

From the Village to Entebbe: The Acholi of Northern Uganda and the Politics of Identity, 1950-1985.

Submitted by Elizabeth Laruni to the University of Exeter as a thesis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in History, February 2014. This thesis is available for Library use on the understanding that it is copyright material and that no quotation from the thesis may be published without proper acknowledgement.

I certify that all material in this thesis which is not my own work has been identified and that no material has previously been submitted and approved for the award of a degree by this or any other University.

Elizabeth Laruni

Abstract

The aim of this thesis will be to decipher why Acholi ethnic identity remained such a critical political tool in late and post-colonial Uganda, from 1950-1985, just before the outbreak of civil war in 1986. The thesis will centre not on the inevitability of the war, but will instead focus on the political processes that preceded it. It will seek fill a gap in a historiography of a people whose contribution to the Ugandan nation state goes beyond that of collective suffering, violence, paramilitary warfare and ethnic conflict. To effectively do this there will be an assessment of how Acholi gender, class and social hierarchies, religious identities, regional identifications and the much-touted 'martial' identity have been utilised internally and externally to politically reinforce Acholi ethnicity in late-colonial and post-colonial Uganda.

Ugandan political engagement has continually allowed the politics of ethnicity to take a centre stage. Even in the present day, Uganda remains ethnically and regionally divided between the 'North' and the 'South'. Bantu-speaking ethnic groups in the southern, central and western Uganda, including the Baganda, Basoga, Bagisu, Banyoro, Batoro, and Banyankole, dominate the South. The North, which is home to the Nilotic groups, encompasses the Acholi, Lango, Madi, Alur, Iteso, and the Karamojong peoples. Historically, the political and ethnic divisions between the peoples of Northern and Southern Uganda have contributed to the country's contentious post-colonial history. This thesis will argue that political hostilities between the peoples of the two regions were a by-product of the economic and political policies of the colonial government and the administrations that followed. Regional demarcations, sanctioned by the British and adopted by post-colonial regimes, reinforced strong ethnically divided local governments founded on pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial Acholi socio-political institutions. Economic underdevelopment played a large part in fostering political tensions between Northern and Southern Uganda and served as useful tool for Acholi power brokers to negotiate for political and economic capital with the state, by utilising the politics of regional differentiation through the 'Northern identity.' Consequently, with onset of decolonisation Ugandan

'nationalism' became a localised movement driven by ethnically homogenous local governments and kingdoms.

For the Acholi ethnic group, the most visible of their colonial and post-colonial identities has been that of the 'martial race'. Acholi soldiers joined the army largely as a means to access job opportunities, and by doing so they became the representatives of state coercion and violence. Yet those that joined did not do so to deliberately suppress other ethnic groups: rather employment opportunities were limited in the locality and the army corps provided access to economic and social mobility. Despite being the most visible identity nationally, the 'martial identity' has not been the most dominant locally, or even the driving force within the Acholi polity in the last thirty-five years. Acholi late-colonial and post-colonial history has been informed by the historical processes that have shaped the relationship between the Acholi 'moral ethnicity' and 'political tribalism'. The latter provided an opportunity for politically minded Acholi to participate within national politics, yet the former kept them tied to the locality. As the political representation of the Acholi outside the region 'political tribalism' was combative, utilising religious, clan, and regional identities to make demands against the state. The prominence of ethnopolitics within national politics ensured that within the repertoire of the Acholi 'cultural tool kit', ethnopolitics remained the dominant tool for external political engagement.

Table of Contents

Abstract	2
Abbreviations	6
Acknowledgements	9
Chapter 1: INTRODUCTION	
1.0. Aim	10
1.1. Ethnicity and Politics in Post-Colonial Uganda	14
1.2. Definitions and Terminology.....	37
1.3. A Note on the Archives and Sources	48
1.4. War, Collective Memories and Oral Histories	50
1.5. Interview Samples and Methodology	61
1.6. Structure.....	64
Chapter 2.0. Indirect Rule in Acholi	66
2.1. Acholi Challenges to Indirect Rule	72
2.2. Christian Missionaries in Acholi	78
2.3. The Colonial Market Economy and the Birth of the <i>Ocols</i>	83
Conclusion	92
Chapter 3: Decolonisation and the Acholi, 1950-1962	
3.0. Using the Language that they taught us?	95
3.1. Regionalism and the 'Northern Identity'	97
3.2. Clan Politics and the Extension of Chiefly Authority	113
3.3. The <i>Ocols</i> : Party Politics and the Fight for the Locality.....	128
3.4. The Chiefs Fight Back: The Acholi and 'Laloyo Maber'	137
3.5. Religious Politics and the <i>Ocols</i>	142
3.6. Domesticity as an Ethnopolitical Factor	152
Conclusion	158
Chapter 4: 'Uniting' the Nation, 1962-1971	
4.0. Independence, the 'Martial' Identity and Myth of Ugandan Nationalism 1962- 1971	160
4.1. Uniting the 'Northerners': The Battle for the Centre	168
4.2. Politics of the Belly: The Acholi Local Government.....	176
4.3. Acholi Ethnonationalism: Fragmenting the 'Northern Identity':	183
Conclusion	193
Chapter 5.0. Acholi in the 1970s: <i>The Politics of Survival?</i>	195
5.1. The fall of the <i>Ocols</i>	197
5.2. State Surveillance and the Rule of Fear	206
5.3. The Militarisation and Rise the Chiefs.....	216
5.4. The Internal Adjustment to Dictatorship.....	222
5.5. Religious Identities as an Avenue for Political Engagement.....	231
5.6. Moving Closer to the Source of Power: Individual versus Collective Agency.... ..	239
Conclusion... ..	249
Chapter 6: Uganda After Amin: The Fight for Leadership	
6.0: A State in Turmoil: 1979-1980	252
6.1. Coup d'état Politics	253
6.2. Civil Disobedience and the Continued Militarisation of Acholi	259
6.3. Culture and Party Politics: The <i>Ocols</i> versus the 'Elders'	277
6.4. Party Politics the <i>Ocols</i> and Obote II	284
Conclusion... ..	295

CONCLUSION	297
Appendix: Formal and Informal Interviews	308
Glossary	310
Bibliography	312
Tables	
1. Uganda Political Divisions and Population	82
2. Central Government Expenditure Law and Order/Defence 1947-61	108
4. ADA Capital Expenditure Approved Estimates 1965.	179
Maps	
1. Ethnic Groups in Uganda	18
3. Eastern and Western Acholi Districts	146
Images	
1. Saza (County) Chief's Uniform 1977	218
2. Presidents of Uganda 1979-1986	257

Abbreviations

Archives

BUL/CMS	Birmingham University Library, CMS Archives, UK
GDA	Gulu District Archive, Gulu
KDA	Kitgum District Archive, Kitgum
MUL/AS	Makerere University Library/Africana Section, Kampala
RCA	Rubaga Cathedral Archive, Kampala
TNA	The National Archives, Kew, London
UCU	Uganda Christian University/ CMS Archive, Mukono
UNA/E	Uganda National Archive, Entebbe

Main Text

ACA	Acholi Cultural Association (Ker-Kwaro Acholi, KKA)
ADA	Acholi District Administration
AUWL	African Uganda Women's League
ALC	Acholi Local Council
ALG	Acholi Local Government
BP	Bataka Party
CP	Conservative Party
CMS	Church Missionary Society (Anglican)
DC	District Commissioner
DP	Democratic Party
EARC	East African Royal Commission
FPAU	Family Planning Association of Uganda
FRONASA	Front for National Salvation

GSU	General Service Unit
HSM	Holy Spirit Movement
ICC	International Criminal Court
IMF	International Monetary Fund
KAR	King's African Rifles
KY	Kabaka Yekka Party (Kabaka only)
LC	Legislative Council
LRA	Lord's Resistance Army
NAC	Native Anglican Church
NCC	National Consultative Council
NGO	Non-Government Organisation
NLP	The National Liberation Party
NUYO	National Union of Youth Organisation
NRM/A	National Resistance Movement/Army
PCR	Post-Conflict Reconstruction
PP	Progressive Party
PSU	Public Safety Unit
RC	Resistance Council
SAP	Structural Adjustment Programme
SFU	Special Force Unit
SRB	State Research Bureau
VF	Verona Fathers (Italian Catholic Missionary)
UAFU	Uganda Africa Farmer's Union
UDC	Uganda Development Council
ULP	Uganda Labour Party

UPC	Uganda People's Congress
UPDF	Uganda People's Defence Force
UPM	Uganda Patriotic Movement
UN	United Nations
UNRF	Uganda National Rescue Front
UNM	Uganda Nationalist Movement
UNC	Uganda National Congress
UNLF/A	Uganda National Liberation Front/Army
UTA	Uganda Teachers' Association
WF	White Fathers (French Catholic Missionary)
YAA	Young Acholi Association
YBA	Young Baganda Association
YFU	Young Farmers' Union
YLA	Young Lango Association
YWCA	Young Women's Christian Association

Acknowledgements

Firstly, I would like to express my thanks and appreciation to Dr Stacey Hynd for her support and encouragement during the past three years. I could not have asked for a more diligent supervisor. Without her help this project could not have been completed. I would also like to extend my appreciation to Professor Martin Thomas for his words of encouragement and advice in his role as my second supervisor. Further thanks are extended to the Department of History at the University of Exeter and the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) for their financial support.

I would also like to thank the staff at the Uganda National Archive in Entebbe, CMS archives in Mukono (Uganda) and Birmingham University, Makerere University Library, British National Archives in Kew, and the district archives in Gulu and Kitgum in Northern Uganda. To all the interviewees in Uganda and London who gave up their time to talk to me, thank you for your candor and hospitality.

In Uganda, I would like to thank Jimmy Odong Fred for his friendship and help as my research assistant, Professor Ronald Atkinson for his encouragement and Professor Ayesha Nibbe for her friendship. Ayesha our lively conversations in Gulu kept me sane!

Thank you to Rhys, Vero, Mithat, Dylan, Tine, Monica, Immy and mum for your continued moral and academic support.

Finally, thank you Daniel for all your love and support. Without your patience and encouragement this project could not have been completed.

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Aim

The aim of this thesis will be to decipher why Acholi ethnic identity remained such a salient political tool in late and post-colonial Uganda. It will do so by discerning how Acholi traditions, social structures and cultural identities have been used as political tools to engage with the Ugandan state from 1950-1985. To effectively analyze this centre-periphery relationship, this thesis will assess how Acholi gender and social hierarchies, religious and regional identifications and the much-touted 'martial' identity have been negotiated internally within the geographical and political boundary of Acholi, and externally within the political boundary of the Ugandan state. More significantly, it will assess whether these particular identity markers, served to reinforce or in fact challenge the notion of a unified Acholi ethnic identity, both internally and externally.

By looking specifically at centre-periphery politics in Uganda, this research will challenge previous analysis offered by scholars such as Mahmood Mamdani who argued that the colonial legacy of state bifurcation between rural and urban, and 'citizen' and 'subject', cumulated in post-colonial decentralised despotic authority in the rural locality.¹ In the case of the Acholi of northern Uganda, this analysis obscures a more complex history of political engagement between the Ugandan political centre and the locality. Furthermore, whereas Mamdani utilised a comparative approach of urban 'citizens' and rural 'subjects', with specific focus on South Africa and western Uganda, this thesis will focus on one local population within the Ugandan state. This will allow for a more in-depth analysis of centre-periphery political engagement in Uganda. This research will also expand chronologically and analytically on previous works on Acholi political history by Cherry Gertzel and Colin Leys.² Whereas these scholars concentrated primarily on local party

¹ M. Mamdani, *Citizen and Subject: Contemporary Africa and the Legacy of Late Colonialism* (London: James Currey, 1996).

