA was now around. They were in Sudan, then came to Uganda, then again in Sudan, then came to Uganda. When we heard they come we ran and hide in the valley or the hills. When they left we came back. At times we took food and ran with it. We cooked there. Sometimes we stayed for two days, sometimes a week or more without coming out.*

*It made my work in the garden difficult. We used to have a group and rotate. It gave you a moral boost to work together even if you feel weak. When rebels came and find you in a group they'd kill all of you. So it was better to work alone in the garden. This took many years, up to now.*

*Then my fourth child, I had when we were going to the camp. One day the LRA came to our compound. They killed two brothers of my husband and threatened to kill my baby. That is when we decided to go to the camp, in the trading centre.*

*We used to have many things like food. We had everything. Life was good. Children were respecting others. Now they are disobeying the parents. There were no rampant disease outbreaks like nowadays. There was cooperation. The desire to be with your relatives was high. Not today, people do not know their relatives and don't have heart for others. There used to be no cases of theft, rape, or greed as there is now.*

*In the camp it was not all that good. But at least there was food relief. Before the camp there was sharing of the fire place, wang oo, and sharing of food. Teaching of children was a communal thing. Your neighbour can teach and take care of your children, even if you are not there. There was good relationship among the community, for example your closest neighbour can marry your daughter which is a great offer. Problems between man and wife were solved by clan members. During the camp there was no sharing of food and fire place.*

*My difficulties in the camp were domestic issues. There was a serious domestic violence which made me go back to my parents since the camp time up to some two months ago. That I have come back there was a quarrel between me and my husband there after he chased me away. My husband was not responsible in taking his duty as a man because could get thing like food in the house but my husband could sell off and drink the money without doing something productive. My husband was beating me time and again. My husband could sell the food we get from UN and the little we cultivate. Chasing me from his home was another issue which made me very upset until when I came back. Quarrelling was another daily problem that I had with my husband when he was drunk.*

*Young girls started having a household when they were only 13 years old. Young boys started to bring in women. The war spoiled the relation between men and women. They were young and not mature. The life of elders changed, there was no more wang oo to give good ideas to youth. They slept in the same hut as youth, which is against our culture. In the camp they were drinking, but before they were really hard working. Now, clan leaders again advise the youth who wish to marry, so they know which other clans are relatives.*

*Elders should solve problems facing a clan. Find out the root cause of something. For example the outbreak of a certain disease like smallpox. This can be solved by ritual sacrifices to eliminate or drive such diseases out of the community, or the patient to be taken to the bush to avoid the spread of the disease. The house has to be fenced in order to avoid the spread. During camp elders changed - for example: they don't concentrate on teaching the children at wang oo in the evening. They lost respect compared to before the war.*

Mariana had her fifth child in the satellite camp in 2009, which was nearer to her home area than the main camp. She sent her two older children to her mother in Gulu district, to go to school. Mariana and her husband were constructing huts in the home area and moved there in 2011.

#### **Annex 4      Alfred's story**

This is the story of a young man who was a youth leader during the last four years that he stayed in the camp (2005-2008). Now aged thirty-five, he was in his late twenties at the time. As a youth leader and War Child protégée he had worked closely with some of the camp leaders. During the time of the conflict the local government started gradually to become more involved in running the camps. I asked him about his past and what he had learnt from the time he lived in the camp. The story shows how this young man had been more exposed to forms of engagement, which is clearly reflected when he speaks about what he learned in the camp. The story shows that the effects of the camp for learning citizenship were not universal for all camp residents.

*In the camp I learnt about socialization through participating in the traditional dances and football matches between the parishes in the camp. Lamwo parish could play against K-. parish, A-. parish played against L-. parish. The qualifiers come from the two parishes and the winner represents Kal sub county play with another sub county. The same applies to traditional dance contests. These bring people together to socialise at the parish level and even at sub-county level and inter-sub-county levels.*

*I learnt about hygiene. There was a good programme that promoted hygiene through giving awards to the smartest household which had the best latrine, rubbish pit, and who smeared the huts properly. The award was in form of soaps and salt. The best among the smartest people gets an extra award of money from the sub-county chief and the Camp Commandant.*

*There was one camp leader whose style of leadership was good. He never wanted to do things in a hidden place but could bring things in public and discuss with community in a way that was approachable and welcoming anybody who had a complaint about issues related to his office. He gave out the tents which people were using in the camp to the elderly persons and disabled people. What helped was their style of lobbying for resources for the community. It was the struggle of the sub-county chief and the Camp Commandant which made people get water in the camp, especially the sub-county chief who worked hard for water and had proper lobbying style for NGOs.*

*People learnt how to raise their voice in a way that they should harass the leaders in case they want their voice to be represented. Also people learnt that if you want your issues to reach the district you can make it through LC 1. You don't go direct. At home people were not seeing the value of leaders like LC 1 in the community until in the camp during allocation of settlement and registration, which was done by LC 1 at first before camp leaders were elected. Also youth learnt that there were other ways of sending a voice above like writing the issues affecting the community. The youth can select me as a youth leader to take that written issue into the community meetings or to the sub-county or to the district themselves. Like the youth of K.-I parish wrote about football matches and traditional dances to the sub-county, which forwarded the request to War Child and Oxfam who sponsored the league.*

