

Transition or stagnation?

Everyday life, food security and recovery in
post-conflict northern Uganda

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Winnie W. Wairimu

Thesis

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For Nancy and Paul,

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Contents

Acknowledgments	vii
Contents	xiii
List of Tables and Boxes	xvi
List of Figures	xvii
List of Maps	xviii
Acronyms and Abbreviations	xix

Chapter one: General Introduction	1
1.1 Introduction	2
1.2 Background to the study	3
1.3 A seed fair, March 22, 2012	4
1.3.1 Actors, relationships and discourses in the recovery process	8
1.4 Scope of research	8
1.4.1 Food security	8
1.4.2 Linking Relief Rehabilitation and Development processes	10
1.4.3 Agricultural services reform	11
1.5 Research questions	14
1.6 Theory	14
1.6.1 Actor oriented approach	15
1.6.2 Social domains	18
1.7 Methodology	19
1.7.1 The organisation of the research	19
1.7.2 Interactive research with ZOA	20
1.7.3 Data collection	22
1.8 Reflection on methodology: my experience with interactive research	26
1.8.1 My positioning as a researcher generally	27
1.9 Outline of the thesis	28

Chapter two: The Setting of the Study	31
2.1 Introduction	32
2.2 The research area	33
2.3 Conflict in Acholiland and the place of northern Uganda in the broader politics of development	36
2.3.1 Displacement: ‘protecting’ the population or enforcing a counter insurgency?	39
2.3.2 The grass is ready - enforcing a decongestion strategy and returning home	40
2.4 Humanitarian aid regime	42
2.5 Re-establishment of state presence and state recovery	46
2.6 Conclusion	48

Chapter three: From Crisis to Governance: The Politics and Practice of Agricultural Service Provision in Northern Uganda	51
Abstract	52
3.1 Introduction	53
3.2 Theoretical approach	54
3.3 Study location and methodology	57
3.4 Early emergency phase (1986-2005)	57
3.4.1 The North: humanitarian service provision	58
3.4.2 The policy domain of service provision in the rest of the country	59
3.5 Emergence of agricultural services in early recovery: from 2006 to 2010	60
3.5.1 Humanitarian assistance	61
3.5.2 Re-introducing government advisory services	63
3.6 Current context: from 2011	63
3.6.1 Humanitarian assistance	64
3.6.2 Service governance	65
3.7 Conclusion	68
 Chapter four: Sitting Allowances: the Hidden Realities of State-Aid Relations in Northern Uganda	 71
Abstract	72
4.1 Introduction	73
4.2 Background: contextualising humanitarian-government relations in northern Uganda	75
4.3 Framing sitting allowances	77
4.4 The state-aid interface and the 'shadowy' nature of sitting allowances	79
4.4.1 Re-establishing service provision while 'sitting at a dry desk'	80
4.4.2 Legitimation of a practice 'in the shadows'	81
4.4.3 Organization and regulation	84
4.5 Conclusion	86
 Chapter five: Aid under Contestation: Everyday Practice and 'Farmer' Responses in 'Community-Based' Food Security Interventions in Northern Uganda	 89
Abstract	90
5.1 Introduction	91
5.2 Changing and diverging food security paradigms and humanitarian aid: a theoretical perspective	92
5.3 Methods	94
5.4 Study location and the farming system	95
5.5 Discursive social differentiation: who qualifies for aid?	97
5.6 The food security programme	97
5.7 Participation in the programme	99
5.8 Explaining the dropouts	100
5.8.1 Availability of Labour as major challenge to food self sufficiency	100
5.8.2 Other contributing factors	106
5.9 Conclusion	107

Chapter six: Linking Relief Rehabilitation and...Destitution in northern Uganda: the Hidden LRRD Plateau	111
Abstract	112
6.1 Introduction	113
6.2 Livelihoods in and after conflict: conceptual development and methodology	114
6.3 Methodology	116
6.4 The study villages and their wider context	116
6.5 Historical trends in livelihoods in Acholiland	118
6.6 Livelihoods re-establishment patterns	119
6.6.1 The place of agriculture	121
6.7 Land, farming systems and impact on food security	122
6.8 Diversification: off-farm income generation and the development of a cash economy	124
6.9 Changing lifestyles and people's preferences	128
6.10 Humanitarian and government approaches to livelihoods	129
6.11 Conclusion	131
Chapter seven: General discussion and conclusion	135
7.1 Introduction	136
7.2 Domains of recovery	137
7.2.1 The domain of local people and their practices	137
7.2.2 The domain of agricultural service governance and development	139
7.2.3 The domain of humanitarian responses and interventions	140
7.3 Cross cutting themes on the dynamics of transition	141
7.3.1 Messy transitions between humanitarian services and state-led market 'modernisation'	141
7.3.2 Bridging policy and practice mismatches and the evolving institutional relations	143
7.3.3 Linking Relief Rehabilitation and...Destitution	145
7.4 Methodological choices and their contribution to the research	146
7.5 Limitations of the study	146
7.6 Implications of findings for the government and practitioners	147
7.7 Final Remarks	149
References	151
Summary	173
Samenvatting	178
Other outputs from the research	184
About the Author	185
Wageningen School of Social Sciences (WASS)	186
Funding	188

List of Tables and Boxes

Table 2.1	
Humanitarian food security related interventions in Pader (2010- 2012)	44
Table 2.2	
Government food security related interventions in Pader (2010- 2012)	47
Table 5.1	
General Household characteristics	95
Table 5.2	
Activities outside of crop production and livestock production within the two study villages	96
Table 5.3	
Land clearance distribution and household food security status in the two study villages	101
Table 6.1	
Land ownership in individual and combined villages (in acres)	123
Box 2.1 Timeline of the main conflict and related events	36

List of Figures

Figure 1.1 Overview of the thesis.	29
Figure 6.1 Percentage of households mentioning off farm sources of incomes	126
Figure 6.2 Wilpii Ngora Imagery 2007	133
Figure 6.3 Wilpii Ngora Imagery 2012	133
Figure 6.4 Wii Lungoyi Imagery 2007	134
Figure 6.5 Wii Lungoyi Imagery 2012	134

List of Maps

Map 2.1	
Uganda Districts, with Acholiland and Pader District demarcated	32
Map 2.2	
Pader District: administrative boundaries with Atanga, Angagura and Pader town council demarcated	35
Map 2.3	
Atanga sub-County, with case study villages, main and satellite camps demarcated	49
Map 2.4	
Wilpii Ngora village location in relation to main camps and facilities	50
Map 2.5	
Wii Lungoyi village location in relation to main camps and facilities	50

Acronyms and Abbreviations

AGRA	Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa
ALREP	Agricultural Livelihoods Recovery Programme
CAADP	Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Program
CAO	Chief Administrative Officer
CAP	Consolidated Appeal Process
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
DAO	District Agricultural Officer
DfID	Department for International Development
DSIP	Agricultural Sector Development Strategy and Investment Plan
EVI/H	Extremely Vulnerable Individuals/Households
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations
FEWSNET	Famine Early Warning Systems Network
FSP	Food Security Programme
GoU	Government of Uganda
HSM	Holy Spirit Movement
IAASTD	International Assessment of Agricultural Knowledge Science and Technology and Development
IASC	Inter- Agency Standing Committee
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
INGOs	International Non-Governmental Organisations
IRIN	Integrated Regional Information Networks
IS Academy	International Development Academy
LC	Local Council
LRA/M	Lord's Resistance Army/Movement
LRRD	Linking Relief, Rehabilitation and Development
MAAIF	Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries
MDG	Extremely Vulnerable Persons
MFPEd	Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development
MSF	Médecins Sans Frontières
NAADS	National Agricultural Advisory Services
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organisations
NRM/A	National Resistance Movement/Army
NUSAF	Northern Uganda Social Action fund
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN)
ODI	Overseas Development Institute (UK)
OPM	Office of the Prime Minister
PD	Production Directorate/Department
PDLG	Pader District Local Government

PMC	Project Management Committee
PMA	Plan for Modernisation of Agriculture
PRDP	Peace, Recovery and Development Plan
PSNs	People with Special Needs'
PW	Public Works
RDC	Resident District Commissioner
RLP	Refugee Law Project
SLF	Sustainable Livelihoods Framework
UBOS	Uganda Bureau of Statistics
UGX	Uganda Shilling
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNHCR	UN High Commission for Refugees
UNLA	United National Liberation Army
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UPDF	Uganda People's Defence Force
UPDM/A	Uganda People's Democratic Movement/Army
US	United States
WFP	World Food Programme
WFS	World Food Summit

Chapter one: General Introduction

1.1 Introduction

In post-conflict northern Uganda, as in many other places, households which were formerly displaced from their villages during civil war and lost assets and access to their land, seek to restore their livelihoods, starting with securing their food supply. In the first years, aid is available. After a few years, when the humanitarians withdraw, households are expected to manage their own livelihoods. This thesis follows these households and finds that a vast majority, after a good start initially, get stuck after three to five years. Barely surviving, they do not manage to mobilise the necessary labour and resources to reach food security and cope with the recurring adversities of rural agricultural life.

While local people are struggling to recover, we see a similar process at the institutional level in which the government regains control and tries to re-establish basic services, including agricultural services. With the help of the international community, the government wants to integrate northern Uganda into the mainstream of the country's policy and governance structures. The national policy is increasingly geared to 'modernizing' agriculture based on a population that is ready to apply high input, market-oriented farming techniques. Aid agencies try to assist in this reconstruction process, struggling with the transition from emergency assistance to recovery and development.

This thesis examines these parallel processes and seeks to analyse whether and in what way institutional reconstruction meets the needs, and fits the context, of the population they are meant to serve. Often we talk about post-conflict societies as 'being in transition' or 'moving out of crisis', and this thesis basically asks the question: 'transition to *what* and movement to *where*'? The thesis is based predominantly on ethnographic work undertaken in Pader district, northern Uganda between 2010 and 2012 where stimulation of the agricultural sector has been pursued as a way to consolidate peace and promote recovery after years of displacement.¹

¹ The phrase 'northern Uganda' is used here in a restricted sense, to refer to the seven districts referred to as the Acholi region that bore the brunt of the Lord's Resistance Army war between 1986 and 2006. See Map 2. However I am fully aware that the boundaries are often redrawn to serve various purposes. For instance, Gelsdorf, Maxwell *et al.* (2012) use the phrase to refer to the Acholi, Teso and Lango, and West Nile regions of northern Uganda. Also, in the Peace, Recovery and Development Plan, the list of districts classified as 'northern Uganda' was extended to cover over 55 districts; technically, that is half of Uganda.

1.2 Background to the study

Food is recognised as a basic need and a human right. It is enshrined in various international resolutions and in the constitutions of many countries.² But despite the renewed global commitment to fight hunger in the last decade, massive technological developments worldwide, and relative progress in achieving the first Millennium Development Goal (MDG) in many regions, especially Asia, food insecurity persists as a challenge for the international community. Overcoming food insecurity remains a dream that never seems to materialise for many food insecure households and national governments.

At the start of this PhD process in 2009, the Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO) estimated the number of food insecure and undernourished people in the world at 1.02 billion (2009). This was the worst level since 1970. In particular, sub-Saharan Africa has been flagged as a hotspot (Devereux and Maxwell 2001; FAO 2006). This is attributed to a complex interaction of diverse factors: extreme weather variability (experienced through floods and drought), high population growth, insecure land tenure, migration, reduced income and limited access to markets, amongst others (Devereux and Maxwell 2001; Clover 2003; Vlassenroot, Ntububa *et al.* 2007).

The complexity of the food insecurity problems facing sub-Saharan Africa is further compounded by the reality that a number of these countries are undergoing or in the process of recovery from protracted conflicts (Pingali, Alinovi *et al.* 2005; Alinovi, Hemrich *et al.* 2008). In some cases like Uganda, the crisis is restricted to certain parts of the country (Maxwell, Russo *et al.* 2012). The humanitarian consequences of conflict are enormous. In addition to the loss of lives and destruction of livelihoods, conflicts have a heavy impact on economic and food security (Korf and Bauer 2002; Longley, Christoplos *et al.* 2006; FAO 2008; Jaspars and Maxwell 2009).

Food insecurity and conflict are two key factors underlying the classification of 'fragile states' in policy discourse (Alinovi and Russo 2009; Christoplos and Hilhorst 2009; Maxwell, Russo *et al.* 2012). Other factors include perceived government collapse, unwillingness on the part of government to address the plight of its citizens, and the high contestation of governments' legitimacy. Assistance is therefore increasingly acquired through aid agencies (Macrae 1999). In fragile states, there is often a proliferation of aid agencies that work towards meeting the perceived needs of individuals and households. This is reflected in the amount of funds spent on humanitarian crises. Development Initiatives (2007: 15) notes that, compared to other regions, for instance, eight countries of sub-Saharan Africa

² See Article 25 (1) of the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights; Article 11(1) of the 1966 International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR).

featured in the top fifteen recipients of external humanitarian assistance in 2006,³ with food aid being the largest component in terms of spending.⁴ The interplay of the post-conflict situation, food insecurity, weak or unable state institutions and humanitarian assistance in northern Uganda is the context for this thesis.

Research into fragile states has mainly focused on the political processes of peace-building, the rule of law and state formation, while scholarship on institutions and service delivery has mainly focused on education, water, sanitation and health, and continues to do so (Mosselson, Wheaton *et al.* 2009; Ndaruhutse 2011; Carpenter, Slater *et al.* 2012). Attention to food security in humanitarian contexts has mainly been restricted to humanitarian assistance. Food-related humanitarian assistance includes food aid, food for work, cash and other monetary interventions including cash for work, seeds and tools, vouchers and fairs, extension services and training, among others (Sperling and Longley 2002; Barrett and Maxwell 2005; FAO 2006; Maxwell, Sadler *et al.* 2008). With the exception of some FAO reports (Pingali, Alinovi *et al.* 2005; Alinovi, Hemrich *et al.* 2007; Alinovi, Hemrich *et al.* 2008; Andrews and Flores 2008), attention to agricultural service delivery in relation to state building, institutional development and livelihoods has been rare and this is the gap this thesis aims to help fill. In addition, this thesis is unique in addressing food security in a fragile region in a country which is otherwise considered stable.

The thesis aims to study processes at the interfaces of food security and livelihoods recovery, institutional conditions and cultures, and the socio-political dynamics of interventions. It looks at the interplay between intervention mechanisms and local organisation of livelihoods in order to develop a more empirically grounded understanding of how livelihood struggles relate to the political economies of aid and local state formation in areas characterised by fragility.

1.3 A seed fair, March 22, 2012

To understand better what the thesis is about, I use an account of a seed fair. It describes a microcosm of food security actors, their relationships, policies and practices in Pader district, northern Uganda.

³ Uganda features in this list, with DRC, Sudan, Somalia, Burundi – countries often appearing in fragile states lists. Here they define humanitarian assistance as ‘aid and action designed to save lives, alleviate suffering and maintain and protect human dignity during and in the aftermath of emergencies’ and is based on the official contributions of the 23 donors who are members of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Development Assistance Committee (DAC) (Development Initiatives 2008:1). This means the assistance could be more owing to the unreported sources and other voluntary funds given to aid agencies.

⁴ Between 1998 and 2004, sub-Saharan Africa countries largely received the largest percentages of DAC’s humanitarian assistance (Development Initiatives 2006).

It is 9 am on Wednesday 22nd of March, 2012. Today is the seed fair, a one-day market where traders offer seeds to 'farmer' households in post-conflict northern Uganda. This fair is being held in Angagura sub-county- one of the sub-counties at the extreme west of Pader district in northern Uganda (Map 2.2). The venue of the market is a large open space that is bursting with activity. Mud and brick structures near the entrance of the space host shops, drinking places and small restaurants. Groups of people - both men and women - come in through this 'gate'; some bring sacks and bags carried on their backs or on bicycles with produce to be sold. A number of them arrive on a tipper lorry seated on top of sacks, feet hanging over the sides of the lorry and holding on to the rails of the lorry for support. This group definitely comes from far away. People are dressed in a very colourful way: men wear plain trousers and a coloured shirt or T-shirt, women in dresses or skirts and T-shirts which are blue, white, green, grey or orange and have messages in the local language - *Lwo*. Translated, the messages include hygiene slogans like 'clean hands are hands to be proud of' or education messages, 'keep girls in schools'. Some indicate the person's position such as 'project management committee' or 'water user committee' and provide visibility to Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and their activities. Yellow T-shirts seem to be the preserve of the ruling party, the National Resistance Movement (NRM), and carry political messages. At first sight, it is only these T-shirts that reveal the omni-presence of aid and government.

In the background and on the left is a building where the District Agricultural Officer (DAO) and another officer from the district headquarters are chatting with several other sub-county level civil servants. The DAO and the officer are here to perform their duties of inspecting the seeds, having arrived together with the NGO, from a distance of about a hundred kilometres. They are given an allowance by the NGO; it is hard to know if they would be here without this incentive.

Looking more closely, it turns out that this is not a normal market. It is actually highly artificial and completely organised by an aid agency. A banner at the entrance reads 'FAO-ZOA Refugee Care Uganda Seed Fair'. At the centre of the clearing and seated under the mango trees are several ZOA volunteers. I know a number of them, as we go to the same church at Pader district headquarters. I can easily sit with them and watch how the traders (often referred to as 'vendors' by aid workers) bring their sacks and bags with produce. A make-shift structure, near the mango trees at the centre of this gathering supports a weighing scale. The ZOA volunteer weighs each type of seed, estimates the total amount of kilograms per item and the information goes on a registration form. The trader receives a number written on a pink cardboard to display on their shirt. This is their identification and proof they are certified to sell in this market. The trader then positions himself with his produce in the market. Today there are about fifteen traders, in addition to a large trader from Kampala who has come at the invitation of ZOA. In front of his lorry, he lays out tarpaulins and throws bags of pre-packaged maize, sorghum and beans down from the lorry. The seeds look treated as the maize has a light greenish blue film on it.

The groups sitting in the market turn out to be more than just neighbours. They constitute 'farmer groups' that have worked together on an NGO-initiated road and today will receive their compensation - not in the form of money, but as vouchers. These groups have recently settled back in their villages of origin after the long war and receive assistance from humanitarian agencies like ZOA. As the farmers stream in, ZOA volunteers start to call the farmers to their desk under the mango trees and give the person a pink booklet full of vouchers. Where there are problems, ZOA project officers are around to help solve them. In total, vouchers worth 48 million Uganda shillings (about € 24,000) are issued to about 600 farmers in 20 farmer groups.⁵

Parallel to the voucher issuing process, the DAO, a man in his late fifties, is already going around visiting some of the traders and discussing the seeds. The discussion is mainly about the variety and how the seeds were preserved. He picks a few beans and looks at them, occasionally writing something in his notebook. Many of the aid agencies work together with local government actors in providing services to the population. This explains the quality control provided by the DAO today.

Once the vouchers are distributed, all farmers and traders are called to one area. The DAO opens the meeting with a speech on agricultural issues such as the seeds and weather patterns. Then the process of price negotiation starts. For the trader from Kampala - commonly referred to by the term 'stockist',⁶ a ZOA staff member makes it clear that the prices are not negotiable. He argues that they have already been agreed between the agency and the trader. For other traders, a staff member writes the item (e.g. maize) on a manila paper, and asks about its local market price. The people shout several prices. He picks one price that he considers more or less average. He then asks the traders how much they want to charge. They say their price. After some shouting, he reaches down and writes down a compromise figure. Some farmers start shouting that that is too expensive and way beyond the local market price. The project officer explains that traders have to recover their costs for transport and this has to be factored in. The price negotiation process is repeated for all the seeds on sale which includes sesame, groundnuts, beans, finger millet, peas, maize, sorghum and pigeon peas. Prices of tools (like hoes) are not negotiable. The project officer then explains that some vouchers are marked specifically for improved seeds and cannot be used to buy any other type of seeds. This means they can only be used to buy improved and treated seeds from the 'stockist' in the market. The project officer warns that ZOA will not pay out on such vouchers if found among other traders. Some people ask other farmers if they want to exchange the improved seeds vouchers for the open vouchers so they can buy what they want. All vouchers - which are glossy papers printed in green and a mix of other colours -

⁵ Exchange rate during the study: 1 US Dollar = 2000 Uganda shillings (UGX).

⁶ A trader who is also a distributor of improved agricultural seeds. In this case he is a representative of one of the large private agricultural seed companies in Uganda.

contain the ZOA logo and the words, 'Agriculture in Pader, Input Voucher, valid for 5000 Uganda shillings (or another denomination) at any authorised ZOA distribution or seed fair in Pader district. Valid for six months from date of issue stamped on the back. May only be redeemed by registered project beneficiaries. Copying is illegal'. At the bottom left is a unique serial number. Open vouchers say 'worth of crop and tools inputs', while the improved seeds vouchers carry the additional words 'improved seeds: cereals/pulses' and carry the value of 20,000 Uganda shillings.⁷ Voucher booklets contain on the average 80,000 Uganda shillings worth of vouchers.

When the market is declared open, most people rush to the free traders. They ask for the price of an item, buy it, and throw it into sacks and move on. The trader writes down on a form how much each person buys. A group is forming around traders selling groundnuts - there seems to be a shortage. Others seem to have identified specific traders and once the market starts they run to these specific traders - some relatives, friends and family. The large trader from Kampala stays alone. It seems everyone wants to first spend their free vouchers, leaving the earmarked ones. Martin (my research assistant) and I talk to different people. He records the conversations; some people are satisfied, while others will take home items they did not plan for due to lack of choice.

After a while, people drift to the 'stockist' to exchange their earmarked vouchers for improved beans, sorghum and maize. A number of people do not want the sorghum despite the trader explaining that it is a shorter and faster maturing variety. Several negotiate with the trader to get more beans instead of sorghum or maize. This goes on until about 5pm but as the day goes by, there is less activity. Most people load their sacks on bicycles or on their heads and go home.

When the market ends, the traders bring their remaining produce to a group of volunteers. This is weighed again and the information goes on the registration form. The trader then moves to a second group of volunteers. They count the vouchers they still have in their possession and verify this against the calculation of the vendor and to the form indicating how much produce he brought into the market. Small margins are allowed. Large margins indicate the trader 'bought' vouchers from the farmers. This would mean that instead of exchanging seeds for vouchers, he exchanged vouchers and gave cash to the farmer, which is not allowed.⁸ If he passes this test, only then he can move to a third group of volunteers who receive the vouchers and give a receipt indicating the amount of money he is entitled to. The traders are asked to listen to the radio for announcements when they can come to receive their money from the ZOA office at the district headquarters. By now it is after 7 pm and everyone is tired. The market is over and another seed fair has been successfully completed.

⁷ At time of research, 1 United States (US) dollar was on average 2000 Uganda shillings.

⁸ Often charging a little 'interest' or transaction cost.

1.3.1 *Actors, relationships and discourses in the recovery process*

The events in the microcosm of the seed fair introduce the policies and practices of food security and recovery in northern Uganda. The major actors are humanitarians, the government and local people. Their activities and interactions are informed by government policies, local strategies and intervention politics. Humanitarians and the government see conflict and recovery as opportunities to change dominant modes of production by, in this case, imbuing interventions with modernisation ideals. This is visible in the vouchers earmarked specifically for improved seeds. Dressing up humanitarian aid as a pseudo-market where ‘farmers’ work on the road to receive vouchers to buy seeds exemplifies a preference for market-based development in post conflict contexts. We also see how local people do not simply follow policies but have their own strategies in terms of what they want and the mechanisms they work with. For many reasons they prefer to buy from people they know and they try to follow their own preferences for local seed varieties, rather than using the improved seeds.

These different aspects of service provision and recovery recur through the following chapters in this thesis in order to understand recovery after war. In the various papers in this thesis, I argue that it is important to follow the three main categories of actors, their different discourses and to see how they help or hinder each other, how they interpenetrate, what role is accorded to others and what they mean for the local people in terms of addressing their food security.

1.4 Scope of research

This thesis is about food security policies, programming and people’s livelihood strategies in northern Uganda. It is a case study that aims to shed light on three interconnected processes: food security and food security programming in the context of Linking Relief, Rehabilitation and Development (LRRD)⁹ and agricultural service reforms.

1.4.1 *Food security*

Food security is a concept that can be defined in very many different ways (Maxwell and Smith 1992). In this thesis, food security is defined as existing ‘when all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life’ (WFS 1998). This definition by the Rome Declaration captures the multidimensional nature of food security: availability, access, stability and utilization. It also tries to portray the relationships between access, availability, diets and nutrition as more complicated than previously thought (Pottier 1999). This definition was reaffirmed

⁹ LRRD refers to processes aimed at ensuring that humanitarian aid can lead to development, while promoting forms of development that can prevent future humanitarian crises.

in the 2009 World Summit on Food Security (Pangaribowo, Gerber *et al.* 2013) with the addition of the word 'social'.

The conceptualisation of food security has developed in recent decades. The theoretical section in Chapter Five traces this development from the food availability notion to issues of entitlements to yet another paradigm on political failure as the cause of food insecurity. Initially (after the 1974 World Food Conference) the focus was mainly on food availability at national or international level, faulting agricultural underproduction and other supply side factors. This focussed mainly on promoting national self-sufficiency which produced a marked response in increased global cereal production. Attention then shifted to the household and individual level, more so after the food crises that characterized Africa in the 1980s (Frankenberger and McCaston 1998). At this level, the debate revolved around issues of entitlements and access to food, largely inspired by Amartya Sen's (1981) work in India and the renowned book 'Poverty and Famines : an essay on entitlement and deprivation'. Entitlements are 'the set of alternative commodity bundles that a person can command in a society using the totality of rights and opportunities that he or she faces (Sen 1981 cited in Devereux 2001: 246). By converting assets and resources such as labour, one can access food through various means. While Sen showed the importance of policies and people's strategies, he was however criticised for 'privileging economic aspects of famine above socio-political determinants' (Devereux 2001: 245). Later notions consider food insecurity as an outcome of social, political and structural processes (De Waal 1997) but also as a determinant and basic foundation of social and political stability (Christoplos, Anderson *et al.* 2009). Drought has also been replaced by protracted conflict and war (or a mixture of war and drought) as the main trigger of famine (Devereux 2001: 256).

Food security programming consists of interventions aimed at food security at household level which often borrow from agricultural rehabilitation discourses. There are four major groups of activity in agricultural rehabilitation: food aid, seed aid, market development, and extension or agricultural advisory services (Christoplos, Longley *et al.* 2004; Longley, Christoplos *et al.* 2006). Food aid is commonly in the form of in-kind food transfers imported into a country in cases of shortage but this has changed to include local purchase of food for distribution to affected communities (Barrett and Maxwell 2005). Food aid is often phased down and supplanted by the provision of seeds and tools (among other agricultural inputs) as a more developmental approach (Longley, Christoplos *et al.* 2006). However, the criticism of seeds and tools as the magic bullet for food insecurity led to the development of more elaborate ways of providing aid (Remington, Maroko *et al.* 2002). Instead of direct and free seed distribution, vouchers and seed fairs - often given as part of public works or community infrastructure programmes - have become ways of stimulating local markets. Lastly, many food security programmes in post-conflict contexts incorporate elements of advisory and extension services. And while this section gives the impression of successive programming, often the modalities of agricultural rehabilitation interact with each other. Some programmes incorporate all the four components to varying degrees as Table 2.1 later shows.

1.4.2 *Linking Relief Rehabilitation and Development processes*

Food security interventions are often implemented within the framework of Linking Relief Rehabilitation and Development (LRRD) processes. LRRD refers to processes aimed at ensuring that humanitarian aid can lead to development, while promoting forms of development that can prevent future humanitarian crises. At the same time, there is a recognition that different needs, phases of response and forms of aid co-exist, and that this 'contiguuum' prevails during an indefinite period of time (Buchanan-Smith and Fabbri 2005; Christoplos 2006). In the case of food security, LRRD aims to stop and prevent worsening of situations for the people affected by the conflict or disaster and to assist them in meeting their own food needs, while supporting governments to set up the necessary policies and institutions to ensure food security for their citizens.

Traditionally, aid has been classified as divided along two mutually incompatible lines. Humanitarian aid is defined as aid and actions aimed at saving lives, alleviating suffering and maintaining or protecting human dignity. It is given as relief during or in the immediate aftermath of an emergency, and in many countries it is the domain of international NGOs and their local partners. Humanitarian aid is usually short term in nature, project based and poorly tuned to respond to broad-based needs (Wheeler, Graves *et al.* 2006).

On the contrary, development aid (also often referred to as 'development cooperation') is provided in times of perceived peace and normality, and is considered long term (Hilhorst 1997; Russo, Hemrich *et al.* 2008). It is often linked to issues of livelihoods (Slim 2000; Wheeler, Graves *et al.* 2006), and explicitly includes engagement with state institutions, while at the same time seeking their enhancement (Harmer and Macrae 2004; Harmer, Piron *et al.* 2004; Alinovi, Hemrich *et al.* 2007).

This duality in thinking attracted increasing criticism. Even though humanitarian and development aid are regarded as an either-or choice, Korf and Bauer (2002) and Hilhorst (1997) argue it is difficult to find pure emergency or development situations. Messy mixtures reflect current conflict realities. And since life in conflict entails some level of continuity, aid provided in conflict should ideally enable people to prepare for long-term rebuilding of their lives.

The criticisms raised against duality thinking led to the development of the notion of LRRD which recognises complementary strategies and objectives. Development aid should help reduce vulnerability while relief aid should provide assets and not undermine the foundation for future development (Harmer and Macrae 2004: 2). Rehabilitation is the grey area that links relief and development (Longley, Christoplos *et al.* 2006). LRRD hopes to improve the prospects for a smooth transition back to normal, state-led processes of development.

While LRRD models received a lot of attention,¹⁰ they also attracted criticism. The conceptual framework of LRRD came into disrepute by the late 1990s since it did not accommodate the chronic and recurrent nature of conflict as well as vulnerability to natural hazards (Frerks, Hillhorst *et al.* 1999). It also looked at relief, rehabilitation and development as sequential implying linear movement from one to the other while actually in some cases all three coexist at the same time. After 2000, the debate largely stagnated. Harmer and Macrae (2004) give several reasons for this, including the idea that this was mainly a debate that was dominated by humanitarian policy actors who were small players in the aid chain (Harmer and Macrae 2004: 3). In addition, the September 11th 2001 terrorist attacks would effectively shift the attention to security concerns.

Recently, the critiques of the linearity of LRRD seem to have fed into the concepts of social protection and resilience. Social protection argues for the need for long-term aid while not forgetting that emergencies happen within this longer time span. Resilience on the other hand is seen as ‘a good entry point for integrated programming and cross-sector dialogue’ for those working on disasters, climate change, peace building, development and humanitarian response (Otto 2013: 29). In the same review, Otto (: 29) adds that through developing the resilience of individuals, households and communities, ‘a humanitarian crisis, and ultimately a humanitarian response, can be avoided’ thus linking humanitarian and development aid. However, in spite of the theoretical debate having shifted to social protection and resilience, LRRD continues to be relevant in the practice of aid.

1.4.3 *Agricultural services reform*

One of the elements of LRRD in Uganda concerns a shift of focus from NGO-led projects to implementation of government policy, and hence an interest from humanitarian actors in finding ways to contribute to agricultural services reform. An understanding of LRRD in conflict-affected northern Uganda thus needs to acknowledge that the ‘D’ is about agricultural services policy and reform in Uganda.

Due to its relatively favourable agro-ecological conditions, Uganda is generally seen as a country with good potential for maintaining both national and household food security. Starting in 1987, major decentralisation and privatisation reforms in the agricultural sector influenced by the World Bank have been the norm while the country itself has, in the past, been a model for the provision of agricultural services. At the time of my research, agricultural extension was undergoing a major transformation and was an arena where the different visions for future food security were contested. By ‘extension’ (used interchangeably with ‘advisory services’), I mean the ‘systems that should facilitate the access of farmers, their organizations

¹⁰ There were various variants of this including developmental relief. Harmer and Macrae (2004) talk of even first and second generations of LRRD.

and other market actors to knowledge, information and technologies; facilitate their interaction with partners in research, education, agri-business, and other relevant institutions; and assist them to develop their own technical, organizational and management skills and practices' (Christoplos 2010: 3).¹¹

Agricultural advisory services have been the 'object' of numerous reforms (Rivera and Rasheed Sulaiman 2009). Changes in agricultural extension (discussed below) are driven by multiple objectives that may include:

- improving rural livelihoods (and not only food security)
- reducing poverty
- responding to globalization and its impact on unorganised small- and medium-scale farmers
- making systems more responsive to farmer needs; increased accountability to farmers by service providers
- promoting economic transformation

(Group 1999; Swanson 2006; Rivera and Rasheed Sulaiman 2009).

The provision of agricultural extension services has been explicitly linked to improving food security and livelihoods for the majority of rural farmers. The major strategy in attaining livelihood security is to increase and improve production, productivity and access to markets. To achieve this, farmers need good and accurate information and advice.

At the core of the changing structure of agricultural advisory services is the concern with the governance structure of the services (Faure, Desjeux *et al.* 2012). This touches on the relationship between the state, the individual and the service provider. Extension used to be largely provided by the state public extension service - a system considered inefficient and ineffective by some (see Klerkx, de Grip *et al.* 2006 for elaboration).

With the introduction of structural adjustment programmes by the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, countries were obliged to scale down government expenditure on public services including extension and subsidies on agricultural inputs. Decentralisation and privatisation of extension services was envisioned as a solution (Neuchatel Group 1999) to the poorly functioning public service. Increasingly, services are no longer centrally controlled by the state but privately provided, market controlled and in some cases like Uganda, decentralised. Different actors and stakeholders often have different demands (Chipeta 2006) and one of the justifications of privatisation is that it could solve the problem where extension workers were caught between the competing demands of their employer

¹¹ As Christoplos (2010) notes this currently includes an ever-increasing list of activities and roles ranging from training to conflict mediation. The aim is to provide necessary information and advisory services.

and the farmer (Klerkx, de Grip *et al.* 2006). Privatisation would promote increased control of services by farmers and improved accountability to farmers.

Notions of demand and market-driven extension started to dominate in the early 2000s. Privatised extension suits an agricultural model where markets specialise in a number of high value crops (Swanson 2006), so that end users (farmers) can pay the private sector extension agents (Birner and Anderson 2007) and market prices for inputs. Extension becomes a demand driven service where providers are accountable to their clients who ideally have free choice of providers i.e. a service provision market (Chipeta 2006).

Privatisation brought with it new concerns, and market failures and imperfections were some of those. Particular kinds of extension services are considered a public good that people are not willing to pay for (Birner and Anderson 2007). Of greater concern to this thesis is the question of whose interests are served by the private and demand-driven service (Christoplos 2010). Christoplos (2010) talks of hundreds of millions of poor farmers, particularly women, who are unlikely to access privatised services.¹² At the same time, I want to consider the choices available to local authorities and the question arises as to whether they can prioritise extension services amidst other pressing concerns (Farrington, Christoplos *et al.* 2002).

In addition to privatisation, other options have been conceptualised. Birner and Anderson (2007) propose a sector that comprises non-governmental organizations and farmer-based organizations as providers and/or financiers of extension. At the same time since many farmers are not organised, the role of the state has slowly crept back into extension services. Christoplos (2010) and Klerkx, de Grip *et al.* (2006) argue that state funding is important to ensure extension services serve public goods and safeguard the provision of goods that are in the public interest. It should thus maintain a regulatory and supervisory role including that of the relationships between the various parties. However, the question that many of these authors forget is what the state really is and whose interests does it serve?

Currently, what is referred to as extension services entails pluralistic approaches that vary from area to area, from one context to another in which the state, the individual and the service provider have varied roles (Rivera and Rasheed Sulaiman 2009; Christoplos 2010). This leads to different scenarios ranging from responsibility of the state for service delivery to completely outsourced services where the state only has a regulatory role. We see service provision then as mechanisms that 'are the result of a social construction that reflects the characteristics of relationships between actors' (Faure, Desjeux *et al.* 2012: 468-469). These actors, as we show in this thesis, include the state, individual farmers or farmers in groups, donors, the extension service provider, and even humanitarian organisations.

¹² The challenges of privatisation are explained more in details by for instance, Klerkx, de Grip *et al.* (2006).

1.5 Research questions

This research aims at understanding processes of food security in recovering Pader district northern Uganda. The main question is:

‘How do local people through their practices and institutional arrangements address food insecurity, and how does this relate to the development of local government’s agricultural departments and services, and to aid interventions in de-fragilising northern Uganda?’¹³

To answer the question, I explored the interfaces of people’s everyday lives (and their local institutions) on the one hand, and on the other hand the meso-level institutions they relied on, such as the district government and its organizations (mainly production and agricultural advisory services) and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs). I thus focussed on the domains of local adaptation and maladaptation, service governance and humanitarian responses and interventions.

To accomplish this exploration I was guided by the following sub-questions:

1. What institutional arrangements and practices for food security have people developed and how have they been affected by conflict?
2. How do local people integrate the interventions by various agencies in their day-to-day livelihoods? What other factors impact food security practices in the transition context?
3. How do the implementation modalities and practices that aid agencies and governments use translate into practice and affect various social groups?
4. What are the dynamics of the interactions between intervening agencies (aid agencies, government)? What influence do they have on food security and agricultural rehabilitation in the region?

1.6 Theory

Informed by the question and the scope that focuses on programmes, policies and people’s strategies, this section provides the theoretical concepts of policy, interventions and livelihoods as used in this thesis. Each individual article in the thesis also contains a theoretical section. Trying not to repeat these here, I give the broader analytical background that underpins the whole thesis.

¹³ Processes of integrating northern Uganda into the rest of Uganda.

1.6.1 Actor oriented approach

This thesis uses an actor-oriented approach (Giddens 1984; Long 2001) as a meta-theory to understand social phenomena of which recovery efforts in northern Uganda are an example. The approach departs from the central point of view that social actors have agency. Rooted in social constructionist theories (Long 2001), agency is a notion that postulates that actors are not entirely passive or 'victims' of social change or interventions, but are 'actors' who shape, inform and act upon interventions or structures in their day-to-day life (Long 1992: 22-23; Long 2001). This helps in understanding the diversity of experiences and outcomes.

Agency is composed of social relations and only becomes effective through them (Long 1992: 22). Key to this notion are the processes and practices through which arrangements and ordering is achieved or constructed. Actors socially negotiate by enrolling others in their projects using a variety of means and strategies including coercive violence, written statements, formal and informal interactions, and everyday gossiping (Hilhorst and Serrano 2010). In this process, institutions and rules are produced as a result of people's interactions. In order to understand the outcome of the interactions between various actors, it is important to understand the interests, practices and actions of the various actors as constraining and producing the context in which they act (Bakewell 2000: 109).

Policy and governance

Sen long ago pointed that food security is much more dependent on appropriate policies and governance than it is about how much fertiliser to apply. This is why it is important to look at policy, policy formation and how policy drives efforts.

Development programmes predominantly reflect notions of modern organisations that assume planned intervention as linear. Accordingly, policy is often assumed as the rational, linear and systematic implementation of determined goals and the outcome or end result of a purposeful course of action (Colebatch 2002: 49; Colebatch 2009). However, policies are often contested in practice and do not take a linear direction or work as planned. In this thesis therefore, although what is put on paper matters, an additional interest is how policy gets socially defined and is shaped along the way and in practice. Policy, in my view is a process (Mosse 2004), where the policy as put on paper gets interpreted, translated and acted upon by different actors along the chain of implementation, in such a way that it may diverge, transform or gain additional properties on the way. It is therefore important not to take policy at face value, but to follow what happens to its objectives and modalities on the way.

One arena where policy is shaped includes the local district level. Interest in district governments and their technical departments, and especially the local administrator, the extension worker and other actors is important. Although their adaptation to the contexts in which they function may not be confined to the good governance rhetoric of donors, their adaptive capacity (Christoplos, Anderson *et al.*

2009) and commitment (Parkinson 2009) is imperative in the success or failure of (agricultural) service provision at a sub-national level. As Gupta (1995: 378) notes, for most people 'the most immediate context for encountering the state is provided by their relationship with government bureaucracies at the local level'.

Understanding policy in practice is therefore about understanding the everyday practices of local bureaucrats (Gupta 1995). Particularly of interest here is that most post conflict areas either due to processes of conflict or otherwise are awash with non-state actors. These may include humanitarian organisations, the church, or local people's self-organized arrangements. In post-conflict contexts, evidence shows that the state is itself contested and not the prime source of rules and even not the main provider of services. Rules and services continue to be organised and provided through negotiation, with the retreat of the state and the expansion of statehood to include an increasing array of actors (Titeca and de Herdt 2011). In practice, negotiation is key and understanding the local institutional realities in a particular context is of the utmost importance. Studying this ethnographically entails paying attention to the everyday processes and practices between these various actors.

Interventions

Consistent with the actor oriented approach described above, I look at interventions as an arena in which different actors (within and outside of the aid chain) negotiate the outcomes of aid (Hilhorst and Jansen 2010). Often, the notion of humanitarian space is used to imply a site where humanitarians are the main actors and who give aid, adhering to principles such as neutrality and/or impartiality (Hilhorst and Jansen 2010). However, it is increasingly recognised that the service delivery landscape in (post) conflict areas is awash with varied actors (Menkhaus 2007). These may seek to shape and influence aid or even service delivery in these contexts. The understanding of interventions therefore needs to start with recognising the dynamics of how various groups of actors play a role in livelihood processes. Thus competing claims about entitlements to resources (including aid) and power always play a role.

A shift in attention from models of aid to the empirical and everyday realities of aid in practice starts with a focus on how interventions work in practice rather than starting with the principles of aid. In this thesis, I therefore depart from the view that the realities and outcomes of aid often depend on how actors at point of service delivery - aid recipients, donors, field staff, government representatives, NGOs and others - interpret the context, the needs, their own roles and each other (Hilhorst and Serrano 2010) and how these are anchored in ongoing political, economic and socio-cultural processes. In this kind of context where different actors manoeuvre to realize their own projects (*Ibid*), it is inevitable that interventions will have unintended consequences. In most cases they become political, if not in their intentions, then in their effects.

Livelihoods

Sen's entitlements notion laid the groundwork for livelihoods as well as the recognition that food insecurity constitutes just one part of people's lives (Frankenberger and McCaston 1998; Devereux and Maxwell 2001; Devereux 2009). This led to an interest in livelihoods and a broader focus in understanding 'how different people in different places live' (Scoones 2009: 172). As Christoplos (2009) notes, a better starting point than the narrow production perspective becomes how people struggle to ensure regular access to food through increasingly complex livelihood strategies within diverse and complex economies.

Amongst the many existing varieties of livelihood frameworks, perhaps the most commonly used one (at least in the past) is that by the Department for International Development (DFID) Sustainable Livelihoods Framework (SLF) (Schafer 2002). It starts with people's strategies as the entry point for analysis. The key concepts of the framework are assets (what people own or can command under the five types of capital: human, social, natural, physical and financial aspects), livelihood strategies and outcomes. Policies, institutions and processes provide the context in which livelihoods are pursued and emphasize how these policies, institutions and processes determine how well poor people are able to deal with the vulnerable situations (shocks, trends, seasonality) in which they live (Christoplos 2009). The Sustainable Livelihoods Framework thus informs the understanding of the strategies through which individuals or groups address food insecurity and (re)organize (or not) their livelihoods to accommodate interventions.