² See: C. Leys, *Politicians and Policies: An Essay on Politics in Acholi, Uganda, 1962-65*, (Nairobi: East African Publishing House, 1967); C. Gertzel, 'Party and Locality in northern

politics and politicians in Acholi from 1945-1965 within a wider national context, this research will instead seek to incorporate the political agency of the constituents which these local politicians purported to represent. Thus, the following chapters will therefore look at the vertical relationship between 'high' and 'low' politics and the horizontal structures of power that dictated the patron-client network among Acholi communities from 1950 to 1985.

This approach will allow for a more in-depth analysis of a local political history, which will show that, among the Acholi at least, a system of decentralised despotic authority could not be effectively imposed within the locality. This was primarily because state sponsored local political elites and the Ugandan central government did not have the resources to unilaterally assert political dominance within Acholi. Consequently, as apposed to highlighting the authority of state sponsored 'citizens', the decentralised system of governance adopted in late colonial and post-colonial Ugandan state, emerged as a result of the states' weakness and inability to assert unilateral political and administrative control over the rural locality. In Acholi, this weakness opened various avenues among local power contenders to engage with and state sponsored authorities in an effort pursue individual and/or collective political goals.

Moreover, among Acholi 'subjects', a process of enabling the 'citizens' through the reciprocity of privilege can also be observed, where this demographic sought to utilise whatever avenues available to gain access to the world of the established local power-brokers. This meant that whilst the state continually failed to invest in the local population, Acholi 'subjects' continued to believe in the possibility of state power to affect positive change in their lives. Yet in order to retain their scarcity value and maintain their access to state resources, local and national political elites reinforced a system of patronage and clientelism. Whilst on one hand they dutifully paid lip service to calls for community development and political empowerment of their constituents, in reality, they continued to relish in the 'politics of the belly.' Arguably, on economic and political terms, this interplay inevitably benefitted the patrons the most. However, their dependence on local voters to gain

political legitimacy locally and nationally, created a symbiotic relationship between the centre and periphery placing limits on either group gaining concrete dominance of the other. Consequently, as apposed to being simply a sphere where local individuals and groups retreated from state intrusion, the Acholi locality provided a crucial socio-political platform from which local power contenders could engage with state authority.

However, given this often paradoxical political relationship in the locality, the external face presented by the Acholi, continued to be one of ethnic unity. This research will further argue that the salience of ethnopolitics within the Ugandan post-colonial state was as a result of colonial legacies embedded within post-colonial political and social structures of power, which continued to emphasize the importance of the 'tribe', locality, and region. After independence, the confrontation between ethnically homogenous local governments, and the push for political centralisation under the premise of nation-building, resulted in religious, tribal and regional factionalism, as successive governments sought political and military allegiances from their respective ethnic groups. This factionalism was further emphasised with the continuation of the colonial policy of economically underdeveloping one region at the expense of another. Consequently, in the aftermath of independence, the peoples of Acholi and the northern districts continued to juxtapose their socio-economic situation vis-à-vis their more economically developed southern counterparts, by utilising the 'victim identity'. This victimisation discourse was effectively fed through the lens of political tribalism, as Acholi political elites sought to claim their share of the 'national cake' by emphasising ethnicity and regional allegiances as the key tool for political engagement with central government. Furthermore, within the locality, economic underdevelopment stunted the emergence of any growth of organised labour movements that could be channelled externally through national party political allegiances. This meant that Acholi ethnic identity emerged as the most effective tool to make collective political demands against the state. All these factors ensured that national politics in post-independence remained structured along regional and ethnic lines.

However, within Acholi intra-group interactions and local politics, chronic economic underdevelopment also meant that more fragmented, clan,

religious, and party political identities came to the forefront, as the internal competition for economic and political resources ensued. This ensured that Acholi remained an ethnically homogenous yet socially and politically divided locality. Internal political competition pitted local competitors against each other, drawing in 'traditionalists' 'modernists', young and old, with each faction (re)imagining and politicising different aspects of Acholi cultural 'traditions' to solidify their political, economic and social positions within the locality and beyond. This ensured that, internally at least, the notion of a unified, politically coherent Acholi ethnic identity remained a fallacy. Yet given that ethnopolitics was so intrinsically entrenched with the Ugandan postcolonial state, even among these competing local actors, this fallacy had to be maintained to retain the connection with the political centre and to compete with regional and ethnic 'outsiders' particularly during times of overt political instability. In short, fragmented localised political grievances, could only gain legitimacy and authority externally if channelled through the more unifying the lens of ethnopolitics. Consequently, late colonial and post-independence discourses of ethnopolitics in the locality emerged through the peoples of Acholi's long-term engagement with the Ugandan state.

Engaging with these themes and time frame within a doctoral thesis is undoubtedly ambitious. Moreover, the concepts that will be discussed here offer little sympathy to linear narratives. Acholi history, much like the history of the Ugandan post-colonial state, is complex and challenging. This history does not present a single story or argument. Instead what we have are layers of narratives, and interpretations that often contradict each other. As Mbembe discusses more generally, 'African social formations are not necessarily converging towards a single point, trend, or cycle. They harbour the possibility of a variety of trajectories, neither convergent nor divergent, but interlocked, paradoxical.'³ More importantly, by using obdurate theories to try and decipher the 'African trajectory' scholars risk presenting a history of perpetual instability, violent conflicts and political failure, feeding in the inherent view of Africa as the modern world's 'other', rather than trying to understand what guides internal political engagement within African societies. Within this

³ A. Mbembe, *On the Postcolony* (California: University of California Press, 2001), 16.

assessment, Charles Anderson's work on 'power contenders' in Latin America holds clear commonalities to the Ugandan nation state. Anderson argues that 'rather than viewing Latin American politics as unpredictable and unstable, analysis should attempt to identify the persistent stable patterns.' By doing so, one is able to clearly see how a variety of techniques are utilised to mobilise power, all of which are legitimate. These varieties and techniques can either be 'the power contenders' that challenge each other for political superiority, or the means in which power is negotiated. They could include, but are not limited to military rule, the Church, oligarchic authority, or voter appeal.⁴ Whilst it could be argued that pairing this historiography with elusive concepts such as 'ethnicity' and 'identity' only hinders the task further, this is in fact not the case. The malleability of 'ethnicity' and 'identity' actually allow for a more in-depth understanding of the time period, giving voice to various identity markers and 'power contenders.' In this way, the archival and oral sources can be given room to speak and tell their stories.

1.1. Ethnicity and Politics in Post-Colonial Uganda.

The Acholi (Acoli⁵) people are "a martial race" whose natural instincts are skewed towards war-like activities.⁶

On 17 February 2011 Ugandans went to the ballot box to cast their vote in the country's second multi-party presidential election since 1980. Of the eight candidates that contested against the incumbent National Resistance Movement (NRM) led by Yoweri Museveni, two, Norbert Mao and Olara Otunnu were Acholi. Despite opinion polls consistently placing Museveni ahead, among the Acholi there was a feeling of genuine optimism that there

⁴ C.W. Anderson, 'Towards a Theory of Latin American Politics', *The Graduate Centre For Latin American Studies*, Vanderbilt University, Occasional Paper No.2 (1964), 1-8; J. Wiarda and M. M. Mott, (eds.) *Politics and Social Change in Latin America: Still a Distinct Tradition?* (Westport Connecticut: Praeger Publishers, 2003).

⁵ There is no 'h' in the Acholi language and as such the 'c' is pronounced 'ch' as in the English *church*. Acholi language purists would not then spell 'Acholi' with an 'h', as this is purely a modification used to aid with pronunciation, and for the purpose of this paper it will be used for that reason.

⁶ Sam Olara, 'President Yoweri Museveni on the Acholi', *The Independent*, 25 January 2011.

could be change after twenty-four years of NRM rule. Campaign slogans such as 'We must take our country back' from Uganda People's Congress (UPC) representative Olara Otunnu, and 'A new leader. A new beginning,' from Democratic Party (DP) representative Norbert Mao, were prominent in the Ugandan media.⁷ Whilst on the surface both candidates claimed that they were primarily concerned with putting an end to what they considered to be the corrupt government of the NRM, closer analysis immediately brings to light the ethnic and political tensions that have for so long characterised politics in Uganda.

Ugandan political engagement has continually allowed the politics of ethnicity to take a centre stage. Even in the present day, Uganda remains ethnically and regionally divided between the 'North' and the 'South'. Bantu-speaking ethnic groups in the southern, central and western Uganda, including the Baganda, Basoga, Bagisu, Banyoro, Batoro, and Banyankole, dominate the South. The North, which is home to the Nilotic groups, encompasses the Acholi, Lango, Madi, Alur, Iteso, and the Karamojong peoples.⁸ For the Acholi, and indeed other ethnic groups in Uganda, ethnic identities have historically proven to be a powerful political commodity. Both Milton Obote and General Idi Amin played upon ethnic divisions for political gain, with Obote, of Lango ethnicity, targeting the previously dominant Baganda Kingdom from 1966-67, while Amin's regime engaged in massacres of the Acholi and Lango peoples.⁹ After his return to power in 1980, Obote continued the same trend of his first presidency by ensuring that Northerners from Acholi and Lango dominated the army corps, to contend with military and political threats to his administration.¹⁰

⁷ Edris Kiggundu, 'Otunnu unveils campaign team', *The Observer*, 31 January 2010; Micheal Ssali, 'Election special: "I want a new beginning", Mao on the future', *Daily Monitor*, 17 January 2011.

⁸ F. K. Girling, *The Acholi of Uganda*, Colonial Office (London: HMSO, 1960), 1: Amuru was only established in 2006 and until then was part of Gulu district.

⁹ J. Okuku, *Ethnicity, State Power and the Democratisation Process in Uganda* (Uppsala: Nordic African Institute, 2002).

¹⁰ Y. Olum, *Multiparty Politics in Uganda* (Kampala, Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung (KAS), 2011, 64.

The clearest example of the strategic use of ethnic cleavages in the 2011 election campaign can be found in an interview with the DP candidate Norbert Mao in January 2011. Listing Mao's ethnic origins - his father being an Acholi and his mother a Munyankole - the interviewer asked which region was giving Mao the most support. Mao replied, 'it may surprise you that my base is not primarily ethnic. My base is generational; my base is a demographic base.' He then added, 'the other base is that I have always been in the North. The North identifies with me and they know that no one else cares about peace and reconstruction than me.'¹¹ The character of Ugandan politics is never more apparent than in this statement. Despite his protestation, Mao's base *is* primarily ethnic. He stood apart as the most popular candidate among the Acholi in Northern Uganda and it is this ethnic demographic that he has continually courted during the election campaign. It is also important to point out that in every single election campaign, Museveni, a Munyankole from Ntungamo district in the South, has never won a majority in the Acholi districts and had consistently performed poorly in the region.

The outbreak of the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) conflict in 1987 instigated what former United Nations (UN) Undersecretary-General Jan Egeland described in 2004 as one of the 'biggest neglected humanitarian emergencies in the world.'¹² The war with the LRA that plagued Northern Uganda for well over two decades is one of the reasons why the current President is so unpopular in the region. The conflict has over the years resulted in the internal displacement of around two million civilians and around 60,000 children being kidnapped by the LRA.¹³ There are no official figures for the total death toll, but it is estimated that around 100,000 people have been killed as a direct result of the war, with tens of thousands also perishing in

¹¹ Michael Ssali, 'I want a new beginning - Mao on the future', *Daily Monitor*, 17 January 2011.