*And so I learnt how to talk to leaders like LC 1. But for simple problems you should have money to pay the court fee. This made many people refuse taking their issues to LC 1 and forget the issues, because the people were too poor to pay the court and LC 1. If they ask for court fee and you don't have it they chase you and people could have nowhere to go. That was not common before the camp because the LC had resources like enough food. They did that in the camp because they wanted money for survival and drinking. In most cases LC 1s became drunkards in the camp, because of part of the fine that they charged people they hid for personal use.*

*The people who had more voice were the businessmen who had been in the centre before the camp. They were used to leaders and had influence on raising complaints to the leaders. Also the educated people who had access to any office because they had the language of expressing the matter that people needed and the community could use such people to raise their voice.*

*Nowadays, they have made it as a by-law to charge the court fees as people have gone home and it has become a usual situation for people although they don't like it. Before the camp, people did not have many leadership apart from LC 1, Rwot Kweri, and clan leaders. Clan leaders usually call the community to sit down for a meeting. It was usually called by elders, who had the power to remove a Rwot Kweri as a group leader and replace him in case he did wrong. Replace him with someone in the group who can perform leadership well. But for LC 1 the people should take the issue to the vice to forward to LC 2 and then to sub county. If the LC 3 finds that the issue is big then he goes to the community to find out the opinion. The LC 3 gives a go ahead to elect the person they want in the community to lead LC 1. But this never happens. The war confused those leaders. They do things on their own.*

Alfred decided to stay in the trading centre after the camp started to phase out. He usually hangs around near War Child's youth centre. He does occasional building work in the centre and helps his parents in the village during the farming season.

## Annex 5      Joseph's story

Joseph is 56 years old and lives in Chua district. He describes how certain local institutions were disrupted during the conflict. His story shows how perceptions of the state and the public sphere, which developed during the war, affect his engagement with local state actors in the post-conflict situation. He has been a member of LC1 since the early 1990s. He now lives with his two wives and eight children in his home area and started to cultivate cassava.

*During the time of Kony, when we were not yet in the camp... my family was protecting itself. During the day the youth would stay in the bush and leave the elders at home to cook food and take it into the bush to the youth and children. During the night everybody went to sleep in the bush. The home will just be left empty without anybody. When it reached morning I could first check all the roads to see if there is a foot mark of those shoes... the kind that the soldiers wear. If I saw those, we had to go back to the bush. If not, then we could go home. Also if we hear the dogs barking we could run to the bush because it is a signal that there is something bad.*

*During insecurity, before camp, I never witnessed any village meeting. Except when it was on Sunday... I remember I once called a meeting for some function in the church and many people came. In that meeting we were planning for a choir, playing instruments and collecting some money. Rebels came and surrounded us. They abducted six young boys. Some came back after two weeks, others never came back. One boy was killed.*

*People were to themselves. I did not see many people, or only briefly. Digging in groups was a risk now. I used to work on my land alone, which frightened me. I could now only farm a small plot of land. There were no village meetings, because we feared rebels. LCs were there by name only, they were not doing anything. There was no way they could go and report our problems at the sub-county. Then LC1 members were there by name only. During that time, there was no problem anyway. Like no quarrels. Only health issues, when someone was sick, we would try any means to get someone to hospital. Courts were held sometimes, with few people. But sometimes, if rebels would come, we would take off in the middle of the court and propose another day to continue with court if it was heard that the rebels were around.*

*There was a fear during the insurgency, during that time people had no voice. Sometimes the government soldiers could arrest civilians that they were rebels, but they were not. Those civilians who were unlucky were killed by soldiers even after telling soldiers that they were not rebels. We had fear; maybe you heard that the rebels are somewhere and you go to report them, but someone who collaborates with them might hear you and he will tell you have reported them. Or when I have a relative who is arrested by the rebels and he comes home out of hunger, and I give him food, then others look at me, they will say I am a rebel and report me to UPDF.*

*Then the camp, actually it was the same thing again. People feared to have voice because they would be reported and be killed by either rebels or even the government soldiers. Even when soldiers in the camp could plot against you with a leader, they could attack you in the camp at night and kill you.*

*I used to fear to criticise the government. I feared to be punished. You know, I was once arrested. A soldier lied about me. One soldier came back from Gangdyang with two guns. When reaching the barracks, he hid the guns in the bush. But someone saw him. People thought he might be a rebel. They told the LC1 and this one had had [military] training, so he laid an ambush on the road side. I came from town and I was stopped by a soldier who knew*

*me. He asked me to go into the barracks and talk to soldiers there. The soldier that had hidden the guns thought I was the one who had reported him. He then accused me and said I was the one who had asked him to hide the guns. Then the soldiers came to me and arrested me. I was later released.*

*Even now I fear because the government might arrest us if I do not do things as it required. For example, people asked for goats from government and they were given to a group of which I am a member. The goats died and it made me fear seriously.*

*Now people fear to talk on leaders for when you raise any complaint they trace you up to where you live. That in case of any government programme or project they will ignore you and not put your name in a group. It happened in NUSAF1. I was in a group with my wife. The leader of the group was not transparent to the members. My wife tried to correct him. They replaced our names with someone else's names. He told her he completely deleted her name and she missed the cows. Now we just sit back.*