This shift to livelihoods and the use of livelihood approaches or frameworks has not been without problems. Studies on livelihoods have the tendency to portray food security as a livelihood outcome (DFID 1999; Collinson, Bhatia *et al.* 2002), as opposed to exploring it as an ongoing dynamic process. Understanding livelihoods or even interest in livelihood approaches in areas affected by conflict, political instability and/or fragile states have increasingly gained prominence (Schafer 2002). The interest has been generated out of the need to move beyond addressing the immediate short-term needs of the population (saving lives) to long-term goals of protecting, promoting, restoring and building livelihoods (Longley, Christoplos *et al.* 2003). Some authors emphasize the need to highlight the vulnerability and risk that are a result of conflict or violence (Lautze and Raven-Roberts 2006). Longley and Maxwell (2003) identify forced displacement, political uncertainty, insecurity, broader institutional factors (as related to structural causes of the conflict) as some of the changes that feature in such conditions and which need to be 'centrally' incorporated into the framework. Others stress the need for incorporating a political economy perspective that focuses on power and wealth relations that can help reveal how these political processes impact on livelihoods and recovery of different groups of people (Schafer 2002; Collinson 2003). Indeed, the process of recovery, and how successful it is, may not be comprehensible without understanding how it is shaped by conflict, politics, and perceptions of future security. These considerations are well

taken into account in the definition by Ellis (2000: 10), which will be adopted in this thesis. He defines livelihoods as 'including assets, activities, and the access to these mediated by institutions and social relations that determine the living gained by an individual or household'.

1.6.2 Social domains

In this thesis the main categories of actors are humanitarian/aid workers, government workers and the local people. Each of these is treated as a category in some ways but they are also fragmented and different in and of themselves. This is captured in the idea of the social domain.

Social domains are areas of social life where ideas and practices concerning particular issues or concerns are exchanged, shared and more or less organized because of a certain proximity, physically or discursively, in the ways references are made to these concerns (Hilhorst 2003). Domains are thus areas organized by reference to a series of interlocking practices and values (Villarreal 1994). The issues here can consist of food security, disaster risk and recovery after war.

The three groups of actors broadly represent their various domains. Here the domains of interest are those of local adaptation or maladaptation, strategies and practices, service governance, and aid responses and interventions. These domains are an analytical separation that helps us to understand the dynamics of food security in northern Uganda.

At the same time, it is important to emphasize that developments in northern Uganda partly stem from, on the one hand, contradictions within these domains (such as the diverging practices of humanitarian aid, or different strategies employed by men and women), and on the other hand from overlap and interpenetration between these domains (such as the smoothing of contradictions because staff of NGOs also works for government). Actors within a domain share a repertoire of practices and language but domains are also characterised by contradictions, conflict and negotiation. Despite the different pedigrees there are also convergences in discourses between domains and actors (with multiple identities) often navigate the domains. To understand food security and recovery then, I argue that it is crucial to have a grounded understanding of these multiple relationships and the embedded interdependences where personal loyalties, multiple subjectivities and discourses are key. It is also useful to see how, in a pure form, different discourses evolve around what is happening in northern Uganda. As I will show, the findings point out that what is happening is because on the one hand there is overlap but there are also big differences between those different discourses and some of the problems we observe are because in these different domains of action, actors continue to work with their own discourse and at the same time they borrow from each other's discourses.

1.7 Methodology

This PhD study is grounded in an ethnographic - interactive tradition that focuses on interfaces. Ethnography is the study of people's actions and accounts in their everyday context. It entails long term immersion and participation in people's lives, explicitly or implicitly (Hammersley and Atkinson 2007; Creswell 2012). Ethnography illuminates 'the social world that we all use in our mundane lives' (Hammersley and Atkinson 2007: 4). For me, this entailed initial exploratory research which culminated into a long-term stay in Pader District doing both ethnography of the people as well as *aidnography* - the ethnography of aid policy and practice (Marcussen and Gould 2004; Mosse 2005).

To study interventions and policy further requires discourse analysis. Discourse analysis is important in studying interventions, interactions and interfaces. Discourses are a particular way of thinking, arguing or understanding of the world. They are an ensemble of ideas, concepts, and categories through which meaning is given to phenomena (Apthorpe and Gasper 1996). They shape, inform, distinguish or help to legitimise certain practices. This is because alternative ways of understanding things are excluded, while specific understandings become dominant. Hence, discourses are mind-sets that have very tangible effects on the way realities can evolve. At the same time, I acknowledge that there are always multiple discourses, in parallel or in contestation with each other (Long 1992; Hilhorst 2003). Here I study discourses by making explicit the assumptions in government, aid workers and people's analyses and strategies, and explore their implications in the practice of interventions and development.

To view policy or aid interventions as a negotiated product calls for attention to interfaces between different social fields (Long and Ploeg 1989). Social interfaces have to do with everyday encounters of different actors or social orders (Long 1989) and an exploration of their interactions and the dynamics of these encounters. Interface analysis then requires an exploration of how these interactions evolve, influence and are influenced by the various actors and/or institutions. The analysis focuses on points of intersection of individuals or parties with often conflicting life worlds, the linkages between actors with different interests and how the interactions evolve, influence and reshape the actor's goals, interests and power relations (Long 1989; Long 2001).

1.7.1 The organisation of the research

My research is part of the IS Academy on Human Security in Fragile States programme. The IS Academies are partnerships between departments at the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs and university departments, involving a number of interconnected activities around a policy theme. The IS Academy on Fragile States is a collaborative programme of academic, governmental and non-governmental actors, coordinated by the special chair group of Humanitarian Aid and

Reconstruction at Wageningen University. The actors include the Stabilisation and Humanitarian Aid (DSH) Unit of the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and five NGOs, including ZOA. The aim of the International Development Academy (IS Academy) on Human Security in Fragile States is to understand better the processes of socio-economic recovery and the roles of formal and informal institutions in conditions of state fragility.

In my case I worked with the Dutch organisation ZOA.¹⁴ ZOA is a relief and recovery organisation that works in conflict and disaster affected communities. It was established in the early 1970s. For the first 20 years of its existence, ZOA focused its attention on refugees and Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) living in camps. After Cambodian and Laotian refugees started returning home from Thailand in 1992-3, ZOA increasingly started focusing on providing assistance to people returning home. Currently, ZOA works in about 14 countries in Africa and Asia, in livelihoods and food security, water and sanitation, and education sectors. ZOA started its operations in northern Uganda in 2007 to support returning communities in rebuilding their lives, focusing on education, water and sanitation, food security, economic development and civic education. ZOA Uganda works in four areas in Uganda; the work in (the case study) Pader District is their longest running and largest programme area. This is however changing as they are phasing out of Pader District.

1.7.2 *Interactive research with ZOA*

Interactive research features ‘research practices involved in collaboration *with* organizations, in which dialogue and interaction with staff are central in shaping the research process’ (Van Leeuwen 2008: 17-18). Knowledge is viewed as co-produced or negotiated between the researcher and the research subjects (Van der Haar, Heijmans *et al.* 2013). The subjects can include local communities, aid organisations, governments or social movements. And as Van der Haar, Heijmans *et al.* (2013: 25) note ‘the precise nature of the links between researchers and organisations may vary widely, from formal, contractual arrangements serving the researcher’s purposes - perhaps including a right of the organisations to be informed or to object to research outcomes with a view to protecting their work and reputation - to set-ups in which every step of the process is collaborative’.

It is a research approach that may have certain advantages. Van der Haar, Heijmans *et al.* (2013) emphasise that this would include access to the field (e.g. in cases of open conflict) or information - particularly where certain information is treated as a private good. It means the findings stand a better chance of being put into practice if they result from a shared knowledge construction process and the

¹⁴ <http://www.zoa-international.com/>

research participants get opportunities to reflect on ongoing activities. In this sense it can be considered a variant of action research (Herr and Anderson 2005).

Interactive research also means that the researcher should be explicitly aware of competing knowledge claims and interests and that the research participants may seek to influence or shape the outcome of the research (Van der Haar, Heijmans *et al.* 2013). Reflexivity about the research, one's own position, and the position of others is therefore a central requirement of the process. This is not very different from ethnography, which also compels research to be reflexive. Ethnography is about understanding an 'external world both in terms of the social processes we observe and the external forces we discern' while at the same time being part of that world and having a relation with those we study (Burawoy 2003: 655). Hammersley and Atkinson (2007) also call for us to recognise we are part of the social world we look at. However, interactive research puts this reflexivity more at the fore and takes a more political view of this process.

So what was the nature of my interactive research arrangement with ZOA ?

- *Interactions on the research questions*

At the start of the research it was clear it would concern food security, but the specific research interest evolved over time in discussions throughout 2009 and 2010.¹⁵ For ZOA headquarters it was of interest to understand people's perspective of recovery and interventions.

- *Selection of the case study areas and programmes*

The choice of country (Uganda), region (northern Uganda) and programme of study were the subject of discussion and negotiation with the country programme (Map 2.1).¹⁶ One of the case studies (Yin 2009) was their largest and longest running programme on food security and livelihoods and lived up to Tavory and Timmermans (2009: 248-249) description of 'a storyline with multiple protagonists, complicated and convoluted sequences of action, and a plot that may sometimes span several years of participant observation. It is described in detail in Chapter Five while Chapter Three draws on some of its components. In 2013, we documented a fragment of this case study programme in a short film. The film follows two of the case study households, their participation and experiences in the programme and ZOA's efforts in promoting recovery.¹⁷

¹⁵ Food security was then a core theme in the IS Academy and a core sector of operation and interest for ZOA.

¹⁶ Out of several possible countries, the Uganda country team showed more interest in learning from their own practice.

¹⁷ The premier was on 16th April 2014 at Humanity House, The Hague, the Netherlands. The film can be found on the website of the special chair Humanitarian Aid and Reconstruction or using the link <http://www.wageningenur.nl/en/video/Socioeconomic-Recovery-in-South-Sudan-and-Uganda.htm>

- *Selection of sub-counties of interest*

The choice of Atanga and Angagura was based on discussions and the knowledge that in 2009 the aid agency was withdrawing from several other sub-counties and consolidating its programme mainly in these two sub-counties for the second phase of funding (Map 2.2 shows location of sub-counties).

- *Involvement in spin-off research activities*

I participated in an evaluation of the Pader programme in 2010, a few months after the start of my fieldwork. The evaluation was conducted, at the request of ZOA Uganda, by a staff member from ZOA Netherlands, I and a local team. The evaluation looked at the first phase of the programme and gave me a strong introduction to 7 of the 28 sub-counties that made up Pader and the newly created Agago District. It tackled resettlement and return issues, and access to basic services and livelihoods after return.

- *Discussion and validation of findings*

The data collection and analysis related to my research remained my own responsibility - although as the findings came up these were often shared and discussed with different people within the organisation at the headquarters, within the Pader programme and with the management at Kampala. However, the analysis in this thesis is independent of the host organisation. In later sections of this chapter, I reflect on this interactive research process.

1.7.3 Data collection

This study was predominantly ethnographic and thus mostly qualitative. I started the fieldwork - which is qualified as the data collection phase of a research process (Mason 2002: 206) - through a visit in 2009, to familiarize myself with the area and discuss the research with ZOA staff and government officials. In 2010 I made short visits to the North between May and October. During this time, under an IS Academy arrangement, I coordinated a review of the development programme and project funding for northern Uganda, in the sectors of education and justice, law and order for the Dutch embassy in Kampala.¹⁸ Although the topics were quite different from my research, this fieldwork provided broad insights into development in northern Uganda, and a first encounter with key informants for my research in the government.¹⁹ Decentralisation, the working of local government and service delivery concerns (part of Chapter Four) are partly shaped by impressions and data collected during this review. Interactions with ministries and donors gave me an impression of how the North was understood, framed in policy, and the effects in practice and interventions.

¹⁸ This was in form of a 4 month internship.

¹⁹ It involved over 9 district local governments with 3 of these been the mother districts that constituted Acholiland.

My extended stay in Pader started in October 2010. Initially I started with exploratory work where I visited random villages and households. For five months, I joined project staff of ZOA, other organisations and the district government on visits to the 'field'. As Hammersley and Atkinson (2007) note, these first few months were unstructured with no clear indication of which actors were to be shadowed or where observation should begin.

Where appropriate and possible, qualitative researchers can use quantitative methods (Seligmann 2005; Silverman 2006). After the selection of Atanga sub-county (Map 2.2), I carried out a survey in March 2011. The survey was meant to form the basis of my in-depth household studies and systematize my ethnography. Whereas ethnography is usually associated with following interesting leads as they come up, I found it very fruitful to retain spontaneity and yet organize the data gathering in a systematic way. This was concentrated in Atanga, but for following the NGO intervention I stretched the research to include the sub-county of Angagura, by joining field staff travelling to Angagura for interviews and participant observation, for example.

I chose two villages for the survey and in-depth follow-up of households in Atanga. The two villages i.e. Wil pii Ngora and Wii Lungoyi varied in terms of distance from the main camp and in settlement patterns (Map 2.3). In both, I undertook a survey in early march 2011 with the help of four research assistants. For the survey, we went door to door - often consulting an exhaustive list provided by the village chairman of the ruling political party. Later, we used snowball - where interviewees are used to identify other potential subjects - to identify and trace village members that still resided in the camps. The data was later analysed using Microsoft Excel and Statistical Package for the Social Sciences SPSS.

From the surveyed households, I selected 30 households for more in-depth follow-up and systematic ethnography.²⁰ This selection was purposely based on a broad set of variables to ensure the households represented as many and varied experiences as possible. Research in post-conflict areas tends to single out particular groups for focus. In northern Uganda, for instance, child soldiers or former child rebels (Annan, Brier *et al.* 2009; Snodgrass and Obika 2011; Vermeij 2011) or those perceived as most deeply affected by conflict have received a lot of attention.²¹ This tendency biases scholarship on northern Uganda in two ways. It leads to the neglect of people who do not identify with these groups, even though they may have been largely affected by the conflict. It also leads to a tendency to focus too much on the effects of conflict to explain people's current conditions. Departing from the focus of these studies, I chose to take the population at large as my starting point and thus the choice of households relates mainly to the types of livelihoods they develop and their participation in recovery programmes.

²⁰ 1 household became difficult to find and we dropped them from the sample.

²¹ <http://www.securelivelihoods.org/>

Working mostly with one research assistant between April 2011 and June 2012, we visited the selected households once every two or three months.²² In total there were seven rounds of visits resulting in 206 individual household visits in the two villages. As part of the visit we started with a general question on 'What's been happening since last month?' Or 'How have things been since the last visit' I found this useful as it gave people an opportunity to talk about anything of importance to them. This could be, for instance, health-related issues that might have destabilised their crop cultivation practices. It was also an opportunity to catch up with events in the villages as some would mention, for example, a meeting with the local council members, a new NGO that had visited, a security- or weather-related event.

A semi-structured interview then followed capturing issues on land production, food, sources of income and work, social interaction and participation in local and community organisations, participation in government or humanitarian organisations, among others. As the same questionnaire was used in every visit, this enabled me to build a year round database on livelihood strategies. The third part of the interview was about a particular topic that I wanted to gather in-depth information about. This was, for example, on the conflict history and experience, return and resettlement, and perception of government extension services. Although not intentional, in many of these interviews both spouses were present or were consulted as needed. Paying attention to their individual differences in the framing or talking about issues and activities helped me look at the household also as an arena.

Life histories were constructed with each of the 29 households dating to the pre-war and displacement periods including their livelihoods at that time. Outside of these prolonged case studies, numerous other visits were made to households in these villages and in the neighbouring sub-counties, and in the district. Visits to the newly-formed district took place mainly during the evaluation, in meetings, or when project staff were meeting project beneficiaries. I also met groups of people on auction and market days, during funerals and rites, while people often passed by for a chat when I was staying in one of the trading centres.

In addition, I used group methods. These included focus group discussions and historical analysis with various groups of people in the villages. I attended clan meetings when and where allowed. These were the times when I interviewed village, clan and sub-county leaders. The 2011 election also provided opportunities to attend political rallies. I visited many of these groups during their work on public works or meetings where they met extension workers. These various methods enabled me to triangulate information.

Formal and informal key informant interviews were carried out with the aid agency and its workers. I was interested in how they made sense of what they were

²² Initially it was a visit once every month to build rapport with them. This was later reduced. Also once in a while I worked with an extra research assistant for instance during the seed fairs.

doing or implementing, or just general events in the villages and what meaning they ascribed to this. When I stayed at the district headquarters, I shared an office (within the ZOA compound) with a number of extension workers and project officers. These were useful opportunities for feedback or just discussions on events within the villages in and outside of the programmes. In several instances, I used the programme advisor and the liaison person with the IS Academy (a staff member at ZOA headquarters) as a sounding board for what I heard or saw. Such informal one-to-one conversations that I had with many staff both at headquarters and within the Uganda programme yielded interesting perspectives not only for the organisation but also for the research. Outside of these interviews I held numerous other interviews with other aid agencies and local government workers who worked in the case study sub-county and within the district. I developed close relationships with local government district workers from the production directorate and more so the agricultural office, others in planning and administration, accompanying them to events to which they were invited by the NGOs or for government programmes they were implementing. Some of these interviews were recorded with consent and transcribed using the transcription software F4. Relevant documents from the agencies and district production directorate and agricultural offices were reviewed to look for evidence of the operation of the local government through time, and to look at programmes implemented. Information generated included how situations and the local people were framed, the nature and type of interventions and the assumptions in programmes. In addition these documents provided information about the social settings being studied and their larger contexts as well as information about these organisations (Hammersley and Atkinson 2007).

Participant observation is a method central to ethnography (Mason 2002; Hammersley and Atkinson 2007; Creswell 2012) or even synonymous with proper ethnography in which the researcher takes on a role in the social situation under observation (Delamont 2004). Atkinson and Hammersley (1994: 249) quoting their earlier work, note that actually any type of social science research is a form of participant observation because we are part of the social world we study. They suggest that it should actually be taken as a 'mode of being-in-the-world characteristic of researchers'. Some of the events I was able to immerse myself in, with my role varying from a complete observer to a complete participant (Hammersley and Atkinson 2007) included numerous training events, fourteen seed fairs, review meetings, workshops, farmer's open days, World Food Day celebrations, and stakeholder meetings. I became a regular at the District Council meetings and cluster meetings getting involved, for example, in World Food Day celebration preparations. In each of these milieus, I examined how various actors interpret the context, their own roles and those of others, their constructions and understandings of situations confronted by, at times appropriating to pursue own interests and projects beyond the spoken need of enabling continued service provision.

1.8 Reflection on methodology: my experience with interactive research

Despite the added value of interactive research, my own experiences with the methodology were mixed even though I maintained good relations with ZOA throughout. In terms of ownership and involvement in the research, there seemed to be more ownership of the questions at headquarters level and even there amongst particular individuals, than in the office in Uganda. I also had to negotiate interesting insights and lines of inquiry that did not seem to be of interest to the organisation. For instance, when I indicated interest in the local government, one of the responses I got was that this had nothing to do with the host organisation. This was remarkable given the fact that the agency was already working in a mode of 'handing services over to the government'. However, interactive research is about flexibility and compromise and we mostly managed to find a way of working towards a common view in the end. The informal discussions and visits with field staff proved most useful.

According to Van der Haar, Heijmans *et al.* (2013), interactive research may involve some misunderstandings and disagreements. Based on my experience, I prefer to think of it more as a process beset with politics. For instance, several times during discussions on the preliminary findings from the research on the programme implemented, it emerged that the findings did not correspond with the expected results in terms of the programme. The inference was often made that the field staff were not doing their work well. This made me reluctant to give further feedback unless when explicitly asked to do so. At the same time, I came to realise that politics is one way research participants make sense of what they do and even how, when confronted with situations that do not match their expectations, they reconcile these with reality through politics rather than confronting their own assumptions.

These kinds of research micro-politics meant that I struggled a lot with my own positioning within ZOA. This was especially triggered when my actions would reflect back on to the staff with whom I had developed friendships. In some instances, I preferred to restrict my involvement to participant observation. In addition, I realised I was naïve about how much could change or even how little interest there is at times in changing things in response to research. I learnt to give feedback but not expect it to lead to immediate change. However, there were opportunities when I discussed with some managers the interesting challenges they were facing in the programme - challenges which had come up in interviews with other organisations. In these instances, I forwarded some ideas and contacts, encouraging the staff to talk to the other organisations.

When I look back on this process, the interactive arrangement with ZOA can perhaps best be summarised by what Van Leeuwen (2008) describes as some collaborative and participatory elements without having full shared ownership of the research and more importantly its findings and outcomes. Furthermore, one of my experiences with interactive research is that there is no such thing as an

organisation per se. Rather what we have are different individuals with different opinions. In the research, this involves different levels of shared ownership of the same research. This includes people at the headquarters level of the organisation and at the Uganda country programme level. And even within the Uganda programme and at the Pader field level, different individuals at different times have different levels of ownership of different aspects of the research. With all these individuals, interactive research has been a process of negotiating and re-negotiating relationships all through the course of the research.

Basically, this interactive research was an evolving and learning process for me. I was able to witness people who are dedicated to their jobs and what they do - trying to improve the lives of those they work with and to share in their everyday struggles in a post-conflict context.

In addition, a major aim of the IS academy was to foster shared learning, exchange and to link research, policy and practice. In this, there is often an assumption that it is easy to balance academic research and to adhere to academic requirements while at the same time being useful to the organisations involved. Perhaps the question I encountered most was, 'What recommendations do you have for us?' Academics are poorly suited to respond to such a request as we tend to leave our findings at the findings stage, while some of our recommendations are far removed from the realities that humanitarian interventions deal with. The opposite is also true. It is crucial, I think, to separate the two as far as possible. I adhere to academic standards in my papers and ensure they are theoretically grounded where necessary. With ZOA, I found that my work proved especially useful to them in discussions and reflections during informal everyday conversations. However, this is not to say that academic research and practice cannot be combined. A few instances do come about when combining is possible. For instance, a literature review I did during proposal development proved useful during the development of the ZOA food security policy paper. ZOA also lived up to its claim to be a learning organisation, when they followed up Chapter Five with additional short-term research by ZOA Netherlands (and implemented it within the framework of the IS Academy) into labour issues and how best to support livelihoods in various other contexts in which they worked. This involved their own field staff in Burundi and eastern Democratic Republic of Congo, and has led to the adoption of new policies and guidelines for incorporating labour constraints and productivity in the design of livelihood interventions.

1.8.1 My positioning as a researcher generally

Issues of positionality and field relations matter in collaborative research settings (Herr and Anderson 2005) and generally in any ethnographic work (Hammersley and Atkinson 2007). Relationships to various participants change throughout a study - varying at various phases of the research. Following the advice of Herr and Anderson (2005), this nuanced positioning of oneself along the insider-outsider continuum is something one figures out in practice. I thus learnt to put on different

and multiple ‘hats’. Within ZOA I became both a researcher and a friend. However, in situations that involved ‘outsiders’ like other aid agencies and the government, during meetings for example, I was introduced as a student researcher. This was the same in the villages, where I made sure I was not associated with ZOA nor mistaken as a staff member of ZOA or any other organisation. It was important for me to develop relations in the villages without any expectations and this worked well. My research assistant and I became common sights in the villages. In some villages, I was fondly referred to as *anyaka* (‘my daughter’) by the elderly members of the households and some clan leaders. But to many others I developed more of a distant ‘waving relationship’. This was a phrase used by a ZOA manager who ran for a political office. She said that whenever we were in the vehicle with her and failed to wave at people, we cost her votes.

However, incidences happened too that were constant reminders that I was at the same time an outsider. These included comments like *muno* (light one or foreigner)²³ and the fact that I never spoke fluent *Lwo* (or Acholi). I learnt *Lwo* is a tonal language and being a Bantu this proved problematic. At the start of fieldwork, when I asked questions, these were often interpreted as statements and vice versa. Despite understanding the language to a considerable extent, I chose to have a research assistant that also did language translation.

1.9 Outline of the thesis

The rest of this thesis is organised as follows, with Figure 1.1 providing the graphical presentation of the thesis. Chapter Two introduces the setting of the research. Pader district broadly falls into the Acholi region that bore the brunt of the long-term conflict in northern Uganda. This chapter also discusses the conflict in northern Uganda in more detail and highlights its historical specificity and forced displacement as key features. It also follows the return process and the setting up of the humanitarian regime in northern Uganda.

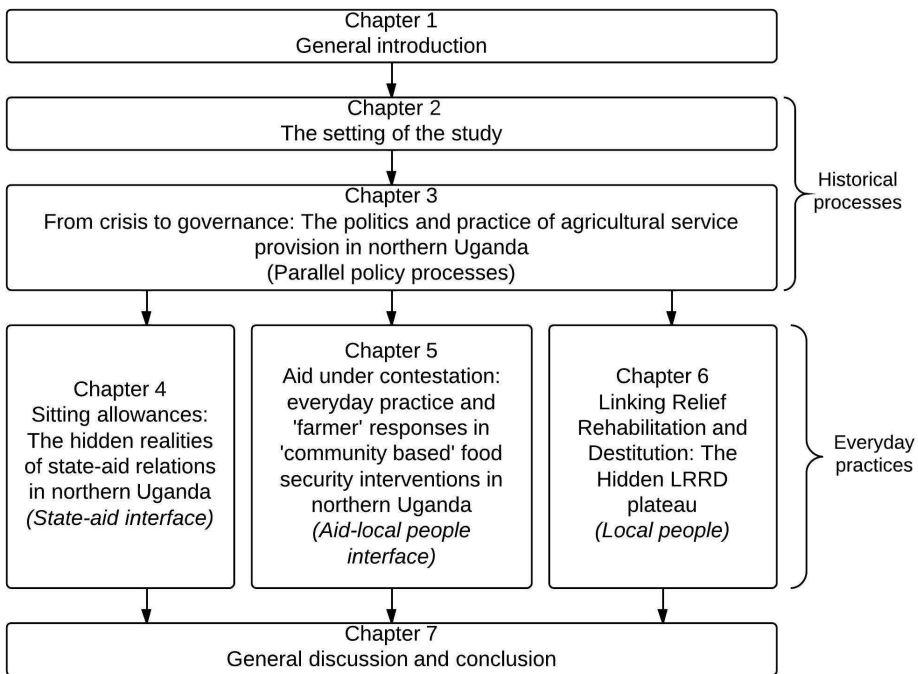
Chapters Three to Six are the empirical chapters of this thesis and where the findings are balanced between broader institutional processes and household perspectives. These chapters also move from narrow issues like sitting allowances to broader policy concerns.

Specifically, Chapter Three addresses the question on the major policies, institutions and practices of the government and the humanitarians. We investigate how national food security policies have been implemented in the North of the country and the role of building household food security in the broader processes of post conflict recovery. Parallel to this we trace the development of the humanitarian regime in northern Uganda.

²³ This was often used by school age boys after an incident when I chased them away for making noise on top of a tree next to my room on a Saturday morning.

To study the interaction between aid agencies and the government in more detail and see how this interaction works out in everyday practice, Chapter Four zooms in on the practice of sitting allowances as a main mechanism that orders governance and service relations in the North. The chapter addresses the question of the dynamics of the interface and interactions between intervening agencies i.e. aid agencies and the local government.

Figure 1.1: Overview of the thesis



In the succeeding chapters, the focus shifts to the households. These chapters answer the questions on institutional arrangements and practices for food security and how these were affected by the conflict, the interplay of interventions and livelihoods as well as the modalities of aid and their impact.

Specifically, in Chapter Five we focus on a case study of a large-scale food security programme implemented in Pader district to unravel the interplay between aid interventions and the dynamics of livelihood strategies at the household and community levels. We follow the programme and households seeking answers to the question about why many people dropped out of aid programmes that, through farmer organisations, offered seeds (through vouchers and money) in exchange for a labour contribution to public works. The programme was aimed at improving their food security situation.

Chapter Six mainly looks at the redevelopment of livelihoods in the North from a long-term perspective following return. This includes how they are being shaped by long-term change processes. The aim of this chapter is to understand the past and present agrarian dynamics in the Acholi countryside, and their implications for livelihoods in the future.

Chapter Seven is the general discussion and conclusion, where I identify the major findings under the domains of local people and their responses, agricultural service governance and development, and humanitarian responses and interventions. It is under these three domains that we go back to the four sub-questions identified in the introduction. We then identify three cross-cutting themes and our general contribution empirically and theoretical. After a section on the contribution to the study of the methodological aspects of this research, the section ends with the implications of the research for practitioners and the government.

Chapter two: The Setting of the Study

[illegible]

32

2.2 The research area

Acholiland in northern Uganda is a region that is predominantly inhabited by the Acholi ethnic group.¹ The Acholi are classified as Nilotic (Finnström 2003) and taken to have settled in present day Acholiland around the 17th century, as part of the Nilotic migration from Sudan (Atkinson 1994).² They speak a language known as *Lwo*.³

Administratively, Acholiland covers seven districts: Gulu, Kitgum, Pader, Agago, Lamwo, Nwoya, and Amuru (Map 2.1), occupying part of the northern border of Uganda with South Sudan. The latter four districts are more recent than the 'mother' Acholi districts of Gulu, Kitgum and Pader, as the next section on conflict will show.⁴ In total, the area occupied is 11,000 square miles (Girling 1960; Atkinson 1989; Atkinson 1994) or roughly the size of Belgium (Doom and Vlassenroot 1999).⁵ It has a population of approximately 1.2 million people comprising 4.8 per cent of the total Ugandan population at the 2002 population census (UBOS 2002). Outside of the large towns of Gulu and Kitgum, most of the population lives in scattered villages, and largely depends on subsistence agriculture and livestock keeping. The area has a climate characterised by two rainy seasons and a long dry season, receiving 800 - 1400mm rainfall (FEWSNET 2010).

The thesis is mainly set within Pader district - a relatively new district in Acholiland (Map 2.2). As part of a decentralisation drive that has seen the number of districts in Uganda increase from 34 in 1990 to 112 by the end of 2011, the district was split off from Kitgum in December 2000 (PDLG 2012).⁶ This division was regarded as essential for security and services. A new and smaller administrative unit would increase access to services for the rural population and improve security in the area as Pader had emerged as a key battleground during the later years of the conflict.⁷ While my fieldwork was ongoing, Agago District was carved out of Pader

¹ Here I often use the term Acholi to refer to the people and Acholiland as the geographic area they occupy.

² In an interview with the traditional chief of Kal village on December 1 2010, the story was reiterated that the Luo came from Baar el ghazaal following the Nile river.

³ Often the term Acholi is also used to signify the language spoken in the area. Thus one can ask 'do you speak Acholi?'

⁴ Nwoya and Agago were created in 2010, Lamwo in 2009 and Amuru in 2006.

⁵ 28,400 square kilometres.

⁶ To promote efficiency of service provision, better services and empowerment of local population, decentralisation is a major public sector policy pursued under the World Bank's neo-liberal reforms. This is a process that has been well elaborated and documented elsewhere. Some like Mamdani (1996) have traced its history. Onyach-Olaa (2003) showed that despite progress and improvement in citizen engagement in the planning of projects, challenges such as technical deficiencies at the local level and differences in national priorities compared to local needs continued to persist. Francis and James (2003) have focussed on its functioning at the local level, in relation to public participation and service delivery.

⁷ Interview: former Pader Chief Administrative Officer (CAO), August 2011, Kitgum.

District in June 2010 (see Nalugo, Gyezaho *et al.* 2010). The district planner of Pader explained that the rationale for the second split was to facilitate service provision and planning, since Pader and Agago fall within two distinctly different geographical and climatic regions.

Pader district borders Gulu and Kitgum districts - which are more recognised districts in terms of the conflict and the history of northern Uganda. This is because they have a longer colonial history and have more established institutions and better infrastructure compared to Pader. Established institutions make relevant partners for humanitarian and development agencies, and the young history of institutions in Pader is therefore said to have led to a more restricted humanitarian response (Boas and Hatløy 2005). This applies to research too, with Gulu and Kitgum attracting much academic and scholarly attention whereas Pader often ends up as a footnote. The lack of academic attention is also related to the high level of insecurity during the later years of conflict.⁸ Administratively, the district (as it currently is) has one county called Aruu, 12 sub-counties, 52 Parishes and 608 villages (PDLG 2012). The district has around 250,000 inhabitants (UBOS 2002).⁹ Culturally, the district is home to one of the largest of the 52 Acholi clans - the *payira*. The district is predominantly inhabited by the Acholi ethnic tribe. A small proportion of the population of the district are Langi, another ethnic tribe who speak and understand the similar *Lwo* spoken by the Acholi. Most of the district's inhabitants are Catholics and Protestants (PDLG 2012).

At the height of the conflict, Pader town, the capital of the district which the district is named after, was a small village (Boas and Hatløy 2005), with little economic base and infrastructure (MSF 2004). According to *Médecins Sans Frontières* (MSF) (2004), even by 'mid-2004, when it received telephone coverage and an airstrip, the town is still little more than a displaced people's camp'. The report goes further to link this isolation of Pader to the fact that it was for long considered the epi-centre of Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) activity, with parts of the district believed to be under *de facto* control of the LRA in the later years of the conflict. A commonly heard response from respondents and local authorities was that in the later part of the conflict, the majority of the LRA recruits came from the area.

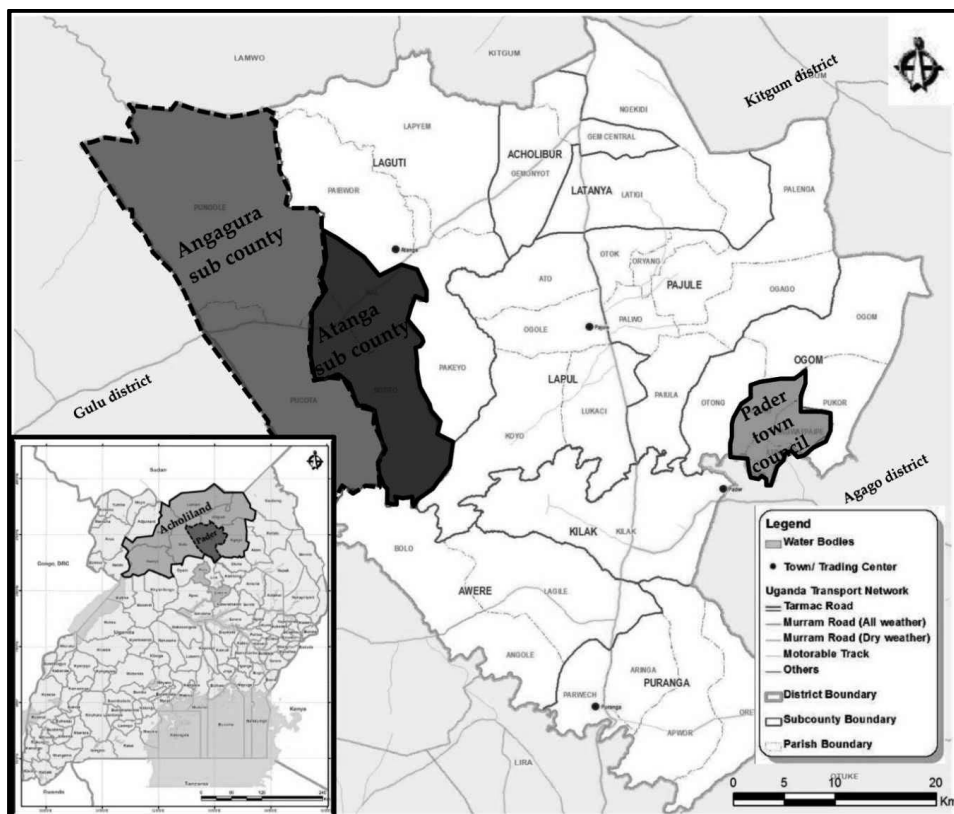
⁸ A 2005 study on war experiences decided to exclude Pader due to security concerns (see Pham, Vinck *et al.* 2005).

⁹ Figures on displaced or even estimated total population of Pader vary greatly. However, these rely on three main sources: WFP food distribution working figures, UNHCR return monitoring figures and projections based on the 2002 population figures. In 2002 WFP reported giving food aid to an estimated 271,000 in Pader (in 20 out of 31 camps). In December 2010, UNHCR Gulu office estimated the number of those displaced into camps as at 2005 to be 339,000 while their Pader Office put this at 352,862 as at 2009. These are figures that refer to the district before it was split. It is also important to note that the UNHCR and WFP estimated population figures still do not capture the totality of displaced persons but only those persons living within the original camps. Some people left the region to stay in other parts of Uganda during the displacement.

Interviewees pointed to this isolation and exemplified it with the fact that there was only one bus that served Pader directly, which frequently broke down. They related this to the slow rate of growth of businesses, such as transport, and also to the fear of the conflict and lack of infrastructure.

At the same time, growth is evident. On my initial visit in August 2009, the town was heavily reliant on a humanitarian economy. Coming back only a few months later in May 2010, the area had drastically changed with the town developing a new commercial life, and a vibrant economy - increasingly detached from humanitarian presence - thrived in the following two years. By 2012, physical planning changed the face of the town which hosts the district headquarters and many small-scale businesses continue to develop. This seems the norm in many of the former camps sites which have now turned into trading centres while the rural countryside remains largely unchanged apart from increased social services such as schools and water points and increased land clearance.

The main study sites of Atanga and Angagura are highlighted in maps at the end of this chapter.



Map 2.2: Pader District: administrative boundaries with Atanga, Angagura and Pader town council demarcated (Source: NUDC 2012)

2.3 Conflict in Acholiland and the place of northern Uganda in the broader politics of development

What is widely referred to as ‘the conflict in northern Uganda’ or ‘the LRA conflict’ is generally considered to have started in 1986 and ended in 2006 (Box 2.1). It was a complex conflict; causal factors that are identified include a political agenda of the rebel movement to topple the government, the internal break down of authority in the North, and a perceived attempt to re-establish order by the rebels through military struggles (Doom and Vlassenroot 1999; Branch 2010).

Box 2.1: Timeline of the main conflict and related events

1986	Museveni and the NRA/M capture Kampala; former supporters of government flee towards the North. Army follows with human rights abuses; start of several rebel movements.
1988-89	The neighbouring Karamajong community decimate cattle and livestock in the North; first wave of forced displacement.
1991	In March, NRA launch a ‘cordon and search operation’ code named ‘Operation North’.
1996-98	Second major wave of displacement, World Food Programme starts relief operations in northern Uganda, directed at the Acholi.
1995	In the Uganda Constitution, the government army changes from National Resistance Army (NRA) to Uganda Peoples Defence Forces (UPDF).
2000-02	First Consolidated Appeal Process (CAP) in 1999/2000. Kitgum district is split in 2000 and Pader starts operating as a district in December 2000; United Nations Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) opens office in Gulu in 2001 to coordinate humanitarian response, policy development and humanitarian advocacy; in March 2002, Operation Iron Fist I is launched by UPDF in Sudan with the effect that the LRA moves back into northern Uganda; third major wave of displacement in September/October 2002.
2003	In August Dr. Francis Deng, the UN Secretary General’s Special Representative on Internal Displacement visits northern Uganda.
2004	The UN Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs Jan Egeland visits northern Uganda in November in a highly publicised visit; the government develops the National Policy for Internally Displaced Persons.
2005	International Criminal Court issues arrests for five top officials in the LRA; clusters formally introduced in the country in February 2005; the ICC announces that 12 arrest warrants were to be issued for LRA war crimes suspects; President Museveni announces an 18-day cease-fire, backing away from previous commitments to sustain military operations until the LRA is committed to withdraw from the bush; in January 2005 OCHA establishes a field office in Pader.
2006	Juba peace talks start in June; the cessation of hostilities is brokered on August 26; people start to move to satellite camps, World Food Programme (WFP) opens an office in Pader.
2007	The comprehensive peace-building and development plan for the region, the Peace, Recovery and Development Plan (PRDP) is launched in October.
2008	The Juba peace talks collapse and the LRA continues to commit atrocities in Congo.
2010	Last CAP; cluster system closes down; in December OCHA closes its remaining office in northern Uganda and phases out of northern Uganda; Pader split into two forming Agago district.
2011	Elections in Uganda and President Museveni wins; UN High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) closes its northern Uganda offices.

Source: compiled from numerous sources

The breeding ground for the conflict, according to many authors, was found in the increasing economic gap between the north and south that developed as a consequence of the pre- and post-independence government interventions (Doom and Vlassenroot 1999; Finnström 2003). The British colonial government used a divide and rule tactic where the North was the major supplier of labourers to the cash crop plantations in the south, and the major supplier of troops to the army (Mamdani 2001). Civil service jobs were preserved for the south (Doom and Vlassenroot 1999). After independence in 1962, this trend continued with subsequent governments either replacing the Acholi in the army with other communities or bringing them back into the army.

The most immediate events leading to the conflict took place in the late 1980s. By this time, the Acholi dominated the Army (then called the United National Liberation Army (UNLA). When President Museveni's National Resistance Army/Movement (NRA/M) took power after capturing Kampala in 1986, many of the former government soldiers and supporters retreated towards Acholiland and Sudan (Finnström 2005).¹⁰ The NRA/M came through the North in the name of disarmament and committed atrocities. While most of the former UNLA soldiers surrendered, not all accepted the terms offered (Allen and Vlassenroot 2010). Others found it difficult to manage with everyday rural life (Finnström 2003), thus preferring to join several rebel movements. This led to the rise of several movements, including the 1986 Holy Spirit Movement (HSM) led by Alice Lakwena and the Uganda People's Democratic Movement/Army (UPDM/A). The most prominent and well known party to the conflict was the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA). This was a rebel movement established in 1989 under the leadership of Joseph Kony.¹¹ Arguing that it was fighting for the Acholi, LRA set itself up in the North, surviving by looting food stocks in the Acholi area.¹² Key to the following decades and central to the conflict were atrocities and human rights abuses both by the LRA and the Uganda People's Defence Force (UPDF) which was the new name of the NRA following the enactment of the 1995 Constitution of Uganda.^{13,14} Abduction, rape,

¹⁰ This is after an insurgency since 1981.

¹¹ According to Finnstrom (2003), Kony initially served under the UPDM/A. Following Alice Lakwena's defeat, he would recruit former HSM and UPDM/A fighters and defectors.

¹² Some accounts show that the Acholi people initially supported this movement. Focus group discussions revealed ideas on *mayumba kumi* - where homesteads in groups of 10 would feed the LRA in turns. Some noted this to be voluntary while others maintained it was forced. The support for the LRA dwindled due to the nature of the violence and atrocities committed towards the Acholi populace (see Finnstrom, 2005; Branch 2005).

¹³ After renaming the army, the initials NRM are mainly used to refer to the ruling political organization and party in Uganda.