¹² Jeevan Vasagar, 'A litany of horrors', *The Guardian*, 2 November 2004; J. Seaton, 'The New Ethnic Wars and the Media' in T. Allen, and J. Seaton (eds.), *The Media of Conflict: War Reporting and Representations of Ethnic Violence* (London: Zed Books, 1999), 43-63.

¹³ T. Allen, *Trial Justice*; Mike Thomson, 'Who can stop the LRA?', 16 February 2011. *BBC World News*, http://news.bbc.co.uk/today/hi/today/newsid_9397000/9397111.stm, [Accessed. 30. September 2013].

government IDP camps from disease and malnutrition.¹⁴ Numerous accusations of brutality by NRA soldiers against Acholi civilians during the conflict have been levied against the government, leading many Acholi to believe that rather than helping to restore peace in the Acholi communities, the NRM's motives were more concerned with eradicating them all together.¹⁵ It is perhaps not surprising that in describing the government's policies in the region politicians repeatedly refer to Museveni's statements likening the Acholi to grasshoppers who were trapped in a bottle 'in which they will eat each other before they find their way out', and of the Acholi as 'a martial race whose natural instincts are skewered towards war-like activities.'¹⁶ While these statements have never been documented through a credible source, nor has the President ever publically acknowledged making them, their infamy points to the hostile relationship between the NRM regime and the peoples of Acholi.

On the other hand, Ugandans who adhere to this view of the Acholi as warmongers highlight the brutality of the LRA; a group formed in Northern Uganda whose primary recruits have been Acholi, including the leader Joseph Kony.

¹⁴ Will Ross, Forgiveness for Uganda's former rebels, *BBC News*.

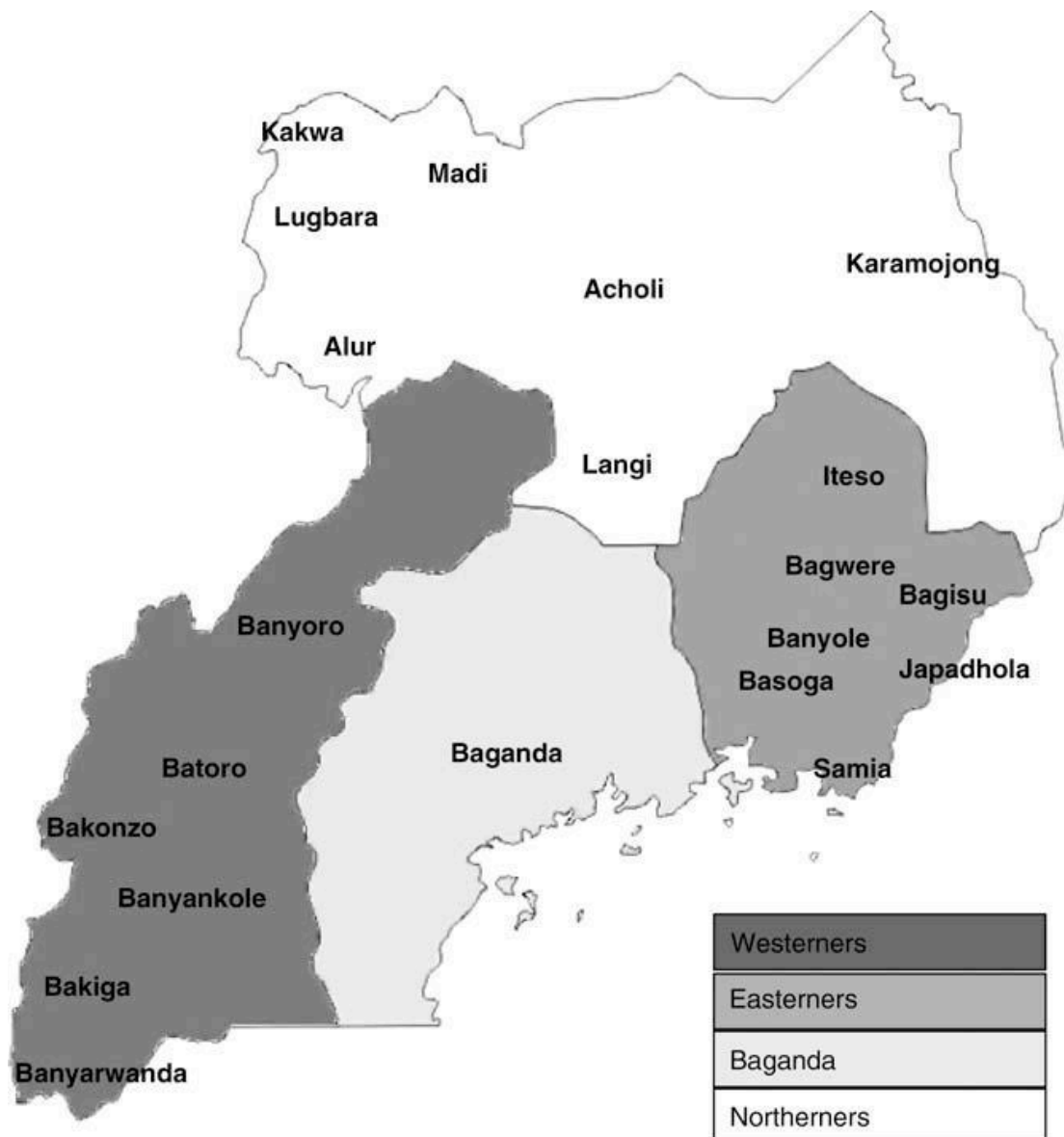
http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/programmes/from_our_own_correspondent/3951277.stm

[Accessed. 30. September 2013]. This estimate is for the period between 1987 and 2004.

¹⁵ A. Branch, 'Neither Peace nor Justice: Political Violence and the Peasantry in Northern Uganda,' 1986-1998, *African Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 8, No. 2 (2005) 3; Alfred Nyongesa Wandera, 'Otunnu 'Unleashes Dossier On Alleged Acholi Genocide', *Daily Monitor*, 5 January 2011.

¹⁶ Finnström, *Living With Bad Surroundings Acholi*, 147; Sam Olara, 'Politics of Acholi Marginalisation is not a Myth', *The Independent*, 25 January 2011

http://www.independent.co.ug/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=3847:politics-of-acholi-marginalisation-is-not-a-myth&catid=112:election-watch&Itemid=370 [Accessed 1 February 2011].



Map 1: Ethnic Groups in Uganda. Source: S. Lindemann, Increased Power sharing in Museveni's Uganda has led to the decline of civil wars, *New LSE Research*.¹⁷

The view is taken that if the Acholi are capable of committing such atrocities against their own people, they must be inherently violent and war-like by nature. Others point to events in the Luwero District seventy-five kilometres north of Kampala, which was the scene for the so-called 'war in the

¹⁷ Map referenced from Stefan Lindemann, 'Increased Power sharing in Museveni's Uganda has led to the decline of civil wars', *New LSE Research*, <http://blogs.lse.ac.uk/africaatlse/2011/09/19/new-lse-research-increased-territorial-power-sharing-in-museveni%E2%80%99s-uganda-has-led-to-the-decline-of-civil-wars/> [Accessed 25 September 2013].

bush' between Museveni's NRA and Obote's Ugandan National Liberation Army (UNLA).¹⁸ The role that Acholi soldiers, who were disproportionately overrepresented in the UNLA, played during the guerrilla war still resonates today. UNLA recruits removed around 750, 000 civilians from the Luwero district to specially created refugee camps, in an effort to eliminate Museveni's support base. Those who did not enter the camps were automatically presumed to be NRA guerrillas and faced violent reprisals from the UNLA. The 'Luwero Triangle', as it became known, is to this day synonymous with large-scale human rights abuses including rape, torture and mass executions. Following the victory of the NRA it was the Acholi who were seen as the main perpetrators of the atrocities particularly by Museveni's supporters in Uganda.¹⁹

However, depictions of the Acholi as war-like outsiders are not new construct. These images are the result of a historical process steeped in colonial and post-colonial political structures, economic underdevelopment, and autocratic leadership, channelled through the politics of ethnic differentiation.

Ethnic identities were often highly politicised by colonial administrations, which followed a policy of 'divide and rule', whereby some groups were favoured and given access to greater political and economic power than others. The British tended to characterise different groups according to racial characteristics, treating some (the Hausa in West Africa, the Acholi in East Africa) as the 'martial races'. The favoured groups, such as the Buganda, typically had greater access to opportunities in education and positions in the colonial administration, whilst the martial races were treated as sources of recruitment for the military- a dichotomy that has continued well into the post-colonial period.²⁰

¹⁸ O. O. Amaza, *Museveni's Long March from Guerrilla to Statesman* (Kampala: Fountain Publishers, 1998).

¹⁹ C. Dolan, *Social Torture: The Case of Northern Uganda*, 235; I. Leggett, *Uganda* (Kampala: Fountain Publishers, 2001).

²⁰ D. Beswick and P. Jackson, *Conflict, Security and Development: An Introduction* (London and New York: Routledge, 2001), 48. Also see; T. Parsons, *The African rank-and-file: Social Implications of Colonial Military Service in the King's African Rifles, 1902-1964* (Portsmouth: Heinemann, 1999), 53-54.

The story of post-independence Uganda and the Acholi is not unique within African post-colonial discourse as it contains familiar elements which can be seen throughout sub-Saharan Africa. Conflicts in Liberia, Sierra Leone, Rwanda and Nigeria, have been explained along ethnic lines by the international media.²¹ These protracted, highly violent conflicts – often involving young combatants and resulting in gross humanitarian abuses – have since come to define the peoples of sub-Saharan, particularly to external observers.²² Yet immediately after independence, Uganda appeared to have a promising future with its growing economy and relative political stability. Independence was embraced by Ugandan civil society with the country's first democratic elections to the National Assembly drawing in three quarters of the population.²³ Decolonisation was to be the era that would bring an end to the factionalism of tribalism and give Africans a new national identity, setting them on the way to modernisation.²⁴ Ugandan politicians propagated the rhetoric of democratisation, detribalisation and modernisation to their newly independent constituents urging them to believe that the post-colonial Ugandan nation state would no longer be about the 'tribe' but about economic development and the 'nation'.²⁵ They were encouraged by international political analysts and academics who. Using theories of development and modernisation, argued that there was a clear path to economic and political development-driven through the mechanisms of capitalism, which all countries followed-and if Africa were placed on that path, it would inevitably develop or 'catch up' to the West.²⁶

The counter-argument against such development and modernisation theories came from African writers such as Franz Fanon who placed Africans squarely within the structures of global politics. Africans were urged them to

²¹ Allen, 'The New Ethnic Wars and the Media'.

²² M. Kaldor, *New and Old Wars: Organised Violence in a Global Era* (Cambridge: Polity, 1999).

²³ J. Carter, 'Independence for Uganda.' *The World Today*, Vol. 18, No. 9 (1962), 375

²⁴ B. Berman, D. Eyoh, W. Kymlicka, (eds.) *Ethnicity and Democracy in Africa* (Oxford: James Currey, 2004), 8.

²⁵ Olum, *Reality Check: Multiparty Politics in Uganda*.

²⁶ P. Chabal, *Africa: The Politics of Suffering and Smiling* (London: Zed Books, 2009), 4.

tear off the constraints of colonialism and look to the lumpen-proletariat for the inspiration to find an *African* resolution for Africa's political, economic and cultural reality that would not emulate their colonisers.²⁷ This assessment fed into the neo-colonialism school of thought, which looked at decolonisation simply as a Western process of informal control of African states by multinational elites. The argument was extended by Basil Davidson and Crawford Young, who argued that despite the enthusiastic drive for reinvention by new 'post-colonial' states, they had in fact inherited not only colonial structures, 'but also its routines, practices and its more normative theories of governance' with Davidson observing that although 'the coinage may have changed, the currency was still the same.'²⁸ The colonial 'coinage' argument has its merit, particularly when viewing Africa's colonial and post-colonial history. The British system of 'indirect rule' had emphasised strong, ethnically divided local governments at the district level, and after independence these local actors and institutions needed to be centralised if the process of de-tribalisation was to be a success. However, with the onset of the nationalism project, post-colonial African states instead became embroiled in protracted and violent sectarian conflicts often fought along ethnic lines.²⁹ Ethnic conflict in post-independence Africa has been attributed, in part, to the colonial tribalisation of indigenous pre-colonial cultural groups, cumulating in an ethno-structured system of governance, which remained embedded within the post-colonial state.³⁰ However, as Martin Doornbos argues, ethnic conflict in Africa is not as result of the political expression of traditional distinctiveness vis-à-vis technologically and culturally homogenising

²⁷ F. Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth* (London: Penguin Books, 1990).

²⁸ C. Young, *The African Colonial State in Comparative Perspective* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994), 283-284; B. Davidson, *The Black Man's Burden: Africa and the Curse of the Nation-state* (London: James Currey, 1992).

²⁹ L. A. Jinadu, 'Explaining and Managing Ethnic Conflict In Africa: Towards a Cultural Theory of Democracy', Claude Ake Memorial Papers No. 1, *The Nordic African Institute*, Uppsala University, (2007), 8-9.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 10.

forces', it is instead the articulation of social, economic and political inequalities unique to each post-colonial African state.³¹

More recently, Daniel Posner traced the impact of recurrent trends of multi-party and single party rule in Africa, in view of why certain ethnic cleavages are emphasised during regime change. Posner argues that political competition within multiparty settings in the context of Kenya and Zambia has been conducive to reinforcing ethnic cleavages related to more unifying blocks, which give credence to distinctions based more on religious, linguistic and regional identities. This is primarily because both candidates and voters can belong to multiple groups. Consequently the decision of who to vote for is determined by who is better placed, at the time, to maximize access to state resources.³² Thus the decision to vote along regional, tribal or religious lines is determined by which identity marker is more politically or socially relevant to the voter at the time. Within the context of Uganda, this scenario can be more easily observed during the multi-party election campaigns in the early 1960s where regional and religious identities came to the forefront. However, the installation of a one party system from 1968-1980 and 1986-2005 reinforced more localised political cleavages. Consequently, 'the transition from one-party to multiparty political competition therefore has the potential to alter the identities that people embrace and, through this, the ethnic cleavages that come to matter in politics.'³³ However, within one-party-rule, 'the effective arena of political conflict shrinks from the nation as a whole to the level of the local electoral constituency', thus emphasising more localised political cleavages.³⁴ Posner also concedes that although certain political cleavages may be emphasised during a regime change, ethnopolitics still remains an effective and unifying political tool, as in both settings politicians and voters

³¹ M. Doornbos, 'Linking the Future to the Past: Ethnicity and Pluralism', *Review of African Political Economy*, No. 52, Fundamentalism in Africa: Religion and Politics (1991), 58; Berman, Eyoh, Kymlicka, (eds.) *Ethnicity and Democracy in Africa*, 3.

³² D.N. Posner, 'Regime Change and Ethnic Cleavages in Africa', *Comparative Political Studies* Vol. 40, No. 11 (2007), 1305

³³ *Ibid.*

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 1308.

will still use ethnicity as an instrument to achieve their political goals.³⁵ Similarly, Berman attributes, in part, the impact on authoritarian rule in Africa, which has resulted in the elimination of the 'political meaning of citizenship', by maintaining a decentralised system of authority in the locality sustained by a patron-client network. In this climate, the single party state offers a 'national arena within which the distribution of material resources between ethnic communities [can] be negotiated between the leaders of various groups, without having to resort to the public mobilization of their supporters.'³⁶ Within this context, 'citizenship' becomes less about the nation, but about the autochthonous claims of established communities over the territories within the nation.³⁷

In his case study of ethnic conflict in the district of Kibaale situated within the Kingdom of Bunyoro, Elliot Green adds to this discourse, by attributing the rise of 'nativism' to consecutive government policies which have emphasised political jurisdictions based on local, rather the regional or national lines. The introduction of the Resistance Council (RC) system in 1986, by the current regime in Uganda, has in Kibaale, contributed to a rise in 'local claims of indigeneity' as means to exclude fellow citizens from access to resources.³⁸ The RC system -later rebranded as the Residence Council- has been lauded as the most far reaching restructuring of local government in Uganda, altering the political system from a top down focus, to a more locally orientated political distribution of power, based on 'residency' rather than 'descent'.³⁹ In Kibaale, this has led to violent clashes with Bakiga migrants and the Banyoro, with the latter arguing that local government was being

³⁵ Ibid., 1309.

³⁶ B. Berman, 'Ethnicity and Democracy in Africa, JICA Research Institute, Working Paper No. 22 (2010), 15.

³⁷ Ibid., 26-28.

³⁸ E.D. Green, 'Demography, Diversity and Nativism in Contemporary Africa: Evidence from Uganda', Paper prepared for presentation at the ASEN Conference on Political Demography, London School of Economics and Political Science, September 2006. (Online resource) Accessed, 8 September 2014. <http://www.sneps.net/wpcontent/uploads/2010/04/greenASEN-Paper.pdf>

³⁹ E.D.Green, 'Decentralization and Conflict in Uganda', *Conflict, Security and Development*, Vol. 8, No. 4 (2008), 2.

monopolised by the Bakiga who were 'plotting to dominate them through tribal voting.'⁴⁰

Local Banyoro repeatedly refer to both the Bakiga migrants to Kibaale and the absentee Baganda landlords who own land in the district as non-natives, despite the fact that members of all three groups are Ugandan citizens . . . As the Kibaale example sadly makes clear, the shift to a residence-based system of rights has merely meant that ethnic conflicts have been reframed rather than removed: whereas in the past rural political contestation took place between groups distinguished by tribe or ethnicity, it now takes place between groups claiming indigeneity over local political jurisdictions. Indeed, as most ethnic groups continue to be defined along territorial lines in Uganda – and elsewhere in Africa – the RC system may have helped to devolve ethnic conflict from the regional to the local level, but it has neither changed the names of the groups in conflict with each other nor has it done anything to reduce the amount of ethnic conflict or advance nation building.⁴¹

More widely, the articulation of conflict along ethnic and tribal lines, as in the case of Uganda, can be attributed firstly, to the colonial and post-colonial decentralisation of governance, modelled along the established colonial boundaries of native authority.⁴² This helped to demarcate, geographically and politically distinct ethnic groupings. Post independence, ethnopolitics quickly became a state sponsored military and administrative exercise, utilised to obtain and/or retain political power often under the guise of nation building and political centralisation. As state leaders sought to weaken local political authority, they became reliant on political and military support from members of their own tribal groups, further militarising national politics along ethnic lines. During the process of decolonisation and the decade following independence, the colonial political and economic dominance of the Kingdom of Buganda provided a convenient platform from which other competing Kingdoms and local authorities could make demands against central administration in Entebbe, located within the Kingdom of

⁴⁰ 'Banyoro-Bakiga wrangle: Time bomb in Kibale?' *The New Vision*, 12 March 2006.

<http://www.newvision.co.ug/D/8/26/486943> (Online resource) Accessed, 13 September 2014.

⁴¹ Green, 'Demography, diversity and nativism in contemporary Africa: evidence from Uganda'.

⁴² J. Okuku, Ethnicity, *State Power and the Democratisation Process in Uganda*, (Uppsala: Nordic African Institute, 2002), 7-8.

Buganda. The other three Kingdoms of Ankole Bunyoro, and Toro as well as the principality of Busoga, all had a centralised monarchical political system. However, internal competition and traditional rivalries between these monarchical heads, coupled with the fear of continued Baganda political dominance in an independent Uganda, prevented the emergence of political alliances between these predominately Bantu speaking Kingdoms.⁴³

In Acholi, local governments born out of the colonial Native Administration, fought to keep a level of political autonomy post-independence, emulating the colonial system of indirect rule, which had localised administrative and political power. Indeed, the Acholi political allegiance to their ethnic locality has its roots firmly entrenched within their encounters with colonial and missionary institutions, with the latter using education as a tool to alter indigenous African values.⁴⁴ Much of the missionary work in Uganda and across the continent took the form of cultural imperialism that worked in conjunction with the 'economic imperialism' being pursued by colonial governments.⁴⁵ Christian missionaries participated in a reciprocal relationship with the colonial administration, which allowed for the effective administration of the indigenous population. By creating a literate intelligentsia, encouraging groups to document their histories and traditions, missionaries gave African communities 'the tools to imagine a larger community than previously existed.'⁴⁶

Missionary activity on the continent ran parallel to the expansion of Western imperialism. The Berlin Conference in 1884-5 formally instigated the colonial partition of Africa, which not only cut across geographical lines but cultural ones as well.⁴⁷ Whilst each European power had its own unique way of ruling their colonial subjects, the one commonality that ran across the

⁴³ G. Mwakikagile, *Ethnicity and National Identity in Uganda: The Land and Its People*, (Dar-a-Salam: New African Press, 2009), 48-49.

⁴⁴ Dwyer, *The Acholi of Uganda: Adjustment to Imperialism*, 112.

⁴⁵ A. K. Tiberondwa, *Missionary Teachers as Agents of Colonialism in Uganda: A Study of their Activities in Uganda, 1877-1925* (Kampala: Fountain Publishers, 1998).

⁴⁶ Berman, Eyoh & Kymlicka (eds.) *Ethnicity & Democracy in Africa*, introduction.

⁴⁷ I. Griffiths, 'The Scramble for Africa: Inherited Political Boundaries,' *The Geographical Journal*, Vol. 152, No. 2 (1986), 206.

British, French, Portuguese and Belgian colonialists was the ethos of 'divide and rule.'⁴⁸ For the British this ethos was satisfied through their governing principle of 'indirect rule' whereby rather than administering the natives directly, they employed tribal chiefs to govern.⁴⁹ The regional divisions of the colonised countries along ethnic lines undoubtedly fostered ethnic divisions, which were actively encouraged by the British administrators. In Uganda, British District Commissioners (DC) were appointed to man their regions, and laws enforced to restrict migration within regions, essentially keeping 'the natives where they belonged.'⁵⁰ Ethnic stereotypes were readily created, as with the Acholi who were marked out as a martial race, while their southern counter-parts, particularly the Baganda, received praise for their sophisticated political system and were regarded as ethnically superior.⁵¹ Utilising the 'Hamitic thesis', British travellers such as John Hanning Speke rationalised the 'political sophistication' of the Buganda Kingdom in terms of the Baganda being descendants of the Gala Hamites of Ethiopia.⁵² The assertion that the Baganda were somehow more sophisticated was instrumental in the use of Baganda agents to spread British political control throughout the rest of the Protectorate. The division between Northern and Southern Uganda was further emphasised with the economic policies of the colonial powers. Considered culturally superior, the Baganda Bantu-speaking South enjoyed more economic investment, while the North was left relatively undeveloped and its peoples marginalised in basic sectors such as education, health and

⁴⁸ F.D. Lugard, *The Dual Mandate in British Tropical Africa* (London: Taylor & Francis, 1965).