¹⁴ Unlike before, over the years, more critics are open about the impunity and tenacity with which the government and the army undertook its operations in the North and corresponding human rights abuses. Speaking at the NRM's 28th Liberation Day anniversary celebrations on January 26th 2014,

maiming, ambushes, looting and burning of huts became part of everyday life in the Acholi region.¹⁵ The conflict was also marked by the start of the disappearance of livestock around 1989, some by the neighbouring community - the Karamajong, and others by the LRA and UPDF.

The conflict ended only in 2006. The reasons for the length of the conflict are summarised by Branch (2005: 3) as 'military incompetence and corruption, the army's economic interests, the government's political interests, and American and European interests'. Branch relates this last point to the ever-increasing high military expenditure at the time - including diversion of aid to fund the military - and the fact that President Museveni emerged as an ally in the fight against terrorism (*Ibid*).¹⁶

For this thesis, it is also crucial to understand that it is in the midst of the ongoing conflict in the North, that Uganda became characterised by a history of parallel intervention systems. While the country benefitted generally from direct budget support aimed at development and macro-economic stabilization, the north of Uganda oscillated between various humanitarian development interventions. Critics like Branch (2007; 2011) note that after President Museveni came into power in 1986, western donor involvement in Uganda's economic liberalisation became particularly comprehensive, while the conflict in the North was largely ignored. A 1998 report compares the World Bank's commitment in 34 countries. They conclude that most of the funds for reforms in the first half of the 1990s went to African countries - mainly Uganda (Alcira Kreimer, John Eriksson *et al.* 1998). In this regard, Uganda became the developing countries' 'poster' example (Kuteesa 2010), 'cause celebre' (Bahiigwa, Rigby *et al.* 2005), a 'success story' and a 'showcase' (Dijkstra and Van Donge 2001) for reforms. It is this decade of long successful public sector reforms, extension services reforms, decentralization, and marked success against the HIV/AIDS pandemic - which resulted in a very positive relationship with international partners, the World Bank included - that Uganda is known for. For such reasons, as well as President Museveni's closeness to donors, the conflict in northern Uganda went on for a long time without due international attention (Branch 2005; Branch 2007).

President Museveni would publically acknowledge that the army's pacification of the LRA was accompanied by abuses.

¹⁵ The conflict later spread to parts of other regions i.e. Lango and Teso but like I mentioned my analysis is mainly restricted to the Acholi region.

¹⁶ It is not my intention to simplify the conflict, its causes or continuation factors. However, I do recognise that there is substantial writing on the conflict itself. Some of these link the conflict to regional and international power struggles including the South Sudan/Sudan conflict, the politics of the International Criminal Court (ICC), terrorism and Luweero triangle war. Some of the literature references used in this section gives elaborate accounts of the conflict and its dynamics. My intention is to give a short and brief background to set the pace for this thesis.

Critics like Hickey and Golooba-Mutebi (2009: 13) actually argue a strong case - that the story of northern Uganda is a story characterised by 'adverse incorporation'. In this, the predicament of the North cannot be understood outside of the historical and relational processes of the South and North. As part of the 'politics of state formation and capitalist development' in Uganda, the North has consistently been outside the broader social contract. This would lead Hickey and Golooba-Mutebi to actually frame northern Uganda as 'Uganda's own internal periphery' (2009: 7). For my thesis it is important to emphasize this history as it continues to be important in the post-conflict challenges of reincorporating the North.

2.3.1 Displacement: 'protecting' the population or enforcing a counter insurgency?

A distinguishing feature of the conflict is the series of massive forced displacements. These affected the Acholi population mainly and took place in what can be classified as three major waves. In the first round of displacement in 1988, the National Resistance Army moved about 100,000 people from their homes in and around major towns in the North into camps (Amnesty International 1989). Many of these returned home in the period between 1989 and 1996, when things calmed down a bit (Kreimer, Collier *et al.* 2000). The second wave of displacement began in September 1996, when the army is reported to have ordered people to move to trading centres where detachments were located, following an announcement on the creation of 'protected villages', (HURIFO 2002). Around the same time, Gersony (1997) noted some spontaneous movement due to increased LRA activities. In some areas, people returned home again during 1997 and 1998. In Pader specifically, Weeks (2002) reported substantial movement back home, which is confirmed by my interviews and focus group discussions. October 2002 marked the start of the third wave of displacement, when people were given a window of 48 hours to relocate yet again. For Pader District, this third wave was the main displacement, with virtually the entire population displaced from their homes into camps (MSF 2004).

Generally, the estimated number of those displaced in Acholi sub-region rose from around 400,000 in 1997, to over 1.7 million by 2004. In the meantime, the displacement in Pader was worse than in neighbouring Kitgum and Gulu Districts. Over 95 per cent of the population was moved into 31 camps by 2004.¹⁷

This large-scale concentration of civilians in camps allowed the Ugandan Army to treat everywhere outside the camps as a battlefield. In the Acholi region, the government initially designated 43 main camps or 'mother camps'. These were mostly near military detachments hence the government's preference for the term 'protected villages' referring to the intention to protect people from the LRA

¹⁷ Some sources put the figure as 24 camps; the 31 figure is based on UNHCR Gulu office (2010), UNOCHA (2009) and Pader District Camp Phase-out Working Group figures.

(Gersony 1997). Amnesty International (1999) suggested that the depopulation was a strategic issue for the government army in their fight against the LRA. Others however referred to the camps as concentration or internment camps (Branch 2009). Branch (2009) contested the label 'protected villages' arguing that such labelling obscures the role of the government in their creation and it seemed to justify the continued presence of international humanitarian interventions.

Although some of the displacement was voluntary, the encampment strategy is widely criticized as ineffective both in terms of protection of the population and assistance accorded to those displaced (Branch 2011). Gersony (1997) noted that people preferred dealing with the insecurity and its challenges in their own homes and villages rather than the disruption and loss of assets that came with displacement. The 'protected villages' were, in fact, not well protected (Weeks 2002; IRIN 2003; Dolan and Hovil 2006). In many cases the camps actually surrounded the military units providing security for the army and thus putting the population at risk of continued attacks by the LRA (Finnström 2003). In many other instances, the army was poorly armed and outnumbered. Fires were very common in camps. State public services were non-existent while most local governments withdrew or implemented minimal services. People had inadequate shelter and food (IRIN 2004; Boas and Hatløy 2005) and a health crisis developed resulting in high mortality rates (MSF 2004). In my interviews with local people I heard of numerous incidences of people who risked insecurity to access traditional fields for cultivation to supplement the inadequate food.

2.3.2 The grass is ready - enforcing a decongestion strategy and returning home

Following a cessation of hostilities in 2006, the return process started.¹⁸ This movement from camps to villages of origin happened in phases, starting with a decongestion process and then return. States and national governments have to play the primary role in humanitarian action and development (Harvey 2009). The government (office of the Prime Minister) and United Nations Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) formulated and adopted a National Policy for Internally Displaced Persons (OPM 2002). The policy and the declaration of the cessation of hostilities was operationalised through the unofficial decongestion policy. This was achieved through the creation of other smaller and

¹⁸ The cessation was a result of a long peace process brokered with the involvement of Sudan's then vice president Riek Machar, a process since referred to as the Juba peace process. After this the LRA retreated from northern Uganda to the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and later the Central African Republic where it continues to commit atrocities while the case referral to the International Criminal Court in 2003 has failed to progress. Recently, the Obama administration also came up with a strategy to defeat the LRA.

less congested camps (Moro 2008) that allowed better access to land for cultivation.¹⁹ Many of these were set up by the security forces in consultation with aid agencies.²⁰

In Pader, most movement was controlled by the government, often by the use of the state security apparatus, and through threats, ultimatums²¹ and appealing to local people and their traditional chiefs through construction of 'modern houses' (Olupot and Ocowun 2010). This perhaps explains why the Refugee Law Project (2007: 4) found that most people in Pader moved to decongestion sites, defining these as settlement sites identified by the government with help from humanitarian agencies - as opposed to those identified by the people themselves. Despite the official position of the government on voluntary return set out in the National Policy for Internally Displaced Persons, the designation of specific settlement areas can be interpreted as an official and controlled means of return.²² In addition, the process of establishment of these decongestion camps (also referred to as satellite camps or transition camps) and the settlement and resettlement of people was strongly criticized on many grounds including the fact that many were displaced short distances (15-20 kilometres) from their homes (Boas and Hatløy; RLP, 2007). It was argued that it made more sense to let people move home and re-establish their lives and livelihoods.

The return process was also not easy. When people were allowed to leave the satellite camps, the process revolved around the greater availability of grass for home construction while access to land was a major pull factor. In Pader most people had noted they would move home 'when the grass is ready' (Oosterom 2008: 41). And while I do refer to the area as post-conflict, the return process was accompanied by many local-level disputes that have since replaced the major

¹⁹ Refugee Law Project (2007: 5) notes that the Minister for Disaster Preparedness and Refugees in the Office of the Prime Minister in late 2006 issued a deadline for people to leave the mother camps by December 31st 2006.

²⁰ Interviews: Pader District planner, June 2011, Pader

²¹ In a Farmers' Open Day' that I attended and which was organized by one of the humanitarian agencies in Atanga Sub-county, Pader District, on October 13, 2010, the then Vice-Resident District Commissioner of Pader informed the participants that he would be coming for the final 'go home' campaign. He added that most of them had only three months (October to December) to stay in the camps. By March, all should have gone home. 'We must reach 96 per cent return. The remaining 4 per cent is our allowance for the vulnerable and the owners of the land on which the camp rests. Everybody else must go home,' he said. He also asked them to pass a message along to the occupants of Lapul Ocwidia camp. He was coming to break down the remaining camp and that it was too big. In his speech he mentioned that he did not regret the force with which they had forced the people to move out of the camps. During an interview with the author in November 2010, he reiterated his position. In late 2006 the Minister for Disaster Preparedness and Refugees in the Office of the Prime Minister issued a deadline to IDPs to leave the 'mother camps' by December 31st 2006. Such ultimatums were also reported in Gulu. See Moro (2008). Others who mentioned this forced return include HURIFO (2007).

²² In Pader, 209 return sites were set up according to OCHA. Moro (2008) talks of 445. Both figures refer to Pader before the district was split to create Agago District.

discourse on war and displacement. The current discourse is about land conflicts, gender and generational conflicts - as the subsequent chapters show. Although, it has been noted that peace seems as precarious as war (Richards 2005), and there is a risk that peace (rather than war) might reintroduce conflict in northern Uganda (Branch 2013), every peaceful society has its tensions and disputes. Northern Uganda and Pader District where most of my research is based is no exception.

2.4 Humanitarian aid regime

This section provides the background to the setting up of the humanitarian aid regime in northern Uganda. In the midst of conflict and before the 1996 large-scale displacement in the North, only a few humanitarian agencies were present. A number of humanitarian agencies such as World Vision had a presence, but few reports indicate relief towards the Acholi (Dolan 2005; Branch 2008). It is after the large-scale displacement of 1997-1999 that the World Food Programme became the major food aid agency in the North (Branch 2009; Tusiime, Renard et al. 2013). It launched the first Consolidated Appeal Process (CAP) in 2000.²³ OCHA established a field office in Gulu in May 2001.²⁵ However, by 2003, there was still limited United Nations (UN) and NGO presence in the conflict affected districts (UNOCHA 2005).

Northern Uganda witnessed an influx of international agencies after the UN Under-Secretary General for Humanitarian Affairs, Jan Egeland's 2003 visit and verdict on the conflict, as the 'most neglected humanitarian situation in the world' (IRIN 2004). This forced the war onto the international agenda, drawing attention and extending commitment to resolve the crisis. Around the same time, the profile of humanitarian actors and their programmes increased significantly in the North. Chapter three provides the profile of the nature of humanitarian assistance for food security and agriculture (see also Table 2.1).

The setting up of the humanitarian regime in the North has been problematic and is criticised. Finnström (2003: 208) highlights the fact that food aid was only allowed in camps. Branch (2009;2011) takes the argument further by stating that humanitarian aid was central to the instrumentalisation of the protected camps. By 2004, programmes were still confined to a few camps in the case of Pader while being remotely controlled from Kitgum (MSF 2004) or from Kampala (Stoddard, Harmer et al. 2006).

²³ A CAP is a humanitarian programme planning and financing tool where aid organisations come together to plan and mainly source funding for their response to disasters and emergencies. It presents a snapshot of situations, response plans, resource requirements, and monitoring arrangements. See <http://www.unocha.org/cap/about-the-cap/about-process>

²⁴ This first CAP actually had only UN agencies as the appealing agencies. Out of the USD 31,194,092 appeal under food security and production, WFP requested USD 26,394,144 for relief and recovery operations in the north.

²⁵ Interview, head of Acholi Region/Gulu Sub-Office, OCHA, March 2011.

With the formation of the transit sites, the language of 'returnees' (Mabikke 2011; Oosterom 2011) and 'transition', entered the humanitarian discourse and in practice influenced aid programming thus making humanitarian agencies again instrumental in politics, this time on the decongestion strategy. Humanitarian rhetoric speaks of providing aid to areas in need. Despite acknowledgment that no agency was supporting any policy of return, in interviews a number revealed that aid largely shifted to the 'decongestion sites'. The role of aid agencies, and more importantly UNHCR and local government in camp phase out and decommissioning was interpreted by locals as key in defining areas eligible for humanitarian assistance.²⁶ The camp closure ceremony visibility was increased by the attendance of various humanitarian and development agencies, local councils and other district officials,²⁷ accompanied by dance and official handover of facilities.

From 2010 major shifts in the humanitarian organisation in the North took place. In 2010, OCHA closed their offices and withdrew from northern Uganda. UNHCR's programme for those displaced ended in 2011. 2010 also saw the last CAP which was replaced by a humanitarian profile paper in 2011 (resembling the CAP but without fundraising components). This withdrawal meant that the government, through its district structures, is considered to be in charge of the region. Other organisations also withdrew from Pader to Gulu and Kitgum, managing their programmes remotely while a few development-oriented organisations set up shop in 2011 and 2012. WFP also moved to Gulu and Kitgum where it refocused itself as a food assistance agency rather than on relief.²⁸ Table 2.1 summarises the various declared objectives and activities implemented by the organisations involved in food security and agricultural livelihoods at the start of our extended stay in Pader in October 2010 and for the following two years when I carried out my research.²⁹

²⁶ In Pader/Agago, four of these camps were officially closed in November 2009 and 12 in February 2010. Later in June, 11 more camps were closed, of which the author attended ceremonies for two camps. Four other camps closure ceremonies took place in 2011.

²⁷ Most respondents noted that the actual presence of the former Resident District Commissioner (RDC) (considered a representative of the president at the district level) who has been on the forefront of calling for the breakdown of the camps is an indication that no more aid is supposed to be given to those left in the camps.

²⁸ These changes are triggered by the broader reinvention of WFP and not the war context of northern Uganda. A visit in October 2013 showed that while the withdrawal of humanitarian actors continued, the setting up of development actors has been much slower.

²⁹ These include Food and Agriculture Organisation, World Food Programme, World Vision, CWW, Lutheran World Federation, Food for the Hungry, Diocese of Kitgum, CARITAS, Mercy Corps, ZOA, ASB, Cooperazione Internazionale, CWW and International Aid Services.

Table 2.1: Humanitarian food security related interventions in Pader (2010 - 2012)

Aid Agency ³⁰	Objective	Activities
Arbeiter-Samariter-Bund (ASB)	Improved food security, facilitate return of vulnerable groups	Inputs distribution, seed vouchers and seed fairs, agricultural extension/demonstration farming, manual removal of congress weed
AVSI	Support farmer groups to carry out mass cultivation and bulk marketing	Promotion of cooperative production, farmer institutional development (farmer groups)
Caritas	To improve household food security and income of resettling households	Inputs distribution, seed vouchers and seed fairs, agricultural extension/demonstration farming, establishment of farmers' groups, labour voucher cultivation, tree and fruit seedlings distribution
Concern Worldwide	Returnee households increase agricultural production, improve food consumption and access to income	Farmer Field Schools, post-harvest technologies/agro-processing , agricultural extension/ demonstration farming, energy-saving technologies, input (seeds/tools/planting material) distribution, promotion of animal traction/draught power
Cooperazione Internazionale (COOPI)	Support the return of the people to their villages of origin	Construction/rehabilitation of storage facilities, seed and livestock fairs/vouchers, support to Village Savings and Loans Association (VSLA), farmer institutional development (farmer groups)/Farmer Field Schools
Food for the Hungry Uganda	To increase agricultural production & productivity, support market development	Cash for work, agricultural extension/demonstration farming, improving physical infrastructure (community access roads and construction of satellite collection stores), farmer institutional development (farmer groups)
Goal	To improve household food security, nutrition and incomes of extremely vulnerable individuals; to strengthen interaction between farmers and stakeholders along the value chain and to empower farmer groups to establish a path out of subsistence farming.	Agricultural extension/ demonstration farming, farming-as-a-business, farmer institutional development (farmer groups).

³⁰ Some of the activities here are implemented in collaboration with FAO and WFP. The list is also not exhaustive but rather seeks to show a sample of the interventions on going at the time of research.

Lutheran World Federation (LWF)	To support seed multiplication both at group and individual level, enhanced agricultural productivity and improved nutrition, enable farmers to access better prices for their produce for increased household income	Input (seeds/tools/planting material) distribution, agricultural extension and demonstration farming, marketing/market information to farmers, micro gardening/kitchen gardening/back yard gardening, post-harvest technologies/agro-processing, seed multiplication, support to Savings and Internal Lending within Community (SILC), community-based supplementary feeding , farmer institutional development (farmer groups)
Mercy Corps	Improved food security, facilitate a transition from subsistence to commercial farming	Inputs distribution, seed vouchers and seed fairs, agricultural extension (training in business skills, demonstration farming, small grants, linking farmers to markets, facilitating access to finance through partnerships with banks,
Women and Rural Development Network (WORUDET)	Transforming the lives of women from 14 to 49 years	Agricultural extension, demonstration farming
World Vision	To reduce food insecurity and vulnerability, support people's return to their communities of origin, strengthen traditional social safety nets for Extremely Vulnerable Individuals (EVIs), strengthen local market linkages and increase communities' access to local markets.	Food and seed vouchers, seed fairs, agricultural extension, community infrastructure and public works (roads, land cultivation and shelter construction for vulnerable households)
World Food Programme (WFP)	Enhancing farmer incomes and food security	Physical infrastructure construction (community access roads, produce collection stores and warehouses, feeder roads), strengthening access to market information, farmer institutional development (farmer groups), agricultural extension, seed (cassava) multiplication.
ZOA	To enable conflict affected households to realize sustainable livelihoods through agriculture, developing a backbone of commercially-oriented farmers that will stimulate the local rural economy and increase living standards.	Agricultural extension/ demonstration farming, business skills development, Farmer Field Schools, public works, inputs distribution, seed vouchers and seed fairs, promotion of cooperative production, marketing/market information to farmers

Source: Interviews, 3w matrixes (OCHA)

2.5 Re-establishment of state presence and state recovery

As I showed earlier, it is often argued that the state's long term neglect of the North was a major cause of the conflict in the first place. Its efforts to come back to the North have also proved problematic to a certain extent, facing a lot of challenges and often regarded with suspicion. Its major commitment towards reconstruction in the North falls under the development framework referred to as the Peace Recovery and Development Plan for northern Uganda (PRDP). Launched in 2007, the aim of PRDP was to consolidate peace and security and to lay the foundation for recovery and development in four ways: consolidation of state authority, contributions to community recovery and promotion of improvements in the conditions and quality of life the people, revitalization of the economy through the productive sectors within the region with particular focus on production and marketing, services and industry, and finally, promotion of peace building and reconciliation (GoU 2007). However, PRDP has been highly criticised for providing only technical solutions to the political complexity of the North (Dolan 2008). Recently, it was marred by financial irregularities and concerns that funds meant for reconstruction were embezzled within the Office of the Prime Minister, the office responsible for implementing programmes in northern Uganda (Biryabarema 2012; New Vision 2012).

The government has also been involved in several other programmes in support of recovery in the North. One of these programmes, the National Agricultural Advisory Services (NAADS), is discussed in detail in Chapter Three. Two other programmes fall within the framework of PRDP. The first, the Northern Uganda Social Action fund (NUSAF) is in its second phase. This is currently the largest scale public works programme implemented in northern Uganda (McCord, Onapa *et al.* 2013) and aims to improve livelihoods. It largely mimics the public works component discussed in Chapter Five. The first phase of NUSAF was subject to a study (Hickey and Golooba-Mutebi 2009; Golooba-Mutebi and Hickey 2010) that highlighted community-based approaches would not solve long-term poverty in the North. The second PRDP programme is specifically aimed at food security and is also in its second phase. The Agricultural Livelihoods Recovery Programme (ALREP) started towards the later part of my fieldwork. This is largely implemented by FAO which sub-contracts several humanitarian organisations. The first phase of this project was again largely dependent on public works and seed fairs. Chapter Three is informed by findings and participant observation in 2010 during some of the ALREP seed fairs as my host organisation was also an implementing partner for phase one. Outside of these, a few people also benefitted from the president's iron sheet programme where those who could build modern stone brick houses received some iron sheets. For the Acholi cultural chiefs, building modern houses was another means to motivate people to move home, reminiscent of other modernisation ideals witnessed in the area.

Table 2.2: Government food security related interventions in Pader (2010 - 2012)³¹

Aid Agency ³²	Objective	Activities
National Agricultural Advisory Services (NAADS (ASB)	Promote food security, nutrition, increase household incomes through increased productivity and market-oriented farming	Inputs distribution (seeds and tools), livestock distribution, hosting radio talk shows, agricultural extension, demonstration farming, business skills development, farmer institutional development (farmer groups and fora), marketing/market information to farmers
Second Northern Uganda Social Action Fund (NUSAF 2)	Improve household access to income earning opportunities/ enable access to temporary employment, increase community socio-economic assets, support households to respond to increasing food prices and smooth consumption	Public works and community infrastructure, livestock distribution, institutional development (formation of community groups)
Northern Uganda Agricultural Livelihoods Recovery Programme (ALREP 2) ³³	Increased agricultural production for returning people, ensure food security and increase household income	Farmer Field Schools, inputs distribution and multiplication, livestock distribution, promotion of cooperative production, agricultural extension, demonstration farming, business skills development, farmer institutional development (farmer groups), construction of infrastructure, community savings and loans activities
Other Government projects: Tractor hire scheme, Plan for the modernization of Agriculture grant	Improve production and productivity, increase farmer incomes	Land clearance for farmer groups, inputs distribution and multiplication, promotion of cooperative production, agricultural extension, demonstration farming, farmer institutional development (farmer groups), construction of agricultural infrastructure.

Source: Compiled from numerous sources including (Secretariat 2000; GoU and OPM 2010; MAAIF 2010; MAAIF 2010; Kjær and Joughin 2012; OPM 2012; McCord, Onapa *et al.* 2013)

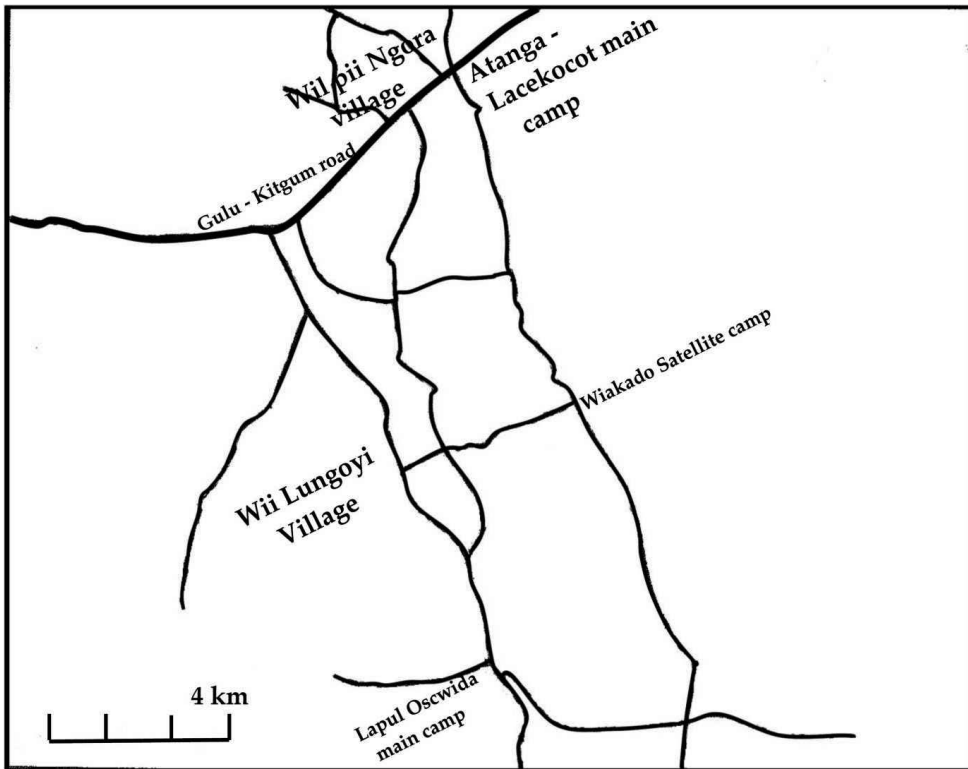
³¹ Some of these programmes have much broader objectives such as to bring the war-affected population to a level at least at par with the rest of the country, and to increased economic growth of the region and Uganda and include a broad range of activities. Here I only refer to those related to food security and choose more intermediate objectives.

³² Some of the activities here are implemented in collaboration with FAO and WFP. The list is also not exhaustive but rather seeks to show a sample of the interventions on going at the time of research.

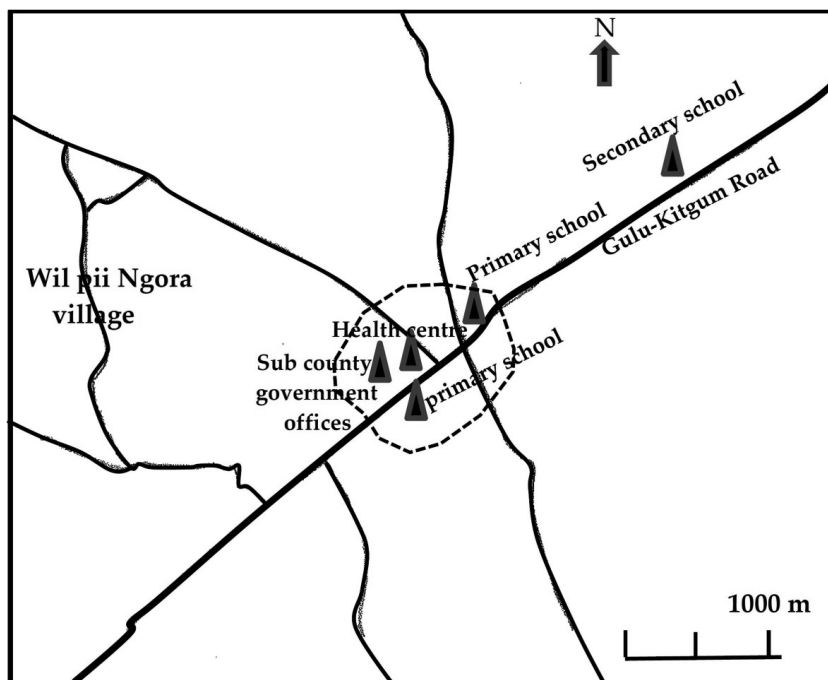
³³ This is a government programme implemented by the office of the Prime Minister but through aid agencies such as the Food and Agriculture Organisation and many other humanitarian organisations.

2.6 Conclusion

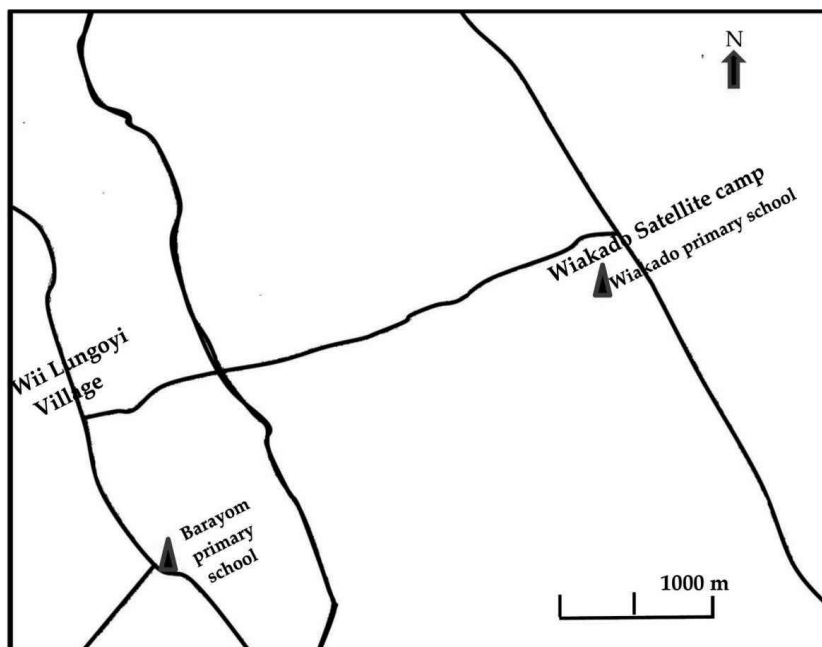
This chapter has provided an introduction to the setting in which this research takes place. It highlighted a number of themes that are relevant to and will recur in the remaining chapters of this thesis. First, it introduced Pader as a recent rural administrative unit largely lacking infrastructure and highly overshadowed by the other 'mother' Acholi districts of Gulu and Kitgum. Secondly, it underscored how the conflict in northern Uganda has a long history and partly stems from the broader dynamics of a north-south divide and the marginalisation of the North. The divide between north and south gained a new dimension because of the history of parallel interventions during and after the conflict. The North has mainly received humanitarian assistance in the later years of the conflict while Uganda as a whole emerged as a 'donor darling' (Adam and Gunning 2002: 2046) and set out on major governance reforms. Thirdly, the trends in displacement in Pader compared to Gulu and Kitgum varied; the displacement of the majority in Pader started in 2000. The return process in Pader was largely controlled by the government. As we will see in the chapters to come, these particularities created the pathways along which government reforms, agricultural service delivery and livelihood recovery in the North, and especially in Pader, took their course.



Map 2.3: Atanga sub-County, with case study villages, main and satellite camps demarcated (Source: Google 2014)



Map 2.4: Wil pii Ngora village location in relation to main camp (dotted line) and facilities (Source: Google 2014)



Map 2.5: Wii Lungoyi village location in relation to main camps and facilities (Source: Google 2014)

Chapter three: From Crisis to Governance: The Politics and Practice of Agricultural Service Provision in Northern Uganda

This chapter has been submitted for publication as:

Wairimu, W.W., I. Christoplos and D. Hilhorst. From Crisis to Governance: The Politics and Practice of Agricultural Service Provision in Northern Uganda. *Agriculture and Human Values*.

Abstract

This article draws on ethnographic fieldwork to examine the relation between humanitarian and agricultural policies and services in three post-conflict periods in northern Uganda. Since 2005, agricultural services in the North are increasingly brought into the fold of national policy processes, and this paper reviews the implications of these processes for the food security and livelihoods of the returnee population. The transition in northern Uganda comes with a change in targeting; from the most vulnerable people to better off farmers that are thought to have potential for engaging in commercial agriculture. There are few farmers that fit this model, which implies that the envisioned commercial 'transformation' is a remote possibility. Reduction of farmers' risks is not a priority in agricultural services, even though these developments are to a certain extent addressed in the everyday interactions between service providers and farmers. Our paper points to the need to view linking relief and development as not only a one-way street where relief strategies feed into development. Instead, we argue that the suitability of 'normal' development processes comes into question.

Keywords: policy; agricultural services; food security; transition; northern Uganda; post-conflict

3.1 Introduction

This paper explores the development of agricultural service provision in post-conflict northern Uganda. After a prolonged period of humanitarian relief, a transition is being made towards 'normal' state-led service provision. However, as this paper will demonstrate, this transition brings out a number of questions on what 'normal' service provision should be and how suitable it is for this war-torn area. We look at the nature and evolution of service provision from the perspective of the ways in which aid interventions and on-going broader political and economic processes in Uganda influence agricultural service provision in the North, and the implications of these processes for the food security and livelihoods of the population.

Situations where humanitarian agencies reduce their emergency interventions in order to give space to normal development are referred to in the jargon of the international community as Linking Relief, Rehabilitation and Development (LRRD).¹ Linking relief to development is seen as a gradual change in the types of services that are available to people. While emergencies are characterized by hand-outs, including food and seeds, development conditions are expected to include a return to services that may be based on cost-recovery, and building of national and local service provision institutions, like agricultural extension. In reality, linking relief to development is a complex and multi-dimensional process. For example, it comes with a change in responsibilities, where the dominance of humanitarian agencies fades and the government gets into the 'driver seat', leading to fundamentally different institutional relations. This paper zooms in on two aspects of LRRD that are often overlooked. First, the transition in northern Uganda comes with a change in targeting. Whereas relief programmes are expected to focus on the most vulnerable people, agricultural development in Uganda today is increasingly targeted at better off farmers who are thought to have potential for engaging in commercial agriculture. Secondly, we unpack how the 'normality' of development in a post-conflict context is often complex, changing and contested.

This paper unravels the ways in which relief and development are bridged in Uganda by discussing three historical periods: The emergency phase (1986-2005) when the majority of the population was based in camps, the early recovery phase (2006-2010) when agricultural services started to re-emerge, and the current context from 2011 onwards. For each of these phases we analyse the policies of humanitarian service delivery in relation to government policies and practices of agricultural service delivery in Uganda, raising questions on the future of a region that is not going to be normal for a long while. Throughout these periods, a situation evolved wherein, ironically, the agricultural policies of Uganda were increasingly applied to

¹ LRRD also includes processes aimed at ensuring that humanitarian aid can lead to development, while promoting forms of development that can prevent future humanitarian crises

the North at the same time as they had become increasingly incompatible with the conditions and needs in the North. Agricultural development policies in Uganda have been analysed extensively elsewhere (Bahiigwa, Rigby *et al.* 2005; Joughin and Kjær 2010; Kjær and Joughin 2012), but this literature rarely describes developments in the conflict-affected North of the country, as this was assumed to be 'humanitarian territory'. This article focuses on how agricultural services in the North are increasingly brought into the arena of national policy processes.

The paper is based on research into food security and agricultural services in fragile contexts with field work undertaken between 2009 and 2012. The research followed people as they returned home and the ensuing interventions implemented by humanitarian agencies and analysed how this related to the parallel development of the government's agricultural departments and services in northern Uganda.

We view the development of services as a social reconstruction through negotiated interactions among farmers, service providers, aid interventions and on-going policy developments within the domains of both humanitarian and developmental agricultural service provision. Agricultural services in this context are not only about responding to food insecurity, but also about addressing diverse agendas and the complex set of relationships among actors. This article reveals the ways in which evolving agricultural policies affect power relations and processes of inclusion and exclusion in northern Uganda.

3.2 Theoretical approach

Traditionally, public services, particularly those that are aid financed, have been regarded as either relief or development oriented. Humanitarian aid was intended as a stop-gap solution to save lives. Humanitarian aid classically addresses the acute and immediate needs of people facing crisis or conflict. On the other hand since the 1990s, the ambitions, mandates and incentives for humanitarian agencies have expanded, and strategies have been devised for long-term presence as a result of the changing and protracted nature of conflict (Russo, Hemrich *et al.* 2008). This has broadened humanitarian efforts to include engagement with, or reconstruction of, local (including government) institutions to enable transitions from emergency to development to take place as well as investment in broader livelihoods.

The distinction between relief and development as largely one of crisis or normality or even as sequential has been criticized. In conflict situations, the different phases are not separated and often co-exist, transit backwards or are spatially differentiated (Buchanan-Smith and Maxwell 1994; Frerks 2004).

Around the turn of the century the debate on Linking Relief, Rehabilitation and Development (LRRD) faded as it was overshadowed by the securitization of development in light of the 'the war on terror'. Recently, we see the debate reviving with attempts to renew an 'integrated analysis which is owned by both humanitarians and developmentalists' (Macrae 2012: 9). Social protection has been

proposed as a possible way to advance the debate on LRRD (Harvey, Proudlock *et al.* 2010). Social protection argues for longer-term engagement to support the chronically vulnerable, while upholding short-term emergency support where and when needed (Harvey, Proudlock *et al.*). It is also proposed that resilience can conceptually transcend the debate beyond LRRD (European EU 2012; Macrae 2012). Macrae (2012: 9) argues that the starting point here should be an 'empirically grounded analysis of the risks - social, political and environmental - facing poor people'.

The implications of LRRD for practical action in current conflict and post-conflict contexts are not clear. While we know much better what aid should not aim to achieve, alternative goals to the simple 'return to normality' of the LRRD continuum remain hazy². As a result, there is still a tendency to either apply labels and programming modalities that slide back to continuum approaches (Koddenbrock 2009) or to simply ignore the broader transformations underway in post-conflict settings. Ambitions for aid have begun to accept the need to abandon notions of linear development but at the same time we see that the ambitions of aid stretch farther than ever in seeking increasingly complicated levels of integration and the convergence of diverse objectives.

A significant body of practice is accumulating that illustrates mixed approaches, but these remain constrained by structures that have not always kept pace with emerging conceptual paradigms. Funding sources remain separate (Maxwell, Russo *et al.* 2012), treating relief and development as distinct and isolated which has had a great impact on actual activities. The question of whether and how to deal with the relationship with the state is also an unsolved dilemma (Koddenbrock 2009). In countries where all regions have been affected by war, models of what development should look like are often lacking. By contrast, in a relatively stable country like Uganda which, despite pockets of fragility, is considered a showcase for successes in structural adjustment and liberalization (Bahiigwa, Rigby *et al.* 2005; Jones 2009), we already know what development looks like as we have seen it in the rest of the country. It is thus in some respects easier to talk about LRRD. But these developments are not necessarily transferrable to the realities in northern Uganda. And this is at the core of the problem of LRRD: it assumes that there are clear transition goalposts.

As an example of a 'model that may not actually be a model', since the 1980s there has been a major change in thinking about agricultural extension provision. In sub-Saharan Africa the majority of the population is rural based and are subsistence farmers and mainstream development efforts assumed that an economic transformation leading to widespread poverty alleviation relies on greater productivity and commercialization of agriculture. Access to better agricultural

² Continuum here refers to linear sequence from relief to rehabilitation to development (Buchanan-Smith and Fabbri 2005: 5).

advisory services (also referred to as agricultural extension) has been seen to be an important way to promote this development model (Neuchatel Group 1999), a paradigm that has resulted in major public sector institutional and structural changes, particularly in Uganda.

The change in thinking about the governance structure of agricultural services in Africa, as elsewhere, has included privatization, decentralization, pluralistic approaches, and new funding mechanisms following the withdrawal of governments (Faure, Desjeux *et al.* 2012). In addition, the blending of such theories, farmer empowerment and participatory approaches has led to the development of demand-driven approaches to service delivery (Parkinson 2009). This involves decentralized control over services that are tailored to farmers and clients (Neuchatel Group 1999). They can then seek, buy and manage advisory services in a market-oriented system.

However, the role of the state in these new models of agricultural services is contested. If services are fully privatized, the state withdraws to a facilitation and regulatory role, with services financed directly by the client farmers. Some have proposed that privatization must be accompanied by a strong injection of public funds to ensure access to advisory services by the rural poor (Kidd, Lamers *et al.* 2000; Christoplos 2010). Thus the state is important to ensure services serve the public good (Hanson and Just 2001) regardless of whether the actual provision is by private or public agencies. What has currently emerged is a mixture of public-private approaches with varying levels of engagement of the state.

In this paper, we will show how the tensions in linking relief, rehabilitation and development are becoming intertwined with changing notions of agricultural service reforms in northern Uganda. This paper combines these two discussions that have thus far been independent of each other. In the transition from crisis, agricultural development is being portrayed as the key to food security and economic development. Food security promoted through agricultural rehabilitation dominates the goals of the humanitarian community. In contrast, the government perceives agricultural development as the path towards economic growth, wealth creation and structural transformation. These goals have been pursued within the flagship extension reform National Agricultural Advisory Services (NAADS) programme, which is described as 'decentralized, demand-driven, client-oriented and farmer-led' (NAADS Secretariat 2000), and had until recently mainly been implemented in other parts of the country. As it gets underway in the North, we will show how it fits into the social contract to ensure food security and/or economic development that is emerging between the state and the citizens in the area.

3.3 Study location and methodology

Our study draws on ethnographic fieldwork undertaken in Pader District, northern Uganda between October 2010 and June 2012. This is a relatively 'new' district carved out through Uganda's far-reaching decentralization drive. It lies approximately 390 km north of the capital Kampala. Together with several neighbouring districts it constitutes the Acholi region.

Pader falls within the so-called 'Sesame Groundnuts Sorghum Cattle Zone' as designated by the Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FEWSNET) (2010). Many residents pursue relatively diversified livelihoods. Currently, agricultural production contributes significantly to the zone's economy. Owing to the conflict, resultant displacement and cattle raids in the 1980s, many households have lost their herds and are now trying to rebuild them.

The paper draws on mixed quantitative and qualitative methods. A survey was carried out in Pader District and was later complemented with detailed and recurrent household visits over the course of a year. I undertook participant observation, visits, meetings and focus group discussions in 13 other sub-counties (both in Pader and the newer Agago district).³ Pader level in-depth interviews were done with United Nations and humanitarian agencies and the district Production Directorate (PD) including NAADS officials, local authorities, and planning and administrative departments down to village level. Kampala level interviews involved relevant institutional stakeholders including government institutions and NGO national offices. Data on Kitgum and Gulu Districts is based on document reviews, a few visits to Kitgum District and interviews with humanitarian agencies that operated in Pader but also had field offices in the other districts. I also attended several *Wang oo*. These are traditional fireplace conversations organized to discuss key issues and held at the *rwot* (chief's) palace (in Atanga sub-county). Interviews were mostly recorded, with consent from interviewees, and transcribed using the transcription software F4.

3.4 Early emergency phase (1986-2005)

A period of prolonged civil unrest started in 1986 and had a severe impact on agricultural production which reduced the food security of the communities. This was intensified when massive forced displacement began in 1996. Prior to the conflict, parallel cattle raids and displacement, mixed farming was the main economic activity (Atkinson 1989). The combination of crops and livestock was used to buffer the household in times of shock and when cash was needed (Stites, Mazurana *et al.* 2006).

³ A group of villages make a parish. Several parishes are a sub-county while sub-counties make a district.