⁴⁹ T. O. Ranger, 'Tradition and Travesty: Chiefs and Administration in Makani District, Zimbabwe, 1960-1980,' *Africa*, 52, Vol. 3 (1982), 20-41.

⁵⁰ Dwyer, *The Acholi of Uganda: Adjustment to Imperialism*.

⁵¹ M. Twaddle, *The Expulsion of a Minority: Essays on Ugandan Asians* (London: Longman, 1975), 303.

⁵² 'Hamitic thesis: the idea that any sophisticated political, economic or social institution had to come only from outsiders, mainly from the 'Hamitic race' considered by Europeans to be a sub-group of the Caucasian race. 'Hamites' from North Africa were considered to be more advanced than the Negroid population living in sub-Saharan Africa. See D. Osabu-Kle, *Compatible Cultural Democracy: The Key to Development in Africa* (Ontario: Broadview Press, 2000), 216; T. Falola and Matthew M. Heaton, *A History of Nigeria*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 35.

service sector employment.⁵³

Tribal and ethnic identities emerged in Uganda primarily as a result of the colonial Native Administration, which sought to unite groups that shared certain cultural commonalities such as language, shared traditions and geography, so as to administer them effectively.⁵⁴ The Acholi, much like the peoples of Karomjong, Lango, Madi and Alur of the northern regions, did not have a pre-colonial history of traditional centralised leadership, comparative to the Kingdoms of the south.⁵⁵ Uganda's colonial experience undoubtedly left an institutional and political legacy that is now widely accepted as being paramount in the construction and reification of more centralised, *politically* based ethnic demarcations.⁵⁶ Whilst colonialism has left a lasting legacy on the peoples of Acholi, it is important to stress that the purpose of this thesis is not to attribute all post-colonial African ethnic conflicts to the division of the continent, be it internally or externally. In fact, as Frederick Cooper rightly assesses in his reference to the Rwandan Civil War of 1994:

It is not helpful to look at the conflict as the age old division of Africa into neatly separate cultures, each a distinctive separate community with a long history of conflict with people who were 'different,' unable to function with western-style institutions because such intentions do not fit the reality of Africa.⁵⁷

⁵³ A.G. Ginywera-Pinchaw, 'Is There A Northern Question?' in K. Rupesinghe (ed.), *Conflict Resolution in Uganda* (London: James Currey, 1989), 48.

⁵⁴ Dwyer, *The Acholi of Uganda: Adjustment to Imperialism*. For more on the creation of tribalism in Africa see K. Crehan, 'Tribes' and the People Who Read Books: Managing History in Colonial Zambia,' *Journal of Southern African Studies*, Vol. 23, No. 2, (1997), 203-218.

⁵⁵ Mwakikagile, *Ethnicity and National Identity in Uganda*, 49.

⁵⁶ O. Vaughan, 'Chieftaincy, Politics and Communal Identity in Western Nigeria, 1893-1951', *The Journal of African History*, Vol. 44, No. 2 (2003), 283-302; Lonsdale, 'Political Tribalism and Moral Ethnicity'; M. Mamdani, *Citizen and Subject* (Kampala, London and Cape Town; Fountain Publishers, James Currey, David Philip, 1996); J. Darwin, *Britain and Decolonisation: The Retreat From the Empire in the Post War World* (London: Macmillan, 1988).

⁵⁷ F. Cooper, *Africa since 1940: Past and Present* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 2.

Cooper's comments are well placed in modern Africanist literature with Berman, Eyoh and Kymlicka warning against taking the view that the politicisation of ethnicity was simply an imposition from above consumed by the susceptible masses.⁵⁸

Acholi political identities were undoubtedly shaped by the social, economic and political structural forms of power embedded within the late colonial and post-colonial Ugandan state. Structural forms of power encompass both micro and macro forms of authority. These can be related to social hierarchies/class, religion, gender, ethnicity, codified laws, customs, and the embedded norms and values that govern intra and inter group behaviour. To be accepted as productive members of their societies, individuals are essentially forced to conform to the rules and regulations dictated by these structures of authority. However, as Anthony Giddens argues, individual agents also play an integral part in both 'constraining' and 'enabling' structural forms of power, which dictate both state-societal and group-to-group interactions.⁵⁹ Thus 'in and through their activities, agents produce the conditions that make these activities possible.'⁶⁰ Giddens 'structuration' theory gives credence to both structural forms of power and the agents who participate within it, creating mutually dependent relationship, which is 'produced and reproduced' through the repetition of action and social encounters.'⁶¹

The 'colonial coinage' argument in many respects disengages with African agency as it proposes that Ugandans simply inherited the colonial structures of power and thus played little part in its construction and/or

⁵⁸ Berman, Eyoh & Kymlicka (eds.) *Ethnicity and Democracy in Africa*.

⁵⁹ A. Giddens, *Elements of the theory of structuration*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), 25. For a concise overview of on the structure versus agency debate in sociology and a critique of Giddens structuration theory see: Z. Baber, 'Beyond the Structure/Agency Dualism: An Evaluation of Giddens's Theory of Structuration', *Sociological Inquiry*, Vol. 61 No. 2 (1991): For a more recent critique, see: B. O'Boyle, 'Reproducing the Social Structure: A Marxist Critique of Giddens's Structuartion Methodology, *Cambridge Journal of Economics*, Vo. 37 No. 5 (2013).

⁶⁰ Giddens, *Elements of the theory of structuration*, 2.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 22-23.

maintenance.⁶² Indirect rule as practiced by the British meant that such an imposition from above would have never been possible had there not been a two-way political discourse between the colonised agents and the colonisers. Within the context of the colonial encounter, Acholi agents enacted specific strategies of action in an attempt to collaborate with and/or challenge colonial authority.⁶³ Moreover, colonial attempts to unitise Acholi clan groups would not have been possible without the pre-existing cultural markers and socio political structures that governed relations between pre-colonial groupings in Acholi. With the salience of ethnopolitics post-independence, these cultural markers became the most effective and viable tools within Acholi 'moral ethnicity', where political strategies could be formulated in the face of internal and external competitors.⁶⁴ Indeed, as Bayart argues more generally:

The colonial moment is an encounter with other dynamics equally endowed with their own historicity, which no amount of military occupation, political repression, 'civilising mission' evangelization or economic development can efface. These other dynamics correspond to the trajectories of pre-existing indigenous social groups during the colonial moment, acting in pursuit of their own interests and in accordance with strategies of moral repertoires that could not be reduced solely to the new order.⁶⁵

In post-colonial Uganda, it was not as simple as inheriting alien structures of the colonial state: these *were* the political structures that had gained authenticity during the colonial period, and they were the same political structures which Ugandans continued to use to govern themselves post-independence. Furthermore, it was not that Ugandans lacked the imagination or the initiative to create a state that was completely altered from the colonial state, but rather that the post-colonial state was and *should* be considered an African reality, steeped in the politics of tradition, Western political ideology, patriarchy, clientalism, nepotism, and strong localised political structures.

⁶² Young, *The African Colonial State in Comparative Perspective*, 283-284; B. Davidson, *The Black Man's Burden: Africa and the Curse of the Nation-state* (London: James Currey, 1992).

⁶³ G. Thompson, *British Colonial Rule and Its Legacy* (Kampala: Fountain Publishers, 2003).

⁶⁴ Lonsdale, 'Political Tribalism and Moral Ethnicity'

⁶⁵ Bayart, *The State in Africa*, xvi.

Advocates of the 'dependency' and 'underdevelopment' theories pointed specifically to this post-colonial reality of clientalism and economic underdevelopment, placing the blame squarely on the colonial economy, and the African agents who upheld it.⁶⁶ Yet Acholi cultural commentators such as Okot p'Bitek, and pan-Africanists such as Fanon sought to go beyond economics by highlighting the effect that colonialism and Western ideology had and was having on African indigenous communities. Indeed Fanon's analysis of the black African with the 'white mask' critiqued the colonised African's emulation of the ideologies and language of his colonisers as a mechanism to elevate himself 'above his jungle status . . . becoming whiter as he renounces his blackness'⁶⁷ Yet by rejecting his indigenous cultural customs and trying to fit into society that will ultimately reject him, the black man develops a dual identity and consciousness having to simultaneously live within two worlds, resulting in a hatred of his 'black skin' which keeps him on the periphery of the 'white' society' he is striving to be accepted into.⁶⁸

Similarly, p'Bitek's *Wer pa Lawino* (1966) and *Wer pa Ocol* (1968) (Song of Lawino and Song of Ocol) poignantly depicted the effect of colonialism on the Acholi cultural and political landscape.⁶⁹ Through his prose p'Bitek, makes a plea to the Acholi, and Africans more widely, warning them against the dangers of losing their culture in favour of Western customs. *Song of 'Lawino's'* impact is grounded in the voice of Lawino, a non-Western educated Acholi village girl. Through the character, p'Bitek is able to paint a vivid image detailing the clash of cultures between the Acholi 'traditional' ways of life, and Western social and political institutions. Appealing to her educated

⁶⁶ A. G. Frank, 'Dependence Is Dead, Long Live Dependence and the Class Struggle: An Answer to Critics', *Latin American Perspectives*, Vol. 1, No. 1, Dependency Theory: A Reassessment (1974), 87-106; W. Rodney, *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa* (Dar es Salaam: Tanzanian Publishing House, 1972); G. A. O'Donnell, *Modernization and Bureaucratic-Authoritarianism: Studies in South American Politics* (Institute of International Studies, University of California, 1973).

⁶⁷ F. Fanon, *Black Skin, White Mask* (London: Pluto Press, 1986) translated by Charles Lam Markmann, 18.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ O. A. Ofuani, 'Okot p'Bitek: A Checklist of Works and Criticism,' *Research in African Literatures* Vol. 16, No. 3 (1985), 370.

husband, Ocol, Lawino urges him not to forget his Acholi roots, and the ways of his ancestors. Lawino compares Acholi customs and Western customs, concluding that the traditional ways were equal to, if not better than the ways of the white man.

Ocol rejects the old type
 He is in love with a modern woman
 He is in love with a beautiful girl
 Who speaks English
 He says he has read extensively and widely
 And he can no longer live with a thing like me.⁷⁰

Through Lawino, p'Bitek offers no apologies for or even defence of indigenous practices such as polygamy which were found so unpalatable by the Western missionaries, but outlines why Acholi customs are suitable and essential for the Acholi:

The ways of your ancestors
 Are good,
 Their customs are solid
 And not hollow
 They are not thin, not easily breakable
 They cannot easily be blown away
 By the Winds
 Because their roots reach deep into the soil⁷¹

Lawino's character is contrasted with her husband Ocol, who no longer finds any satisfaction in the Acholi customs and traditions and has instead wholeheartedly embraced his new Westernised identity, with p'Bitek lamenting that this new generation of Western educated Africans would 'obliterate tribal boundaries, 'and throttle native tongues to dumb death.'⁷² p'Bitek depicts the 'Ocols' of Uganda as the handmaidens of colonialism who held little respect for indigenous African traditions and were detrimental to the African way of life. Through his works, p'Bitek's critique on the effects of colonialism on Uganda loosely feeds into the dependency theorists

⁷⁰ O. p'Bitek, *Song of Lawino, Song of Ocol* (Nairobi: Heinemann, 1984), 36.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 41.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 124.

‘conceptual framework for understanding the politics of dependent countries’ that showed ‘power to be in the hands of ruling classes whose economic hegemony derived from their role as handmaidens of the capitalist [colonial] order.’⁷³

Ugandan scholar Mahmood Mamdani freely admits that as a younger man he was among the generation of academics inspired by the dependency theorists, who believed that the impact of colonialism in Africa was purely down to economics. With the benefit of hindsight, he assesses that this was in fact not the case.⁷⁴ Moving away from what he terms the limits of the framework of the political economy as a tool of analysis, Mamdani encourages the dismantling of African identities, arguing that ‘the process of state formation generates political identities that are not only distinct from market-based identities, but also cultural identities.’⁷⁵ Indeed p’Bitek also illuminates important points about the internal conflicts within ethnic and cultural groupings beyond the colonial and post-colonial political economy. The impact of colonialism on Acholi gender roles, social hierarchy, and a politicised religious identity are never more apparent than in songs of Lawino and Ocol. Once a proud wife, daughter and mother, Lawino now has to contend with a husband who no longer sees her value within the homestead. Ocol’s masculinity is continually questioned by his wife, who does not understand why he wishes to bury his head in books, and no longer respects his parents.⁷⁶

Their manhood was finished
In the classrooms
Their testicles
Were smashed
With large books.⁷⁷

⁷³ P. Chabal, *Power in Africa: An Essay in Political Interpretation* (New York: St Martin’s Press, 1992), 2.

⁷⁴ M. Mamdani, ‘Beyond Settler and Native as Political Identities: Overcoming the Political Legacy of Colonialism,’ *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, Vol. 43, No.4, (2001), 651-664.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ M. Mamdani, *When Victims Become Killers Colonialism, Nativism and the Genocide in Rwanda*, (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2002), 20.

⁷⁷ O. p’Bitek, *Song of Lawino, Song of Ocol*, 177.

A religious dimension of conflict is added by Ocol's 'conversion' to Catholicism and Lawino's rejection of missionary education, opting instead to adhere to the *jogi* (spirits, jok: singular) who had guided her ancestors for so long.⁷⁸ Ocol and Lawino offer viable but contrasting depictions of Acholi identity. p'Bitek deliberately takes a highly critical view of Ocol, who to his mind has rejected his roots and is no longer behaving like an 'Acholi' man. However, although seemingly despised by p'Bitek, this thesis will argue that Ocol is a valid representation of the numerous Acholi, who through their encounter with Western institutions steadily adapted to their changing social, political and economic landscape. p'Bitek makes it clear that it is Ocol's eagerness to adopt the 'the white mans' way over his own peoples, which he deplors. However, the disdain with which Ocol is treated by the author brings to light one major point of concern; mainly the inability to look at the character objectively and see that Ocol's Westernisation is not merely an imposition from above, but an internal negotiation of self-identification.

In another respect, it was Lawino and her real life sisters who allowed this dual identity to not only develop but to thrive in late colonial and post-colonial Uganda. They were the mothers who worked tirelessly in the homestead to bring up young boys and girls. They instilled in them Acholi cultural norms and values, whilst preparing them to go to school to acquire the education that would one day allow them to take their position in the new Uganda. Many actively embraced new Western religious teachings and encouraged their children to do the same. This is a process which many Acholi underwent during colonisation, post-independence, and it is a process which still continues today. More interestingly, today, the *Ocol/s* of Uganda, not only regard themselves as Acholi, but have wholeheartedly embraced their ethnic identification and continue to use it as a tool for political engagement. They have not, as Ocol promised, obliterated tribal boundaries, but have continued to emphasise them in post-colonial Uganda.

Consequently, while it is important to assess the impact of colonialism on African communities, academic analysis must attempt, as Mamdani

⁷⁸ O. p'Bitek, *Religion of the Central Luo* (Nairobi: East African Literature Bureau, 1971).

argues, to 'historicise African agency' by emphasising the African experience of colonialism and how this shaped African post-colonial cultural, political and ethnic identities.⁷⁹ This line of questioning emerged around the late 1980s and early 1990s in response to the systematic collapse of African nation-states, which ushered in an era of political instability, military coups, civil war and the rise of authoritarian single party regimes ensuring recurrent trends of democratisation followed by destabilisation. Uganda's post-colonial economic and political decline began in the mid-1960s amidst the political turmoil created by the Obote regime and the subsequent coup d'état of Idi Amin, which had a detrimental effect on the economy. The manipulation of ethnic and political identities resulted in widespread massacres from 1966, finally cumulating with civil war in 1986. By the time Museveni staged his coup d'état in 1986, in the aftermath of the failure of the IMF Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP), Uganda had become one of the poorest countries in sub-Saharan Africa.⁸⁰ Independence had not eradicated colonial ethnic tensions nor had it forced Ugandans to shed the tribal/clan and ethnic affiliations, showing that modernisation/development model had comprehensively failed. Similarly and disappointingly for the dependency theorists, despite the prolonged period of economic depression in the 1970s and 1980s, which weakened global capitalist structures, a proletarian uprising did not occur, nor did Africans shed their colonial legacy by abandoning the elitist politics of patrimonial/clientelism. By focusing on 'the strong' state as a mechanism for modernisation and in its various forms of dependency theorists on both sides of the spectrum were left with models which could no longer be viably applied to the African reality.⁸¹

⁷⁹ Mamdani, 'Beyond Settler and Native'.

⁸⁰ M. Mamdani, 'Uganda: Contradictions of the IMF Programme and Perspective,' *Development and Change* Volume 21, No. 3 (1990), 427–467; J. K. Baffoe, 'Structural Adjustment and Agriculture in Uganda,' International Labour Office, Geneva, March 2000 <http://www.ilo.org/public/english/dialogue/sector/papers/uganstru/index.htm>. [Accessed 15 March 2011].

⁸¹ T. Young, *Readings in African Politics* (Oxford: James Currey, 2003), 1; W. Martin and M. Wes, 'The Decline of the Africanists' Africa and the Rise of New Africas', *A Journal of Opinion*, Vol. 23, No. 1 (1995), 24-26.

This realisation opened up yet another era in Africanist literature focusing heavily on the study of ethnicity and its role in African political identity. As Young stated, the time had come when it was no longer 'feasible to look at ethnicity as a cultural hangover.'⁸² In fact in the face of the dissolution of African nationalism, it was more pertinent to conclude that ethnicity was in fact the realisation of the effects of modernisation and the struggle for power and resources.⁸³ The emphasis on African ethnic identities rather than African political and economic trajectories was spearheaded by the publication in 1989 of Jean-François Bayart's acclaimed book, *The State in Africa: The Politics of the Belly*, which sought to change the way which scholars viewed Africa and its politics. Bayart aimed to look at Africa, specifically the behaviour of its peoples, not through the eyes of the modernisation or dependency theorists, but through the eyes of Africans themselves. He argued that African politics is authentic to Africans and rather than placing them into these Western based theoretical trajectories, Africanists should accept that African politics is very much rooted in the African experience of governance, tradition and culture.⁸⁴ This revolutionary approach opened up new opportunities for Africanists, specifically those disillusioned by the failures of the modernisation process, who wanted to go 'beyond the facile generalizations and intellectual or cultural prejudices, which demean Africa.'⁸⁵ As Berman has argued:

African ethnic politics is not simply a cynical instrument of elite manipulation. African ethnicities are complex and protean expressions of the often distinctive African experiences of modernity grounded in the material realities of state and market and the confrontation of class, gender and generation.⁸⁶

From the late 1980s 'ethnicity' found a firm place in Africanist literature. John Lonsdale famously and influentially differentiated 'moral ethnicity' from

⁸² Young, *Readings in African Politics*, 1.

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ J-F. Bayart, *Africa: The Politics of the Belly* (Cambridge: Polity, 2009).

⁸⁵ C. Clapham, 'The Longue Durée of the African State,' *African Affairs*, Vol. 93, No.372 (1994), 433-439; J-F. Bayart, *Africa: The Politics of the Belly*, rear cover.

⁸⁶ Berman, Eyoh & Kymlicka (eds.), *Ethnicity and Democracy in Africa*, 3.

'political tribalism' while other scholars looked at what role, if any, ethnicity could play in the African democratic process and some went about trying to find its roots beyond the colonial state.⁸⁷ What these studies showed was that African ethnic identities had neither decreased nor vanished within the post-colonial state. This focus on ethnicity opened up an opportunity for academics to adopt a more pluralistic approach to scholarly research on Africa, incorporating multiple disciplines with historians, sociologists and political scientists embracing multi-focal approaches in an effort to dismantle and historicise African ethnic groups and the various identities, which they encompass. Even anthropologists, previously dismissed as the handmaidens of colonialism, were welcomed back with open arms as political scientists such as Patrick Chabal adopted anthropological methodologies, seeking to look at 'politics from below' by 'focusing [the] camera at eye level and engaging with politics as it is played out in real life.'⁸⁸ The proliferation of academic literature on 'identity politics' over the past thirty years is reflection of the need to understand how groups and individuals have politically mobilised in an attempt to make political claims within their locality, nation states or even globally. More significantly this discourse has sought to look at the cultural tools, power structures and social environments which create and nurture these politicised identities precisely because:

Political movements are rarely, if ever, the spontaneous and unmediated expression of grassroots feelings of injustice. Elites typically play an important role in deciding a movement's goals and tactics. And if we attend to these elite strategies, it becomes clear that identity claims are often shaped – and distorted – by intragroup and intergroup power dynamics.⁸⁹

The clearest point that studies of African ethnic identities over the last two decades have shown is that shifting African identities have nearly always

⁸⁷ J. Lonsdale, 'Moral Ethnicity and Political Tribalism'; Atkinson, *The Roots of Ethnicity*; C. Lentz and, Nugent, *Ethnicity in Ghana: The Limits of Invention* (New York: St Martin's Press, 2000).

⁸⁸ Chabal, *Africa: The Politics of Suffering and Smiling*, x-xi.

⁸⁹ A. Eisenberg and Will Kymlicka (eds.), *Identity Politics in the Public Realm: Bringing Institutions Back In* (Toronto: UBC Press, 2011), 3

incorporated some sort of ethnic identification. The pluralism in this stems from the ability of these identities to adapt, or indeed be adapted, in the face of local, regional, national and global changes. Consequently, this thesis is a product of its time, acknowledging the political role ethnic identification has and continues to play in Uganda, but also goes beyond this by dismantling ethnic identity, and assessing the importance of other points of identification, whether it is religious, class, gender, or generational and how they have politically negotiated within the locality and the centre.⁹⁰ Indeed as Carola Lentz states, 'ethnic ideologies are powerful and strategically efficient to many precisely because they hide space for multiple interpretations and processes of negotiation.'⁹¹

1.2. Definitions and Terminology

Ocol and Lawino

Through out this thesis characters depicted in the Okot p'Bitek's books *Song of Ocol* and *Song of Lawino* will be used stylistically when referring generally to members of the Acholi middle class, rural peasantry, urban labourers and lower ranking military personnel. The *Ocols* can consist of local and national politicians, large business owners who have the means to buy labour, high profile religious leaders, high-ranking military personnel, mid to high level civil servants within local government, and local professionals such as teachers. Where the analysis is based on one single member or group within these characterisations, this will be made clear throughout the main text. It should also be noted that within these characterisations there are also further socio-economic and political divisions. For instance, among the *Lawinos*, urban labourers and lower-ranking military personnel are more likely to have access to a waged employment compared to rural subsistence farmers who tend live hand to mouth. Moreover, the formers migration to urban towns and cities

⁹⁰ J. Hutchinson and A.D. Smith, (eds.) *Ethnicity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 11.