The prevailing narrative among agencies and government officials is that many people now suffer from poverty as a consequence of the unrest, subsequent displacement and the loss of their assets. Most notable is the disappearance of cattle over time, and the lack of access to land. It is estimated that over 1.8 million people were moved into camps as part of an 'encampment' policy (Weeks 2002). Worst hit was Pader District, where over 98 per cent of the population was moved into 31 camps by 2004. Movement was restricted and, even more so, access to fields for agricultural production was restricted. Even prior to this displacement, the North could be understood in reference to 'adverse incorporation' (Hickey and Du Toit 2007) characterized by political and economic marginalization, with entrenched poverty (Golooba-Mutebi and Hickey 2010; Lindemann 2011). Humanitarian organizations established themselves in this region to provide basic services as the government was assumed to be weak or absent.

3.4.1 The North: humanitarian service provision

During the emergency there was no major policy narrative related to agricultural services in the North for several reasons. First was the dominant focus on security concerns as the region suffered from sporadic upsurges in violence. Secondly, there was little access to farmland and humanitarian agencies dominated service provision, with the local government maintaining a minor role at best. The World Food Programme (WFP) was the main 'front-line' agency since the upsurge in rebel activities in 1996-97 and throughout the mass displacements of the following four years. For the displaced population, the United Nations agency had the most consistent physical field presence and was instrumental in implementing the encampment policy (Branch 2009). This is exemplified by WFP's domination of the 2002 consolidated appeal at the height of the displacement, its requirements standing at 52 per cent of the total appeal, while support to general agriculture stood at seven per cent, with the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) in the lead for provision of agricultural inputs. Many other humanitarian agencies worked in collaboration with WFP, and were restricted to traditional relief activities.⁴

The discourse that has been reproduced over time is that the population was dependent on food aid, and thus assumed to have no need for broader services. Closer scrutiny however reveals continuity (although limited) in conflict, both in and out of camps. A 1999 report by WFP, a 2001 Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) report and later FEWSNET (2002)) show that periods of relative calm in the North provided enhanced conditions for crop cultivation and production. In Pader, OCHA reported that 60 per cent of people in camps were able to access fields to supplement relief food. When the situation was relatively quiet,

⁴ Such implementing partners included Church of Uganda, Feed the Hungry Children, and Catholic Relief Services. Oxfam/Accord, the Catholic Diocese and the Italian agency Associazione Volontari per il Servizio Internazionale (AVSI) were involved.

people were able to cultivate small areas of land by returning to their own homes or move further afield from camps. Production remained well below normal levels, however, but it enhanced households' food security. These examples of continuity are not unique to northern Uganda (Hilhorst, Christoplos *et al.* 2010) and suggest the value of support through agricultural service provision. Maxwell, Russo *et al.* (2012) write that such external support is however limited in protracted conflict. This is only partially due to conflict conditions, as the withdrawal of services also rests on false assumptions and bureaucratic realities (Hilhorst 1997).

3.4.2 The policy domain of service provision in the rest of the country

By contrast, in the more stable parts of the country, Uganda was coming to be seen internationally as a model of reform in agricultural services with the emergence of the National Agricultural Advisory Services (NAADS). NAADS was created as a 'farmer-owned, public-funded – private-sector-serviced rural development programme' (NAADS Secretariat 2000: 4), to provide agricultural extension. The design of NAADS reflected broader international paradigms regarding reforms in agricultural extension, which emphasized pluralistic service provision. Thus NAADS was mandated to provide a demand-driven, farmer-led agricultural service delivery system targeting poor subsistence farmers (NAADS Secretariat 2000).

NAADS aimed to empower farmer groups (of 15-30) to procure advisory services, manage linkages with marketing partners and conduct demand-driven monitoring of the advisory services. Several evaluations indicated improvements in farmers' institutional development and the ability to take advantage of agricultural advisory services. Participating farmers demonstrated high adoption rates of new and improved agricultural practices, technologies and new crop enterprises (OPM 2005; Benin, Nkonya *et al.* 2007).⁵ In an interview with the Soroti district NAADS coordinator, he noted that districts where NAADS was initially introduced were able to experiment with various technologies under the facilitation of service providers.

NAADS was anchored in the Plan for the Modernisation of Agriculture (PMA), which provided the policy framework for accelerated growth and reduction in poverty through modernization of agriculture. The objective was to increase incomes of subsistence farmers and to improve household food security through the market rather than emphasizing self-sufficiency (MAAIF and MFPED 2000: 28).

PMA was to be achieved through a multi-sectoral approach, which was largely linked to commercialization. The 80 per cent of the population considered to be predominantly reliant on subsistence farming were encouraged to take up a commercial orientation. Thus the various aspects of the PMA were developed towards reorienting the poor rural population to modernize and increase the amount of marketable produce.

⁵ In Benin *et al.* (2012: 392), the authors later note difficulty in drawing 'definitive conclusions regarding the direct impact of the programme' on income.

This targeting policy of PMA proved problematic. Bahiigwa, Rigby *et al.* (2005) pointed out that the target group was framed as the poor farmers - which the PMA identified as including categories like widows and female-headed households, orphans and male youth. However, these groups were poorly placed to take advantage of such programmes, or even to participate in markets. Ekwamu and Ashley (2003), amongst others, had therefore suggested that the PMA should focus rather on those with sufficient land, livestock and other resources to achieve a modicum of impact. Pressure was therefore emerging to rethink or reconcile PMA with the 'right' target goals, population, and with appropriate strategies and modalities (Bahiigwa, Rigby *et al.* 2005). This was taken up in the subsequent phase. This rethinking of the target group for agricultural policy would enlarge the gap between development and relief. Humanitarianism targets the most vulnerable whereas many of today's agricultural development programmes focus on those farmers that are likely to commercialize, which are usually already the better off.

3.5 Emergence of agricultural services in early recovery: from 2006 to 2010

Starting in 2006, the defining feature of recovery efforts was the strategy for movement of people to 'decongestion sites'⁶ and back to their villages of origin (Moro 2008). People were moved to smaller transition camps located 2 to 5 kilometres from their original villages. According to the Inter Agency Standing Committee in Uganda, by August 2008, 64 per cent of the population had moved out of the original 'mother' camps.

A joint emergency food needs assessment carried out in 20 isolated camps in Pader District by UN agencies, NGOs and Pader District authorities showed rural livelihoods diversified in the new camps. Individuals were able to capture new economic opportunities and petty trading, casual labour and market exchange became important. However, despite this diversification, restoring agriculture was seen as the first step in creating economic growth and laying the foundation for a durable peace.

Return meant restored access to land, a key factor in boosting agricultural production and ensuring more sustainable livelihoods. A 2009 study by Martin *et al.* showed a steady increase in land opened for production between 2006-07 and 2008-09. This was accompanied by partial (and later complete) phase-out of general food distribution. By 2009, only individuals classified as Extremely Vulnerable Individuals (EVIs) were receiving food aid from WFP. This was in line with shifting needs and means to support them (Interview, Head of WFP Pader Sub-program). While the humanitarian agencies remained focused on mechanisms geared towards agricultural rehabilitation, such as distributions of seeds and tools, the government started to reintroduce some of its services to the area.

⁶ Also known as transition or satellite camps.

3.5.1 Humanitarian assistance

Humanitarian policy narratives framed food insecurity as related to seed insecurity, i.e., lack of, inadequate or poor quality basic agricultural inputs. Seeds and tools emerged as the standard *modus operandi*, justified by the objective of 'kick starting' production. These were accompanied by demonstration and multiplication plots of food crops and other 'improved' seed varieties. Household interviews highlighted an appreciation for improved access to seeds.

A strong call came from donors and the Ugandan government to shift from temporary relief to recovery (i.e., production, community infrastructure and re-starting basic services). The government and the United Nations sought to reorient existing assistance towards establishment of physical and social infrastructure at the parish level. Uganda was expected to be a trial ground for the UN's humanitarian reform agenda wherein 'early recovery' was to consist of a move away from the patchy nature of humanitarian service provision. The parish approach involved scaled-up service delivery for the overall population of the parish - which included existing villages, returned Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) and transit populations, providing equal services to all (OPM and JMC 2007).

The approach failed to generate the necessary support. The institutional system was not prepared. The Ugandan government was nonetheless ill-prepared to deal with the massive outpouring of people from camps. In the absence of development actors and an established funding mechanism for development-oriented activities, attempts by humanitarians to guide recovery were viewed as 'at best an inappropriate stretching of the humanitarian mandate, and at worst as an act of institutional preservation' (Bailey, Pavanello *et al.* 2009: 10).

Funding for the Acholi region was being reduced. Donor interest had shifted to the north-eastern region of Karamoja (OCHA 2009; O'Keefe 2010) where an 'emergency' was developing. Despite strong relations with development donors, the government failed to attract funding for its Peace Recovery and Development Plan (Bailey, Pavanello *et al.* 2009). Humanitarian organizations were forced to scale down, close field offices or withdraw from Pader. This was partly attributed to a highly publicized return process, creating the impression that the North was no longer an emergency, and that the situation had 'normalized'. Locally and internationally, camp phase-out was interpreted as key in defining regions and groups no longer eligible for humanitarian assistance. Thus aid for the transitional process was limited in volume, scope and even geographical coverage, resulting in relatively less investment in recovery compared to relief.

In practice, a few explicit attempts at LRRD were emerging which combined provision of agricultural inputs, advisory services, infrastructural development and the development of markets. These were intended to stimulate people's capacity to choose their own paths to recovery. Several of these attempts revolved around investment in public works. Farmers received vouchers for their labour on these public works projects, which they could redeem with selected input providers. Seed

fairs eventually became the main *de facto* interface between the humanitarian agencies and public agricultural service providers.

Seed fairs are a novel temporary market-based scheme where farmers exchange vouchers issued by a humanitarian agency for inputs (Longley, Christoplos *et al.* 2006). The logic behind providing vouchers rather than cash is that these restrict the farmers to buying only seeds and tools. At the same time they are seen as a way to stimulate the development of private input providers. Seed fairs thus served a second objective of service provision and institutional development to create conditions for normally functioning markets.

Within this modality, private traders from outside the district have established themselves, but the market was apparently not strong enough for comprehensive services. Seed fairs are based on assumptions of increased accountability of service providers to clients, to ensure quality. It can be questioned whether a one-day kind of encounter provides the necessary conditions for accountability between the vendors and buyers. From our interviews, we found that the service providers felt more accountable to the NGOs than to the communities participating and leveraged these opportunities to establish themselves. This has led to the development of a cadre of service providers who have positioned themselves where their main clients are the NGOs' seed fairs, with little trust between them and the local communities they serve. Local people at times perceived the vendors as 'stealing' from them as they referred to participating in public works as 'earning' the vouchers.

As seed fairs were being appropriated and transformed in ways not anticipated, other actors created room for manoeuvre. Local people devised means to directly negotiate the exchange of vouchers for cash from the vendors - a practice considered as 'cheating', and condemned by NGO staff. Cheating has grave consequences for the vendor if 'caught'. In September 2010, a vendor was denied payment for being in possession of vouchers whose worth exceeded the produce he had brought to the market.⁷ This was regarded as an indication he had 'bought' vouchers from the market. In another case, local farmers joined together to buy items from their own relatives, side-lining the input dealers considered not from their area. Most of these contestations were found to be due to differences in perceptions between the agencies promoting the fairs and the local communities over livelihood priorities, types of seeds promoted, quality concerns and input prices. While the agencies promoted improved and 'certified' seeds, which generally were more expensive, the local community mentioned rarely using these while some wanted the liberty to use the money they 'earned' in different ways. In addition, these exchanges also side-stepped (social) relations between the vendor and the buyer which we understand in reference to the embeddedness of economic actions (Granovetter and Swedberg 2011) by trying to strip seed fairs from the relational, institutional, and cultural context. In addition, seed fairs are part of a larger political economy (of service provision and public sector reforms) that shapes provision of agricultural services in the district.

⁷ Practices like weigh in and weigh out were introduced to give NGOs idea of how much produce was transacted and to ascertain if traders were involved in cheating practices.

3.5.2 Re-introducing government advisory services

At the same time as early recovery efforts were underway in the North, the first cracks were beginning to show in the NAADS model. Pressures were emerging to return to past models of using access to agricultural services, both extension and input provision, as a tool for political patronage. A recent study shows that there was little ownership of the market-oriented values of the programme among the polity (Kjær and Joughin 2012). Parkinson (2009; 2009) also pointed out that political factors were always present, despite the claims of farmer ownership.

At its time of introduction in Pader in 2007, NAADS was characterized by uncertainty as a result of suspensions, shifting reforms and new guidelines. The District Coordinator summarized the results of their work in those initial years as extremely limited. Specifically it was shifting to a different categorization of farmers, revolving around farmers who had resources to upscale demonstrated technologies, with a greater bias towards model farmers. A senior official in the PMA secretariat credited the shift to 'loss of interest in the PMA, which had its focus as the smallholder farmer'. He would later elaborate that 'by 2007, PMA was a dead document but nobody wanted to come out clearly and bury it in public. At the secretariat we were not implementing it'. The secretariat was reflecting on 'results from the field' that indicated that progressive farmers were the ones experimenting and adopting new technologies'.⁸ Our interviews revealed that the technocrats in charge of implementing PMA did not believe in the modality of the smallholder to bring about necessary changes in the overall rural economy.⁹ The PMA secretariat would rise to occupy a very influential position, to the extent that it was indispensable within the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries (MAAIF) (Pasipanodya 2011) and in broader government circles (Interviews 2011, 2012). Its role had shifted to policy design, strategy formulation and technical support for MAAIF as compared to the envisaged inter-ministerial coordination role. It was thus no surprise that the shifts in NAADS, and broadly in agricultural policy, reflected the discontent within the secretariat.

3.6 Current context: from 2011

Most of the rural population have settled back in their villages and can concentrate on agricultural production, amongst other activities. Despite this, the expansion of land area under cultivation has slowed. Families have also become split between long-established 'mother' camps, new sites and their villages of origin - a strategy which enables them to take advantage of social services and opportunities for

⁸ One of the dangers in evaluating extension programmes based on technological adoption is its potential to skew incentives toward farmers who are already able to manage risk.

⁹ Footnote 19 in Hickey (2013) also shows this growing impatience with the small holder and the shift to modernisation.

diversified livelihoods. Young people are reluctant to move to the rural areas, preferring trading centres that offer more urbanized livelihoods. Some forms of humanitarian assistance are still being provided, although many question whether it is still justified. At the same time, government services continue to evolve, but are also undergoing change in terms of their objectives, methodologies and outcomes.

3.6.1 Humanitarian assistance

Even if on-the-ground realities have changed, humanitarian policy narratives continue, where provision of agricultural inputs for improving productivity are still seen as key to household food security. Although not on the same scale as previously, seeds and tools continue to dominate, despite the fact that agriculture was originally portrayed by NGOs as having been kick started long ago. Notwithstanding this continuity, there is a major difference with previous years. A considerable amount of the vouchers are now tied to improved seeds supplied by seed companies in the drive to tie farmers into increased (and 'modernized') production. Humanitarian service provision has thus been remodelled to feed into the agricultural modernization policy.

However, such a drive may prove counterproductive in light of results which show households did not use (organic or inorganic) fertilizers, despite receiving improved seeds. Improved seeds lead to improved production, but only with sufficient fertilizer use or otherwise highly fertile soils. This is pertinent since these households indicated they cannot leave their land fallow for long periods due to labour constraints in opening new land and land conflicts, which means that farmers are using these seeds in conditions for which they are unsuited.

The agricultural commercialization agenda that has engulfed the rest of Uganda became a sequel to addressing food security in the North. There are many initiatives where farmers are trained to take up 'farming as a business', organization into groups presumed to later develop into producer organizations, provision of improved seeds and tools for 'enterprise' development. Groups are 'guided' to go for high input, high value non-traditional crops like soybeans. These can also be combined with supposedly profitable small enterprises such as bee keeping and pig farming.

Challenges remain to commercialize agriculture, as there are few markets and the demands of the markets that exist for quality, bulk, etc. may be unattainable. The WFP sub-office programme manager in Pader attested that the warehouse receipting they had set up in Gulu, 'could not accept produce at times from our own farmers, because the standards and quality required is very high'. This highlighted the paradox of introducing such systems in post-conflict situations. Warehouse receipt schemes are supposed to help poor farmers and transform the agricultural sector by shielding farmers from price fluctuations by providing reliable storage facilities and secure access to credit. Current regulations and the grading processes mean that much produce is rejected. Furthermore, grading does not guarantee higher prices.

3.6.2 Service governance

The development of the state in the provision of agricultural services in the post-conflict context continues to be complex. In this section we contrast the official policy narrative, the nature of poverty and emerging challenges in the North, and the ways that local service providers develop their own social contract with the farmers to address these challenges.

The current NAADS is focuses on food security for all; *participating* households are supported with planting materials, livestock, and some other agricultural supplies. NAADS distinguishes three categories of farmers. The first category is the food security farmers and targets practicing subsistence farmers. The second category consists of market-oriented farmers who are expected to provide a model for priority market-oriented enterprises by demonstrating technologies to other farmers. Lastly, commercial farmers are those who already have clearly established linkage to markets and other support services.

The PMA is now replaced by a new policy: the Agricultural Sector Development Strategy and Investment Plan (DSIP).¹⁰ Like its predecessor, DSIP's mission is to transform subsistence farming to commercial agriculture with stated objectives of increasing rural incomes and livelihoods and improving household food and nutrition security (MAAIF and MFPED 2000: 28; MAAIF 2010: 51). In DSIP, the strategy has shifted further to wealth creation and growth. DSIP argues for the logic of improving productivity and helping farmers move 'up' the value chain as the key to the agricultural revolution in Uganda and to achieve food and income security. DSIP has no specific policy about the role of the smallholder farmers who previously received attention in the PMA.

The emphasis the Government of Uganda pays to the growth, wealth creation and transformation to a modern rural economy skews the type and focus of agricultural services offered in the post-conflict area towards the commercial and market-oriented farmer categories.¹¹ A discussion with a sub-county NAADS coordinator in Pader revealed that the DSIP aims to satisfy the many small farmers with some inputs, while the focus on advisory services is concentrated on the groups of market and commercial farmers helping them turn their investments into profitable ventures. He elaborated:

'Do the math. If you have three extension staff in a sub-county, one of whom does mainly administrative work, and the other two are split over

¹⁰ DSIP aligns with the principles and aspirations of the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Program (CAADP). CAADP is an initiative of African countries to accelerate economic growth and reduce poverty and hunger through agriculture-led development.

¹¹ Hickey (2013) provides a detailed exploration of the process through which transformation became a new development agenda in Uganda.

nine model farmers in one category and 100 scattered farmers in another in just one parish already, whom do you concentrate on? The nine of course, who receive more resources.'

It is important to note that the DSIP acknowledges the need for specific focus on the North for restoring agricultural livelihoods. Sections in the DSIP refer to the Peace Recovery and Development Plan for northern Uganda (PRDP) as the additional policy framework for the development of the North through which continued recovery efforts will be directed. There is no ministry in Uganda, apart from the non-technical Office of the Prime Minister (OPM), which has the mechanisms and instruments for intervening in the North as a special area.

Interviews at the PMA secretariat brought out a widely held opinion among District staff that the 'project northern Uganda' in the DSIP should be regarded as an 'emotional appeal' and a 'redundant addition' since 'no money is allocated in real terms' (Interviews, 2012). DSIP is the responsibility of the Ministry of Agriculture, which has no special mandate and accompanying funds for northern Uganda. The Ugandan parliament has not created within MAAIF any structures or mandate through which parliament can then approve resources (if any) for northern Uganda.

NAADS emphasizes commercialization, while maintaining a group of food security households, incorporating families that cannot manage their food security. Food security farmers receive on average 100,000 Uganda shillings (UGX) worth of seed,¹² three hoes and 1-2 training sessions on how to plant those seeds.¹³ However, these are still considered by farmers to be inadequate and are usually delivered late. Market-oriented farmers accessed UGX 875,000 worth of inputs while the commercial farmers received UGX 1,500,000.

For the group of food security farmers, the shift towards more provision of inputs as compared to institutional development (and advisory services) can be questioned. Smallholder farmers are usually geographically dispersed and more in need of infrastructural and institutional public goods (Poulton 2012). Investment in inputs in the absence of well-developed institutional support has minimal chances of impact.

This emphasis on inputs in NAADS and more generally as a response to food insecurity resulted in public uproar. The 2011/2012 national budget was popularly labelled as a 'hoe budget'. Others referred to 'hoe economics' (Rwakakamba 2011) in reaction to an announcement by the Minister of Finance, Planning and Economic Development on the removal of import duty on hand hoes. Interviews showed hoes have minimal potential to augment local production and encourage food security.

There is quite a lively debate on the drivers of such emphasis on inputs. In an interview with the then acting executive director NAADS in 2012 he mentioned that

¹² Exchange rate during the study: 1 US Dollar = 2000 Uganda shillings (UGX).

¹³ The 'food security' farmers' category is treated as a palliative welfare measure.

the provision of inputs was incorporated in the North and was part of the agenda to consolidate peace implying that this was meant to be some form of social protection. Outside the social protection argument, others have noted that these kind of changes were introduced at election time and thus meant to please the electorate and to distribute patronage (Whitfield and Therkildsen 2011; Kjær and Joughin 2012).

In this period agricultural services have become more integrated into governance structures. This has the consequence, amongst others, that programming is more liable to become politicized. This proved problematic, both with the extension advisors and the local people. The influential chairpersons of Local Councils (LC) and the chairperson of the ruling party are part of the farmers' forum executive. In the areas of research, the selection of participants was contested, when Local Council leaders with 'far-reaching decision making functions' (Lindemann 2011: 407) started to act as gatekeepers of programmes and fill registration lists with kin and neighbours first. People thus tried to establish good relations as a protection mechanism. There was even a village that petitioned the sub-county administration to have the village split over what they noted as disagreement and discontent with how access to advisory services is facilitated by the political institutions. In addition, people noted differences between NGOs and government programmes such as NAADS on the basis that there was little follow-up in government programmes to determine 'real' participants. Just as Englebert and Tull (2008) write about reconstruction being about competition for resources, just as conflict, people hope a separation and split of the village would leverage their own bargaining power and 'smooth' access to state resources. In a focus group discussion an older man noted, 'our own village comes with our own LC1'. Follow-up interviews revealed that people considered the role of these local institutions in dispute resolution secondary to 'helping development reach' the villages.

NAADS is packaged as a development-oriented program, but is currently implemented within an area that is recovering from conflict. This creates several problems. In practice, as we observed, the District staff tend to navigate between the demands from Kampala and the local realities. Guidelines become adapted through interactions between the farmers and the NAADS advisors. For instance, when 'model farmers' proved difficult to find in Pader due to high requirements, the district staff initially worked on a more modest scale with 'demonstration farmers'. Many of the newly returned population have difficulties in paying back the loans, especially in cases where agricultural production was negatively affected by excessive or delayed rains. Repayment of inputs has been waived in several cases, based on a case-by-case approach. Also, in 2011, the district decided to be flexible with a series of new guidelines issued by the secretariat, and did not demand that farmers co-finance the cost of inputs they received.

3.7 Conclusion

In this article we have shown how agricultural service development is undertaken in northern Uganda, specifically within Pader district and neighbouring areas. The transition from the humanitarian crises to development is far more complex than characterized in either humanitarian or development narratives, and has only partially been achieved.

The notion of LRRD assumes that a humanitarian response to crises gradually closes the gap with development policies. In northern Uganda, this is not what happened and it is apparent that programmes in the North have to be understood in the light of broader shifts towards economic recovery in the country. Although food security (through agricultural services development) was seen as the way to merge humanitarian, development, poverty reduction and economic growth objectives, there came to be an ever-greater push towards economic growth. As a result, at the time that the government is ready to integrate northern Uganda into the mainstream development of agricultural policy, the gap between addressing humanitarian needs and development has become larger. Our paper thus points to the need to view LRRD as not only a one-way street where relief strategies feed into development. Instead, the post-conflict context is one where implicit assumptions behind the suitability of normal development processes come into question.

Agricultural support in contexts emerging from conflict is generally framed as facilitating (or merely taking for granted) a transition from supply-led relief programming to establishment of sustainable (market-driven) systems for service delivery (Longley, Christoplos *et al.* 2006). In northern Uganda, this is being done without an analysis of what happens with relation to the root causes of conflict in terms of rural destitution if these policies continue to largely exclude the population and fail to generate livelihoods for the majority. A major question concerns the relevance of the commercialization and modernization model for the majority of small-scale farmers who may not be well positioned to take advantage of these programmes. This majority increasingly falls off the radar of both the humanitarian agencies and the government. When policy shifts, this can lead to a change in target groups, away from the humanitarian concerns related to vulnerability and towards non-inclusive development.

This brings us to the point: reconstruction should suit the context. It is likely that as humanitarian programming is fading in a context that is changing so fast, one major question that arises is whether current agricultural services provide a relevant response for a post-conflict area that is far removed from markets, lags behind in infrastructural development and experiences high levels of poverty. Our study shows that the specificities of the North are largely overlooked by policy makers, as it is no longer a humanitarian emergency but neither does it possess the characteristics that would be likely lead to commercial transformation. The government has little to offer beyond the Peace Recovery and Development Plan for northern Uganda, which is facing uncertain funding from both public resources and

donor support. Among policy makers in Kampala, there are indeed very few who sympathize with the need for a context-specific focus in the North.

In the midst of these policy developments, we observed how, in the local context, service providers and the local population negotiate the social contract between them in an evolving manner. It appears that some elements of the 'demand-driven' spirit that originally was central to NAADS remain, even if this means deviating from official guidelines. Particularly for the North, the provision of agricultural services and its contribution to achieving food security could be a major determinant of how the development of the social contract between the government and the local community is perceived. The peace dividend has to start with 'peace in the stomach' (Hilhorst and Van Leeuwen 2005: 553) in a region where feelings of marginalization and exclusion have for years alienated citizens from the state. With humanitarian programmes declining fast, people will look to NAADS as the main service provider. The value, potential contribution and use of services should be assessed within the context of the fragile relationship that advisors have, seek to develop and maintain with the rural population. Linking relief to rehabilitation to development, then, is far more than a policy change. It is a process where the relationships are negotiated between the bureaucrats, NGO staff and the people they are mandated to serve.

Chapter four: Sitting Allowances: the Hidden Realities of State-Aid Relations in Northern Uganda

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Abstract

This paper concerns the everyday politics of the interface of state and non-state actors in agricultural service delivery in post conflict northern Uganda. It deals with the practice of sitting allowances (providing monetary incentives for government officials to perform their jobs), analysing its legitimation and its informal yet highly regularized nature. The paper aims to contribute to humanitarian debates on the roles of the state and NGOs in linking relief, rehabilitation and development, as well as the growing academic interest in everyday or 'real' governance. Sitting allowances have a high degree of influence on service delivery, and as such are an important mechanism of social ordering of governance relations between the local government and aid actors in the domains of food security and agricultural services. We argue that (re) building (agricultural) services in northern Uganda is much more than a transition from exceptional crisis to the 'normality' of development. In the historically specific context of northern Uganda, humanitarian programmes are increasingly embedded in governance practices in which sitting allowances are institutionalized as a silent compact in the shadow of development.

4.1 Introduction

In post-conflict northern Uganda, a gradual handing over of service delivery from aid agencies to government is underway - a transition that coincides with major reorganizations of the Ugandan state, where semi-fulfilled policy shifts towards decentralization and the privatization of services considerably changes the conditions of agricultural services. This paper analyses these parallel transitions and how they are influenced by the practices of 'sitting allowances', where aid agencies provide monetary incentives for government officials to perform their regular jobs, such as attending meetings and workshops, providing quality control at seed-fairs or facilitating a training.¹ This practice, which is widespread and yet rarely discussed, is analysed as a main ordering mechanism that embeds humanitarian and development aid in the governance of northern Uganda. Rather than facilitating a transition, humanitarian practices become an unintended backbone of the organization of agricultural services. This transition is happening within processes that are commonly referred to as linking relief, rehabilitation and development (LRRD).

Within LRRD in northern Uganda today, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that have provided humanitarian assistance in the past are looking for a new space and role for themselves in relations with the state that resemble, but do not fully correlate with development. The aid organizations are mainly multi-mandate agencies. When the crisis was acute, they acted within a humanitarian mandate, focusing on direct service delivery and keeping clear of politics. In recent years they have begun shifting to developmental practices wherein a closer collaboration with state agencies is needed, but where the nature of these new forms of state-NGO relations is ambiguous. LRRD in northern Uganda today is not just an exit strategy of humanitarian actors, but neither is it about a simple shift to developmental relations. This paper explores what governs this ambiguous relationship, and as such is a contribution to the literature on how LRRD practices are shaped in the interface between the routines and values of local government and aid agencies looking to reconstitute their roles.

State-governed service delivery in African states increasingly moves in a direction where people pay for services they already paid for through taxes. They pay public servants for services supposed to be received in the public service domains. Hence the definition of 'public services' in many African states is becoming blurred with the introduction of pluralistic public and private services where provision and service personnel (Blundo and Olivier de Sardan 2006; Titeca and de Herdt 2011) draw on different forms of funding and assuming different responsibilities that are grounded in diverse norms. This is the reality of the

¹ Aid agencies in question are all Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs). Where United Nations (UN) agencies are involved this is explicitly mentioned.

‘negotiated state’ (Hagmann and Péclard 2010) and hybridity in Africa and elsewhere.

These processes have been underway in the background of humanitarian service provision, where norms of neutrality and impartiality more clearly acknowledge the need to work around the state through parallel systems of service delivery. Humanitarian mandates may be relatively clear, but in widespread and chronic emergencies the resulting services are often fragmented, with poor overall coverage interspersed with pockets of high quality international service delivery. Sometimes humanitarians constitute the only real service providers (Olivier de Sardan 2011), in the midst of constrained access by the state and funding gaps even where the state could resume its duties. This has increasingly been recognised as a problem, resulting in revived demands that aid agencies collaborate with and more rapidly hand back responsibilities to the state (Harvey 2009).

Despite recognised dysfunctions, LRRD programmes in post conflict contexts nonetheless tend to be based on implicit Weberian assumptions about the capacities and commitments of the state to provide services in areas where fragility remains prevalent. This paper takes a more critical stance by unpacking the political economy of LRRD with a focus on the factors that shape incentives and practice in public service delivery. Sitting allowances are a widespread factor in this, yet have received little scholarly attention outside of references to petty corruption or footnotes treating allowances as marginal to aid, society and service provision. Our research in northern Uganda has found that these practices are a core factor governing day-to-day interactions in the post-conflict context and have a high degree of influence on service delivery. We have found sitting allowances to be one of the main mechanisms of social ordering of governance relations between the local government and aid agencies.

By unravelling the role of sitting allowances in everyday governance, we build on recent work on the nature of (real) governance and the politics of service delivery. Olivier de Sardan says that ‘in a purely descriptive and analytical sense, we can define governance as any organised method of delivering public or collective services and goods according to specific logics and norms, and to specific forms of authority’ (Olivier de Sardan 2011: 22). Everyday governance is then an emergent pattern and outcome of an on-going interaction or ‘negotiation’ between state and aid (non-state) actors (Titeca and de Herdt 2011) and is embedded in everyday relations and practices (Cleaver, Franks *et al.* 2013) of both these types of actors. As we shall argue, a mundane and largely invisible practice like the provision of a sitting allowance can have ordering dimensions and play a role in the control, allocation, production and use of resources and services, the values and ideas underlying those services, activities and the reproduction of the state.

The paper is based on intensive ethnographic work between October 2010 and June 2012, as part of a doctoral research programme on food security and agricultural services in fragile contexts. Our research originally set out to understand evolving governance arrangements in agricultural services following the cessation of hostilities between the government of Uganda and the Lord’s Resistance Army in 2006. During an exploratory field visit in 2009, the importance of sitting allowances became overwhelmingly apparent. Although these have no part in aid agency or

government policies, their importance in practice was spontaneously referred to in most of the exploratory interviews.

Most of the data is based on fieldwork in Pader District, northern Uganda. The study builds primarily on in-depth interviews with current and former employees of the District (agricultural) Production Directorate (PD),² other district government departments, such as planning and administration, United Nations (UN) agencies, NGOs and the local people. Where consent was given, interviews were recorded, and transcribed using the transcription software F4. Informally held interviews were incorporated to enhance our general understanding but have not been used for specific references. In addition, I undertook participatory observation on a high number of occasions of coordination and service delivery, such as quality control in seed fairs, training events in agricultural practices by NGOs and government and numerous workshops and meetings. In all settings, I observed and analysed how situations or issues were constituted, which led to a further focus on the tangible effects of these discursive practices on the way service provision relations evolve and are negotiated. Analysis of decentralization and service delivery in the North has also benefited from a programme review in nine districts for the Netherlands Embassy in Kampala.

The paper starts by outlining the institutional context of post-conflict Uganda. We then introduce the theoretical underpinning of sitting allowances. The rest of the paper elaborates how the practices work in different mechanisms, such as meetings, seed fairs and training. Subsequently, we analyse the properties of this seldom-recorded institution that can best be understood as a silent compact, or a customary contract. We will focus on its legitimation, the shadiness of its practice, and its informal yet highly regularized nature. Core questions concern the effects of sitting allowances in maintaining agricultural services for the returnee population and how they affect the power, accountability and long-term sustainability of these services.

4.2 Background: contextualising humanitarian-government relations in northern Uganda

In northern Uganda, sitting allowances have to be understood within a broader context of the relationship between aid organizations (most of which began their work under a humanitarian mandate) and government for the management of populations displaced due to civil conflict between government forces and the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA). The civil conflict resulted in several waves of forced displacement. Over 1.8 million people were moved into camps, referred to as 'protected villages'. The impact on the local community was heavy. Peasant livelihoods were greatly constrained, forcing them to rely partly on relief.

² The department consists of crop, veterinary, commercial services, entomology, fisheries, trade, forestry, the National Agricultural Advisory Services (NAADS) and cooperative societies sub-departments.

Until 2003, there were only a handful of international agencies active in northern Uganda (Baines and Paddon 2012). This changed after a visit of UN Under-Secretary General for Humanitarian Affairs, Jan Egeland, who labelled northern Uganda the 'most neglected humanitarian situation in the world' (IRIN 2004). The region then witnessed an influx of international agencies. By 2007, 25 International Non-Governmental Organizations (INGOs), eight national NGO/CBOs, the Ugandan Red Cross, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and seven UN agencies were operating in Pader (Savage, Petty *et al.* 2008).

During the emergency, aid developed as the dominant form of governance (Duffield 2002). Government departments continued to be operational to some extent, but they were largely ignored and marginalized by the massive humanitarian presence. For example, district authorities expressed frustration when NGOs failed to submit information they needed for their work (Martin 2010). Conversely, NGOs felt that the existing government system did not fit within the camp setting³ - as they were not perceived as being inclined to respond effectively to people's needs. The consequences of this marginalization have been analysed by Branch who pointed out how the government accepted that the humanitarians had such a dominant role since the international agencies were needed to implement and legitimize government security policies, particularly forcing people to live in camps (Branch 2009).

When a cessation of hostilities was brokered in 2006 between the parties in the conflict, this marked the start of a process where over 92 per cent of the displaced population returned to their communities of origin or locations closer to home to pick up their lives and livelihoods. Humanitarian action had started to be formally coordinated through the new cluster approach of the UN, where operational sectors were coordinated by different agencies, partly with the aim to strengthen partnerships with the government (IASC 2006). A lack of congruence between clusters and government departments, a lack of respect for government's coordinating apparatus and the top-down nature of the process resulted in a sense of exclusion on the side of government actors (Huber and Birkeland 2000; IASC 2006; Steets and Grünewald 2010). They were increasingly absent from meetings, claiming they had other competing responsibilities. A process followed to adapt the cluster approach to coordinate better with the government. The gradual withdrawal of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), signalled the transfer of coordination power to the government. Currently, governance, policies, guidance and the coordination of food security and agriculture efforts are in the hands of the Production Directorate and under the district governments' responsibilities (where they belong per the Local Government Act of 1992). This coincides with a stronger push for aid organisations to work closely with the local government.

³ Interview, regional INGO manager, Pader, 5 May 2011.

4.3 Framing sitting allowances

The term ‘sitting allowances’ can be traced back to the 1980s when development programmes started giving monetary incentives to civil servants who attended their meetings. Carlson traces its development in Uganda to 1986-1993 (Carlson 2004). The intention was to encourage civil servants to concentrate on service provision, instead of looking for alternative means of income and to enhance participation. Over time, however, this rationale has changed in practice. From the 1990s onwards, development programmes were increasingly pushed towards more measurable and tangible ways to demonstrate participation (de Graaf 2010). As the number of people (including government officials) attending meetings or workshops increasingly became part of the indicators of results reported on in logical frameworks, an incentive was created whereby meetings became the ends rather than the means to development.

Another factor in their growth was that they are a way to augment civil servants’ salaries. The aid agencies wanted to motivate civil servants and provide a certain compensation for the inequalities in the enterprise where expatriates get paid much higher than their counterparts in the local government (Ridde 2010). Donors ruled out payment of (or top-ups to) regular salaries, as this was considered ‘unsustainable’. Sitting allowances (and other mechanisms such as field allowances) became a way to bypass donors’ own regulations and norms.

Literature referring to sitting allowances predominantly focuses on negative aspects and points out donors’ hypocrisy in relation to ‘sustainability’, highlighting how these payments can lead to corruption while undermining the intended objectives. It is argued that the general public is deprived of the public goods involved in the transfers (Ridde 2010). Sitting allowances are regarded as tantamount to corruption (Chene 2009) and are associated with vice, distorted incentives and dependency. Donors sometimes accept the critique, and when excessive sitting allowances and *per diems* are highlighted in monitoring and evaluation reports this may occasionally lead to withdrawal of donor funds. The suspension of the Global Fund grant for HIV/AIDS in Uganda, for example, was said to be due to sitting allowances and other ‘irregularities’ (Bass 2005).

Nonetheless, published literature on the subject of sitting allowances is scarce (Vian, Miller *et al.* 2012). Academic literature has stayed away from the subject, leaving it to the domain of newspapers, blogs, evaluations and consultancy reports. The rare academic literature dealing with the subject refers to stable contexts and usually in passing (Steiner 2007), as hearsay⁴ or in anecdotal ways. Several publications exist on the perversity of sitting allowances in the health sector (Ridde 2010; Hanson 2012), referring for example to ‘problems created by *per diems* and possible solutions’ (Vian, Miller *et al.* 2012). Conteh and Kingori (2010) have called for more systematic and structural attention to sitting allowances or *per diems*.

⁴ Interview, Associate Fellow, Makerere University, Kampala, June 2011,

In a different perspective, the normative, anecdotal or dismissive treatment of the phenomenon misses the entanglement of sitting allowances in the infrastructure of development. In northern Uganda sitting allowances can also be seen as part of a larger mosaic of the post-conflict dynamics, where they are integral to the everyday governance of service delivery. They represent one of the ways in which actors negotiate what service governance consists of in this post conflict context where aid still constitutes a dominant aspect of service provision.⁵ The practice of sitting allowances in Pader is an emerging feature of the specific conditions of humanitarian presence and 'real' service governance.⁶

In addition to the conflict and resulting humanitarian aspects of the context in the North, on a national level the governance of Ugandan agricultural services is being reconstituted with an aim of modernizing and commercializing agriculture and agricultural institutions through a blend of decentralization and agricultural extension reform. After President Yoweri Museveni came to power, donors became very influential and comprehensively engaged in Uganda's economic liberalization (Branch 2009), in which agriculture has been an important focus. Through the 1990s and 2000s service reforms combined aspects of privatisation, decentralisation, and democratisation with efforts to maintain the continued strong grip of the state on service delivery.⁷

By around 2005, the result was an apparently liberalized state dominated by an emerging elite with the presidency at the helm that Barkan refers to as 'an authoritarian patronage-based regime' (Barkan 2011: 2).⁸ Governance and service delivery in Uganda have become increasingly commoditized. Barkan (2011) highlights the spiralling costs of patronage (for example around the 2011 elections) which is a corresponding system of tribute, accumulation and reward that services the political life of the state and its agents. At a service delivery level, in daily interactions with public officials to gain access to public services in Kampala, it is 'normal' to pay for services one is formally entitled to. In over nine districts in the North we heard that parents incur costs by providing 'boosts' to encourage teachers to stay in schools, especially in remote areas.⁹ Sitting allowances can be seen as part of this everyday governance, which may include 'the diverse, multiple actions of state actors as well as the myriad responses and interactions between state officials and non-state actors' (Migdal and Schlichte 2005: 15).

⁵ General discussions revealed that sitting allowances also happen in sectors like education, public works and health.

⁶ On 'real governance' see Olivier de Sardan (2008).

⁷ For elaboration, see Golooba-Mutebi and Sam Hickey (2010).

⁸ On the larger politics of development see Golooba-Mutebi and Hickey (2013).

⁹ These included cash or in kind contributions like providing labour in their garden. 'Parents schools' are common, where locals using local materials set up schools and community members volunteer to teach while the rest of the community provides for their upkeep.

4.4 The state-aid interface and the 'shadowy' nature of sitting allowances

The practices of offering civil servants direct and personal remuneration for jobs they do for aid agencies or local communities have the form of a taboo: everybody knows about it and talks about it in private but the topic is not brought up in meetings, nor is it reported on. It happens in open daylight, yet stays in the shadow of the formal documentation and discourse on development.

The term 'sitting allowances' was used in Pader both for remuneration to the conflict-affected population and for civil servants. The term '*per diem*', on the other hand, was strictly reserved by interviewees for what agencies paid their own staff during fieldtrips. '*Per diems*' were considered to be in line with the official agency policies and were part of the rightful terms of employment. 'Sitting allowances' concerned exchanges between aid agencies and the local government and the community, and were considered an exception to the rule.

Programme budget lines provided room for manoeuvre to permit the payment of sitting allowances. One project officer interviewed reported that even if sitting allowances were not mentioned in project proposals, budgets were structured with provisions in mind. A project manager mentioned that within the food security project he manages, 'allowances are charged under either training or the seed fair line depending on which of the two activities the PD staff was involved in'. Seed fairs and training were the main areas where allowances were provided.

In the period of research, NGOs held agricultural training events for farmers. In the years following the cessation of hostilities, the trainings were justified by reference to needs of a generation of young people who grew up in camps and stated that they did not have, or had lost, farming skills. In subsequent years, training as part of extension services was geared to an agenda of technological change, in which commercialization and modernization became a central normative ambition in line with changing government policy. Each agricultural rehabilitation programme was based on assumptions that the erstwhile 'farmers' needed reorientation towards 'new', 'better' and 'modern' farming practices to improve household income and food security. While some organisations preferred to offer the training using their own programme staff, a number of them used PD officers as facilitators or contributors. In these cases, the District staff prepared training materials and facilitated sessions on topics chosen by the aid organisation.

Seed fairs are a novel market-based humanitarian service where suppliers and local people trade agricultural inputs for vouchers supplied to farmers by aid agencies. Reviewed literature speaks highly of the modality of seed fairs, primarily as a more demand-driven alternative to direct seed distributions, as means to 'put farmers first' (Remington, Maroko *et al.* 2002), or to highlight farmers' demands and needs. While it is beyond the scope of this paper to address these claims, we

recognize that seed fairs resonate with a current development practice shift towards 'reconstruction from below' (Hilhorst, Christoplos *et al.* 2010).

The success of seed fairs or any input-related interventions critically depends on effective and independent quality control mechanisms for inputs (Christoplos 2008). Such mechanisms however, are not well established in northern Uganda. Poor quality seed is a broad concern within Uganda and attributed to a history of breakdown of state regulation as part of two decades of national neo-liberal reforms (CEM 2010; Wiegratz 2010). The physical presence of an officer from the Production Directorate in the seed fair was meant to provide quality control. The District representative checked the certification cards, detailing the source and storage of seeds. He was also required to sample the inputs for a germination test but this was rarely done in practice because it would require a process of pre-qualifying vendors in order to obtain samples. Instead, PD staff were present at the fair to assure and advise the buyers. The presence of the PD staff at seed fairs served different purposes for different actors. The PD staff used the gathering as an opportunity to communicate with farmers on relevant issues such as the outbreak of diseases, commodity price fluctuations and weather forecasts. Local people took advantage of these events to seek specific advice on crops and diseases. They would, for example, ask advice on whether or not to plant cotton in view of the price-fall in the previous year. The NGOs could use the report written by the PD staff after the event to show they provided a form of quality assurance and thereby enhance their legitimacy in the eyes of their donors.

Sitting allowances were routinely provided to government staff involved in training and seeds fairs. However, discussions with aid workers revealed that the term 'sitting allowances' was considered political and distasteful. Instead, people interviewed for this study preferred to replace the term 'sitting allowances' by terms like 'transport' or 'training' allowances. Another term often used was 'facilitation'. By using labels like 'training' or 'facilitation', sitting allowances were legitimized as a contribution to capacity development. Facilitation evokes the appropriate image of enabling local government. Use of these terms thus reconstituted 'sitting allowances' in a manner that aligns them with NGO discourse (and donor requirements).

4.4.1 Re-establishing service provision while 'sitting at a dry desk'

Decentralisation has been a major component of public sector reform and 'capacity development' to promote better service provision and empowerment in Uganda. This is well documented elsewhere (Francis and James 2003; Manyak and Katono 2010; Green 2013). The Ugandan experience mirrors that of many countries where the reforms are mostly incomplete and devoid of necessary arrangements for desired outcomes (Ribot, Agrawal *et al.* 2006). Local government in Pader is an example of this mismatch between aims and conditions as the district faces huge challenges in fulfilling its responsibilities for service delivery and promoting socio-economic development. The challenges included poor funding, understaffing, irregular

salaries and lack of adequate capital to implement activities - a phenomenon akin to 'sitting on a dry desk' (Therkildsen and Tidemand 2007: 8), and quite typical for northern Uganda (Wairimu and Tamas 2010). Local government agencies are heavily reliant on the inadequate central government allocations for operational costs and at times salaries. Local revenue is constrained by a weak revenue base consisting of market revenues, a two per cent tax on contractors, fees for bicycle licenses, land rates and a hotel tax. The most significant local revenue source - the graduated personal tax, was abolished in 2005 through a presidential intervention (Manyak and Katono 2010).

The humanitarian policy to build local government capacity thus intersected with the tendency of the district government to look to aid agencies to offset shortfalls in district funds. At the time of this research, over fifteen actors including international and national NGOs, UN agencies, community and church-based organisations were implementing projects with a focus on food security.¹⁰ Most of these agencies covered some government expenses, such as transport for activities, and in addition paid sitting allowances - through a cash transfer - to the extension workers engaging in these activities.

To better understand why and how sitting allowances are important, we have to place them within the context of general salaries and remuneration. A highly ranked officer reported to receive an average 20,000 to 35,000 Uganda shillings (UGX) per seed fair and 55,000 to 80,000 UGX per day for training as allowances.¹¹ In a 'good' month, he conducted five seed fairs and eight trainings. His salary was approximately 900,000. This means he generated between a quarter to three quarters of his monthly salary at the peak of the cropping season. The sitting allowances thus result in major opportunities for civil servants to supplement their income and at times act as a safety net mechanism in case of salary delays or failures. This is similar to findings elsewhere where they are referred to as *per diems* that provide opportunity to supplement meagre salaries (Horning 2008; Olivier de Sardan 2011; Søreide, Tostensen *et al.* 2012; Vian, Miller *et al.* 2012).

4.4.2 Legitimation of a practice 'in the shadows'

According to the Uganda Public Service Standing Orders,¹² allowances are defined as taxable payments, and additional to salary payable to an officer in order to facilitate the proper execution of an assignment or duty (GoU 2010). But the kinds of allowances referred to in this paper are unreported and are neither taxable, nor declared. These institutional monetised arrangements between NGOs and a given

¹⁰ These included WFP, LWF, Coopi, Mercy Corps, GOAL, CESVI, ZOA, FAO, World Vision, Concern International, FHI, Caritas, FAO, CPAR, IAS, and Diocese of Kitgum among others.

¹¹ Exchange rate at time of research: 1 US Dollar = 2000 Uganda shillings.

¹² Documents issued to deal with the management of the Public Service and their terms and conditions of service.

civil servant for specific assignments are legitimized in different ways by international and local staff aid agencies and by government actors.

The international staff of NGOs argued that they use allowances to establish constructive relationships were needed and to influence the working of the local government and the quality of services provided. Those interviewed claimed it enabled them to hold the district departments accountable for service provision. One regional head of programmes in an INGO stated:

‘You can say okay, we were in this and that training, we spent on you, both in terms of capacity building and upkeep and so on, we expect some output and follow-up from you. But if there was nothing offered, you have no hold on the person. You can’t even claim a report.’

Indeed, in the many trainings observed in the course of this research it was established that ‘facilitation’ enabled the NGOs to work with the PD on the basis of ‘terms of reference’ that stipulated the tasks of the PD.

Several respondents argued that sitting allowances represented a modest proportion of project activities, whereas they could make a major difference to the outcome. Project managers needed to ensure timely implementation of activities. Some were also under pressure to spend money from national offices through ‘remote management’ (Stoddard, Harmer *et al.* 2006). These staff felt compelled to give priority to timely implementation of projects that involved local government and this was facilitated by sitting allowances. As one UN officer told me:

‘You need them to prioritise some work. The allowances help you achieve that. Also if it means I get them to do what is important and required, I will give the allowance.’

National staff of the NGOs, on the other hand, condoned sitting allowances because they could easily identify with the civil servants. During our research, we increasingly came across people holding two jobs: with an NGO and, for example, with the government’s National Agricultural Advisory Services (NAADS). Aid organisations had remained the main source of livelihoods for years, but recently their staff had begun to look towards NAADS and the local government as increasingly attractive options for future careers. Several of the coordinators and service providers under NAADS were formerly humanitarian workers, while field based officers in NGOs and NAADS rarely relinquished their former positions. The proximity (and sometimes double identity) of national staff with civil servants brought about a high acceptance of sitting allowances.

Despite being a semi-legitimate practice, sitting allowances were understood by both aid agencies and the local government as being instrumental in the NGO policy of handing over responsibilities to the state. During the emergency, and as we highlighted above, district departments had minimal involvement in implementing programmes. Their roles in humanitarian projects were ceremonial, such as to ‘flag off’ projects or to officiate in project handover ceremonies. Looking back on this, the community development officer from one sub-county announced during the review of a programme that he was ‘tired of doing favours for NGOs who only came by my

office, just before they have visits from donors'. Thus, both NGOs and the local government came to recognise that their cooperation had to go beyond signing ceremonial memorandums of understanding to include more concrete and well-defined responsibilities in programmes. Sitting allowances were seen as ways to smooth such collaboration. PD staff increasingly understood the LRRD related pressure on NGOs to establish a more genuine relationship with local government, which carries with it a realignment of power relations. At the same time, NGO representatives seemed to appreciate that the local government was also under pressure to 'step up' their efforts in responding to the needs of the newly returned population.

However, this shared appreciation did not lead to any degree of formalisation due to lingering concerns that these practices could be seen to be 'corrupt', as civil servants were effectively asking to be compensated for their 'normal duties'. Ultimately, the agencies felt they had no choice but to go along and to establish informal norms for doing so. There were no inter-agency guidelines and NGOs never officially harmonized their procedures for sitting allowances. The country director of one summarised this as:

'everyone knows that everyone else is giving out. You know others are doing it. We also give out. If we stop, others will still give. Basically it's muddling through for everyone.'

On the side of the district staff, many local government actors perceived of training and quality control as additional work and services rendered to the aid agency or to the local community. They recognized these agencies as a source of patronage emanating from images portrayed by their gated offices and guest-house compounds, the four wheel drive cars and the large budgets NGOs are commonly believed to have available.¹³ This attitude was fuelled by failure of some NGOs to declare their budgets to the district administration, leading to a general perception that they are 'hiding something'. A number of agencies declined to submit their budgets because they considered this as an inappropriate effort by the government to exert control.

In several interviews, district staff presented a 'privatization' narrative to legitimize the allowances, based on the prevailing agricultural extension reforms. Despite being civil servants some also considered themselves to be 'private service providers', since they argued they were contracted by the NGO on behalf of the community. This was partly because the NGO 'beneficiaries' sent for training were considered as outside and/or in addition to the agricultural advisory services provided to groups under government programmes such as NAADS. Especially since the PD had no budget for such additional training, or even for monitoring of agencies' programmes, it was considered 'normal' for NGOs to finance the engagement of the PD staff.

¹³ See also Jordan Smith (2003).

The privatisation narrative used by government interviewees relates to broader neo-liberal reforms targeting the public sector and agricultural extension reforms. The Uganda-wide NAADS programme, introduced around 2000, aimed to 'thin' the extension line agency, with the extension workers becoming private service providers that could be 'co-opted' back on a contract-basis (NAADS Secretariat 2000), thus separating extension from the civil service. However the system was contested and produced mixed results. Some districts ended up with a double or hybrid system where NAADS operated in parallel to line departments. The introduction of NAADS in Pader only began during the transition to development in 2007 - a time when the reforms were unravelling as the central government had started to restore aspects of the old extension service (Kjær and Joughin 2012). NAADS was established as a department under the Production Department, creating a set of semi-private service providers that were on the payroll of the government yet were considered 'privatised', which added to their view that sitting allowances were a 'normal' part of these arrangements.

4.4.3 Organization and regulation

Given the shadowy existence of sitting allowances, the question remains how are they organized and regulated in the absence of formal and recognised regulation? Sitting allowances are fluid and informal, yet highly regularized at the same time, with individuals navigating in between. The discussions and agreements on sitting allowances take place in the time slot between the official invitation letter and the actual event.

The process is as follows. The administrative assistants in the PD office are the first to deal with the invitation letter. This letter makes no reference to sitting allowances. There is, however, always a silent offer and an expectation. After the assignment is handed over to a particular PD staff member it is followed up, often through a telephone conversation. As part of this follow-up, 'facilitation' might be discussed. The staff member then decides whether to attend the seed fair or training. This decision is partly based on the issue of sitting allowances, but also the availability of staff, promptness of the request,¹⁴ and the reputation of the NGO. Hence, NGOs need to ensure they are in the PD's 'good book' to ensure the attendance of qualified staff.

Civil servants talked about the reliability of NGOs in relation to sitting allowances in terms of 'behaving'. Behaving was used to refer to meeting costs of a certain activity or even a simple idea of buying someone lunch in the NGO offices. In some cases, field workers also used the term 'behaving' in reference to their Kampala offices and referred to the act of paying salaries. Thus when they said 'Kampala has not behaved', they meant the salaries were yet to be transferred into their bank accounts. NGOs that did not 'behave', in this case, were NGOs who failed

¹⁴ We witnessed several instances where late requests despite offering SAs were just disregarded.

to pay allowances or paid very low rates, thus not respecting the unspoken rules for 'behaving'. The mutual understanding was that too high an amount would land the NGO worker in problems with their superiors, while too low amounts were unacceptable. The nature of activity also determined the rate, where for instance, it was 'not acceptable' to offer a workshop rate during training. Generally, the penalty for NGOs which do not 'behave' is a refusal to attend their activities in the future.

Negotiation is informal, on a case-by-case agreement. On closer observation, however, these negotiations were framed in highly personal terms and relations going beyond the single event under negotiation. Granovetter argues that investment in relations is important because many practices like sitting allowances face 'the problem of embeddedness' (Granovetter 1985). They are devoid of protection, enforcement or means for redress outside of themselves, and thus rely on mutual trust emanating from a history of investment in social ties (Portes and Haller 2005). They are thus only realized through everyday practices, which act as the rules and regulations and help to check on the unrestricted pursuit of sitting allowances. For instance, in cases where there was no (or very little) provision in budgets for facilitation, PD staff would nonetheless accept the invitation if there was a history of relations, or with an unspoken expectation that their actions would be reciprocated and rewarded in future. Terms like friend and father were frequently used to frame existing relationships and to negotiate solutions when district officers were confronted with cases of conflicting activities and requests from the NGOs. Job and life histories of NGO workers in the district showed, as elaborated above, that the same group of individuals moved between organisations over time, but maintained this cordial relationship with the district. This means that in practice the NGO's reputation depended more on the person and reputation of the project coordinator in charge of the agricultural programme than on the NGO per se. Thus a 'cooperative' NGO could easily be re-categorized as 'misbehaving' when a particular staff member left the organisation. Thus not all civil servants, nor all agency staff, were treated equally.

Despite being embedded, sitting allowances are to some extent officially sanctioned, although this endorsement is 'encoded'. During the time of fieldwork, requests and invitations to NGO activities were increasingly sent through the Chief Administration Officer (CAO), who is the administrative head of the district and in charge of NGO-government relations. The use of the CAO's office to seek permission for the participation of a civil servant is considered as an implicit formalisation of the allowances. The official recognition of their status 'away from duty station' made it easier to claim. It was thus considered that once the CAO acknowledges the involvement of the district official in NGO activities, it would be 'normal' for the NGO to assume payment of allowances.

In several interviews NGO staff and local government referred to attempts to formalize the allowances but without success. Reference was made to several revised standing orders and policies sent to local governments by the Ministry of Public Service, setting the rates for visits out of one's duty station. A district official once

produced a letter dated March 2009 and emanating from the Office of the UN Resident Coordinator and signed by the World Bank. It sought to set the 'limits' for various types of sitting allowances. In one of the NGO offices, this same letter was on display on a notice board, with the words 'sitting allowances are not a right, but the exception to the rule' in red. Interviewees agreed that the letter had no status in regulating the relation between the government and NGOs, yet the letter did add to the legitimation of the practice. NGOs in particular were opposed to the idea that the letter could be considered a rule, as this would reduce their room for manoeuvre to adjust their appropriation, contestation or subjugation within each organization's realities and based on on-going negotiations with varying outcomes for each organisation and service provided.

4.5 Conclusion

In considering LRRD related transitions, it is crucial to problematize the notion of the goalposts of 'development'. In this paper, we have analysed the institutional arrangement of sitting allowances as a widespread practice impinging on transition and development in northern Uganda. The importance of these shadowy arrangements can be interpreted as suggesting that the roles of the state and aid agencies in 'development' diverge from the ideal norms implied in LRRD transitions. Conditions of the state or even transferring responsibilities back to it, respond more to local conditions, half-hearted policy roll-outs and negotiated realities of aid-state relations. In illustrating this we have situated sitting allowances within the politics of day-to-day decision-making and interaction in the provision of services. Looking at the everyday governance of the phenomenon, undistorted by a normative conceptual gaze, has allowed us to identify how the institutional norms surrounding sitting allowances have become central to service provision governance and development 'as it happens'.

The use of sitting allowances stems from development practice, yet blends seamlessly with the observed trend that states in Africa and elsewhere increasingly enter into - formal or informal - direct taxation for the use of services. Quite contrary to the notion that the 'D' in LRRD, implies that the government fully reassumes its duties to the affected population, it could be observed how multi-mandated aid agencies increasingly went 'local' in the organisation of services, while the allowances they provided in the shadowy margins of their practice actually formed a major pillar of state-governed service delivery.

Recent policy trends suggest the engagement of state and non-state providers as part of the state building agenda in fragile contexts (OECD 2008). As a result, we currently witness an amalgam of policy experiments that step away from institutional mono-cropping (Evans 2004). They instead aim to ensure minimal services by grounding service provision in local realities (Hilhorst, Christoplos *et al.* 2010). Our article points to the need to make aid agencies part of this equation and

rather than holding on to an idealized notion of LRRD based on misguided assumptions that agencies can simply 'hand over' services to a civil service waiting in the wings. Aid agencies are (and should be) an embedded part of this institutional multiplicity.

The evolving version of development is local and historically specific. Sitting allowances in northern Uganda are shaped in a context of a high density of agencies focusing on food security, policies of collaboration with, and capacity development of, the state by aid agencies, constrained local government budgets and staff and hesitant and inconsistent steps toward decentralization and privatization of public services. These elements - and the state-aid relationships that have grown over time - create the conditions in which the practice of sitting allowances is legitimized and meets the interests of the different actors involved. It is in this context that sitting allowances became institutionalized as a silent but regulated compact, a customary contract that takes places in the shadows of development with consent of all actors.

Development is not just about practices, but also about the meaning that can be ascribed to these practices. The practice of sitting allowances was consensual, while the meanings ascribed to the practice were varied. Actors legitimized sitting allowances with their own specific arguments, drawing on their respective frames of reference. They thus ascribed meaning to sitting allowances varying from mechanisms to enhance effective and responsive service delivery (international staff of NGOs) to a rightful support to underpaid civil servants (local staff of NGOs) or the logical expression of a drive towards privatisation (local government). In the fragmented landscape of service delivery we thus recognize the different normative frameworks underpinning different institutions contributing to the hybrid nature of service delivery.

Agencies blend into everyday governance in Uganda, and sitting allowances are key to ensure the smooth collaboration between agencies and civil servants. The question remains if these agencies leave an imprint on the services that are being provided. We found that sitting allowance had become a principal channel through which the mutual accountabilities between local government and aid agencies, including the UN, are negotiated. It was largely through sitting allowances that agencies could realise the expectations they had from civil servants and civil servants could perform as the privatised service providers the government wanted them to be. On the other hand, the shady nature of these arrangements meant that these accountability practices also remained un-transparent. Whether end-users of the services could base accountability claims on the practice is subject to further research. This is more so because the context is one where the provision of agricultural services and its contribution to achieving food security is emerging as a major determinant of how the development of the social contract between the government and the local community can be developed (Chapter Three).

Lastly, both aid agencies and local government sustain the myth that sitting allowances constitute a small 'wrongdoing' that must be excused because it results in better service provision. Sitting allowances in northern Uganda were quite

substantial and often provide a significant supplement to the regular salary of a civil servant. For this reason alone, it is important to lift the veil on this practice and make it subject to further academic study, and - crucially - take it outside of the taboo-sphere and make it part of transparent debate and policy of aid agencies and government.

Chapter five: Aid under Contestation: Everyday Practice and 'Farmer' Responses in 'Community-Based' Food Security Interventions in Northern Uganda

This chapter has been submitted for publication as:

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Abstract

Addressing food insecurity in fragile and conflict affected societies is a key aspect of human development and subject to different food security paradigms. We examine a large-scale intervention in northern Uganda to unravel the interplay between aid interventions and the dynamics of livelihood strategies at the household and community levels. The paper specifically focuses on the question why many people dropped out of aid programmes that, through farmer organisations, largely offered seeds (through vouchers and money) in exchange for a labour contribution to public works. Using a unique methodology that combines interactive research and ethnography we show how labour constraints within households - partly due to competition with public works and aid interventions - constrain recovery efforts. These interact with processes of social differentiation, social engineering, and the ways people deal with recurrent shocks, including disaster risks. We conclude that governments and aid organisations are trapped in assumptions and unfounded narratives informing their interventions which leads to mismatches with the needs of people in recovery situations.

Key Words: labour; public works; food security; aid interventions; northern Uganda

5.1 Introduction

Food security as a key aspect of human development is back on the academic agenda, as well as being a key national and development cooperation policy theme.¹ This has been partially triggered by the 2007 - 2008 food crisis and the steep rise in prices of major food commodities (Rao 2009) affecting mainly Africa, Latin America and Asia. In several cases, food riots were reported (Cohen and Garrett 2010). Climate change is another contributing factor (Maxwell, Webb *et al.* 2010). It is argued that with changing weather conditions, the majority of the population in some areas will face increased difficulty in meeting their food needs (Parry, Rosenzweig *et al.* 2004; Cline 2007). The pendulum had also shifted back on food security in so-called fragile states, with countries or regions within countries symptomized by a mix of characteristics which may include unwilling and/or unable governments and recovery from protracted conflicts (FAO 2010; Maxwell, Russo *et al.* 2012). Twenty per cent of the world's undernourished people live in such fragile states (FAO 2010: 15).

Northern Uganda can be regarded as 'fragile' albeit within a relatively stable state.² Some key aspects of this fragility have been a complex conflict that disrupted rural livelihoods and weak formal state institutions that provided services and support (Flores, Khwaja *et al.* 2005). This exposed large groups of people to increased uncertainties in access to food over a considerable period of time (Alinovi, Hemrich *et al.* 2007). As common in such contexts, either during displacement or return processes, humanitarian assistance is a key feature of people's everyday life.

Using a unique methodology that combines interactive research (Van der Haar, Heijmans *et al.* 2013) with recurrent household and thematic interviews over 16 months, we focus on local people as they rebuild their lives during a return process. The ways in which people respond to food security interventions was one of the aspects we followed. In addition, we focused on a case study of a food security intervention on the part of a European NGO that formed farmer groups to organize labour parties working on road construction in exchange for vouchers and money to buy seeds. As the years went by, increasing numbers of participants opted out of the programme and this paper examines the reasons for this. As part of the investigation we analysed the ways in which policy paradigms about food security shaped the form and content of the food security intervention.

The paper has several sections. First, we highlight the theoretical perspective, where we combine notions and paradigms on the shifts in thinking about food security with parallel approaches to humanitarian aid. The next section on methodology is followed by an introduction to the study area. We then go into the

¹ For instance, it is a policy theme and agenda for the Dutch and United Kingdom (UK) governments.

² Strong state governance led to significant improvements in Uganda over the past 2 decades, to the extent that it is paraded as a 'success story' and a 'showcase' (Dijkstra and Van Donge, 2001).

details of the programme and how it was implemented, focussing on the dynamics that revolved around it. The paper ends with a concluding analysis that also draws out the implications for practice.

5.2 Changing and diverging food security paradigms and humanitarian aid: a theoretical perspective

Food security is a contested concept, where numerous claims and arguments are drawn upon to define and explain causes and responses. Mooney and Hunt (2009) talk of the existence of 'multiple consensus and contestations discourses'. Maye and Kirwan (2013: 4) build on this to talk and refer to a 'fractured consensus'. It is thus a concept characterised by substantial agreement among the international community on many aspects and simultaneously, disagreement and diverging views.

Rooted in the Malthusian tradition (Malthus 1798), food insecurity was initially framed as a question of availability. This discourse focused on lack of availability of food due to inadequate food production, which was in turn due to factors such as population growth and natural hazards. In 1945 the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) was created with objectives focused on food security through increased agricultural production, hence food availability. Food insecurity was treated as a concern that could be resolved by technical solutions. This was the major underpinning of the Green Revolution of the 1950s and 1960s when research, development and technology transfer were the pillars of production increase, especially in South Asia.

Amartya Sen (1981) challenged this paradigm and demonstrated that food supply was usually not the problem. Food insecurity persists despite increased grain reserves at national and international level. He showed that famine resulted from the failure of 'entitlements' or unequal access for certain groups of people, often caused by structural vulnerability. Such 'entitlements' could consist of income, access to social protection or smallholder production. He concluded that increasing global food supply is not a panacea for famine. The broader 'freedom' to buy food (or lack thereof among poor and vulnerable people) was influenced by local/national/international policies, markets and trends, which was recognized as more important than household or even national production levels (Christoplos 2009).

While the entitlement discourse mainly focuses on economic entitlements and the working of markets, a third paradigm holds that food insecurity, especially famine, today is preventable and hence a signal of political failure (Devereux 2009). This is an argument that has also been elaborated by De Waal (1997), focussing largely on African governments. This approach looks at access to food as a basic expression of the social contract. These three paradigms have been developed in response to each other. Yet, they also co-exist and it can be argued that each of these paradigms can be empirically valid in specific contexts.

Interestingly, the new international agenda on food security has taken the discussion back to the 1960s and 1970s with a focus on 'new productionism' (Marsden 2010: 443). Tomlinson (2013) provides a summary and critique of the imperative to double food production by 2050 so as to feed nine billion people. This is a discourse reliant on the resurgent importance of agriculture to food security and rural development as reflected in the World Development Report of 2008. Most importantly, 'new productionism' does not take account of the fact that especially sub-Saharan Africa - home to a substantial number of undernourished people - is an 'arc of insecurity' (Munslow and O'Dempsey 2010; O'Keefe 2010) where processes including climate change, political insecurity, competition over resources and conflict-induced displacement intertwine to produce food insecurity.

Currently we see two diverging views, drawing on the three paradigms explained above in different ways. The first emphasizes the economic value of food and increasing production, and that rural *farmers* should be supported to integrate and produce for markets (AGRA 2009). It calls for investment and initiatives to improve productivity with new and improved inputs. There is an implicit push for large-scale commercialisation, standardisation and modernisation of agriculture as envisaged by the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (McMichael and Schneider 2011). The second paradigm advocated by, amongst others, the International Assessment of Agricultural Knowledge, Science and Technology and Development (IAASTD) argues that rural communities are not well placed to take advantage of the highly discriminatory markets which leaves them in a much worse position than they were before and which entrenches inequalities. In this view, *peasants* are regarded as part of the rural countryside where the right of nations and people to control their own food systems and markets is central (Wittman, Desmarais *et al.* 2010).

This paper focuses on the ways in which humanitarian approaches tally with these general policy paradigms on food security. In tandem with general theoretical developments, we have witnessed changes in humanitarian and development responses to food insecurity in conflict and areas recovering from conflict. Humanitarian aid has long been premised on the assumption of food crisis as an issue of lack of food availability. The standard response was the provision of food aid to the most vulnerable target groups, which developed into the dominance of seeds and tools to re-establish production and increase productivity, and thus availability.

More recently, the understanding of food crises in conflict and post-conflict areas has become more complex, and we witness an increasingly ambitious combination of various models in aid interventions, pushing towards more integrated and comprehensive approaches. Food security interventions can be seen to alleviate the immediate needs of the poorest, while also strengthening the foundations of long-term food security through social protection and livelihood promotion. This can also be seen as a shift from temporary relief to recovery (i.e. production, infrastructure and re-starting basic services) in which the emerging trends combine provision of agricultural inputs, advisory services, infrastructural development and the

development of markets. While food security interventions shift to strengthening market institutions and household resilience, there is also an approach to food security in conflict situations where food security is about understanding the complex and recurrent nature of hunger and famines, with entitlements, access, and societal organization as key aspects. This view would lead to a longer-term perspective on food security which recognised entrenched poverty and the need for investment in broader livelihoods i.e. an integrated approach.

5.3 Methods

We used an ethnographic-interactive methodology to undertake the research. Interactive research refers to collaborative research practices shaped through dialogue and interactions between the researcher, staff from aid agencies and/or the community that is studied. Thus research relationships and knowledge are co-produced and continually negotiated between researchers and research subjects (Van der Haar, Heijmans *et al.* 2013). These are arrangements that include some form of collaboration and participatory elements but also misunderstandings and disagreement. Interactive research does not always translate into fully-shared ownership of the research or its findings. In this case, our study was negotiated and shaped in practice with the Dutch aid agency's Food Security Programme (FSP) which is the subject of study in this paper. It entailed 'following' its on-going community based food security and agriculturally based livelihood interventions in Pader District, northern Uganda.

Ethnography includes mixed or multiple data collection methods (Hammersley and Atkinson 2005). Data were collected using a questionnaire survey in March 2011 in two villages in one sub-county. Wii Lungoyi³ was a 'new' village i.e. 2011 was the first year they participated in the FSP. The second village - Wil pii Ngora⁴ was 'old' and 2011 was the second year in which the programme was implemented in the village. In total, we captured 121 households in the survey and 30 households were purposely chosen for recurrent qualitative in-depth household visits. The selection criteria included a diverse number of factors, including participation in aid and government projects, return phase and movement patterns back home. Regular follow-up visits were used to capture events in households as they happened using a semi-structured interview guide. This part of the visit always covered the same topics. In addition, a thematic question (on conflict experience, resettlement, perception of extension services, and the use of labour exchange) was dealt with in every visit. In total and working with a research assistant, I carried out 206 visits among the case study households plus other numerous informal interviews and household visits with other families in the study district. The general characteristics of the 121 and 29 households are summarised in Table 5.1 below. One household

³ Subsequently denoted as Lungoyi.

⁴ Subsequently denoted as Ngora.

became increasingly difficult to find. Of the other 29 cases, from Lungoyi, eight households were participating in the FSP and seven were non-participating households. In Ngora, we had seven participating households and seven non-participating households. The intention was not to compare but to understand the dynamics within different households. Data from the two villages were validated during meetings and discussions held in other villages, the neighbouring sub-county and broadly in the district where the FSP was also implemented. The major strength of our methodology, combining quantitative methods with systematic ethnographic enquiry, is that it allowed us to witness the nature, dynamics and processes within households over 16 months, thus capturing events which easily be lost to a single or less structured methodology.

Table 5.1: General Household characteristics

	N=121	n=29
Average household size	5.1±2	5.6±2.1
Average age of household head	41±12.6	41±9.7
Dependency ratio ^a	1.6	1.6
Average farm size (acres)	11.8±23.3	9.6±6.4
Land under cultivation (acres)	4.3±16.1	3.0±1.7
Communal (traditional) labour participation	76%	86%
Access to oxen	6%	10%

^aratio of household size: non-workers

5.4 Study location and the farming system

Pader District is located in northern Uganda. As a 'new' district under Uganda's decentralisation drive, it lacks the physical infrastructure and well-established administrative institutions of its well-known colonially established neighbours - Gulu and Kitgum districts. Pader emerged as the battleground during the later years of the complex war between the Lord's Resistance Army/Movement rise and the Government of Uganda. Violence became a part of everyday life, and the results were catastrophic (Hovil and Moorehead 2002). By 2003, the situation deteriorated to the extent that humanitarian relief operations were impeded or suspended (OCHA 2003).

The main feature of the conflict was forced displacement into camps of over 90 per cent of the 326,338 inhabitants of the District (GOU 2002).⁵ This happened in two major waves: in October/November 1997 to 1999 and between 2001 to 2002. A 2005 study by Boas and Hatloy found that on almost all indicators related to service provision, infrastructure and security, Pader camps scored worse than neighbouring

⁵ Numbers of displaced people vary but mainly rely on World Food Programme (WFP) food distribution working figures and UNHCR return monitoring figures. In 2002, WFP reported giving food to an estimated 271,000 in Pader (in 20 out of 31 camps). By 2008 UNHCR office put the number at 352,862.

districts. This included asset holdings (such as radio, bicycle and livestock) which influence adaptation choices and act as a safety net. Recently, many of these households were able to go back home to their villages, glad to escape the extremely poor living conditions in and around the camps (Bjørkhaug, Bøås *et al.* 2007).

Pader is inhabited by the Acholi sub-ethnic group, who are traditionally mixed smallholder farmers (Atkinson 1989) and heavily dependent on unpredictable rainfall. Rainfall is bimodal with an annual average of 1,330mm but with highly specific and localised patterns. Crops grown include finger millet and sorghum as the staple with small-scale production of maize, sweet potatoes, cassava, cowpea, pigeon peas, beans, sesame, groundnuts and vegetables. Cash crop farming (cotton and tobacco) was traditionally integrated into the production cycle and did not compete with food production (Carr 1982 quoted in Ker, 1995; Martiniello 2013). Currently, a few households own cattle and small animals, others having lost most to raids in late 1980s, and later during conflict and displacement. Other activities that complement crop production as the main livelihood activity are summarised in Table 5.2.

Table 5.2: Activities outside of crop production and livestock production within the two study villages

Off farm activities N=121 Yes - 74% No - 26%			
Activity type	% households	Activity type	% households
Casual labour	43%	Selling firewood	5%
Selling charcoal ^b	32%	Government employee	3%
Thatching grass roofs	13%	Selling local brew ^b	7%
Petty trade	7%	Black smith	2%
Others	5%	Renting ox	2%
Renting land	1%		

^bWe estimate an underreporting. Household visits showed that it was considered as an 'illegal' activity. In the survey, four households in Ngora reported no involvement in local brewing, while 3 in Lungoyi did not report charcoal burning but in the recurrent visits they indicated involvement. Households can be engaged in more than one of the mentioned activities.

Extensive farming happens within two seasons on land that is typically owned through inheritance. Land is cleared for several consecutive seasons spanning between two to three years, then left fallow, with fallow periods dependent on factors like ability to open new plots and crop sequencing. Reliance on elaborate crop sequencing and intercropping practices helps to optimise the use of land. A focus group discussion put the likely order of rotations as sesame, groundnuts, maize/beans, sorghum, and cassava. Martiniello (2013) adds the succession millet, sesame, pigeon peas, sorghum, cassava. From our field observations, a typical plot has two to five crops intercropped.

5.5 Discursive social differentiation: who qualifies for aid?

During the return, many food security programmes took on mixed methods between relief and development and used socially differentiated forms of targeting. One category was described as the 'Extremely vulnerable individuals and households' (EVI/Hs) and 'People with Special Needs' (PSNs). This was used to refer to people with disabilities, women, children, the sick, and the elderly (RLP 2006; IDMC 2010) and they gradually became the only people provided with food aid. For others, in order to reduce the 'dependency syndrome' (Harrell-Bond 1986) the trend was to 'wean' people off food aid.

This categorisation was criticised for being oversimplified (RLP 2006). By analysing the impact of various shocks including conflict and rebel attacks, Ssewanyana, Younger *et al.* (2007: 21) showed that impact varied more by geographic area than by consumption distribution or vulnerability categories. He recommended 'targeting by geographic region rather than by consumption or education levels or a variety of household characteristics'.

By the time of research, the trends in food security programming had moved in a direction where they were driven by the need to increase production and productivity as a pathway to food security. This was a push for an agricultural peace dividend with heavy modernisation undertones. The focus shifted largely to households that were able to do well building on their potential capacities to expand and demonstrate progress - and not those necessarily in need of assistance. This is a trend also noted by Banfield and Naujoks (2009) and Gelsdorf, Maxwell *et al.* (2012: 32) who refer to choosing the 'viable versus vulnerable'. Recently, the Agricultural Sector Development Strategy and Investment Plan (MAAIF 2010: 75), the government's main guide for public action and investment in agriculture picks up on the trend. It notes that the 'single best method to increase cultivated area and labour productivity in the north...(..) is that the target group needs to be selected on the basis of their *willingness* and *capacity* to maintain...'. This is in line with broader transformations in Ugandan policies and strategy towards growth, wealth creation and transformation to a modern rural economy as the key to achieve food and income security. The assumption in 'picking winners' (Christoplos, Rodríguez *et al.* 2010) as currently pursued in agricultural recovery and development, is that these categories are better placed to take advantage of the opportunities for economic development. However, as we will show in this case, this premise largely ignores the ensuing dynamics within the recovery context and in some cases might trigger subtle forms of social protest.

5.6 The food security programme

Broadly, the public works modality to improve agricultural livelihoods was implemented in northern Uganda as early as 2007 by WFP (Tusiime, Renard *et al.* 2013). From 2007 onwards, this increasingly took the form of vouchers for work, where contributions to public works was 'paid' in vouchers which could be

exchanged for seeds in so-called seed fairs.⁶ The two largest public works based programmes were started in 2007 and implemented by FAO through various partners (CEM 2010) and by the government through its Northern Uganda Social Action Fund (McCord, Onapa *et al.* 2013).

The case study intervention that we looked at was typical for food security programmes in Acholiland at the time of the research. It served social, economic and political objectives and combined elements of basic service provision, institutional development and community participation. Our interactive research partner started its programmes in Pader District in 2007. With a staff level that grew to about 70 within the district, their aim was to support returning persons to re-establish their livelihoods. The case study intervention was their largest and longest running programme starting 2007 and ending 2013. It targeted over 6000 'farmers' with the main objective of enabling the participating households to increase food production and income.

The programme aimed to build different local-level institutions. Rural communities were mobilized to 'self-organise' into 'farmer groups'⁷ of 20-30 individuals with a requirement of 50 per cent representation of women. These groups formed the primary basis of interaction between the agency and the farmers. The aim was also to restore the social fabric through working in groups. Within each group four individuals were elected as the Project Management Committee (PMC). The PMC helped to set up routines for meetings and getting together for various activities related to the programme, guided by rules set up within each group. The groups provided labour for public works. In Lungoyi, groups earned and redeemed vouchers in seed fairs while in Ngora, groups earned money which was deposited in the name of the group for communal cultivation, rather than individually. With these earnings, complemented with agricultural extension, groups were meant to progress towards being market-oriented producers. The approach thus combined infrastructural and institutional development, agricultural inputs provision, private sector development, and extension services with the end goal of improving the food security situation of the households.

The group's contribution to rebuilding community assets was through a Public Works (PW) modality. Roads were the most common form of PWs. Initially, construction of markets, cattle crushes and tree planting (in schools) were included, but the emphasis on roads came about because agencies increasingly wanted to support the development priorities of the local government, and it fitted the

⁶ See Birner *et al.* (2010) for instance on Danida cases.

⁷ The term 'farmer' is commonly used by humanitarian agencies and the government to refer to the northern Uganda populace. It is a term often used in a derogatory way, especially when local perceptions and practices differ from prescribed action. Reviewed academic literature on the Acholi population mostly refers to the 'peasantry'.

agricultural modernisation ideal. The roads were disconnected from the immediate and direct needs of the people and mainly served long-term development goals.

Ideally, each participant in the programme was meant to work 20 days paid at 4,000 Uganda shillings (UGX) per day.⁸ Those who worked in the scheme received vouchers to redeem in a seed fair while those already in the second year received 2,000 UGX cash per day. This was not individually, but for the group. A seed fair was held when 80 per cent of the work by most groups in one sub-county was achieved. Groups working for cash also accessed their cash after similar conditions were satisfied.

5.7 Participation in the programme

The fieldwork for this research was done in the fourth year of the food security programme. In the course of time, many participants decided not to continue with the programme resulting in a large 'drop out' rate. The farmers group in Ngora started with 56 participating households (in two groups), which dropped to 13 at the start of 2011. At the end of 2011, this had reduced to seven while an additional six households joined the group. In Lungoyi, where two farmer groups had been formed consisting of 53 members, by end of 2011, five households continued in the programme. What we saw here was households 'voting with their feet' (Tiebout 1956; see also Banzhaf and Walsh 2008) in response to interventions. By leaving situations they did not like or going to situations they believe to be more beneficial, 'voting with their feet' can be described as a tool for asserting freedom of choice and agency. Most importantly it served as a mechanism to constrain further participation within and among households.

At the time of research, stories were constructed and sustained in the villages about the absence or lack of benefit in the food security intervention. During a discussion in Ngora, a young man mentioned that 'others (village members) tell us that we (participating ones) are detrimental to our own development'. During a household visit, an elderly man noted that, 'the lazy ones are the ones who prefer to work on the NGO road rather than concentrate on their own garden'. The content of these messages varied but were used to refer to participating households participating which were seen as 'non developmental' and 'not progressive'.⁹

The experiences of the drop-outs and the stories that went around affected households in the villages in subsequent years. Indeed visits to other villages and particularly discussions with NGO extension workers revealed increasing difficulty in convincing people to join the programme.

⁸ Exchange rate at time of research: 1 United States Dollar = 2000 Uganda shillings.

⁹ Interestingly, this resentment did not turn against the fieldworkers of the programme, who were believed to be sympathetic to people's predicament but without the power to influence the content and modality of the programme. Field officers maintained cordial social relations with the locals who mentioned these as 'struggling with us working on the road'.

5.8 Explaining the dropouts

This section discusses why households dropped out of the food security programme. The recurrent household visits revealed dynamics and processes which were not seen by the agency and which we use to explain why the households considered their food security situation was not improving. These unseen dynamics and processes resulted in exits from the intervention and contestation of the programme on the ground.

5.8.1 *Availability of Labour as major challenge to food self sufficiency*

FAO (2012) argues that for 'agricultural growth to include the poor to reduce hunger and promote poverty reduction it should utilise the assets typically owned by the poor'. It further states that 'in all cases, the poor own their own labour, and in some cases this is all they own' (*Ibid*) - a logic used to inform many development interventions that build on a people's labour contribution (Siyoun 2012), often in the form of Public Works (PWs).

Public Works have gained interest among governments, the international development community (McCord 2012) and humanitarian organisations for their potential to address diverse concerns simultaneously. McCord (2012: 1) mentions they can 'not only address basic consumption needs but also contribute, directly or indirectly, to tackling the challenge of unemployment at both household and aggregate levels, thereby addressing the key current challenges of promoting productivity, growth, and stability, while also promoting graduation and preventing "dependency"'.¹⁰ The contribution to public works is also used as an indication or standard measure of a community's ownership and willingness to contribute to development projects as part of the participation rhetoric (White 1996). Such ownership has been put forward as a means to ensure sustainable development and peace building even in fragile and post-conflict contexts (Kuehne, Pietz *et al.* 2008; Donais 2009). There is an assumption both by government and humanitarians that labour is enough, extra and even readily available. Our interviews revealed that labour was, in fact, one of the scarcest resources in the area.

Labour scarcity

In the interviews, participating households noted increased difficulty in land opening and clearance.¹¹ Martin, Petty *et al.* (2009: 15) showed that over a three-year period in the early return process, the area cultivated by households in Pader had steadily increased - from an average of '1.3 acres (1/2 hectare) in 2006-07 to 3.1 acres (1.25 hectares) in 2007-08 and 4.2 acres (1.7 hectares) in 2008-09'.¹² From our

¹⁰ I.e. graduate out of poverty and away from ongoing reliance on state support.

¹¹ We use the term to refer to clearing and cultivation of land owned, borrowed or rented/hired by a household.

¹² The 2009 study by ODI was carried out before a 2010 district split. The households studied are currently located within the neighbouring district of Agago.

discussions and interviews, we heard that the steady increase in land opened was not possible under current conditions and households struggled to open the same amount of land each year and to sustain this every other year. Many emphasised that their food self-sufficiency was still highly compromised. Table 5.3 shows that 74 per cent still cultivate less than what is required for their self-sufficiency while a further 14 per cent are on the border of what is needed for self-sufficiency.¹³

Table 5.3: Land clearance distribution and household food security status in the two villages

Amount of land cleared in (acres)		How do you characterize your household?	
0-2	47.9%	Food secure	17%
3	26.5%	Food Insecure	69%
4	14.1%	Alternate	13%
5 and above	6.6%		

Maintaining or increasing land under production is crucially important, because households rely on agricultural production to provide a basis for their livelihood security and specifically to ensure the house has enough food for most months in a year. Acholi peasants have a long history of practicing agriculture and keeping cattle. Other activities (Table 5.2) complement this, but agriculture remains the central activity for maintaining food security, especially because staple food prices tended to double in local markets during times of shortage.