⁹¹ C. Lentz, 'Colonial Constructions and African Initiatives: The History of Ethnicity in Northwestern Ghana', *Ethnos*, Vol. 65, No.1 (2000), 107-35.

such as Gulu and Kampala allows them exposure to economic, ethnic and political social groups, which tend to be more diverse in comparison to their rural counterparts. Consequently, this urban demographic has the potential to form political identities based on a more nationally orientated industrial movement. However, in Acholi, as will be discussed further in chapter four, chronic regional underdevelopment and lack of industry placed restrictions on the formation of any mass, centralised, proletarian workers' movement that could transcend the locality.

Among the *Ocols*, local professionals such as teachers, tended to have a lower economic and political profile, in comparison to say urban business owners or local and national politicians. However, their education levels as well as unrestricted access to the minds of a new generation of Acholi children undoubtedly placed them in a position of social and political influence. This can be more clearly observed in the 1950s and 1960s when local schools became a hotly contested battleground for the two major political parties in the region. Moreover, the teaching profession could also act as a gateway to formal politics given that a number of Acholi politicians that emerged post-independence came from a teaching background.

Whilst *Ocol* and *Lawino* are labels imposed by the author, it is also illuminating to highlight more commonly used local terms that convey similar socio-economic demarcations. These terms are diverse and generally denote physical appearances, education levels, wealth and/or political power. Thus among the rural population words such as, *Lulonyo* (the rich), *Wige Lobo* (owners of the world/boss) and *Mufuata mingi* (a Kiswahili word meaning either fats/oils) generally used to describe an overweight person as this often symbolises wealth. The expression *Lucung iwibye*, is perhaps the most descriptive. This literally translates to 'those who stand on top of an anthill' and is popularly used to describe local politicians who would often utilise the risen platforms of anthills to stand on whilst addressing potential voters. On the reverse side, the terms used to describe the *Lawinos* by the *Ocols* tend to denote the formers lower socio-economic status and level of education. Whilst English words such as 'villagers' and 'local people' are commonly used, other terms such as *Lutedoro* are also common. This word literally translates to 'those who sit at the base of the granary', and is used due to the fact that

villagers with the unavailability of chairs would use the raised base of granary to sit on whilst listening to political speeches. Finally, the term *Dano* (people/person) has a deep social stratification connotation, as it is usually used to describe the *Lawinos* as the ‘commoners’ of Acholi society. However, by adding the adjective ‘big’ as in ‘Dano Madit’ (big people/person), this expression can then be used to refer to those within the higher echelons of Acholi society.

Throughout the this thesis, other expressions, denoting the social, political and economic demarcation between *Ocol* and *Lawino* such as the ‘silent majority’, ‘power-brokers’, ‘political/local elite’, and the ‘haves and have not’ have also been used at times where there is a need to convey context outside the Acholi locality and Uganda more widely. Where these terms appear in thesis, they will be grounded within theoretical analysis and debates on social virtue, social contracts, and the reciprocity of privilege. Consequently, the terms *Ocol* and *Lawino* will be used specifically when analysing local interplay between Acholi local elites and the rural peasantry or urban dwellers with lower socio-economic profiles.

There is also a gender dimension that needs to be considered. Firstly, Acholi women were vastly underrepresented in the local and national archives for the period under research. This was primarily through lack of education and the patriarchal social order. This is point that p’Bitek highlights with his characterisation of ‘Lawino’ as the uneducated village wife whose domain is very much the female-dominated domestic sphere. In many respects, p’Bitek’s depiction of these gender roles reflects the reality of many Acholi women in the Ugandan late-colonial and early post-colonial state. Secondly, within this author’s categorisation of the *Lawinos*, the patriarchal social order within Acholi society meant that women were further marginalised in favour of the Acholi man. Consequently, despite sharing a similar economic status as their female counterparts, Acholi men do not fully conform to the socio-political characterisation of *Lawino*. Whilst they may have been marginalised from the world of the *Ocols*, they were still afforded access to certain commodities primarily because of their gender. These assertions will be discussed further in chapter three and more briefly in chapter five.

Finally, in some instances during the thesis there is an implicit tension when differentiating between the *Ocol*s and Acholi chiefs. In many regards, the chiefs were themselves the *Ocol* given their social and political status within the locality and their access to education, particularly post-independence. Where this tension emerges, the political tensions between modernist versus traditionalists come to the forefront. Within this debate, we are able to observe how these two competing groups emphasised different tools, languages and rhetoric to ensure their foothold within local and national politics. More significantly, this tension highlights clearly how local chiefs emphasised the political and administrative structure of the colonial Native Authority and Acholi cultural 'traditions' to compete with the new demographic of *Ocol*s born out of the late colonial market economy. This tension can also be observed throughout the thesis with the recurrent battle between these two groups, to gain power at the expense of the other. Significantly however, within the cataclysmic decade of the 1980s, political domains became blurred; there we see more clearly the *Ocol*s and chiefs' adopting each other's 'tools' to capitalise on the political opportunities presented by a state on the verge of collapse. Thus when the opportunity arose, each group was happy to infringe on the others political domain, if it helped to further their individual and collective goals.

Identity

In the social sciences 'identity' is used as an umbrella term to describe an individual's comprehension of his or herself as a discrete and separate entity. This identity is visualised through certain markers that could include, but are not limited to, dress language and geography. These markers provide the 'membership status, which identifies itself, and is identified by others, as constituting a category distinguishable from other categories of the same order.'⁹² For these identity markers to have any significance, their meaning has to be recognised by those who observing the characteristics of the identity being presented. As an example, an Acholi living in a village in

⁹² F. Barth, *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries* (Boston: Little Brown, 1969).

England would perhaps find it easier to identify themselves as Ugandan or even African first to their neighbours, as opposed to as an Acholi. This is primarily because, the identity markers that distinguish an Acholi in Uganda, be it language, traditional food, or specific ceremonial dress, would not be so readily recognisable by the majority of the population in rural England. The Acholi identity would in this instance lose its significance to the people perceiving it, as they would attach little importance to the particularities of the identity markers. However, if the Acholi in question were back in Uganda, to simply identify oneself as African or even Ugandan would make little sense, unless the statements were politically motivated; if they were a deliberate attempt to move away from the confines of regional, ethnic or even national demarcations.

Ethnic identity can be referred to as; 'the individual level of identification with a culturally defined collectivity', and 'the sense on the part of the individual that he or she belongs to a particular cultural community.' These identification points generally include a common language, geographical point, culture and sometimes a shared religion.⁹³ Culture can be broadly defined as, 'the system of shared beliefs, values, customs, behaviours, and artefacts that the members of society use to cope with their world and with one another, and that are transmitted from generation to generation through learning.'⁹⁴ A cultural collectivity is therefore a group of people who share and observe these customs, whether symbolically or materially. And so culture is formed and strengthened through sharing the same material space, and when this is not possible, normative values, thoughts and beliefs transferred generationally provide the basis for the continuation of cultural beliefs beyond the confines of the home, locality, region, and even country. However, culture itself is not static, and like ethnicity changes and adapts according to time and changes in the material space such as the effects of modernisation and political institutions.

⁹³ Hutchinson and Smith (eds.), *Ethnicity*, 5.

⁹⁴ C. Geertz, *The Interpretations of Cultures* (New York: Basic Books, 1973), 4; A.L Kroeber and C. Kluckhohn, *Culture: A Critical Review of Concepts and Definitions*, (New York: Vintage Books, 1952); D. G. Bates and F. Plog, *Cultural Anthropology* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1990), 7.

Ethnicity and Nationalism

As one of the most prolific writers on ethnicity and nationalism, Anthony D. Smith coined the term 'ethnosymbolism' as a 'soft' form of primordialism. To Smith, ethnic identification is based on emotional ties that are shaped by a person's historical and cultural background.⁹⁵ While rejecting the primordial view that national identities are atavistic, he also disagrees with the structuralist view that these two identities are completely new constructs. Smith argues that without a significant prior history of ethnicity, there can be no nations or nationalism, 'only states imposed from above.'⁹⁶ Anthropologist Fredrick Barth made an important distinction between cultural and ethnic groups.⁹⁷ Barth argued that rather than seeing ethnicity or ethnic groups as a fixed reality or container wherein people lived, ethnicity should instead be observed as the interaction between groups. It is these interactions that perpetuate cultural differences and create boundaries.⁹⁸ This work marked a distinct shift in the study of ethnicity. By looking at the relationships between groups, and the process of identity constructions, Barth rejected the classical primordialist school of thought, which looked upon markers, such as common language, ancestry and geographical points as the key roots ethnic identification. For Barth, and those who followed, ethnicity is viewed as a lived identity constantly changed and reinvented in accordance to external and internal stimulus.⁹⁹ The structuralist approach gives ethnicity and ethnic identity a certain amount of flexibility, allowing it to change and adapt. This is a limited departure from Smith, who readily accepts that nation states are

⁹⁵ A.D. Smith, *The Ethnic Origins of Nations* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988).

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 214.

⁹⁷ Barth, *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries*.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹⁹ E. Hobsbawm and T.O. Ranger (eds.), *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge University Press, 1983); B. Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1991).

indeed modern constructions. However, it is ethnicity, which he views as the foundation of nationalism and national identity in its 'soft' primordialist form.¹⁰⁰

Barth's research provides a feasible distinction between culture and ethnicity, and by doing so he is able to offer a deeper insight into the nature of ethnicity. To Barth, ethnicity is:

A political process by which people seek to form groups and to differentiate one set of people from another, by appealing to the idea of ineluctable cultural difference. In fact, people can readily invent cultural differences if it is in their political interests to do so. Ethnicity is the pursuit of political goals—the acquisition or maintenance of power, the mobilisation of a following—through the idiom of cultural commonness and difference.¹⁰¹

The unavoidable cultural differences or commonness that Barth refers to, such as recognisable common practices that bind generations, provide cultural groupings with the raw materials which can be used to effectively mobilise a group or community against potential physical or political threats from 'outsiders.' John Lonsdale later extended this assessment in his frequently cited work on politicised ethnicity drawing the reader to consider two sides of ethnic identities by differentiating between 'political tribalism' and 'moral ethnicity.' To Lonsdale, 'moral ethnicity' is a process of 'ourself-ing' and 'political tribalism' that of 'othering.' 'Political tribalism' is the external face of a group and determines how its members behave in relation to 'others'/outsiders.¹⁰² Within an ethnic group, moral ethnicity is the internal discourses of social responsibility and it is the moral codes and actions that are conducted day-to-day determining how people should behave among themselves. Yet as Lonsdale states there also needs to be a further differentiation between the 'moral economy' of a group and 'moral ethnicity.'

¹⁰⁰ Anderson, *Imagined Communities*.

¹⁰¹ Summarised by J. Sharp in 'Ethnic Groups and Nation: The Apartheid Vision in South Africa', in E. Boonzaier and J. S. Sharp (eds.), *South African Key Words: The Uses and Abuses of Political Concepts*. (Cape Town: David Philip, 1988), 79-80. Also quoted in Atkinson, *The Roots of Ethnicity*, 15.

¹⁰² Lonsdale, 'Moral Ethnicity and Political Tribalism', 76.

All ethnicities have at their core a moral economy that allocates reputation by the means to which people pursue their self-interests. Reputation's criteria are historically negotiated but appear to be immemorially 'given'. No pre-colonial African society was communalistic in its own day, for instance, but all were technically so simple that any individual accumulation of wealth ineluctably incurred social obligations which had to be constantly repaid. Rich and poor had duties to each other; patronage had to earn its service. Reputations measured the quality of each.