Clearing land is very labour intensive. It involves first a clearing of the bush and shrubs. In the past, this clearing was done by burning the bush, a practice currently discouraged. In the process of this first clearing, large trees which are not protected culturally are cut down for charcoal burning (Table 5.2).¹⁴ A second clearing involves ‘digging’ up the soil with a hand hoe - a time consuming activity where on average an acre can take up to a month depending on the household size and labour availability. Even where communal labour is engaged, individual households have to ‘prepare’ the land i.e. burn and/or clear the bush.

The availability of labour is often restricted due to poor health, particularly when women have to stay home to tend to children with malaria or nodding disease.¹⁵ The

¹³ Household needs are based on daily caloric needs of households (by gender and age) derived from FAO (2001). These are converted to maize grain equivalent per year. This means a household with 1 female adult, 1 teenager and 3 children between 1 and 14 years requires minimum 800kg of grains per year. Given we calculated production in the area as roughly 200-300kg/acre, with four acres a household might just be self-sufficient. We are yet to factor in what they require for sale for other household needs.

¹⁴ Cultural bylaws prohibit cutting the shea-nut tree.

¹⁵ A little known disease characterised by convulsions, head nodding and mental retardation. Several case study households had 2 - 4 children affected and the symptoms noted as worse during the rainy season. A few highlighted medical costs on burns or injuries.

shortage of labour is aggravated because livestock which buffered the household in times of shocks (Stites, Mazurana *et al.* 2006) is a 'missing asset' (Bjørkhaug, Bøås *et al.* 2007: 36). Given the 'central role livestock and animals play in the food security and labour needs of subsistence farmers' people had indicated both livestock and food aid as top household priority needs for return' (*Ibid*). A list of other requirements, including seeds and tools followed equally. However, humanitarian aid generally focussed on providing seeds and tools. Discussions with staff of various humanitarian agencies revealed several reasons why aid did not address this priority need of people. Investment in livestock would call for a substantial contribution and investment in households. On average, a household received seeds and some tools worth US \$ 20-35 per project per year. An ox plough costs about US \$ 60-66 while a pair of oxen costs US \$ 370-590. An agency staff member explained that investing in oxen and ploughs would force aid agencies to report fewer beneficiaries and 'nobody wants to do that'. Another one said that donors rarely allowed for more than US\$ 100 investment on livelihoods per beneficiary household per project. The absence of oxen and ploughs (Table 5.1) forced people to adopt hand cultivation adding to the pressure on labour and further limiting area farmed.

A study by the Overseas Development Institute had indicated initial signs of labour shortage during the early years of return (Martin, Petty *et al.* 2009). They found that, 'for most households in this survey, therefore, availability of land for cultivation is not in itself an issue; rather, the problem is one of land clearance, due to the lack of draft power and labour..... as well as lack of cash to employ labour' (*Ibid*: 15,17). The public works based programmes thus targeted one of the most scarce resources in the area - labour. As a result, these programmes systematically locked out unviable households and acted as a mechanism through which the viable were selected. In the survey the response 'we did not have able bodied men or enough labour' would feature in about 70 per cent of possible reasons for not participating in the public work.¹⁶

The results were supported by focus group discussions. Highly dependent households were characterised as poor and lacking the means for production. When asked to define and to determine who was considered as wealthy, the term was related to assets and activities that remedy lack of labour or make its use more efficient such as oxen, oxen plough or households with several able bodied persons. A comment from one man (N57)¹⁷ summarised this as follows:

'My wife is not capable of fully working as she limps. She can only do small work around the house like weeding. I am the only one to work. The programme is good for those who have enough capability to participate. We do not have that.'

¹⁶ The only other large response was from those who said their families were not willing to participate.

¹⁷ Refers to village and age, with each village denoted using the first letter.

In this case, and others in the aftermath of humanitarian and post-war reconstruction interventions, there is a risk that the most vulnerable, often those without strong family or community attachments, are excluded from economic recovery, as well as aid programmes, leading to the paradox that the most needy sometimes end up more vulnerable than before.

However, even among those framed as 'viable', participating households in interviews noted 'competition' with public works as a major labour problem. Others mentioned that public works 'threatened' their cultivation and this had a major impact on the food security situation of the heavily subsistence reliant peasants. A man (N38) said: 'last year I opened more land than this year since I was not working on the road'. A lady (W32) stated that 'land is the same as last year as working on the road has affected the increase of land. The road work took a long time to get finished. We started land opening late'. This was supported by an analysis which shows that on average non-participating households in Ngora opened an eighth of an acre more than their counterparts who participated in public works. There were households in our research who managed to open more land, but these were not found among the participants to the programme. During a focus group discussion with members of one group in Ngora, during the public works at least half already indicated their intention not to continue once they received the seeds, they were already 'working' for. This group later dissolved.

Ideally the PW component was scheduled for 20 days, and meant to be completed before the start of the agricultural season to avoid labour competition. However, with drop outs and problematic group processes, the work took longer. Discussions with field officers showed it took at least twice the number of scheduled days. In the study year, the PWs would start in late February, effectively coinciding with most of the cropping season.

The public works also competed with community labour. In addition to family labour, to plant labour intensive crops and to open new land for the second season high value sesame (or beans) for instance, Acholi households rely on traditional social forms of collective labour and shared arrangements¹⁸ (Table 5.1). These included *aleya* (rotational labour arrangements), *awak* (voluntary labour where food and drinks are provided)¹⁹ and *katala* (hiring labour mostly for cash and in a few instances for in-kind food contributions like cassava and beans). Managed by *rwodi*

¹⁸ Sesame was reported to do well only on 'virgin' or new land. Beans are a staple crop. Both beans and sesame are considered 'high' value crops and often expensive. Most households therefore strive to invest their labour and participate in the village labour arrangements mostly to ensure supply of beans.

¹⁹ Both the survey and focus group discussions show that *awak* is very rare after the conflict as it was noted to require substantial amounts of food and local brew to feed the workers, something that is difficult to produce for many of the newly returned population. This was noted as one cause of food insecurity after return.

kweri (designated hoe chiefs), the informal system and practices allow for negotiated access, control and distribution of labour for agricultural subsistence production within a village and to a lesser extent for other activities like house construction. It is based on multi-layered social, family, clan and kinship relations and functions as a safety net, ensuring access for each household, including vulnerable households, to at least a minimum amount of tilled land. Interestingly, the survey showed that households participating in these 'labour gangs' on average cleared 1.4 acres more than non-participating households, irrespective of whether they were engaged in the NGO programmes.

Visits to several villages showed that the parallel traditional labour arrangements continued to exist, while new and formalised farmer groups formed under NGO projects existed above these arrangements and did not replace them. The NGO interventions were premised on the idea that the social tapestry of communities was destroyed and hence new farmer institutions needed to be formed. However, empirical research has consistently shown that forms of social capital continue to exist in fragile contexts, with the prevalence of traditional relational networks and associations (Vervisch, Vlassenroot *et al.* 2013). Such informal institutions may not always be a grand solution and neither are they always very equitable (*Ibid*). However, in some cases like this, they can remedy labour concerns to a certain extent and so it is not surprising that traditional social organisation of labour continued to be valued.

Another labour-related dynamic was the cropping season which creates opportunities for short-term employment in the form of casual labour (Table 5.2). Many households work on other people's land to earn income to supplement their food and for other household-related needs. People resort to casual labour to address immediate food needs during shortages. As McCord, Onapa *et al.* (2013) also found, agricultural labour markets peaked during the growing season which is also the hunger season, 'hence not the most appropriate season for engaging in PW construction activities, since supporting household income through PWs rests on the assumption that households have excess labour at the time of project' (*Ibid*). However, in this case public works coincided with the cropping season, while increased dropout rates meant the work took longer than expected. These parallel labour engaging activities thus led people to contest additional labour requirements by the PW.

Tied payments

NGOs paid a higher rate per day than casual labour. This would lead us to question why people preferred daily casual work to contribution to public works. 'NGO money' was a one-off payment tied into seeds and tools through seed fairs. Working on other peoples' land for a lower rate gave freedom on when and how to utilise the money. Although the range of agricultural inputs allowed in the seed fairs was enlarged, this did not change the mind-set of the groups nor the general feeling that they were being 'cheated' of their labour as they referred to it. 'Cheating' was

also used to refer to the relatively higher prices in seed fairs compared to local markets, especially since those interviewed found that the seeds they received in the seed fairs were not 'improved' as claimed. In this process, the higher rate paid for the work was therefore 'not felt' and thus undervalued or lost in the process. In addition, with a coinciding hunger season both the survey and the regular visits showed the immediate need for health and education, which was not possible to address under the food security scheme. One interviewed farmer (L31) added: 'my family needs food and I cannot postpone that and wait for the seeds which I still need to plant'.

Youth needs and preferences

Household coping practices and the ways in which individual actors develop preferences and lifestyles, while seeking to adjust their livelihoods to changing opportunities and constraints, result in new social and economic ordering. The labour scarcity for agricultural production was also related to an exodus of young men from traditional agrarian lifestyles to more 'urbanised' livelihoods offered by the small trading centres. In an interview, the district agricultural planner argued that given the population of the area, labour should not be a problem, but war dynamics showed this to be 'a war of the youth'.²⁰ Agricultural livelihoods are unattractive to this generation. Branch (2013) showed that youth are migrating towards Gulu City, some as a result of dispossession of land, and also because they prefer the city lifestyle. Dispossession has played a crucial role in northern Uganda (Whyte, Babiha *et al.* 2013) but we also encountered many young people who prefer the 'urban' life and to 'hang around' many former main camps that turned into trading centres rather than return to villages where their parents farm.

Many aid programmes are designed to promote the restoration of rural livelihoods. On the other hand, people-generated dynamics are often concentrated in informal economic processes that tie and reshape different urban and rural realities. Particularly, youths have different needs and intentions in recovery. In this case, the exodus of this generation from agricultural-based livelihoods has the potential to alter the structure of households that have high dependency rates (Table 5.1) and are highly dependent on family labour.

Empowerment or employment? Divergent views in framing public works

Irrespective of the particular choice or type of PW, we established that differences in framing the link to empowerment and seeds and tools was one reason why labour concerns were not seen by the humanitarians. A review of documents and interviews revealed that PW are assumed to be a way of empowering the local community. Due to their years of displacement, rural people were understood as disempowered, and empowerment was an important secondary objective in shaping

²⁰ On the high loss of young men and abducted categories comprising thousands of children and adolescents, see Boas and Hatloy, 2005; Annan *et al.* 2013.

the modalities of food security programmes. Working on the community assets was thus seen as a way to help them 'regain dignity' and learn how to work for them. On the other hand, those interviewed placed high value on the infrastructure and income created by the PW, but questioned the empowerment logic. They saw the PW as 'employment' generation schemes and not 'empowerment' projects. Related to this employment view, others questioned the PW link and payment through seeds and tools as PWs did not provide additional income but rather substituted the income that would be gained from other sources such as casual labour (Table 5.2) or ability to open more land.

5.8.2 *Other contributing factors*

Outside of labour concerns, we identified other factors that influenced decision making about participating in food security programmes and which also affected the food security situation of the farmers.

Risk scenarios and disasters

The area has suffered from several hazards in recent years and the participants perceived the intervention plans as failing to take these into account. Some of the group farms in one area were affected by 'too much rain' and water logging. People lost their crop of beans and sesame. During a meeting, one of the case study groups brought this to the attention of the extension worker. Later in a follow up visit, one of the members mentioned that the, 'report we got from the office is that it was bad luck. Bad luck when these things happen every other year? The whole plot of beans is submerged'. Such events brought to our attention the risky nature of recovery in situations where shocks gravely impact on the household.

Substantial crop losses due to events like water logging, small floods and 'too much sunshine' easily remained outside the recognition of the agencies and were considered as not large or visible enough, yet they affected many households. People are considered capable to cope with these 'minor' events (Alinovi, Hemrich *et al.* 2007). Only when floods were large scale, as in the 2007 and 2010 floods which caught the attention of the media and research institutes, did the Office of the Prime minister distribute free seeds. These floods were treated as humanitarian incidents requiring more seeds and tools. There was no recognition of the extreme vulnerability of households, even to minor shocks, as a result of the lack of assets, including animals, to smooth consumption or cushion against the impact. In the fragile condition of their households, people noted that one loss of crop was 'large enough' to send a household back into a destitute situation, thus moving households 'in and out of food insecurity'.

Rich farmer groups but poor farmers: social engineering and group dynamics

In the effort to rebuild the institutional fabric, post-conflict reconstruction and social engineering has taken rebuilding of community based organisations and associations as a starting point for livelihood support (see Goovaerts, Gasser *et al.* 2005). In the case of Pader, rebuilding the social fabric and integrating peace

building in interventions takes the form of establishing farmer 'groups'. Group-based approaches are said to be more effective for the provision of extension services compared with working with individual farmers (Leeuwis and Van de Ban 2004). On the other hand, Colebatch (1998) recognises that organisation is about routinization - developing known and predictable ways of dealing with events, thus community organising provides a way to simplify working and to manage complexity. In this particular case such participatory methods like organising people in groups can best be understood in line with project effectiveness (See also Vervisch, Titeca *et al.* 2013) or rather as part of an organisation's 'way of working', rather than participation.

In many cases, however, people did not care about more participation and community organisation as these were not seen as contributing to the results they wanted to achieve. All they wanted was services. This became clearer as efforts to reduce the amount of public works could not attract those that had already left the groups to re-join. In addition, rewards for individual performance in the groups were delayed as they depended on eighty per cent of the work finished by the group, making households that were performing well the victim of those that were performing poorly. While the group members and even some of those who 'dropped out' later expressed appreciation for the seeds received, many mentioned the reason for joining the groups was mainly because 'groups' had been institutionalised as the only way to 'get services from aid agencies'.

The complexity of organising and group dynamics led to people leaving the interventions. In several cases, we heard people refer to 'rich farmer groups but poor farmers' in reference to resources made available to group work and organisation and the lack of results at household level. This meant that people did not consider group work to translate into effects within the household. What was presented as best for society was not always considered best for the household.

5.9 Conclusion

In this paper, we have analysed people's livelihood strategies during return and recovery in Pader, northern Uganda, and their response to community based food security programming. We also analysed how the humanitarian aid programme became in some respects tied to the food security and agricultural policies of the government. The intervention emerged as a response to food insecurity triggered mainly by displacement and was brought in line with an agricultural modernisation policy. As a result, 'community based' approaches in northern Uganda have missed the realities and priorities of the post-conflict context (See also Hickey and Golooba-Mutebi 2009) and from this we draw several conclusions.

Many humanitarian agencies entered into recovery with hopes that temporary support schemes providing poor people with vouchers to obtain agricultural inputs in exchange for their labour contribution to public works, would provide the first step on the road to modern agriculture. The approach was challenged by different

factors, especially because of its labour-based nature. Household opening of land stagnated after two or three years of return, mainly as a result of labour constraints. The assumption that people had labour available did not hold, and the programme interacted negatively with household's productive needs, including their ability to open land, to participate in community labour exchange and to earn cash income. The 'viable' were actually not viable in relation to the road to modernisation. People's response can be classified as a subtle form of social protest. Many households dropped out of the programme; dissent about the programme was widespread and discouraged other households to join.

Our findings suggest that an approach based on more empirically-based analysis could have led to better ways to support households. People's recovery strategies, as we have shown, were crucially dependent on labour, which determined the land they could open, the income they could earn and the level of involvement they could have in economically viable labour exchange schemes. Interventions geared to the recovery of livestock, in particular oxen and ploughs to provide draft labour, would have been a better response to people's priority needs. Livestock also has a role as buffer in case of food shortfalls and this role can be played by goats which are much less expensive than oxen.

People's decision making displayed their need to cope with shocks on account of natural hazards or market uncertainties, and the necessity to place their immediate needs over long-term investments. Interventions where people were compensated for their labour with vouchers to help them through the next agricultural cycle, without considering the pressing needs of the day were inappropriate for a vast majority of households.

Traditional agricultural practices are to some extent built around labour exchange, and these arrangements have survived until today, thus challenging the assumption that interventions need to engineer new forms farmer organisations to restore the social fabric. In this context, food security programming that builds on and strengthens what local people actually do about their problems would ensure that households benefit from their participation. External agencies need to focus on understanding better the preconditions for institutional formation and how they can contribute to the creation of an enabling environment (Goodhand, Hulme *et al.* 2000) rather than engineer it themselves by setting up parallel institutions which have little ownership and chance of survival. While customary and existing communal institutions functioned to a certain extent, these were largely ignored in favour of new groups.

Our findings also challenge the choice of roads as the preferred option for public works. Roads are not considered immediately useful for the poor people targeted by the food security programmes. They would probably be more motivated to contribute to public works that address concerns related to soil and water management measures that would reduce the effects of floods and dry spells. Again livestock might play a role managing such risks.

The question remains: why was food security programming in Pader not able to better build on people's needs and practices? Our findings point out that this was related to the desire among agencies to follow the government that prematurely wished to modernise agriculture. Programming was also locked into the untested assumptions that households had surplus labour and that a lack of community cohesion impeded development. These assumptions point to a deeper conviction that people display a dependency on aid. The resilience of these assumptions in view of strongly contrasting empirical realities points to the fact that these are not merely oversight but may be related to their convenience for interventions, under current conditions. An emphasis on restoring the social fabric befits a situation where resources for community support only allow investment through group processes. A focus on seeds and tools prevails where addressing people's priority needs for restoration of livestock is considered too expensive in a competing aid arena. If governments and aid agencies alike could be more aware of their own limitations and assumptions, rather than legitimizing their interventions on unfounded narratives about how people survive in severe conditions, this might open up a more honest dialogue on how to best serve returning populations.

Chapter six: Linking Relief Rehabilitation and...Destitution in northern Uganda: the Hidden LRRD Plateau

A version of this chapter has been submitted for publication as:

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Abstract

Acholiland in northern Uganda is recovering from conflict that resulted in large-scale displacement. Based on ethnographic fieldwork, this paper looks at efforts to re-establish livelihoods after return. We argue that recovery efforts aiming to return to normality and achieve economic growth overlook structural changes such as pressure on land, reduction in productivity and the failures of common accumulation strategies. The idea that people move from recovery to development, is negated by findings that show that this frequently leads rather to destitution. After an initial improvement due to access to land and recovery programmes, livelihoods and everyday life for the returnees are greatly constrained and many people get stuck or lose livelihood options. The paper calls for a reflection on what development in the North may look like, taking into account the current changes and those dating from the conflict, and building on effective, locally-anchored strategies for food-security and livelihoods.

Key Words: northern Uganda, livelihoods, LRRD, structural changes

6.1 Introduction

In post-conflict areas such as northern Uganda, recovery efforts often aim to link households with development processes based on economic growth models. Optimism prevails: once things are 'on the right path', the conditions are created for socio-economic security to unfold.

The notion of Linking Relief, Rehabilitation and Development denotes a process by which people, supported by aid actors, gradually move from relief towards development. The assumption is that properly planned interventions can contribute to a resumption of past activities or lead to 'normal development' in accordance with national policies and trends. Despite the recognition that emergencies were not just a temporary disruption to the 'normal' process of development, in practice, continuum thinking continues to underpin implicitly much aid programming and aid repeatedly slides back into recovery modalities (Buchanan-Smith and Fabbri 2005; Koddenbrock 2009).

LRRD is a notion that became popular in the mid-1990s when humanitarian agencies, especially the dual mandate agencies that also concern themselves with development, started to consider the challenge presented by their humanitarian efforts in terms of 'reducing future vulnerabilities'¹ and the ways in which their programmes could help to break through vicious cycles of poverty and crisis. Discussions in these years warned against a linear approach to LRRD and suggested that the different types of activity should be considered a 'contiguuum' instead. Questions were also raised about the compatibility of the different styles of interventions, and whether it was possible for agencies to co-programme the different aspects. After an initial high interest in the concept, it largely disappeared from theoretical debates. It became overshadowed by the security concerns and the 'war on terror', and was overtaken by the conflict and fragile states discourse (Christoplos 2006). In recent years, it has been suggested that LRRD is subsumed under the focus of resilience, which is another expression of the concern linking relief and development (Macrae 2012; Otto 2013).

Although LRRD has not been very prominent in theoretical debates on aid, it has remained an important standard in the practice of service delivery during and after crises, as exemplified by calls to 'build back better' in the 2004 South Asian Tsunami and in more recent efforts in the Horn of Africa (Buchanan-Smith and Fabbri 2005; Otto 2013).

This paper looks at the redevelopment of livelihoods after return from a long-term perspective. We will pay attention to past and current agrarian dynamics in the Acholi countryside in northern Uganda, and their implications for the future. Humanitarian and government agricultural policies and interventions have focused

¹ The 7th article of the 1994 Code of Conduct of the Red Cross/ Red Crescent societies and humanitarian NGOS reads 'relief aid must strive to reduce future vulnerabilities to disaster as well as meeting basic needs'.

on helping people move back to their villages. Programmes were built on the assumption that if people are brought back to their pre-displacement situations, they will get back on the 'regular path to development' and modernity. These programmes appear to focus on the displacement as the central tenet of the crisis to be addressed. This paper will show however that this LRRD paradigm has obscured structural changes underneath.

In Pader District in Acholiland in northern Uganda, the Overseas Development Institute conducted a longitudinal study of livelihood recovery during the actual process of return after displacement (Martin, Petty *et al.* 2009). Little is known about what has happened after the immediate return phase within Acholiland (Gelsdorf, Maxwell *et al.* 2012). Based on ethnographic work in Pader, this paper attempts to fill this gap. We build on the Overseas Development Institute (ODI) study and other studies on life after return by looking at the structural changes that are underway in the region and their implications for food security, local recovery and future livelihoods.

Based on ethnographic fieldwork in two distinctly different rural villages between October 2010 and June 2012, we analyse the livelihood trajectories of returned households and the way these trajectories (and differentiation among households) are being shaped by long-term change processes. What we see in northern Uganda is that households start to rehabilitate their lives upon returning home. However, after two to four years, many are stuck in livelihoods that do not provide any prospects for improvement. The 'D' of 'Development' in LRRD is not an achievable goal for many of those formerly displaced who see their normal state of affairs becoming instead a state of 'Destitution'.

The structure of the paper is as follows: first, we summarise the conceptual development on livelihoods in situations of conflict and post-conflict, ending with a description of the methodology used in our research. The next section provides background information on the study area and the two case study villages. We then look at the stories of individual households showing how livelihood development patterns take shape, followed by an analysis of changes related to land and their impact on peasant farming systems. We then explore the changing lifestyles and the various perspectives on these changes. Humanitarian interventions are explored against this background of changing livelihoods. We end with a concluding analysis of the material described.

6.2 Livelihoods in and after conflict: conceptual development and methodology

The concept of 'livelihoods' includes assets and activities, and access to them mediated by institutions (of power and politics) and social relations that determine the living gained by an individual or household (Ellis 2000; Kaag, Van Berkel *et al.* 2004; de Haan 2007). The livelihoods concept became very popular in the 1990s in response to the macro-economic approaches of earlier decades. The aim was to

redirect attention to the challenges of how to approach the different aspects of livelihood practices on a micro-level without losing sight of the factors that extend beyond the micro level.

Livelihood approaches have become strongly associated with models that incorporate material and non-material assets or 'capital', and capabilities, and which situate these in a framework that maps the opportunities and constraints that people encounter in making their living (Chambers and Conway 1992; Bebbington 1999). Compared to the restricted ways in which humanitarian relief portrays victims of crisis, livelihood approaches focus rather on people's agency and inform participatory approaches to interventions (Kaag, Van Berkel *et al.* 2004). Livelihood approaches centre on households within their enabling, or disabling, environments.

The use of livelihood approaches can be problematic in practice for several reasons. First, they may lead to static analyses of what households look like and can do, and overlook the vagaries and fluidity of conditions in crisis situations. In times of increased risk and vulnerability, people need to constantly assess and re-assess what livelihood strategies they can safely pursue (Kaag, Van Berkel *et al.* 2004; Lautze and Raven-Roberts 2006). Secondly, it has been observed that despite the comprehensive models underlying livelihood approaches, interventions often continue to reflect what Farrington (1998) has labelled the 'yeoman farmer fallacy', where every rural inhabitant in a developing country is assumed to be a subsistence farmer. A biased focus on subsistence can overlook entrepreneurial activities that are geared to accumulation. It has also been observed that livelihood approaches may take insufficient account of supra-local interconnections in livelihood strategies - ranging from seasonal migration to international emigration. Bernstein (2009: 73) shows that in practice the majority of 'peasants' or 'small farmers' pursue 'various and complex combinations' of livelihood strategies that defy 'assumptions of fixed, let alone uniform, notions and identities'.

It is important to acknowledge how people's livelihood strategies are affected by, and affect, the physical, social and institutional environment in which households operate. The use of models in livelihood analysis is important in mapping risks and opportunities, but fails to capture the processes by which these risks and opportunities become effective and the meaning that people attach to them. People do not rationally calculate their options, but their considerations and preferences are mediated by their interpretations of these options and come about in the interactions of everyday life. Bebbington (1999: 2034) stated:

'Over and above the meaningfulness of a particular set of assets, then, there is a meaningfulness associated with the set of cultural practices made possible (or constrained) by the patterns of co-residence and absence linked to certain livelihood strategies.'

The interactive nature of livelihood choices and the agency people invest in organizing their daily lives cannot be captured by mapping exercises. This underlines the importance of ethnographic research in analysing livelihoods. It shifts the starting point and understanding from the framework and approach to starting

with the people whose livelihoods are being studied and understanding their everyday life.

6.3 Methodology

This study is based on intensive ethnographic work between 2010 and 2012 where we 'followed' 29 households that were chosen for in-depth study following a household survey in two villages. Choosing these households ensured that they represented a wide variety of experiences. Households were visited every two to three months. During the visits, general events in the household and the village were discussed, and the activities undertaken within these households were observed closely. As part of the discussions, semi-structured interviews helped capture various dynamics in the households including production and farming systems, participation in community-based organisations and NGO interventions, food shortages and household responses. In order to understand the particular and unique livelihood trajectories of each household, life histories were collected that included pre-displacement. Ideally we interviewed the household head or spouse but in many instances, we noticed that during the interview either called the other to verify, add or they would just 'sit in' through the interviews. Apart from the household visits, I held numerous focus group discussions and attended village meetings. Interviews were mostly carried out in the local language (*Lwo*) by the main researcher with the help of a research assistant.

6.4 The study villages and their wider context

The causes, trends and dynamics of the conflict in northern Uganda have been analysed by many researchers. Key factors that are commonly included in these analyses are the north-south divide, regional economic imbalances, a history of violence against Acholi people by the National Resistance Movement in the 1980s, and efforts by the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) to 'cleanse' the Acholi of perceived government collaborators (Finnström 2003; Branch 2007; Dolan 2009; Allen and Vlassenroot 2010). New scales of violence in retaliation - with the Acholi as the main target - seemed to follow failed attempts at peaceful resolution of the conflict and military operations aimed at defeating the LRA (Atkinson 2009; Dolan 2009). The government also stands accused of human rights violations against the Acholi population.

Although there had already been large-scale displacement in parts of Acholiland in the late 1990s, a government directive issued in 2002 forced almost the entire rural population of Acholiland into camp settlements. This dramatically disrupted everyday life. Originally, the Acholi lived in small settlements consisting of scattered homesteads. The village was a unit that functioned to control labour and social reproduction (Girling 1960). When people were cramped into congested camps and their movement was restricted, livelihoods were disrupted and social life came under severe strain. Caught between the army and the LRA, people found outside

the camps were labelled 'rebels' by the army while a string of massacres made clear that the 'protected' camps were not protected at all.

Pader District lies in the area that was the epicentre of the war. However, while neighbouring districts like Gulu and Kitgum saw large-scale early displacement, most people in Pader were displaced in 2002. Conditions in the camps were so bad that tens of thousands of people died due to poor access to food, income, health care, safe drinking water and sanitation (Martin, Petty *et al.* 2009). After a cessation of hostilities, people started returning home from late 2006 onwards. Where areas became safe early, people returned directly to their villages. In more remote areas, people were first moved to 209 so-called 'decongestion camps' that were smaller and closer to their villages than the main camps, and with relatively better basic services (Boas and Hatløy 2005; RLP 2007).² From these satellite camps, people gradually moved home. In many cases, people restarted cultivation in their villages, but only moved permanently a year or two later. UNHCR noted that by 2010, 97 per cent had moved out of the main camps and were either at home or in the satellite camps.

The two research case study villages cover both categories of return. Wil pii Ngora³ is located near the sub-county capital (map 2.3 and 2.4). The majority of its 69 households returned home directly from the main camp. Surprisingly however, the majority of the inhabitants only returned between 2008 and 2010. The proximity to their village of origin meant that they could access agricultural land, while staying in the camp. Because service provision (schools, health centre, and clean water source) were considerably better in the camp, there was a strong incentive to delay return. Wii Lungoyi⁴ is more remote, at 15 km from the main camp (map 2.3 and 2.5). The 52 households in this village first moved into a satellite camp, from where they moved home between 2006 and 2009.

Both villages are characterized by a gently undulating landscape at an average elevation of 1150 metres above sea level, which is typical for most of Pader. Cultivation is done on the higher land. Parts of the lower valleys are swamps; these are found more in Ngora than in Lungoyi. Valleys and marshes are used for grazing, hunting, and dry season vegetable farming. They also act as source of grass for thatching huts, and clay for making pots. Lungoyi has more dense vegetation (and more trees) than Ngora. The whole area receives about 1,300 mm per year in two seasons (April-July and August-October). While the total amount of rainfall is good for cultivation, crops are regularly affected by both waterlogging and mid-season dry spells - and this is expected to get worse due to climate change. Funk, Rowland *et al.* (2012) note that poor harvests will likely become more common in these areas, as rainfall is structurally less than it was between 1960 and 1989. In both villages,

² The figure refers to 2009 before the district was split the following year.

³ Subsequently denoted as Ngora.

⁴ Subsequently denoted as Lungoyi.

houses are concentrated near roads - findings supported elsewhere by Joireman, Sawyer *et al.* (2012) and Rugadya, Nsamba-Gayiiya *et al.* (2008).

6.5 Historical trends in livelihoods in Acholiland

The Acholi have always had diversified but predominantly rural land-based livelihoods. Most households practised mixed farming (Atkinson 1989; Atkinson 1994) growing sesame, finger millet, cow peas, sorghum, beans and various vegetables. Groundnuts, maize, sweet potato and cassava have a more recent history in the area (Ker 1995 quoting Carr, 1982). Cultivation was done in a fallow rotation system while the availability of livestock and ox ploughs made it possible to open up reasonably large areas per household (*Ibid*). Livestock was also a supplement for food and acted as a cushion in times of shock (Stites, Mazurana *et al.* 2006). Cotton and to a lesser extent tobacco, which were grown on a fairly large scale further south, were grown as a cash crop by some households. The introduction of cotton provided a boost towards commercialisation, but cotton never took pre-eminence over food crops: 'the farmers were willing to fit an additional crop into their farming system, mainly by planting it after weeding their priority food crops, so that its labour requirements fitted into their pattern of labour availability' (*Ibid*). In addition to cultivation, hunting and gathering of wild fruits and herbs were carried out in the communal lands traditionally covered by communally owned and managed fields and forests which also acted as grazing lands. This does not mean that Acholi households were not part of a cash economy. Dating back to colonial times, Acholiland has long supplied migrant labour to cash crop-producing areas - mainly coffee plantations - further south (Jørgensen 1981).

In the late 1980s, this reality was disrupted dramatically. Cattle raids by pastoralists from north eastern Uganda and the escalating war meant that the number of cattle in Acholiland, which had grown from 135,000 in 1963 (Ker 1995) to 285,000 in 1985 was reduced to a mere 5,000 in 1997 (Gersony 1997). This loss of animal traction caused a dramatic reduction in the acreage that households could cultivate and forced households to invest most of their labour in crop production. After people were moved into camps, their access to land was reduced to a radius of about two kilometres around the camps. While they did continue cultivation during their years of displacement, many were only able to cultivate very small plots. This forced people to look to other sources of income, even going to the extent of selling the food aid that they received. According to Bozzoli, Brück *et al.* (2011) camps had a strong effect on activity choices, particularly encouraging trading.

When people started returning to their homes, ODI set up a longitudinal research project to study the ways in which people re-established their livelihoods after return (Martin, Petty *et al.* 2009). The area studied by ODI was about 60 kilometres east of our case study villages. It is culturally similar, but has less rainfall and as a consequence agriculture is more risky and livestock has historically been more important than in our case study villages. ODI's research highlighted several issues.

First, due to a relative improvement in access to land compared to the situation in the main camps, livelihood prospects for returnee households generally improved between 2006 and 2009. Secondly, the main sources of income were agricultural labour, sale of grass and firewood (done by poorer women) and charcoal, sale of some crop harvest, local saving schemes, construction work, including brick-making (better paid), and fetching water (low pay, mostly female labour).

This earlier study showed that people did try to rebuild their livelihoods, maintaining reasonable continuity with the pre-displacement situation. There was a process of fairly rapid improvement compared to the situation in the camps. However, what is not documented is the subsequent stagnation. As we will show, rather than re-establishing subsistence cultivation and then moving on towards wealth accumulation, most households are getting stuck in a situation of dire poverty and destitution.

6.6 Livelihoods re-establishment patterns

Nyeko⁵ is from Ngora. He is 55 years old, has a wife and three children. They were displaced to Laceyokot main camp in 1996, returned home in 1999 and were displaced again during the government-ordered mass displacement of 2002. He recently built one hut in the village but his family prefers to stay in the camp. The hut in the village is mainly used during the cultivation period and during cultural rites. He said that building a hut in the village is a strategy for permanent camp dwellers to stake a claim to their land in the midst of increased land conflicts.

After he returned in 2007, Nyeko opened one acre of land (out of the four acres he owns) using a hand hoe. He gradually expanded this to two acres in 2010 - following a pattern where most households cultivate three acres or less due to labour constraints and lack of animal traction (Chapter Five). He also started cutting down trees on his land and burning charcoal. He left the sacks outside a shop owned by a friend in the camp where they were sold to vehicles heading to Gulu. The proceeds were mostly for buying household assets and paying secondary school fees for his daughter and the two other children in primary school. Nyeko maintained that heavy investment in the children's education was to help them get jobs as he does not foresee a future in farming for them. By investing in assets to expand his current activities while at the same time investing in his children's education for future exit out of farming Nyeko is a case of 'stepping up to step out' (Dorward, Anderson *et al.* 2009). At the same time, he (and many others) often expressed the opinion that education is not a guarantee to job security or to a better livelihood because government jobs, the major source of formal employment in northern Uganda were considered a family affair. Nyeko explained that, 'only children of former government workers get called for a government job'. Nyeko, who could speak good

⁵ The names have been changed.

English, kept saying that though at times he doubted the ability of his children to get a job, he did not want them to be like him, who had not finished school.

For Nyeko and others in Ngora, whose land is about five kilometres from the camp, the improvement in security conditions from 2007 onwards meant they were able to access their land relatively early. As cultivation restarted, trees were turned into charcoal. However, most of the trees in Ngora and similar areas were cleared two or three years after people returned and residents had to look for alternative options. The village's proximity to the main camp meant that many residents became or remained involved in the small-town economy that had developed around the former main camp. Here, they could find opportunities for petty trading, local brewing, unskilled wage labour, blacksmithing and thatching roofs (Figure 6.1). Since the survey was conducted in 2011, charcoal production has further declined, and many households have moved into local brewing.

People viewed return as a gradual process. Keeping some members in the camp meant that households could gradually re-establish their farms with the available means of investment. Particularly female-headed households delayed their return because they could not afford the costs of constructing huts. Elderly people and school-going children were initially left in the camps, because social services were better.

Betty, Nyeko's wife, argued that for undertaking charcoal burning, they increasingly have to negotiate access to land and trees with other village members:

'Everyone now knows there is money in charcoal. They will not let you have access to their land as this diminishes their own options. Actually, few people in our village do charcoal burning anymore. The few who do it, buy the trees elsewhere or ask for it as payment for casual labour. Someone who wanted to use a tractor on their land asked my husband to cut the trees and he asked to retain the trees as payment.'

Given these recent developments, Nyeko supplements his cultivation with *katalas* (wage labour). We also often found Betty at the roadside selling roasted cassava, groundnuts, Shea nut oil, bananas and mangoes, depending on what was in season.

In Lungoyi, the re-establishment of livelihoods has followed a similar trajectory. However, the return process and access to farms was delayed by the households staying in the satellite camps, as one lady from Lungoyi mentioned:

'In satellites we were better off than in the main camps. But still, compared to staying on my own land, satellites were worse. I could not stay overnight as well as plan for better use of my land. I could only come to cultivate and left every evening to return to the camp. Only when I could permanently move is when I started using my land for several things.'

The delay in access to land explains why charcoal burning and selling firewood (by women) is still common in Lungoyi. Observations on the ground and Google Earth imagery confirm that there still are a lot more trees in Lungoyi than in Ngora (see Figure 6.2 – 6.5 at the end of this Paper). It could be assumed that the re-establishment of livelihoods in Lungoyi lags behind Ngora by about three years.

However, options for petty trading are limited here given the distance of the village to the main camp.

Nyeko's story highlights several elements that will be dealt with in the next sections. It shows that, ideally, livelihood redevelopment improved gradually during the initial years of return, largely boosted by the initial access to land. However, the economic situation has stalled, the food security situation does not seem to get better and most people are not getting wealthier. This current crisis is due to several factors. First there is limited land opening due to labour constraints, as indicated earlier. Secondly, an obscure and even serious factor is the lack of land per household, which we explore in the next section. This makes diversification important but also limited because the third constraining factor is that charcoal burning is no longer an option for many. With deforestation gradually progressing, it is very likely that the people of Lungoyi village will need to look for other activities to replace the high income generated by charcoal burning.

6.6.1 The place of agriculture

In the absence of livestock, for most households including that of Nyeko, crop production continues to play an important role in social reproduction. Many people grow a component of their own food requirements - unless serious illness denies them the ability to open land. The acreage that households can cultivate is however limited by labour constraints (Chapter Five). Without animal traction, 74.4 per cent of households in our survey had only been able to open three acres of land or less. This is not enough to cover the total household food requirements with an average household size of 5.1 (Chapter Five) let alone produce any substantial surplus.⁶ Many households do grow small amounts of sesame and groundnuts for sale, but this is at the expense of household food production. People thus endanger their household food security to generate a limited amount of cash for education, health, and clothing. Surprisingly, the fact that many households sell crops while not producing enough to eat is an indicator of poverty rather than wealth.

Even for the better-off households, the re-establishment of cash crop production - particularly cotton - has been plagued by price variations. Following low supply and improved world market prices, in 2010 cotton prices were at a record high at 1600 Uganda shillings per kilogram and farmers growing cotton had a good year (Kagolo 2012).⁷ By 2011, the price was reported to rise to 2300 - 3600 per kilogram (Misairi and Basiime 2012; Miti 2012). However, by late 2011 and 2012, the price had plunged to 800 shillings, and many cotton growers lost their investments. As a recent report

⁶ This is also partly due to recurrent hazards in the form of floods or delayed rains. Loss and poor harvest is very common. Several people noted at times harvesting a basin or several basins of beans from an acre. A basin is the equivalent of 15 kilos. Sorghum seemed the most resistant crop with households noting consistent harvest as compared to their expectations.

⁷ Exchange rate at time of research: 1 US Dollar = 2000 Uganda shillings.

summarises, 'cotton pricing in Uganda is the most important policy directly affecting the cotton sector and influencing farmers' incentives' (Mohammed and Stephen 2012: 29). In the absence of strong farmer institutions in the North and effective state regulation, imperfect market systems greatly exposed the recovery of many households to market shocks and price drops in the past two years. There were reports of farmers abandoning their crop in the fields or setting the crop on fire out of frustration. While humanitarian agencies and the government have shifted from promoting subsistence agriculture to promoting commercial agriculture, the risks are too high for most households, which prefer to stick to subsistence agriculture.

Many people however do aspire to improve on their production, but this is not a goal in itself. Rather, it is used as a 'stepping stone' where crop income is re-invested in other off-farm ventures (Dorward, Anderson *et al.* 2009). These include trading, making and selling charcoal or other activities not reliant on weather and providing better and regular returns to labour. In one of our focus group discussions, the participants concluded that those who wanted to secure their future had to 'get out of direct farming'. We found a similar pattern among many of the households that were followed through the research.

6.7 Land, farming systems and impact on food security

For rural households in northern Uganda, land is a crucial asset (Branch 2013). As the population increases and arable land becomes scarce, land is rapidly becoming 'the next point of hostility' in the area (Atkinson 2009). In recent years, northern Uganda has seen an increase in local land conflicts as well as those pitting the Acholi peasantry and the state and multinational corporations who dispossess locals of land, for instance for the establishment of large-scale sugar plantations (Mabikke 2011; Martiniello 2013).

Table 6.1 presents the distribution of land ownership in our two case study villages. As can be seen, 71 per cent of households own ten acres or less, which is not enough for maintaining an effective fallow rotation. Even worse, almost a third of households own four acres or less, which means that they cannot have a fallow rotation at all if they want to produce enough food for their households. This is surprising given that government staff and aid workers widely hold the conviction that 'land is not a problem' in Acholiland. Even though the land looks open, much of the arable land lies fallow (as part of a rotation system), and other parts (the marshy valleys and parts of the forest) are not accessible for cultivation nor are they 'free' (Adoko and Levine 2004). Perhaps people under-reported land ownership in the survey, but the satellite imagery clearly confirms plot boundaries on most of the land outside the valleys (Figures 6.2 – 6.5). The figures are also confirmed by the district development plan which also puts land ownership at an average of 4.9 acres (PDLG 2012).

Table 6.1: Land ownership in individual and combined villages (in acres)

	Ngora (n-69)	Lungoyi (n-52)	Both villages
1- 4	42%	15%	31%
5 - 6	16%	12%	14%
7-10	20%	35%	26%
11 - 15	6%	19%	12%
16 - 20	7%	12%	9%
21 and above	8%	8%	8%

As there are very few opportunities for making a living entirely outside agriculture, households have no option but to divide their land among all their children. The national household survey shows that 78.6 per cent of the North gets land through this method with the number of agricultural households steadily increasing between 1995 and 2006 (UBOS 2007). The population in the area has grown at about five per cent per year between 1991 and 2002. Due to mortality in the camps, the population remained more or less stable between 2002 and 2006 (UBOS 2006), but since then it has started growing again. This means that the pressure on land is rapidly increasing, and is likely to continue increasing in the coming decades. An additional contributing factor to land conflicts is that during the years of displacement, a high number of new households were established that did not get any land allocated upon marriage.

Land in Acholiland is 'owned' via customary tenure (Adoko and Levine 2004). Traditionally one could claim land by clearing and cultivating the 'free' land consisting of forests, etc. A man had personal claim to land that he and his wife (or wives) had under cultivation or that had been cultivated but was lying fallow, and such rights passed from father to son. This would then comprise the family 'owned' land within a village. Given the low population densities and minimal land pressure, almost anyone who was willing to clear and work unused land has been welcomed by lineage heads responsible for such land. Customary tenure meant that once a family 'owned' that land, it could not be displaced. Ownership of the land also meant that this land was held in trustee for future generations and passed through inheritance. At the same time, communal land was designated for common use within the whole village with purposes such as hunting, grazing and forest land falling within such categories. With increasing individualisation, land is allocated to male members, who then can pass or reallocate to their children. This creates problems for widows and orphans. Especially after people have returned, the older male Acholi and elders have been accused of dispossession of land, especially from youths, women and orphans (Whyte, Babiiha *et al.* 2013) - a sign of the breakdown of social norms. For the categories of women-headed households like the case of Anek (below), this results in new forms of powerlessness. Other cases have been cited as attempts by the government, military and politicians to acquire large-scale land

though dispossession, eviction, violence and bribery of inhabitants (Mabikke 2011; Martiniello 2013) with the involvement of the Ugandan government, politicians and several companies and foundations. While we do not downplay the importance of such concerns and issues, the focus on land grabbing distracts attention from the fact that land is not available even for those living in the area.

As Table 6.1 shows (and as is discussed below), the availability of land per household has reached a critical point: the existing fallow-based farming system is not viable for many households. Fallowing is the main mechanism for maintaining soil fertility given the absence of fertilisers and the absence of livestock for an integrated system. In addition, Girling (1960: 16-17) argues that shifting cultivation in Acholiland is crucial because of the nature of soils in the North which are extremely shallow. Nutrients are often depleted within two years resulting in poor harvests and soil erosion. It thus requires adequate fallowing to allow the soils regenerate and in the meantime, individuals need to open up new land for cultivation.

The current situation is that households are gradually 'eating into' the fertility of their land. This process is made worse by the introduction of hybrid seeds by humanitarian actors without accompanying attention for soil fertility management and/or fertilisers. These seeds only give higher yields when they receive more nutrients (Adoko and Levine 2004); faster nutrient mining is associated with the technologies that seek increased productivity in the absence of adequate measures for soil fertility management (Benin, Nkonya *et al.* 2007). This can be more serious if there is no more 'free' and 'empty' land to be claimed (Adoko and Levine 2004; Martiniello 2013). This fact was obscured in the first years after return, because much land had been abandoned during the years of displacement. During discussions with farmers however, we increasingly heard that the 'land is not producing as well as it used to'.

This scarcity of land is forcing people to look outside agriculture for income. It also facilitates the development of an even stronger informal urban economy that can absorb households that no longer have enough access to land, for instance Gulu (Branch 2013). Also, it will force people to change their farming system radically, perhaps to one of permanent cultivation thus requiring the use of fertilisers - an option out of reach for many of these households.

6.8 Diversification: off-farm income generation and the development of a cash economy

Constrained agricultural production and land means that diversification becomes important. Figure 6.1 shows the different off-farm sources of income that were mentioned in the two villages. As can be seen, casual labour on other people's farms and (in Lungoyi) selling of charcoal are by far the most important sources of income. It is also important to note that almost 40 per cent of the households in Ngora have no off-farm source of income and depend entirely on agriculture. Of these

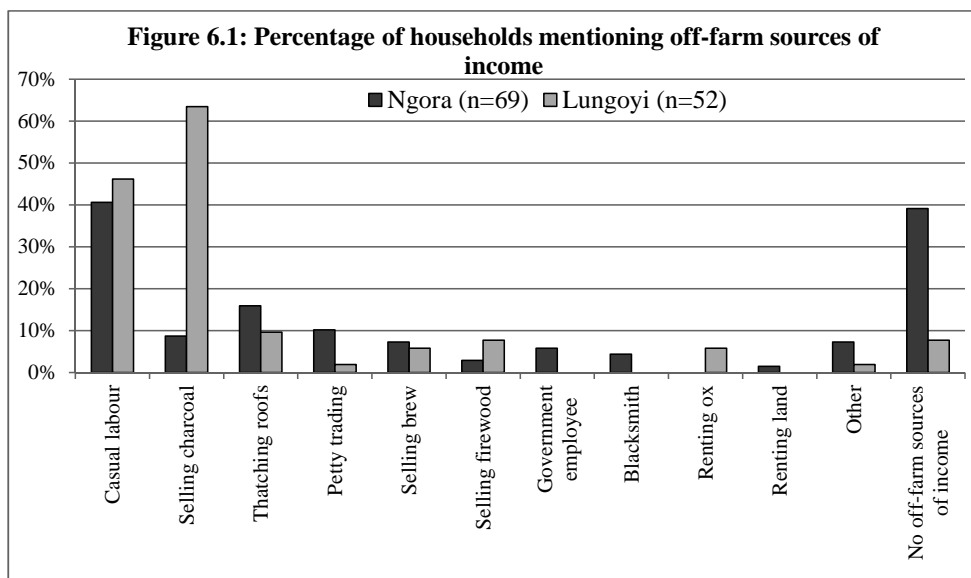
households, a quarter were big farmers that could live off their farms, while the remaining households were mostly widows, widowers or elderly couples who were in dire straits and often with high number of dependents.

Ocaka is from Lungoyi. He and his wife and two children stayed in Wiakado satellite camp for two years from where he accessed his land for cultivation (map 2.3 and 2.5). They moved back permanently to Lungoyi after he built a hut in 2010. That same year, he started burning charcoal and he has since bought a bicycle from the proceeds. As witnessed in several other households, charcoal burning plays a crucial role in asset accumulation and offers the opportunity to 'burn one's way into recovery'. Earning enough money to buy a bicycle and other household assets is an important aim in the recovery process. A bicycle is a valuable asset, enables easier access to markets and the health centre and is the most common mode of transport - a factor that Boas and Hatløy (2005) attribute to the poor access to public transport.

In several instances, we observed families who also sent bags of charcoal on the buses to Gulu to maintain the family. This was associated with relatively higher standards and more expensive life reported in the 'city' (Branch 2013). Outside of food, healthcare and education constitute major expenditures in households (Chapter Five). In addition to charcoal burning, Ocaka grows crops and together with his father, rents out his father's oxen, splitting the proceeds after saving enough for maintenance for the ox plough. His father and several other people in Lungoyi received a pair of oxen during a government project, which explains why village Lungoyi in Figure 6.1 has people who rent out oxen. Ocaka's case shows that charcoal burning allows for the accumulation of assets and thus creation of wealth. It is, in fact, the only livelihood activity that makes asset accumulation on any scale possible for the majority of the population.

Household interviews showed that activities like local brewing or casual labour do not allow asset accumulation. Anek is a 53-year-old widow who lives with her four children in a satellite camp two kilometres from Lungoyi. She did not yet move back to the village because she cannot build a hut for herself and cannot save money to pay for someone else to do it. On several occasions she noted that she was afraid of moving home to confront the in-laws and claim her late husband's land, part of which is occupied and farmed by a relative. This means that Anek does not have enough land remaining to grow her own food. During peak labour seasons, Anek migrates for three or four days to a nearby sub-county to work as a casual labourer on a farm and then comes back to work on her land for three days. She cannot stay out for more than three days in a row as her daughter suffers from what has been labelled as the 'nodding disease' whose symptoms are convulsions, head nodding and mental retardation (Van Bommel, Derluyn *et al.* 2013). In addition, she sells *kete* (local brew). Anek's multiple sources of income are distress strategies, partly to cope with the medical care for her daughter, and are not indications of being well-off. While casual labour is widely seen as an important source of income (41 per cent of households in both villages were engaged in it), it is highly seasonal (mostly during land opening). The money earned is mostly used to buy food at the start of the

annual hunger gap and to buy or acquire inputs - mainly seeds - for cultivation (Chapter Five). Casual labour thus helps to address extreme poverty, but does not enable asset accumulation.



Anek could not take full advantage of opportunities for charcoal burning as this required an initial investment that she could not afford and neither would it provide better prospects for her. This is common for vulnerable households, even in Lungoyi where trees for charcoal are still available. On observing a pile of tree trunks that were outside her home for several months, and when we asked why the trunks had been there for long, she explained:

‘At times I used the income from brewing to hire people to cut the trees for charcoal. I cannot use the money from casual labour as that is meant mostly for food and medicine for my daughter. To get them to burn the charcoal, I have to give them more money. And since I do not have a bicycle, I sell my charcoal from here and in most cases I sell back to those who burned it. In the end I gain little from it. I am waiting for the dry season when I have less work then I can try to burn it myself and take it to the roadside’.

Anek’s narrative shows two things. First, charcoal burning is labour intensive, difficult and mostly male dominated. Secondly, networks of middlemen and ‘agents’ (mainly local youth found in former camp sites) regulate the well-controlled business that has boomed in northern Uganda. Individuals like Anek, who have no means of access to the main roads, sell to agents. Others (like Ocaka) with access to a bicycle transport their charcoal to the main road, where they sell to businessmen and

trucks headed to Gulu at a higher price. Anek explained that a bag of charcoal sold at the farm gate costs 5-6000 Uganda shillings (roughly 2.5-3 USD). On the roadside, a bag costs 15-18000 shillings, in Gulu 25,000 and in Kampala it costs 80-120,000 shillings. The charcoal trade, is referred to as 'black gold' by Kampala traders due to its profitability, and northern Uganda is currently the major source of the trade in Kampala (IRIN 2012).

Activities which did not allow asset accumulation served other equally important purposes in the recovery process – often related to socio-cultural events. Anek used proceeds from casual labour and selling brew to hold *guru lyel* (last funeral rites and ceremonies) for her father who was killed during the war. *Guru lyel* is one of the many cultural practices that have resumed after displacement and which are central to reconciliation, restoring social cohesion and order and (through the sharing of food) equalising food security in the community. A discussion with clan elders highlighted a societal discourse on increased incidences of food insecurity, adverse weather conditions and the related incidences of 'bad luck', for instance people killed by lightning or motorbike accidents. Such incidents were blamed on the presence of many discontent and angry spirits due to the war and breakdown in societal practices and traditional rituals during displacement. These are said to 'hang around' and are blamed for the current state of affairs and disasters within a community that has a very rich cosmology tradition (See also Finnström, 2003). Anek mentioned that the last rites gave her 'peace of mind' which was more important to her than any material asset she could have bought. She (and others) often mentioned approval from the dead as important. As the research progressed, people like Anek increasingly identified non-economic outcomes such as achieving social and cultural goals as very important in their own right and various activities contribute to this. People noted that activities which can easily be classified as playing very minimal (if any) role in asset accumulation served crucial roles by enabling them to participate meaningfully in the socio-cultural life of the villages with arenas like clan meetings, funerals, church and weddings acting as the sites of action and performance. People expressed pride in how they were able to take local brew, food stuffs and firewood to funerals or how this made them 'feel useful'. Often, this involved time away visiting the affected families, mourning with them and maintaining social and communal relations by demonstrating 'being one with them' at the expense of their own weeding, other activities or lost income. In the process, they anchored elaborate social support systems which indeed proved useful and the highest form of 'gifts' they received, showing the 'cultural and social embeddedness of livelihood', Kaag, Van Berkel *et al.* (2004: 55). These cases thus showed that it is imperative to factor in these relationships and people's own preferences in understanding livelihoods. In addition it showed the risks of analysing livelihood activities from an external viewpoint as for many, approval and participation in cultural events through local brewing was as important as any other objective. Diversification activities can be validated by looking at an activity and the

role it plays in a household's recovery process as well as in meeting their own objectives.

6.9 Changing lifestyles and people's preferences

Household profiles and the trends such as those of Nyeko and Anek show that former camp sites turned trading centres are integrated into the everyday lives and livelihoods of households, and are prominent in the economic and social life of the rural sites. In certain cases, it raises questions about the concept of 'return', as family activities continue to rely on the camp sites. In several cases, we followed households between their second home at the camp, and the villages.

Initially, displacement with minimum access to land in camps forced people into cash sources of income to get by and created new opportunities where alternative sources of cash developed. Chapter Three highlighted the fact that camps (satellite mostly) provided opportunities to diversify where individuals were able to capture new economic opportunities. Petty trading, casual labour and market exchange became important. At this time diversification was a sign of resilience given the dire conditions in the camps and the limited ability of relief food to meet household needs. In addition 'camp life' increasingly shaped the outlook towards various activities which were at the core of livelihood diversification, such as charcoal burning. In such cases, we encountered a few comments that likened the camps to 'school without pay'. An elderly man said: 'when your family is faced with starvation, it forces you to think on your feet. And that's what camps did. It "taught" us to look at some activities in a new way.' This same development of substantial camp and urban populations has played a crucial role in increased demand for charcoal and firewood and created a major opportunity for cash income.

Broadly (and supported by charcoal burning and other activities) this larger shift towards a cash economy is notable. Acholiland had a limited cash economy until at least the 1970s, in some cases posing resistance to it (Mamdani 1976; Martiniello 2013). Martiniello argues that the fact that cash crop farming has never fully taken over and did not compete with subsistence production was one way market integration was kept at a low level. Subtle changes in Acholi social relations with regard to reciprocity and organisation of the factors of production can be identified, which indicate the increased preference for a cash economy, not only in the towns or cities like Gulu (see Branch 2013), but also in the countryside. For instance, *awak* (labour for food and drinks) based labour arrangements have weakened in preference for the more cash based *katalas* (labour for cash) (Chapter Five).

Branch (2013) explores the different perspectives on the rise of a substantial cash economy in Acholiland as a generational perspective pitting the older generation against the young, a factor that our respondents often attributed to the life in camps and again supporting the thesis that camps have been crucial in shaping socio-economic organisation. The divergent perceptions played out during a visit to some clan elders in 2011 at the main camp, where all our respondents stayed during

displacement. The research assistant and I had gone to discuss a different matter but found a 'court session' underway, and, with permission, we were allowed to sit in. The case involved a man in his twenties who had cut branches from a shea-nut tree for charcoal burning. Someone reported him and the elders found him before he could cut the trunk. There were about six elders (including the boy's father) sitting in this session. Although the case also hid underlying land contestations (we learnt that the tree was on a disputed boundary), the elders made it clear that on this particular day they were deliberating on the tree and not the land. What followed was a lecture on Acholi traditions and livelihoods. One of the elderly men would equate proceeds from charcoal money as 'easy and dirty money'. The discussion presented these new activities as a threat to traditional Acholi livelihoods related to land and livestock and the reason that most Acholi and relatively young families shun opening large chunks of land, 'they fear to work hard, shunning the very essence of our society - hard work and a man eating from his own land.' Later, one of the elders argued that, 'the shea-nut tree was one of the few reminders that we are still Acholi. And even that is under threat from charcoal burning. Everything is under threat nowadays.'⁸ On another occasion, a focus group discussion generated a heated debate when an elderly man mentioned that 'the younger generation prefer to drink alcohol than participate in hard work', noting another 'vice' said to have originated from camps but currently a survival strategy for many households. The commodification of local brewing in camps is considered to be a cause of this situation.

6.10 Humanitarian and government approaches to livelihoods

Humanitarian assistance in promoting food security and livelihoods is mainly focussed on agricultural activities, primarily seed and tool distributions and extension services for improving production. These are coupled together with village loans and savings associations to encourage community based saving to safeguard the household from shocks. The Ugandan government tries to introduce different types of agricultural services largely focussing on commercialisation (Chapter Five). This is a process characterised by exclusion of the many people who do not have the capacity to absorb the associated risks (Chapter Five). Interestingly, although households like those of Nyeko and Ocaka participated in humanitarian interventions related to crop production, both mentioned that these might set a foundation for some food security (by providing seeds to start off production) but were not a pathway to accumulation and building of assets. People do not rely on aid as it seems not to address their priority needs, and at times people drop out of these interventions when they do not get what they want (Chapter Five). The income gained from such activities is little and tied into sometimes problematic group

⁸ A by-law was formulated by the cultural leaders to protect indigenous trees species like the shea-nut tree that are considered to be under threat from the activity and which are preferred due to their better charcoal producing qualities.

processes. In addition, some of these programmes are overly ambitious, though objectives that seem to contradict at times, combining market development, infrastructure, institution building and agricultural extension. Mallett and Slater (2012) argue that in many cases, these overly agriculture-focussed interventions have little potential for livelihood transformation and at best can 'safeguard assets and prevent negative outcomes'. In Pader, households that were able to accumulate assets from participating in NGO projects were those again that already had a good fall-back position or already owned crucial assets like oxen. Others like Ocaka who fall into this category, often mentioned they were more interested in the interaction with the NGO workers, rather than the immediate material benefits, a factor that he was able to achieve given he was the 'chairman' of several groups formed through NGO programmes, including a village loan and savings organisation. This he attributed to the extension services they offered to supplement the few government extension workers available.

It was surprising that in Pader the government and NGOs pay little attention to livestock, which is one key way to increase agricultural income. An interview with a sub-county chief implementing the Northern Uganda Social Action Fund (NUSAF) - the government programme under which Ocaka and a few others in Lungoyi received oxen - was illustrative of the priority needs of people against implemented livelihood-related interventions:

'We initially received 20 NUSAF interest forms for our sub-county to give to groups who wanted to participate in the programme, 1 form per group. When the forms were returned to us, two groups had chosen beehive keeping and the rest 18 groups choose restocking (livestock). However, during the second stage of application, the district government sent us only 10 forms to fill in the details of the groups who had indicated interest in stage one. Out of these, five forms were specifically earmarked for household income projects where livestock restocking falls and the other five were meant for community infrastructure rehabilitation and public works. We called the 20 groups and informed them of this new development. They all chose to compete for the five forms indicating need for livestock. Nobody wants the other five forms'.

A paradox of livelihood interventions in Pader District also exists. While the official discourse stresses the need for 'alternative livelihoods' (Hilson and Banchirigah 2009), the only significant alternative (charcoal burning) is actively discouraged without a meaningful alternative source of livelihoods being offered. For many households in Uganda (including the very same government officials and NGO staff who condemn charcoal burning), charcoal is the only affordable source of heat. By discouraging charcoal burning (rather than encouraging replanting to maintain sufficient stock of trees), the net effect of the push for livelihoods diversification deepens poverty, rather than reducing it. Ironically, the local government actively

relies on the taxation of commercial charcoal production as a source of revenue to complement its otherwise very meagre income from local market revenues and fines, bicycle licenses, a two per cent tax on contractors, premium on land and a hotel tax (Chapter Four). So, while officially discouraging charcoal burning, the local government actually depends on charcoal taxation for reducing its dependence on funds from the central government and from humanitarian agencies. This shows how both humanitarian organisations and government 'miss the point' in their response to livelihood promotion (Levine and Chastre 2004).

6.11 Conclusion

In this paper we have analysed livelihood trajectories and structural changes in the Acholi countryside. The past two decades that were characterised by displacement, suffering and return, created the need for rebuilding a viable economy. The feasibility and availability of livelihood options has been influenced by changes in the social, economic and political spectrum. It can therefore be problematic to attribute socio-economic problems in post-conflict or fragile states solely to the dynamics of conflict (and resulting displacement).

After return, many households (except for the vulnerable) initially improved their situation compared to what it was in the camp. This is based on reliance on old Acholi livelihoods with a mix of new livelihood activities. In particular, we highlighted the interpenetration of the rural and urban in the countryside with new livelihoods emerging and taking shape. The new livelihoods are viewed differently by different generations and continue to shape the problematic social and generational relations that have played a role in losing access to land especially on the part of female-headed households and young households.

After a few years of progress, many are stuck in livelihoods that do not provide prospects for a better life or improvement. Despite most rural households having multiple sources of income (Ellis 1998), many are barely at subsistence level. In addition, the major alternative source of income that provided a reasonable means for wealth accumulation to a reasonably large group of people is rapidly disappearing. Structural factors mean a full return to traditional Acholi livelihoods is not possible. This relates to pressure on land to a level that low-input fallow rotation is not feasible and yields are gradually declining due to soil nutrient depletion. Similarly, many have no means to rebuild livestock herds, formerly central to Acholi livelihoods, to supplement crop production.

Linking Relief to Rehabilitation to Development (LRRD) is a popular concept underpinning recovery programmes after conflict. Our findings point out that rehabilitation may not be achieved in the course of a few years, but may require more time. More importantly, our findings call into question the 'D'; development appears in LRRD discussions as a notion that is taken for granted. There is an implicit idea that development refers to the pre-crisis situation, which disregards the possibility that this situation carried the elements that would bring about the crisis

and it disregards the fact that structural changes may have impeded the viability of these past development strategies. Alternatively, LRRD is coupled to the idea of building-back-better or preparing communities to avert or withstand future crises, which is often associated with the idea of resilience to describe ways in which people take responsibility for their own social and economic well-being in a form of active citizenship rather than relying on the state (Joseph 2013). In the case of northern Uganda, we see that development, as steered by the government, is geared to modernized agriculture and does not provide the conditions for the vast majority of people whose situation does not allow them to adopt that type of agricultural growth model. In these cases, we see livelihoods take off during the rehabilitation phase, grounded in direct assistance and the capture of short-term gains in charcoal burning, but getting stuck at the transition to development. Hence, while there is a linking of relief to rehabilitation, there is no 'D' in the sense of development. Rather, the initial improvement leads to the 'D' of destitution. Both state and aid (policy and practice) are based on linear views of development and resilience that ignore this hidden LRRD plateau as recovery turns into destitution. They are oblivious to the actual transition that is underway and its nature, and humanitarian agencies may need to better consider what their development work means for the needs of their primary target groups.

The implication of this is that recovery is not just about improving production and productivity as part of broader agricultural recovery. Indeed the problem of the North is to enhance development based on changing and more diversified livelihoods. There is a need to engage with questions related to what the current changes and those dating from conflict mean for the long term in the region. In the process one needs to explore effective, locally-anchored strategies to support economic security, including food security and resilient livelihoods.

Figure 6.2: Wilpii Ngora Imagery 2007



Figure 6.3: Wilpii Ngora Imagery 2012

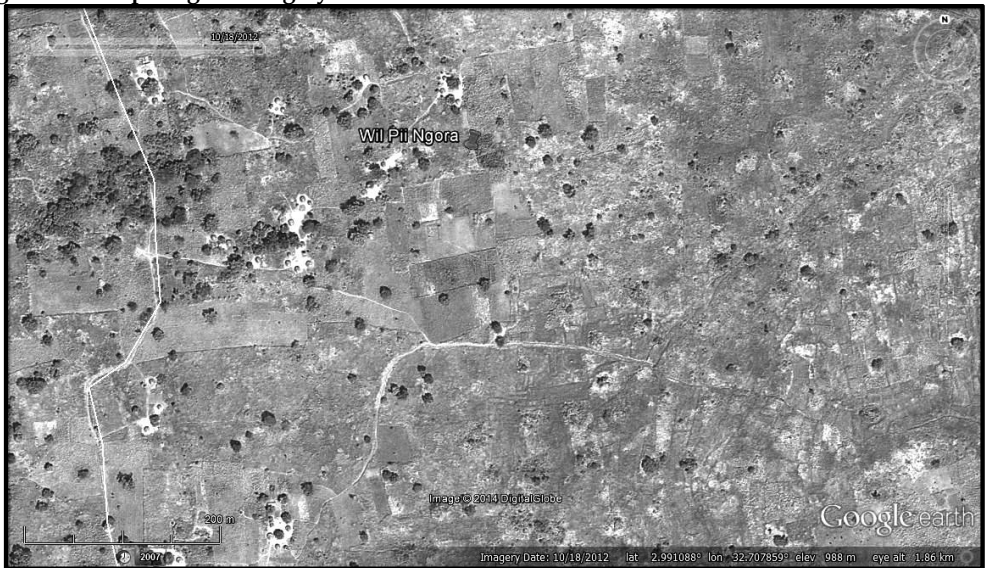


Figure 6.4: Wii Lungoyi Imagery 2007



Figure 6.5: Wii Lungoyi Imagery 2012



Chapter seven: General discussion and conclusions

7.1 Introduction

This thesis has analysed efforts to address food insecurity and recovery in post-conflict northern Uganda. It has specifically focussed on how people through their practices and institutional arrangements address food insecurity, and how this relates to the development of local government's agricultural departments and services, and also how it relates to aid interventions in de-fragilising northern Uganda. It explored how state, local government actors, humanitarians and local communities try to build on recovery interventions and agricultural rehabilitation programming and the consequences of their efforts for the food security of the local community.

The thesis shows that responses to food insecurity and rebuilding agricultural services in northern Uganda connect three dynamic processes. First are the struggles of individuals, households and communities to survive and rebuild their livelihood after long-term conflict, displacement and marginalisation. Secondly, there are efforts by the local district government and humanitarian actors to make sense of the shifting institutional relationships that they are entangled in. Thirdly, there are the processes by which the government incorporates the north in Uganda's agricultural policy domains. Reflecting on the original research question, the latter process (the importance of national policy processes in the recovery of the north) emerged in the course of the research. The dynamics and space for local government, households and humanitarian agencies are increasingly shaped by national policy processes. This specifically concerned agricultural growth policy and institutional reform processes. The way in which various actors responded to these different signals from the national government became one of the key aspects of my research. It would lead me to link bottom-up research on household and community practices and realities with an analysis of national trends and policies.

The sub-questions that the study sought to answer were:

1. What institutional arrangements and practices for food security have people developed and how have they been affected by conflict?
2. How do local people integrate the interventions by various agencies in their day-to-day livelihoods? Which other factors impact on the practices for food security in the transition context?
3. How do the implementation modalities and practices that aid agencies and governments work with translate in practice and affect various social groups?
4. What are the dynamics of the interactions between intervening agencies (aid agencies, government)? What influence does this have on food security and agricultural rehabilitation in the region?

This final chapter brings together and organises the findings - and the answer to the four sub questions in three domains of local people, the government, and the aid agencies respectively. Research sub-questions one and two are mainly addressed

under the first domain – local people and their responses. Sub-question three and (and partly four) are addressed in the domains on agricultural service governance and development, and the domain on humanitarian responses and interventions. As a matter of practicality and to avoid repetition, sub-question four is largely addressed in the domain on humanitarian responses and interventions and focuses on the interface and interactions between local government and aid agencies in trying to make sense of shifting institutional conditions in the north. In section Two of this chapter, three major cross-cutting themes on the dynamics of the transition underway in northern Uganda are identified and linked to broader empirical or theoretical debates, demonstrating the contribution of this research. Section three is about various methodological aspects and their contribution to this research, followed by the limitations of the study. The chapter ends with implications for practitioners and government in the last section.

7.2 Domains of recovery

The overview of the research findings can be presented through three different domains that analytically separate the local people, government and aid workers, while acknowledging that these three groups of actors intertwine, interact and affect each other.

7.2.1 The domain of local people and their practices

People have adapted, sometimes in surprising ways, to a situation that is very different from when they were displaced from their villages. They seek new livelihoods, enabled by the development of a cash economy, reliant on charcoal burning, casual labour and the commercialisation of local brewing (Chapter Five and Six). In Chapter Six, we saw that former camps turned into trading centres have taken prominence in the economic life of rural sites. These provide households with additional livelihood options like petty trading. Many have also retained old Acholi ways of lives, and sometimes even reinforced them. Local institutions are major contributors to rebuilding livelihoods through labour re-organisation for agricultural production and act as social protection for groups that cannot generate adequate labour for production in the village.

People's attempts to rebuild their lives is an intricate balance of various considerations. Their decision making often displays the need to cope with shocks triggered by natural hazards or market uncertainties (Chapters Three, Five and Six). The strategies they develop are embedded in their social lives, such as in the cultural rites described in Chapter Six. New institutions like seed fairs (Chapter Three) are likewise shaped by social relationships that people have developed through time.

There is pressure on livelihood development and a full return to traditional Acholi livelihoods is currently not possible for many. Shifting cultivation as a practice formerly at the core of these livelihoods - is highly constrained and for some even impossible due to lack of adequate land. As patterns and trajectories in Chapter

Six showed, former key sources of income diminish which means that more households are now relying strictly on crop production, which for many generates little income and prospects for a better life. This means that people are unable to rebuild livestock herds or access other assets lost during the conflict and displacement. In particular, the inability to replace livestock that has disappeared due to conflict, displacement and cattle rustling (Chapters Three, Five and Six) greatly constrains the mixed farming system that was formerly central to Acholi livelihoods.

Apart from lack of livestock, there are other major constraints to recovery. First, households' recovery is constrained by labour issues – two in particular. Households that have below-average access to able-bodied labour (or households with a high dependents/able-bodied ratio) are virtually unable to open land for production for their own sufficiency. In the study villages, 74 per cent of households have labour to clear three acres of land and to manage just below the minimum four acres required for self-sufficiency (Chapter Five). Chapter Six showed that this latter group cannot develop further unless they have access to assets or other key activities like charcoal. At the same time, any sale of household food stocks due to other needs puts the house at further risk of becoming food insecure. Often labour concerns are associated with 'vulnerable' people - a term which is used by humanitarian agencies with reference to people with disabilities, women, children, the sick, and the elderly, and not the 'viable' or those considered 'able', 'willing' or have the 'capacity' to work or rather have labour available to demonstrate results in development projects. This thesis however, clearly demonstrates that this is an unfounded assumption at the core of public works and development projects by showing that labour is also a major problem for regular households and tensions arise when a demand is made on this labour. The second constraint to recovery relates to accessibility of required inputs to make the shift to stable permanent cultivation: fertilisers, for instance, are too costly. Thirdly, recovery constraints are related to recurrent shocks that can easily de-stabilise a household in the greater push towards development, as Chapter Four shows. Loss or poor harvest is a major setback for households that already struggle to open enough land for production.

In view of these constraints, households feel the need to earn income outside of agriculture (Chapters Five and Six). However, new livelihood activities that provided some prospects for asset accumulation and a pathway out of poverty were often short lived due to the absence of a sustainable mechanism to replenish the stocks (Chapter Six). Chapters Five and Six demonstrate that this difficulty in recovery is partly because a good number of people are excluded from the processes of development that increasingly seeks viability. For the majority of the population in northern Uganda therefore, recovery is a highly uncertain, fluid and variable process.

It is in the uncertain recovery process that people negotiate aid and government interventions to suit and shape them to their livelihood choices and priorities. Aid is considered as just one of the many resources (or constraints) available in post-

conflict contexts, and participation in aid programmes is weighed and balanced with other activities (Chapter Five). Seed fairs are reshaped to suit a preference for local seeds or cash by negotiating with seed traders. In government interventions, people try to reshape administrative boundaries of the village where it is perceived that certain groups benefit more from programmes. Others form close relations with gatekeepers of government programmes to get access to them. At the same time, we have shown how humanitarian programmes often do not suit people's livelihoods, in particular because they do not recognize the labour constraints that people face. In these cases people choose to drop out of the programme.

7.2.2 The domain of agricultural service governance and development

Agricultural service governance and development is the domain of the government, its policies and its agricultural services. On a national level, the governance of Ugandan agricultural services is being reconstituted as part of agricultural extension reform. The aim is to 'modernize' and commercialize agriculture and agricultural institutions through a blend of decentralization and privatisation. For the north, following a period of state withdrawal or invisibility (at least in service provision), main government efforts are aimed at de-fragilising northern Uganda and bringing it back into the fold of national policy processes. What seems clear in this case is that the government seeks to turn the northerner into a 'citizen' that can be integrated into the 'normal' planning process that mainly focuses on commercialisation and modernisation of agriculture. In this process, as we analyse in Chapter Two, the government locks out the poor and average in a shift towards modern farmers. Only very few people in the north can aspire to this status.

The development narrative of the Ugandan government in the north is strongly influenced by the international development discourse. Chapter Three emphasised that the Ugandan extension policy started with a World Bank driven discourse focusing on privatisation of agricultural services, and envisaging market led development with fewer roles for the state and with payment for extension services. The National Agricultural Advisory Services (NAADS) programme, at least in its initial days had a highly donor-driven agenda aimed at privatised, demand-led extension service provision (Kjær and Joughin 2012).¹ This is the same story as with other programmes focussing on the north, for example the World Bank-funded Northern Uganda Social Action Fund (Golooba 2009). The master framework for recovery - the Peace Recovery and Development Plan (Chapter Three implementation has been reliant on donor funding.

¹ According to Kjær and Joughin (2012: 319) donors here refers to 'the multilateral and bilateral organisations funding the original NAADS programme. They were the World Bank, the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), the European Union, the Department for International Development (DFID-UK), Danish International Development Assistance (Danida) the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the Belgian Survival Fund (BSF), the Netherlands and Irish Aid'.

Recovery of the state bureaucracy is ongoing especially at the district government level. During the conflict and displacement period, local governments largely withdrew but nonetheless implemented several agricultural programmes, albeit on a very small scale. Current resumption of services at the institutional level is surrounded by challenges. As part of broader inconsistent state and donor influenced decentralization, public sector and extension reforms, the conditions for service delivery have changed in northern Uganda to include constrained local government budgets and staff. Government services are therefore characterised by the phenomenon of 'sitting on a dry desk'. Any sort of service provision is heavily reliant on aid and 'sitting allowances' (Chapter Four). State officials use the institutional arrangement of sitting allowances as a major opportunity to supplement income and at times act as a safety net mechanism in case of salary delays or failures. Chapter Four shows that the magnitude of the phenomenon is much larger than acknowledged.

7.2.3 The domain of humanitarian responses and interventions

In order to understand the nature and impact of efforts to maintain and enhance food security in northern Uganda during the conflict and post-conflict years, it was important to investigate how humanitarian efforts addressed the severe constraints to household food security and how agricultural rehabilitation has been conceptualised and addressed with the return of peace. Food security narratives in the north have shifted over time from food aid driven food security to re-establishing production (Chapter Three). The food security programme that was analysed in Chapter Five was implemented at a time when the push to increase agricultural production and productivity as a pathway to food security was high. The major underlying theory of change in this agricultural rehabilitation discourse - largely informed by the thinking on Linking Relief, Rehabilitation and Development (LRRD) - assumed that the combined provision of agricultural inputs, farmer institutional development, infrastructural development and the development of markets leads to household food security and provides the basis for households to venture into commercialisation (Chapters Three, Four and Five).

One important implication of this 'new' humanitarian agenda in the north was the shift in targeting of services towards those considered as able to demonstrate results. In this process groups labelled as 'vulnerable' are explicitly locked out of interventions through public works, and aid contributes to social differentiation. Chapter Five showed that the shift is partly informed by misconceptions about labour availability in rural households - assumptions that guide the form, execution and success of humanitarian programmes. However, targeting 'viable' people with aid interventions is based on little appreciation and understanding of the local dynamics of labour, recovery, local institutions and disaster risks. As we showed, in this context the targeting was detrimental to the objectives of inclusion, access to food and poverty reduction.

Underlying this notion that agricultural intensification leads to greater food security are assumptions about how people survive in severe conditions. However, these assumptions do not include the fact that local livelihoods are increasingly complex and diverse (Christoplos 2009) as compared to the narrow production perspective. These assumptions mostly rely on arguments on the importance of agriculture to food security and rural livelihoods. The assumptions have been criticised on the grounds that not all rural people want or strive to be farmers, often referred to as the 'yeoman farmer fallacy' (Farrington and Bebbington 1992). Subsistence farming seems to be a misnomer because people can only survive at subsistence level if they have non-agricultural sources of income.

At the same time, humanitarian actors in northern Uganda are finding their way in new and evolving institutional conditions and realities. LRRD then becomes a process that has to be negotiated in the relationships between local bureaucrats and NGO staff. In Chapter Four we showed how this takes place in practice with regard to changing state institutions and the realities of the north. Humanitarian agencies intend to hand over to the government as an exit strategy. Sitting allowances smooth the process of transition yet also undermine it. Chapter Four demonstrated that sitting allowances as part of the agricultural services delivery repertoires/options provide a negotiated opportunity for service delivery. This in turn shapes and is shaped by the evolving interaction with humanitarian agencies and aid is embedded in the political economy of the post-conflict context. At the same time, service delivery becomes subject to the provision of sitting allowances in some cases develop a life of their own, overshadowing the services to be provided. In several other cases, despite allowances being provided, service delivery and in particular quality control, is not achieved as expected due to the modalities of aid working. Quality control in seed fairs can only be fully assured if there is a pre-qualification of traders to enable germination tests.

7.3 Cross cutting themes on the dynamics of transition

The findings in response to the research question(s) of this thesis lead to three general conclusions on the processes and dynamics of transition in northern Uganda.

7.3.1 Messy transitions between humanitarian services and state-led market 'modernisation'

At the macro level, development policies are brought in while humanitarian modalities still function. The convergence of multiple humanitarian aims and national development policies (that also represent donor priorities) leads to an intervention outcome that does not reflect the people's own recovery processes and the constraints they face. The result is a widening gap and a mismatch between the northern Ugandan policies and local realities.

In the transition from humanitarian services to state-led market modernisation, policies aim to turn peasants into commercial farmers. This is in line with the government's broader transformation and economic growth objectives in which

agricultural development is pursued as a pathway to this goal (Chapter Three). Thus development is increasingly being shaped in an era when services are being privatised and the aims are modernization, commercialisation and growth. This tends to favour bigger farmers over smaller farmers. Literature on extension services stress that the state's role is crucial in re-orienting services to serve the public goods of food security and poverty alleviation (Klerkx, de Grip *et al.* 2006; Christoplos 2010). The literature takes for granted that the state is always interested in re-orienting services to serve these public goods. However, in the case of Uganda, the interest is in using agriculture as the engine of economic growth, including at policy level. The focus is therefore on commercializing farmers and disregarding the average farmers in the north who are in no position to take advantage of such services.

Humanitarian service provision has gradually been re-conceptualized and increasingly reflects the current agricultural modernization policy while retaining humanitarian modes of working. Recovery and sustainability have come to be associated with quick-fixes for institutions and markets for service provision (Chapters Two and Four). Seed fairs and vouchers increase people's capacity to choose their own paths to recovery and at the same time are mechanisms that in many respects constrain peoples' choices. The public works/voucher/seed fairs thus constitute a compromise between the different humanitarian/development aims and national development policies that assume the re-emergence of northern Uganda into national processes.

This compromise transition and the resultant misfit between policy and reality are empirically underpinned. The vast majority of people are stuck in rebuilding livelihoods (Chapter Five and Six). Part of the mismatch is because the focus of recovery interventions on a return to normality and growth overlooks structural changes such as pressure on land, reduction in productivity and the strategies that people relied on to rebuild assets (during the first years of return) are now constrained (Chapter Six). At the same time many people are excluded from recovery, development and extension services provided by both humanitarian agencies and the government. This means the envisioned commercial 'transformation' in the North remains a remote possibility.

A misfit between policy and reality (including government's programmes which select 'model' farmers) raises questions of state-society relations as governments should ideally be the source of social protection for the very poor. As Hickey (2007) notes, the prioritisation of social protection is part of the social and political contract. In addition, structural issues related to poverty, can only be addressed if the state sees the need to prioritise the concerns of the majority. In the absence of such prioritisation, problematic relations between Kampala and the north will persist.

Where the government tries to address the realities of poverty in the north, this is mainly done through humanitarian type of interventions. Government modalities in programmes such as the Northern Uganda Social Action Fund (NUSAF) overly focus on community-based interventions with heavy public works components.

Public works as currently implemented have little potential for addressing food security while most households struggle to generate the labour required to engage in this type of work. In the meantime, assets such as livestock, which people indicate as relevant, are increasingly sidelined (see also McCord, Onapa *et al.* 2013). Elsewhere NUSAF is faulted for failure to pay due attention to the structural nature of poverty in the north, people's own needs, and unequal power relations (Hickey and Golooba-Mutebi 2009). NUSAF focuses on community-based approaches without taking into account that some people do not have ownership rights over resources engaged in community reconstruction processes, while many are unable to hold leaders in charge of these processes or resources accountable (Golooba-Mutebi and Hickey 2010 :1232/1233). Within the National Agricultural Advisory Services programme, focus on the poor is a palliative measure. Agricultural inputs distribution - mostly seeds for the majority 'food security farmers' category is emphasised. As a response to disaster risks too, the tendency has been to distribute more seeds. Some of these community-based interventions are implemented by humanitarians, in coordination with the state. The broader concern is that community-based approaches are missing in the realities and priorities of the post-conflict context and that most people are stuck in structural poverty.

7.3.2 Bridging policy and practice mismatches and the evolving institutional relations

As actors find ways of bridging policy and practice in the larger messy transition from humanitarian services to state-led services, this thesis shows how institutional relations or new institutions evolve out of the process of recovery and reconstruction. As the state and humanitarian agencies push for modernised and privatised institutions, we see consistently that people reshape those institutions and re-personalise them. Those working in the NAADs office are supposedly meant to be very different and to represent a new kind of service providers. Seed fairs are set up to form perfect markets but people prefer to buy seeds from the people they know and trust. We can thus interpret what is happening in the north in terms of the theoretical notion of 'bricolage' (Cleaver 2001; Cleaver 2012) and evolving institutional relations that are formed in everyday practice.

Particularly, local level actors find their way of working together on two levels within the broader processes of recovery. In Chapter Four, we have shown how state actors and aid workers use the modality of sitting allowances to resolve some of the problems posed by the transition from rehabilitation to development. While seemingly out of place in relation to the rhetoric of handing over services to the state, this arrangement shapes service provision and serves as one of the few institutional mechanisms to negotiate this transition. Sitting allowances create a modestly enabling environment for meso level 'bricolage' wherein various norms can be layered, combined and adapted to the realities of service provision in the north.

As agricultural extension and decentralisation reforms act as a forum for negotiating development, humanitarian actors become entrenched in the political

economy of northern Uganda. This is important because there has been major progress in understanding the functioning of the state and everyday governance as an outcome of on-going negotiation and interaction between state and non-state actors (Migdal and Schlichte 2005; Hagmann and Péclard 2010; Titeca and de Herdt 2011). The contribution has been a better understanding of areas characterised as fragile in policy discourse by shifting the focus to what exists or what is i.e. showing local institutional realities that exist, rather than what is missing. As we have shown in this thesis, institutional norms surrounding sitting allowances are central to service provision governance and development 'as it happens'. Aid agencies are an embedded part of the institutional multiplicity in post-conflict contexts given their role in shaping the governance of services in these areas characterised by fragility. The role of humanitarian aid in everyday governance was missing so far.

In the broader literature on post-conflict and fragile contexts, and specifically on state-society relations and the institutions, one does not find references to agricultural services. There exists literature on topics such as community development, reconstruction, peace-building, state-building, state formation and service provision in sectors like health, water and sanitation, justice and education (Titeca and de Herdt 2011; Brinkerhoff, Wetterberg *et al.* 2012; Carpenter, Slater *et al.* 2012; Stel, Boer *et al.* 2012). Cramer (2006) talks of the big makeover fantasy - the assumption that one can just drop new institutions into post-conflict areas. In addition, there has been a lot of discussion on how, in general terms, service delivery develops in post conflict areas (Baird 2011) or even how service delivery is linked to issues of state legitimacy (Brinkerhoff, Wetterberg *et al.* 2012). These discussions have rarely addressed issues of agricultural services. Departing from these studies and in relation to how local actors work together, this thesis shows that in the shaping of agricultural services, just like in other services in post-conflict societies, we see the negotiation of the state/society relationships.

A major reason why generally agricultural services provision is not a major topic in post-conflict areas is because the reform processes at the core of their changing nature and structure are mainly targeted at 'stable' areas. There is a lot of literature on agricultural services and especially extension services. Part of this literature is summarised under the scope of research on agricultural services reform and which Faure, Desjeux *et al.* (2012: 466) summarise as focussed on the institutional environment of agricultural advisory services: the governance structure including financing and relationships among actors, the advisory service providers including the profile and skills of advisors, the advisory methods and tools, and the assessment or evaluation of the impact of advisory services. However this literature does not deal with post-conflict contexts, even though reforms like privatisation also happen in post-conflict areas bring specific challenges. So generally we have seen the literature on the development of post-conflict societies and that of agricultural advisory services grow in parallel. As we have shown, northern Uganda has become an arena where agricultural services and related reforms confront post-conflict dynamics. This thesis therefore contributes to literature by showing how agricultural

services (reforms included) and post-conflict contexts intertwine and the nature of the whole new dynamics that result from this process i.e. sitting allowances.

At the practical level of local governance of agricultural advisory services, district government officials and local service providers established a new social contract with the newly returned population. This is through balancing Kampala requirements and everyday realities of the post-conflict context in their everyday interactions with farmers. The development of new state-society relations, in this case, becomes a process negotiated between extension workers and the local people. In the process, these local service providers emerge as key actors that shape rural livelihoods especially how local people deal with the increasingly intertwined risks of food insecurity and disasters. This is particularly important as recent research also supports the view that it is common for 'disasters to meet conflict' (Heijmans 2012) in such fragile contexts. Where state capacity to respond is weak and where social, economic and political processes (or even conflict itself) already produced populations highly vulnerable to shocks, disasters increasingly happen (Spiegel, Le *et al.* 2007).

7.3.3 Linking Relief Rehabilitation and...Destitution

The third process in the transition and recovery in northern Uganda relates to the linking of Relief Rehabilitation and Destitution, rather than linking to Development. Literature about Linking Relief Rehabilitation and Development (LRRD) usually analyses problems with the nature of, and linkages between, Relief, Rehabilitation and Development, but rarely looks at the meaning of Development that Rehabilitation is supposed to link up to (Korf 2002; Longley, Christoplos *et al.* 2003). Here, it is demonstrated that actually the 'D' in Development is the problem in many ways and should be construed as a problem. Building and rebuilding services, including agricultural services in northern Uganda is much more than a transition from exceptional crisis to the 'normality' of development. 'Normality' of development in a post-conflict context is often complex, changing and contested (Chapter Three). The idealized notion of LRRD is based on a misguided assumption that agencies can simply 'hand over' services to a waiting civil service. This is described in Chapter Four. The practice of sitting allowances suggests that the roles of the state and aid agencies in 'development' diverge from the idealised norms implied by LRRD transitions.

It is often not questioned what people are transferring to and the nature of their transition. This thesis shows that people in northern Uganda recover rather well in the first two to three years after returning to their homes. However, this initial recovery does not become a launching pad towards development, but instead households get stuck in destitution. Assets erode to such an extent that development is not an achievable goal for many of those formerly displaced. Many people see their 'normality' becoming a state of 'Destitution' instead of 'Development'. This thesis, therefore, contributes to the LRRD debate by identifying the 'D' of

Development as a problem when it is usually taken for granted in the LRRD literature.

7.4 Methodological choices and their contribution to the research

Ethnography is a broad type of research endeavour; there are three aspects in my approach that stand out and call for reflection.

First, in this thesis I chose to take a systematic approach to ethnography as much as possible, in particular through the recurrent in-depth household visits that spanned 15 months, and time spent in the ZOA office and at the district production and agricultural department. Ethnography is often associated with spontaneity. However, retaining spontaneity while doing organised data collection meant I could simultaneously follow new leads and insights and consistently build up extensive profiles of each of the three groups of actors. It also meant that I was able to keep detailed impressions of the household dynamics without losing sight of broader dynamics within the district.

Secondly, I combined qualitative and quantitative techniques. Often the assumption is that quantitative methods are not compatible with qualitative ethnography (Silverman 2006). Usually, analysis of texts, discourse analysis, life and oral histories, interviews are the main methods in ethnography. However, mixing qualitative and quantitative methods has added value. The survey formed the basis for the household visits. The data from the recurrent in-depth household interviews could be quantified when needed. In addition, the findings from the survey combined with the regular but systematic visits revealed interesting dynamics about households that often stay out of the gaze of one methodology. Systematic ethnography combined with interactive research proved to be powerful methods for capturing livelihood dynamics and interventions and for understanding everyday life in northern Uganda.

Thirdly, interactive research enriched my research. Outside of practical considerations, it allowed additional access to data. Most important, however, are the insights derived from different types of knowledge actors and participants which enabled me to observe the process of knowledge construction. Often, the reflection moments with ZOA staff in Uganda and those in the Netherlands provided interesting insights for the research. These were moments when findings were questioned and assumptions tested.

7.5 Limitations of the study

There have been explicit attempts to incorporate nutritional aspects in studying food security resulting in the concept of nutrition security (Pangaribowo, Gerber *et al.* 2013). According to a World Bank definition quoted in Capone, El Bilali *et al.* (2014: 14), 'nutrition security exists when food security is combined with a sanitary environment, adequate health services, and proper care and feeding practices to ensure a healthy life for all household members'. A first limitation of this study

therefore is that I choose to look at food security programmes, policies and people's livelihood strategies, but I did not expand this to include food security from a nutritional perspective. This was despite the consideration that household food security was affected, for instance, by the nodding disease; women often noted that this interfered with weeding or resulted in the sale of food to meet health-related costs.

In addition, the concept of 'household' which we use here has been criticised for failure to take into consideration intra-household heterogeneity, struggles and power differentials (Kaag, Van Berkel *et al.* 2004). This requires a focus on individual food security. While I did not do justice fully to this, it was addressed to a certain extent. For instance, Chapter Six describes differences in understanding livelihoods, land and recovery due to disaggregation on generational, gender and age lines. This applies not only within the households but across the general population.

Lastly, this study and especially its use of quantitative methods was restricted to a small sample of the population. A recently-launched piece of research into understanding livelihoods in the Acholi region by the Secure Livelihoods Research Consortium (SLRC) programme may generate data and insights complementary to this research².

I also chose to focus on Pader District which is more remote than several other Acholi Districts. The dynamics here might differ from, for instance, Gulu and Kitgum districts which have always received more humanitarian and scholarly attention. As I also noted, several humanitarian organisations have recently retreated from Pader to Kitgum and Gulu. In terms of government programmes, NAADs was introduced much earlier in Kitgum and thus the dynamics might differ.

7.6 Implications of findings for the government and practitioners

In this section, I would like to indicate the implications of my research for practitioners and government on the recovery of northern Uganda and the struggles of households in this process. The section is partly based on discussions and contributions from ZOA staff based in the Netherlands following a reflection on the findings of this thesis.

- I have established that the result of the merging of the various humanitarian/development - government norms does not seem to reflect the local realities and constraints faced in bringing land back into cultivation much less in the transformation of agriculture from slash and burn to the 'modern' intensive production that is envisaged. These 'modern' systems are constrained and require different types of interventions. For instance, improved modern agriculture requires access to and use of fertiliser (which would likely require a very different type of institutional underpinning, e.g.,

² <http://www.securelivelihoods.org/>

seasonal credit rather than fairs, as well as different expertise, e.g. related to the measurement and interpretation of soil parameters) and adaptation to climate variability (again, requiring different solutions, e.g., more attention to integrated drought tolerant crop production systems, *in situ* and *ex situ* water harvesting, and/or crop insurance).

- In the thesis we see that programmes meant for food security also have implications, objectives and sub-texts on institutions and institutional engineering. Aid tries to restore the social fabric in communities whereas people are interested in different types of institutions. At the same time, where NGOs introduce 'new institutions', these tend to collapse due to lack of local legitimacy. In rebuilding livelihoods, existing social relations and local institutions are of utmost importance and should be given due recognition by aid and government, rather than being undermined by the institutional engineering currently taking place. These institutions such as traditional labour arrangements and communal assistance in calamities promote not only recovery, but provide a modicum of social protection.
- Governments and humanitarian actors should be aware of and therefore investigate the validity of their assumptions which are: (1) that the newly-returned population primarily depend on subsistence farming for their food and income; (2) that they have ample labour available, and (3) that they mostly need improved seeds. In this thesis I have made clear that many households are, at most, only partially dependent on farming, with other sources of income being critical to both basic survival and wealth accumulation. In addition, many households face labour scarcity, particularly in peak periods. In fact, labour was a serious constraint to opening up sufficient land for food security. Thirdly, many households participating in seed fairs preferred to sell their vouchers for cash or ordinary seeds, but what they really wanted was livestock. This leads me to recommend that food security programmes should take the importance of non-farm income sources, labour availability, and household preferences much more seriously than they currently appear to be doing.
- Governments and humanitarian actors need to be careful in assuming that return (and development) means back to normality as it may very well be that people return from situations of acute crisis into situations of structural crisis. There is a need to investigate the effects of long-term trends on livelihoods redevelopment options, and to incorporate structural crisis factors (population pressure, land/water shortage, climate change, etc.) into LRRD programming.
- LRRD programming should also make a realistic assessment of what opportunities exist for asset accumulation which households need to escape structural poverty and move beyond borderline food security. Current interventions either ignore the potential for asset accumulation, or are only

viable for small proportions of the population leaving the rest stuck in deeply entrenched poverty.

- Humanitarians should be aware that current aid modalities such as shifting from 'vulnerable' to the 'able' and 'willing' leads to programmes of exclusion. The assumption is that the vulnerable will benefit at some point in time through trickling down of programme results or spontaneous dissemination of practices is not substantiated. Such modalities should therefore be accompanied by parallel programmes that target and address the needs of those locked out of current programmes. These can include safety nets.

Designing better interventions should be based on an empirical understanding of the particular context and on genuinely listening to the local population rather than only conducting NGO-engineered surveys and highly ritualised formal meetings. Even where promotion of alternative livelihoods can be pursued this has to be contextualised to be effective and ideally should start with patterns of, and opportunities for, asset accumulation or food security, as already pursued by people themselves. This might mean engagement with strategies that normally do not fall within the scope of aid agencies and making flexibility central to the process. Alternatives also need step-by-step introduction while all assumptions embedded in programmes should be made clear and implementation should be an iterative process where assumptions are frequently checked against realities and where programmes are changed.

7.7 Final Remarks

Throughout this thesis, I have established that, in the current context, food security and agricultural services are about addressing diverse agendas and the complex set of relationships among several actors - mainly the government, local people and aid workers. For the government, this has meant growth and modernisation which entails incorporating northern Uganda into the state's vision for development and policy processes in general. The state's concerns to de-fragilise the north including post-conflict stabilisation, extending the state into the north and re-establishing government authority. Agricultural extension, services and policy more generally are areas in which this plays out. However, with regard to the government, it is important to stress that food security as an aspect of agricultural policy is mainly secondary to contributing to economic growth. To understand how agricultural policy is expected to contribute to food security, it is essential to acknowledge that there are many competing priorities.

For aid agencies, while the stated objective has been food security, this was also coupled to many other implicit and hidden objectives. Food security programmes progressively exclude the most vulnerable showing that access to food for all is clearly subordinate to the politics of producing more food in total. At the same time, there are ideals about reordering societies through the establishment of new institutions in the form of farmer groups. The focus on increasing food availability

largely through improving production and productivity in the north ignores issues of access to food. In both cases i.e. government and humanitarian aid, the secondary objectives under the banner of the programming wave of food security tend to become objectives in their own right, while the original goal of attaining food security gets obscured. This is why I draw attention to the politics of food security.

To me then, this political change towards modernisation of agriculture has a huge impact on the food security programmes and the targeting of the population. Food security is heavily politicised and therefore our thinking on the definition of food security should take into account these political aspects. In this sense the commonly used 1996 World Food Summit definition fails to capture the whole dimension of what determines food security. This thesis, therefore proposes the addition of the word 'political' to reflect the whole range of factors influencing food security. That is 'food security exists when all people at all times have physical, social, *political* and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life'.

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Summary

Food insecurity represents an essential need (among many others) in recovery after conflict (Forman, Patrick *et al.* 2000; McKinney 2008) that people contend with while rebuilding their lives. At the same time, several institutional processes are ongoing in fragile and post-conflict contexts. Governments try to resume services for the affected population and reassert their authority in these contested spaces. Local governments particularly try to rebuild service provision and at the same time deal with changes happening within the general contexts where these services are offered. As is common in and after conflict, aid agencies assist in the recovery process, at times struggling with the transition from emergency assistance to recovery and development. These multiple processes, and how they interact, provide the subject matter for this thesis.

It might seem that ensuring food security is in many respects the most visible and fundamental indicator of whether or not fragile states and the international community are meeting their most basic responsibilities. This is surprisingly not the case in the overwhelming majority of research on areas characterised by fragility in policy discourse. Until 2008, food security was generally ignored in research into fragile states or was treated as a technical task for humanitarian agencies. In addition, there has been little focus in these kinds of contexts on the importance of agricultural services and their relation to broader livelihood processes, aid assistance, the development of institutions and the state in post-conflict recovery. These are the gaps that inform the thesis. In addition, this thesis focuses attention on dynamics within a fragile region in a state that has been praised in the past decade as a model on agricultural services reforms.

This thesis 'Transition or stagnation? Everyday life, food security and recovery in post-conflict northern Uganda' addresses the following main question:

'How do local people through their practices and institutional arrangements address food insecurity, and how does this relate to the development of local government's agricultural departments and services, and to aid interventions in de-fragilising North Uganda?'

The scope of the research is food security policies, programming and people's livelihood strategies and the findings relate to the domains of (a) local people and their responses, (b) agricultural service governance and development and (c) humanitarian responses and interventions.

The research is based on an interactive-ethnographic methodology. Predominantly ethnographic work was undertaken in Pader District, northern Uganda between 2010 and 2012 where support for improving agricultural production and productivity has been pursued as a major way of addressing food security and promoting recovery. The research was undertaken under the auspices of the IS Academy on Human Security in Fragile States - a collaborative framework

that seeks to promote linkages between academic research, policy and practice. The main interactive partner was the Dutch agency ZOA. ZOA has a major focus on supporting refugees, host communities and those displaced within their own countries due to armed conflict or natural disasters. Improving food security, income and livelihoods is one major sectors in which they work.

The thesis starts with an introduction to the topic of interest in Chapter One. The scope of research is set out as food security policies, programmes and people's livelihood strategies in northern Uganda. The thesis is a case study that provides insights on the interconnected processes of food security and food security programming, in the context of Linking Relief, Rehabilitation and Development (LRRD) processes and agricultural service reforms and policies. This leads to an elaboration of how the concepts of food security, policy and livelihoods are approached from an actor-oriented perspective. The methodology is then introduced showing this research as largely a combination of ethnography and interactive research with the Dutch agency ZOA. This section is followed by a reflection on the methodology where it is highlighted that spontaneity in ethnography does not mean that data collection cannot be planned systematically. The introduction finally pays attention to the value of interactive research methods, and points attention to the politics that are central to this process.

Chapter Two follows with an introduction to Pader District as part of Acholiland in northern Uganda as the research area. The development of the conflict in northern Uganda is traced and summarised as a conflict whose seeds were sown by both the colonial and post-independence governments. Forced displacement of the Acholi population, withdrawal of state services and a problematic humanitarian regime are identified as key features of the conflict that re- occur in the following chapters.

Chapter Three is largely an outcome of the realisation that policy shapes processes in the North. This was not initially captured in the research question. This chapter traces two parallel processes in the North based on a classification of three periods: an early emergency phase (1986 - 2005), the emergence of agricultural services in early recovery (from 2006 - 2010) and the current context starting 2011. Agricultural policy in Uganda has, through the years, shifted towards modernisation and commercialisation as the pathway to food security. Parallel to this we traced the development of the humanitarian regime in northern Uganda, from food aid to recovery programming that entails seeds and tools and seed fairs aimed at kick starting production, and then on to the current period where they embrace the modernisation ideals with which government policies are imbued. The findings thus show a convergence of humanitarian and government modalities focusing on agricultural modernization where reduction of farmers' risks is not a priority. The targeting of agricultural policy and its objectives has changed to economic growth and transformation processes whereas social, economic and political processes, including the conflict in the north have generated high levels of vulnerability to food insecurity. This makes commercial transformation only a remote possibility. However, the divergence in policy and realities is mitigated to a certain extent by the

relationships that local service providers and extension workers build with the local community. They try to balance the various interests to develop a local social contract. The paper thus points to the need to view LRRD as not only a one-way street where relief strategies feed into development. Rather it leads to a questioning of the suitability of these development-oriented processes in light of rural realities.

As northern Uganda moves away from an emergency context where aid agencies were the major actors, district local governments and their technical departments are expected to take over from the agencies. Chapter Four explores the nature and dynamics of the relations between aid agency workers and local civil servants. This is a chapter about an important mechanism through which aid and government agencies resolve for themselves some of the tensions embedded in the discourses of LRRD processes and the differences between policy and the realities of the north. Following shifting reforms, privatisation of agricultural services and decentralisation, the district government faces major challenges in service provision. The high presence of aid agencies and the need for service provision has led to the establishment of sitting allowances - monetary arrangements paid to civil servants to perform their roles. The chapter examines sitting allowances in the three arenas of quality control: seeds in seed fairs, meetings and workshops, and agricultural trainings for farmers. It shows how sitting allowances are legitimised, organised and regulated while at the same time staying in the shadows as far as development is concerned. Sitting allowances are sustained through a multiplicity of interests, networks of patronage and established social relations between aid and government workers. The institutional arrangement becomes entrenched and increasingly shapes service provision. The chapter concludes by arguing that sitting allowances are part of governance as it happens in the post-conflict context.

Chapter Five is a direct result of the interactive nature of this thesis. It focuses on the interplay between aid interventions and people's everyday lives. It contributes to an understanding of why people drop out of aid programmes that, through farmer organisations, largely offered seeds (though vouchers and money) in exchange for a labour contribution to public works. Aid interventions are often shaped by food security paradigms. The food security programme of the case study is informed by modernisation ideals that seek to increase households' food security through improved production. At the same time, the programme follows a broader trend where those framed as 'willing', 'able' or 'viable' are brought out for participation in programmes with a public works component. However, 'following' households within and outside the programme shows that targeting viable people with aid interventions shows little appreciation and understanding of the local dynamics of labour, recovery and disaster risks and leads to social exclusion of the vulnerable. The findings show that the majority of the population struggles to balance public works labour requirements with participation in community labour gangs and other activities aimed at supplementing food during shortages. This is at a time when the exit of young men alters the labour structure of households. Labour dynamics combine with risk from weather-related hazards and group dynamics to shape

people's perception of the aid intervention and the result is that people 'vote with their feet' by dropping out of the programme. The findings here point to the need for humanitarian aid to build in learning processes and adjust to realities of areas characterised by fragility.

Chapter Six revisits people's everyday lives - taking as its departure point people's livelihoods. It contributes to an understanding of the nature of the transition for people in northern Uganda as not one linking relief to rehabilitation and development but rather from rehabilitation to destitution. Following their return from camps, people re-establish production progressively. At the same time livelihood diversification becomes crucial as activities such as local brewing and petty trading increase. Charcoal burning is a key activity towards asset accumulation. For those living near former camps, these camps are integrated into their livelihoods, as sources of income-generating activities. Despite improvement and recovery in the initial stages of return, and in opposition to what is generally assumed about progress after conflict, most people get stuck on a hidden plateau. Structural changes such as population growth put the current key resource under threat – land. Rebuilding livestock, formerly crucial for supplementing food production, is difficult for many. The new livelihoods also cause generational differences and conflicts. This chapter concludes that everyday life and livelihoods are greatly constrained and for many, instead of a transition to development, theirs is a transition to destitution.

In the last chapter, Chapter Seven, I highlight the importance of policy processes in shaping developments in the north and providing room for manoeuvre for humanitarian and local district governments. This is a key finding that emerged but was not captured in the original research question. Here the findings from the research are grouped under three separate yet intertwined domains: local people and their responses, agricultural service governance and development, and humanitarian responses and interventions. It is under these three domains that the four sub-questions that guided this research are addressed. The thesis shows that the interaction between people's efforts to address food security and the development of local government's agricultural departments and services and to aid interventions is characterised by a transition in which three processes and dynamics are key:

- First there is a messy transition between humanitarian services and state-led market 'modernisation'; this is a process in which there is a widening gap between policies and realities in the north. Current policy pushes for modernization, commercialisation and growth which tend to favour bigger farmers rather than smaller farmers. However, local realities show that few people fit this new agenda.
- Secondly, both government and humanitarian actors try to bridge this policy and reality gap by working together. Local government actors also try to be more responsive to people's struggles in the recovery process. In this process, new institutional arrangements emerge as northern Uganda becomes an arena where agricultural services and related reforms confront post-conflict

dynamics. I also highlight the need to take agricultural services in post-conflict contexts as important arenas where state/society relations are negotiated.

- Thirdly, the transition process is one in which the majority of the people are stuck on a hidden plateau as recovery turns into destitution. Rather than a process where Relief, Rehabilitation and Development are connected, practice shows that for a majority of people one could more aptly speak of a process linking Relief, Rehabilitation and Destitution.

A section on the limitations of the study is followed by a section that highlights the main contributions of methodological choices made and a section on the implications of the study for government and practitioners. The chapter ends with a call for the rethinking of the commonly used World Food Summit definition of food security to include that people require political space to be able to achieve food security.

Samenvatting

Voedselzekerheid vertegenwoordigt één van de (vele) essentiële behoeften tijdens het herstel na een conflict (Forman, Patrick *et al.* 2000; McKinney 2008), waar mensen mee te maken hebben wanneer ze hun levens opnieuw opbouwen. Tegelijkertijd vinden er een aantal institutionele processen plaats in fragiele en (post) conflict contexten. Overheden proberen de dienstverlening aan de betrokken bevolking opnieuw op te pakken, en hun gezag in deze – betwiste – ruimte weer te bevestigen. Dit geldt ook voor lokale overheden, die daarbij ook te maken hebben met veranderingen in de context waarin deze diensten worden aangeboden. Zoals gebruikelijk tijdens en na conflicten, assisteren hulporganisaties in het herstelproces, soms worstelend met de transitie van noodhulp naar herstel en ontwikkelingshulp. Deze verschillende processen, en de interactie daartussen, zijn het onderwerp van dit proefschrift.

Het zeker stellen van voedselzekerheid lijkt in veel opzichten de meest zichtbare en fundamentele indicator om te bepalen of fragiele staten en de internationale gemeenschap hun meest basale verantwoordelijkheden nakomen. Verassend genoeg blijkt dit niet het geval volgens veruit het meeste onderzoek in gebieden die algemeen als fragiel getypeerd worden. Tot 2008 werd voedselzekerheid meestal genegeerd in onderzoek naar fragiele staten, of het werd beschouwd als een technische taak voor humanitaire organisaties. Verder is er in deze contexten weinig aandacht geweest voor het belang van agrarische dienstverlening en de relatie daarvan met bredere processen van levensonderhoud, hulp, de ontwikkeling van instituties en de staat in het herstel na een conflict. Dit zijn de lacunes waar dit proefschrift zich op richt. Daarnaast onderzoekt het de dynamiek in een fragiele regio van een staat die het afgelopen decennium is geprezen als model voor het hervormen van de agrarische dienstverlening.

Dit proefschrift ‘Transitie of stagnatie? Het leven van alledag, voedselzekerheid en herstel in post-conflict Noord-Oeganda’ heeft als hoofdvraag:

Hoe gaan lokale mensen in hun dagelijkse praktijken en institutionele regelingen om met een gebrek aan voedselzekerheid, en hoe verhoudt dit zich tot de ontwikkeling van agrarische afdelingen en diensten van lokale overheden, en tot hulpinterventies in het minder fragiel maken van Noord-Oeganda?

Het onderzoek bekijkt beleid en programma's voor voedselzekerheid, en de strategieën van mensen om in hun levensonderhoud te voorzien; de bevindingen hebben betrekking op verschillende domeinen: (a) lokale mensen en hun respons, (b) het bestuur en de ontwikkeling van agrarische diensten, en (c) de humanitaire respons en interventies.

Het onderzoek is gebaseerd op een interactieve, etnografische methodologie. Het onderzoek is verricht in het Pader district in Noord-Oeganda, tussen 2010 en 2012,

waar de verbetering van landbouwproductie en – productiviteit werd gezien als een belangrijke manier om voedselzekerheid te bewerkstelligen en herstel te bevorderen. Het onderzoek is uitgevoerd binnen het raamwerk van de IS Academie 'Human Security in Fragile States', een kader voor samenwerking dat ernaar streeft om de samenhang tussen academisch onderzoek, het beleid en de praktijk te bevorderen. De belangrijkste partner voor dit interactieve onderzoek was de Nederlandse hulporganisatie ZOA. ZOA heeft een sterke focus op het ondersteunen van vluchtelingen, ontvangende gemeenschappen en diegenen die binnen hun eigen landen uit hun huizen verdreven zijn door gewapend conflict of natuurrampen. Het vergroten en verbeteren van voedselzekerheid - inclusief inkomens en manieren om in levensonderhoud te voorzien - is één van de belangrijkste sectoren waar zij in werken.

Het proefschrift begint met een introductie van het onderzoeksonderwerp, in hoofdstuk 1. Het onderzoek bekijkt beleid en programma's voor voedselzekerheid, en strategieën van mensen om in hun levensonderhoud te voorzien in Noord-Oeganda. Dit proefschrift is een case study die inzicht verschaft in de onderling verbonden processen van voedselzekerheid en voedselzekerheidsprogramma's, in het kader van 'Linking Relief, Rehabilitation and Development' (LRRD, het verbinden van noodhulp, herstel en ontwikkeling) processen en hervormingen van agrarische diensten en beleid. Het hoofdstuk werkt uit hoe de concepten van voedselzekerheid, beleid en levensonderhoud (*livelihoods*) worden benaderd vanuit een actor-georiënteerde benadering. Daarna wordt de methodologie geïntroduceerd; een combinatie van etnografie en interactief onderzoek met de Nederlandse organisatie ZOA. Dit onderdeel wordt gevolgd door een reflectie op de methodologie, waarin onderstreept wordt dat spontaniteit in etnografie niet betekent dat de dataverzameling niet meer systematisch kan worden aangepakt. Tenslotte besteedt de introductie nog aandacht aan de toegevoegde waarde van interactieve onderzoeksmethodes, en wijst ook op de politieke processen die in dit proces een centrale rol spelen.

Het tweede hoofdstuk vervolgt met een introductie van het onderzoeksgebied: Pader district en meer algemeen het Acholiland in Noord-Oeganda. De ontwikkeling van het conflict in Noord-Oeganda wordt uiteengezet en samengevat als voornamelijk een conflict waarvoor de kiem gelegd werd door zowel koloniale als post-koloniale overheden. Gedwongen verhuizing (*displacement*) van de Acholi bevolking, terugtrekking van overheidsdiensten en een problematisch humanitair regime worden geïdentificeerd als de belangrijkste kenmerken van het conflict. Ze komen ook terug in de volgende hoofdstukken.

Hoofdstuk 3 komt grotendeels voort uit het besef dat de processen in het noorden gevormd worden door het beleid. Dit werd in eerste instantie niet gevangen in de onderzoeksvraag. Het hoofdstuk volgt twee parallelle processen in het noorden, gebaseerd op een verdeling in drie periodes: de vroege fase van noodhulp (1986-2005), de opkomst van agrarische diensten in het vroege herstel (van 2006-2010) en de huidige context, vanaf 2011. Landbouwbeleid in Oeganda is door de jaren heen

verschoven naar modernisering en commercialisering als de weg naar voedselzekerheid. Parallel hieraan volg ik de ontwikkeling van het humanitaire regime in Noord-Oeganda, van voedselhulp tot herstel middels zaaigoed, gereedschap en 'zaaigoed-markten' (*seed fairs*) gericht op het opstarten van de voedselproductie, tot de huidige periode waarin de moderniseringsidealen van de overheid worden omarmd. De bevindingen laten zo zien hoe de werkwijzen van humanitaire actoren en de overheid bij elkaar komen, gericht op de modernisering van de landbouw waarbij de vermindering van risico voor boeren geen prioriteit is. Het doel van het landbouwbeleid is veranderd naar economische groei en transformatieprocessen, terwijl sociale, economische en politieke processen, inclusief het conflict, in het noorden tot hoge niveaus van kwetsbaarheid voor voedselonzeekerheid hebben geleid. Dit maakt dat commerciële transformatie slechts een verre mogelijkheid is. Echter, het verschil tussen beleid en realiteit wordt tot op zekere hoogte gecompenseerd door de relaties die lokale dienstverleners en voorlichters opbouwen met de lokale gemeenschap. Zij proberen de verschillende belangen te balanceren om een lokaal sociaal contract te ontwikkelen. Dit hoofdstuk wijst dus zo op de noodzaak om LRRD niet als een eenrichtingsverkeer te zien, waarin noodhulpstrategieën uiteindelijk overgaan in ontwikkeling. Veeleer leidt het tot vraagtekens bij de geschiktheid van deze ontwikkelingsgeoriënteerde processen in het licht van de rurale werkelijkheid.

Nu Noord-Oeganda steeds minder in de noodsituatie verkeert waarin hulporganisaties de belangrijke actoren waren, is het de bedoeling dat lokale districtsoverheden en hun technische afdelingen het van de organisaties overnemen. Hoofdstuk 4 onderzoekt de aard en de dynamiek van de relaties tussen medewerkers van hulporganisaties en lokale ambtenaren. Dit is een hoofdstuk over een belangrijk mechanisme dat hulp- en overheidsorganisaties toepassen om een aantal spanningen op te lossen die ingebed zijn in het discours van LRRD-processen en de verschillen tussen beleid en de werkelijkheid van het noorden. Na hervormingen, privatisering van agrarische diensten en decentralisatie, staat de districtsoverheid voor grote uitdagingen bij het verlenen van diensten. In combinatie met de sterke aanwezigheid van hulporganisaties en de noodzaak voor de verlening van diensten, leidt dit tot de creatie van '*sitting allowances*', 'aanwezigheidsvergoedingen' – financiële regelingen om ambtenaren te betalen voor het verrichten van hun taak. Dit hoofdstuk kijkt naar *sitting allowances* in drie arena's: kwaliteitscontrole van zaaigoed op zaaigoed-markten; vergaderingen en workshops; en agrarische training voor boeren. Het laat zien hoe *sitting allowances* worden gelegitimeerd, georganiseerd en gereguleerd, terwijl ze tegelijkertijd in de schaduw van ontwikkeling blijven. *Sitting allowances* worden in stand gehouden door een veelheid aan belangen, patronage netwerken en gevestigde sociale relaties tussen medewerkers van hulporganisaties en de overheid. Deze institutionele regeling raakt verankerd en beïnvloedt dienstverlening in een groeiende mate. Het hoofdstuk concludeert dat *sitting allowances* deel zijn van bestuur, zoals dit in de postconflict context in de praktijk gevormd wordt.

Hoofdstuk 5 is een direct resultaat van de interactieve vorm van dit proefschrift. Het focust op de wisselwerking tussen hulpinterventies en het leven van alledag van mensen. Het hoofdstuk draagt bij aan het begrijpen van de vraag waarom mensen uit hulpprogramma's stappen. De bewuste programma's boden, via boerenorganisaties, voornamelijk zaaigoed aan (via waardebonnen en geld) in ruil voor een arbeidsbijdrage aan openbare werken. Hulpinterventies ontleen hun vorm vaak aan paradigma's over voedselzekerheid. Het voedselzekerheidsprogramma in de case study is gebaseerd op moderniseringsidealen die beogen de voedselzekerheid van huishoudens te vergroten door een verbeterde productie. Tegelijkertijd volgt het een algemenere trend waarin enkel diegenen die worden gezien als 'bereidwillig', 'capabel', of 'veelbelovend' worden geselecteerd voor deelname in programma's door hun bereidheid om mee te werken aan openbare werken (bijvoorbeeld het herstel van wegen). Echter, het volgen van huishoudens binnen en buiten het programma laat zien dat hulporganisaties die zich richten op 'veelbelovende' mensen weinig waardering en begrip tonen voor de lokale dynamieken van arbeid, herstel en rampenrisico's. De aanpak leidt tot de sociale uitsluiting van kwetsbare groepen. De bevindingen laten zien dat de meerderheid van de bevolking worstelt om de arbeidsvereisten voor de openbare werken in evenwicht te brengen met deelname aan gemeenschapswerk en andere activiteiten gericht op het aanvullen van voedsel tijdens tekorten. Dit gebeurt in een tijd waarin de arbeidsstructuur van huishoudens toch al verandert door postconflictdynamieken waarbij jonge mannen naar de stad vertrekken. De combinatie van arbeidsdynamieken, het risico op weergeerelateerde gevaren, en groepsdynamieken, vormt de mening van mensen over de hulpinterventie. Het resultaat is dat mensen 'stemmen met hun voeten' door uit het programma te stappen. Deze bevindingen wijzen op de noodzaak voor humanitaire organisaties om leerprocessen in te bouwen en zich aan te passen aan de realiteiten van gebieden die worden gekenmerkt door fragiliteit.

Hoofdstuk 6 keert terug bij het alledaagse leven van mensen – waarbij hun bestaansmiddelen als uitgangspunt worden genomen. Het draagt bij aan het begrijpen van de aard van de transitie voor mensen in Noord-Oeganda, niet als een overgang van noodhulp naar herstel en ontwikkeling (LRRD), maar eerder van herstel naar armoede. Na terugkeer uit de kampen, zetten mensen geleidelijk weer de productie op. Tegelijkertijd wordt de diversificatie van bestaansmiddelen cruciaal, zoals het lokale bierbrouwen en kleine handelsactiviteiten. Houtskool branden is een sleutelactiviteit voor het vergroten van vermogen. Voor de mensen die dichtbij de voormalige kampen wonen, zijn deze kampen geïntegreerd in hun bestaansmiddelen, als bronnen van activiteiten die inkomsten genereren. Maar in tegenstelling tot wat meestal wordt aangenomen over vooruitgang na conflict en ondanks verbeteringen en herstel in de eerste stadia van terugkeer, komen de meeste mensen vast te zitten op een verborgen plateau. Structurele veranderingen zoals bevolkingsgroei, bedreigen de belangrijkste hulpbron: land. Het opnieuw opbouwen van een veestapel, die vroeger cruciaal was voor het aanvullen van de

voedselproductie, is moeilijk voor velen. De nieuwe bestaansmiddelen zorgen ook voor generatieverschillen en -conflicten. Dit leidt naar de conclusie dat het leven van alledag en bestaansmiddelen sterk worden beperkt, en dat voor velen, in plaats van een overgang van herstel naar ontwikkeling, de overgang er één is naar armoede.

In het laatste hoofdstuk, hoofdstuk 7, benadruk ik het belang van beleidsprocessen in het vormgeven van ontwikkelingen in het noorden en de ruimte voor manoeuvreren voor humanitaire organisaties en de lokale districtsoverheden. Dit is een belangrijk onderwerp dat in de loop van het onderzoek naar voren kwam, maar in eerste instantie niet was opgenomen in de onderzoeksvraag. Hier worden de bevindingen van het onderzoek gegroepeerd in drie aparte en toch verweven domeinen: lokale mensen en hun respons, het bestuur van agrarische diensten en ontwikkeling, en de humanitaire respons en interventies. Het is in deze drie domeinen dat de vier deelvragen die het onderzoek geleid hebben, worden besproken. Het proefschrift laat de interacties zien tussen de pogingen van mensen om voedselzekerheid te genereren enerzijds, en de relatie met de ontwikkeling van de agrarische afdelingen en diensten van lokale overheden, en met hulpinterventies in het minder fragiel wordende Noord-Oeganda anderzijds. Deze interacties worden gekenmerkt door een transitie waarin drie processen en dynamieken centraal staan.

- Ten eerste is er de rommelige overgang van humanitaire diensten en door de staat geleide 'modernisering' van de markt, dit is een proces waarin het gat tussen beleid en werkelijkheid in het noorden groter wordt. Huidig beleid dringt aan op modernisering, commercialisering en groeimodellen. Zulk beleid neigt ernaar grotere boeren te bevoordelen in plaats van kleinere boeren. Aan de andere kant laat de lokale werkelijkheid zien dat maar weinig mensen passen in deze nieuwe agenda.
- Ten tweede proberen zowel de overheid en humanitaire actoren dit gat tussen beleid en realiteit te overbruggen, door samen te werken. Lokale overheidsactoren proberen ook beter in te spelen op de strijd van mensen in het herstelproces. In grote lijnen komen in dit proces nieuwe institutionele regelingen naar voren, terwijl Noord-Oeganda een arena wordt waarin agrarische diensten en gerelateerde hervormingen de confrontatie aangaan met dynamieken van na het conflict. Ik benadruk ook de noodzaak om agrarische diensten in postconflict contexten als belangrijke arena's te beschouwen waar staat-maatschappij relaties worden onderhandeld.
- Ten derde is het transitieproces er één waarin de meerderheid van de mensen vast zit op een verborgen plateau, waar herstel overgaat in armoede. In plaats van een verbinding tussen Noodhulp, Herstel en Ontwikkeling (LRRD) is er eerder sprake van een verbinding tussen Noodhulp, Herstel en Bittere armoede voor de meerderheid van de mensen.

Na een beschrijving van beperkingen van deze studie, volgt een gedeelte waarin de invloed van de gemaakte methodologische keuzes op het onderzoek wordt belicht. Hierna volgt een gedeelte over de implicaties van deze studie voor de overheid en de medewerkers van hulporganisaties. Het hoofdstuk eindigt met een

oproep om de meest gebruikelijke definitie van voedselzekerheid te herzien en hierin op te nemen dat mensen ook politieke ruimte nodig hebben om hun toegang tot voedsel zeker te stellen.

Other outputs from the research

- Video/ Film based on ZOA food security programme in Pader, in Northern Uganda. Premiered on 16th April at Humanity House, The Hague, the Netherlands.
- Wairimu, W.W. (forthcoming) Food insecurity and agricultural rehabilitation in post conflict Northern Uganda: In Christoplos, I. and Pain, A. (Eds) New Challenges to Food Security. Routledge.
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About the Author

Winnie Wangari Wairimu was born in Nairobi, Kenya in 1981. After completing high school, she joined Kenyatta University in Nairobi and graduated in 2005 with a Bachelor degree in Environmental Studies and Community Development.

Winnie joined the International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI) in 2005. Working as a research assistant and involved in several programmes that focused on the Maasai community, she developed a keen interest in development issues. In 2006 she received a WUR scholarship from Wageningen University, The Netherlands to undertake a Master of Science in International Development Studies. She specialised in Rural Development Sociology and undertook a minor specialisation in Disaster and Conflict Studies. With a thesis titled 'Land, Mobility and Redesigned lifestyles: a study of Maasai pastoralists of South-Central Kenya', she graduated in 2008 (cum laude).

In April 2009, Winnie was awarded a scholarship by the Dutch Relief and Recovery Agency - ZOA to pursue her PhD studies under the Special Chair Humanitarian Aid and Reconstruction group. This was under the International Development Academy (IS Academy) on Human security in Fragile States programme – a collaborative programme between the Dutch NGO community and the Stabilisation and Humanitarian Aid (DSH) department of the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Meanwhile, Winnie was involved in a number of key assignments in research and consultancy, advisory work, monitoring and evaluation and policy development in fragile and post-conflict situations. She participated in the development of ZOA's food security policy. At the request of the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands (EKN) in Kampala, in 2010, she coordinated and undertook a review and assessment of projects in the Education and Justice, Law and Order Sector involving the relevant ministries, NGOs, CBOs and over nine district governments in northern Uganda. In the same year, she participated in the programme evaluation of the ZOA Pader programme and in 2012 she was contracted by the African Studies Centre, Leiden for a participatory research and assessment of economic development in northern Uganda for a Dutch social impact investment fund that supports sustainable economic and private sector development in fragile and conflict affected societies in East Africa.

Currently, Winnie works as an independent consultant based in Nairobi even as she pursues her research interests in governance and public services, food security, livelihoods and economic development, humanitarian aid and development and state-society relations.

Completed Training and Supervision Plan
Winnie Wangari Wairimu
Wageningen School of Social Sciences (WASS)



Wageningen School
of Social Sciences

Name of the learning activity	Department/Institute	Year	ECTS*
A) Project related competences			
Humanitarian Aid and Reconstruction (RDS34806)	WUR	2009	4
IS Academy orientation week and courses	Disaster Studies, WUR	2009	2
Organising workshop 'Food security in a transition context, northern Uganda'	Disaster Studies, WUR/ZOA Uganda	2012	2
Organised and facilitated sandwich sessions at ZOA Netherlands, a shared learning workshop with ZOA Congo and South Sudan, Presentation: ZOA bi-annual Inter Regional meeting	ZOA Netherlands/ZOA South Sudan	2010-2014	4
Preparation and attendance of IS Academy seminars	Disaster Studies, WUR	2009/2010	3
B) General research related competences			
CERES Orientation	CERES	2007	3
CERES presentation tutorials	CERES	2007	5.5
A Practical course on the methodology of fieldwork	CERES	2009	2
Qualitative data analysis for development research	CERES	2009	1
Qualitative Data Analysis: Procedures and Strategies	CERES	2011	4
'Interactions between locals recovery and intervener programs in the Acholi region of northern Uganda'	13 th conference of the International Association for the Study of Forced Migration, Kampala, Uganda	2011	2
'Food security and agricultural service provision in post-conflict northern Uganda	3 rd World Conference on Humanitarian studies, Istanbul, Turkey	2013	2
Presentation of poster : Beyond transition: food security and agricultural rehabilitation in Pader district, North Uganda'	WASS Midterm Review, WUR	2012	1
'Interactive research' lecture	Sociology of Development and Change (SDC), WUR	2012, 2013	1
'From food aid to food security' lecture	Sociology of Development and Change (SDC), WUR	2013	1
Security, field safety and aggression training for researchers	Clarity UK, Centre for Safety and Development	2013	1
C) Career related competences/personal development			
Improve your writing	Language Centre, WUR	2012	1
Information Literacy	Library, WUR	2009	0.6
Endnote Advanced	Library, WUR	2009	0.3
Supervising Msc student (Thesis)	Sociology of Development and Change (SDC), WUR	2013 - 2014	1
Total			41.4

*One credit according to ECTS is on average equivalent to 28 hours of study load

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