The established codes of conduct and interactions within this moral economy are not static and must be continually renegotiated within the group to maintain equilibrium through reciprocal relations, regardless of whether the power structures are vertical or horizontal. Within the moral economy of a group, members and individuals

earned their living, discharged social obligation, resolved disputes, earned reputation and trust as self-realised men or women. Cultural competition energised pre-colonial Africa but prudence set limits to cultural chauvinism. Cultures were permeable; big men took wives from other ethnic 'others.' The poor might take to inter-ethnic migration in search of alternative protection, marriage and trade.¹⁰³

However the colonial encounter meant that ethnic consciousness and differentiation became sharper as:

Alien rule, economic changes and literacy affected social relations. Local power became concentrated unprecedentedly in the hands of official chiefs and their kin. Migrant labour subverted household disciplines and generational relations, women's market production called in question existing gender relations. Religious change challenged the elder's monopoly on access to unseen power; literacy gave scandalous new assurances to the young, to women or the poor. . . The penetration of colonial capitalism forced people to debate such formally implicit moral economies within increasingly explicit 'moral ethnicities'. These new social competitions fostered new arguments about what forms of achievement made one a good member of the local community.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰³ Lonsdale, 'Moral Ethnicity and Political Tribalism', 46, 78.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 78.

While Barth arguably takes a more negative view of ethnicity, particularly compared to cultural identity, Lonsdale looks at it as the cradle of civility which, in the African context, provides an internal environment where inequalities can be questioned regardless of class or social hierarchy, gender or generation. 'Moral ethnicity' shows that Africans have the cultural tools to question and resist the oppressive apparatus of their states and provides individuals and groups with the tools to compete 'for the scarce goods of modernity, as well as for access to local resources of land and labour.'¹⁰⁵ Lonsdale states emphatically that this version of a living ethnicity within a local context has nothing to do with political mobilisation, which is instead the external face of an ethnic group presented to contend with 'outsiders'. However, negotiations on 'how best to represent one's community in the external, unequal arena of state power' must always be reconciled within the enclave of 'moral ethnicity'.¹⁰⁶ Consequently, it is the cultural commonalities or the pre-colonial moral economy of African communities which have laid the foundations to allow for the development of the social discourses that govern relations within 'moral ethnicity' and 'political tribalism'. As Lonsdale readily acknowledges, colonial rule sharpened ethnic consciousness as it encountered Western institutions, be it institutes of education, the market economy, or the centralisation of the native polity. This contributed to the creation, definition and politicisation of African tribal/ethnic groups. However, the tribalisation/ethnification of these groups would not have been possible had there not existed the cultural commonalities with which the colonial administration or even members of a cultural group could use to attempt to construct a coherent, and seemingly unified ethnic identity.

The 'Cultural Took Kit'

Cultural traits are not always unique to a single ethnic group and can cross clan, tribe and ethnic boundaries. Generally, cross-cultural similarities are inevitably more evident among groups living in close geographical proximity to

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 46, 78.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., 140.

each other. In 1965 anthropologist Michael Moerman published a paper on ethnographic research he had conducted on the Lue group in northern Thailand. In trying to answer the question 'who are the Lue?' Moerman encountered several difficulties in pin pointing a precise definition. When he posed the question to the Lue, the typical characteristics described to differentiate themselves were also present in several neighbouring groups.¹⁰⁷ Similarly, the Acholi are ethno-linguistically and culturally related to several groups in Northern Uganda and neighbouring countries such as Sudan and Kenya. Numerous similarities can be seen in 'Acholi' customs including marriage, rituals, funeral and naming ceremonies with neighbouring groups such as the Lango. The word 'jok/ juok' which is used to describe Acholi pre-colonial deities is the same term used by groups such as the Lango, Anuak in Sudan and Alur in Northern Uganda. These commonalities are what Lonsdale, Barth and Smith argue, bind groups together. However, what ultimately separates them, as will be discussed further in the next chapter, is what 'cultural tools' groups choose to use, emphasise or discount when faced with internal and external competition. On her work on cultural symbolism and strategies Ann Swidler coined the term 'cultural tool kit' which she argues, provides a repertoire 'of habits, skills, and styles from which people construct strategies of action.'¹⁰⁸

Strategies of action are cultural products; the symbolic experiences, mythic lore, and ritual practices of a group or society create moods and motivations, ways of organizing experience and evaluating reality, modes of regulating conduct and ways of forming social bonds, which provide resources for constructing strategies of action. Settled cultures constrain action over time because of the high cost of retooling to adopt new patterns of action. In unsettled periods, in contrast, cultural meanings are more highly articulated and explicit, because they model patterns of actions that do not come naturally. Ultimately, structural and historical opportunities determine which strategies, and thus which cultural systems succeed.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁷ M. Moerman, 'Ethnic Identification in a Complex Civilization: Who Are the Lue?', *American Anthropologist*, Vol. 67, Issue 5 (1965), 1215-1230.

¹⁰⁸ A. Swidler, 'Culture in Action: Symbols and Strategies' *American Sociological Review*, Vol. 51, No. 2, (1986), 273-286.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 284.

For the Acholi, pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial, economic and social changes had a direct correlation to the 'cultural tools', which were emphasised or discounted in relation to their changing political and social environments. These are the tools that govern relationships within moral ethnicity and can include, shared ancestry, shared geographical boundaries, language, symbols, rituals, stories and established social norms and values which dictate the relationship between elders, youth, men and women. Colonial rule sharpened certain culture identities, fragmenting culturally common groups into more politically distinct tribal groups, whilst others such as clan and chiefly allegiances provided the political tools to contend with the threats from 'outsiders'. Within the repertoire of the 'cultural kit', chiefs, youth, women, politicians and peasants could obtain the tools to voice their grievances internally and externally. However, the fluidity of cultural identity means that even within the accepted boundaries of 'Acholiness', individuals and internal micro-groups can also act in various ways to emphasise or even devalue certain cultural norms and values, according to specific internal circumstances.¹¹⁰ Thus clan and chiefly allegiances can be emphasised over other more unifying cultural traits – such as geographical locations and a shared language – as individuals and micro-groups fight for scarce commodities.

Having failed to find a satisfactory definition of what made the Lue 'Lue', Moerman in the end was forced to conclude that someone was 'Lue' by simply believing and calling themselves 'Lue', and acting in certain ways to validate their 'Lueness'.¹¹¹ However, it is not just enough to call yourself 'Acholi' or act in certain ways to validate ones 'Acholiness'. Membership is always negotiated by the established nucleus of a cultural or ethnic group. In Acholi, membership is generally carried through the paternal lineage, as culturally a woman marries into her husband's family. Consequently, Acholi daughters remained economically lucrative as through marriage they could provide their families with a much-needed injection of cash and/or cattle

¹¹⁰ T.H. Eriksen, *Ethnicity and Nationalism: Anthropological Perspectives* (London: Pluto Press, 2002), 11-12.

¹¹¹ Moerman, 'Ethnic Identification in a Complex Civilization', 1215-1230; see also C. Young, *The Politics of Cultural Pluralism* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1977).

through bridewealth. Not paying the bridewealth sometimes impeded a traditional marriage, as a woman would not be accepted to belong to a man's familial lineage unless the bridewealth had been paid in full. However, a man could take his new wife home and continue to pay the balance in instalments. Finnström notes that many Acholi will argue that a woman's loyalties will remain uncertain until bridewealth has been paid.¹¹² In cases where the husband dies before completing payment, the wife, with her children, can return to her family and if she remains unmarried her daughters' bride-wealth will be given to her family instead of her husband's.¹¹³

In cases of inter-marriage, where the man is 'Acholi' any children born would generally be accepted as belonging to the 'Acholi' ethnic group. However, as can be observed in the 1970s and 1980s, ancestral ties were more readily challenged as political instability and scarce economic commodities heightened internal competition within the region. Even those who had assumed their 'Acholi' identity by living in Acholi districts for years, acquiring the established cultural traits and acting in certain ways to validate their 'Acholiness', were targeted as outsiders and potential threats to the established community. Similarly, with the relative political and economic stability of the 1950s and early 1960s, regional rather than ethnic identities emerged as the key tool for political engagement. Thus, cultural and ethnic identities are lived experiences, never static, always negotiated and continually challenged.

1.3. A Note on the Archives and Sources

The research herein is primarily qualitative, making use of primary and secondary materials including oral testimonies. The archives in Uganda give a vivid reflection of the political history of the country from its status as a British Protectorate to its post-colonial history. Offering a wealth of colonial and early post-colonial documents from district staff records to minutes from presidential meetings, the National Archives in Entebbe offer clear insight into the official

¹¹² Finnström, *Living With Bad Surroundings*, 192.

¹¹³ Interviews, Gulu, Kitgum and Aduku June-July 2012.

mind. These records were contextualised within wider colonial and imperial debates through the Colonial Office records in the British National Archives in Kew. The Uganda Christian University (UCU) in Mukono, which holds the Church Missionary Society (CMS) archives and the White Father (WF) Archives at Rubaga Cathedral in Kampala, provided access to missionary documents, although the majority were again from the colonial period. The archives in Entebbe and the well-stocked Africana library at Makerere University in the capital Kampala are particularly strong for the 1960s. The political euphoria of the first decade independence is reflected in the abundance of documents produced and preserved from this time period. As Ugandans took control of central government, political activity at the local and national level produced a wealth of correspondence, petitions, audits, accounts manifestos, intelligence reports and official minutes from local and national governmental councils. The documents paint a picture of a country actively engaged in its political future with local and national political actors openly challenging the state and holding it accountable without the fear of retribution that would come to characterise the 1970s and 1980s. As a consequence, the majority of the sources that have been engaged with in the 1950s and 1960s are written documents produced by state actors, local political and non-political actors as well as religious institutions, all of which are well represented in the archives. Politics in Uganda in the early 1960s is largely reflective of Derrida's assertion that 'effective democratization can always be measured by this essential criterion: the participation in and access to the archive, its constitution, and its interpretation.'¹¹⁴ It is also a testimony, to the relative inclusiveness of Ugandan polity in the early 1960s that allowed so many voices to find a place in the nation's archives. In addition, there is more usage of newspaper reports within these chapters, in direct correlation to the relative freedom of the press enjoyed during the 1950s-1960s compared to the heavy censorship imposed by Amin and Obote's second administration. Thus, during the chapters of the thesis certain source genres will disappear or emerge depending on the time period being discussed.

¹¹⁴ J. Derrida, *Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression*, translation by Eric Prenowitz (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1995).

Similarly, certain themes are also emphasised according to political contexts. Generational conflicts are more readily observed within the archives in the 1950s and 1960s, as politically inclusive governments tend to empower various sections of a society to persecute collective grievances. However, the repressiveness of Amin's regime and the marginalisation of the Acholi educated elite suppressed the political dialogue between the traditionalists and modernists in Acholi society. Similarly, the economic depression and political turmoil of the 1980s gave rise to individual political and economic considerations rather than any collectivised movements as the competition for commodities in Acholi increased. Thus the battle between the 'Ocols' and the chiefs can be observed more clearly within the relative political inclusivity of the 1950s and early 1960s.

The documents of the 1970s and the 1980s presented a more challenging task. The National Archives and Makerere University simply did not hold a satisfactory amount of data for this time period. This is where the district archives in Gulu, the largest town in Acholi, and Kitgum in East Acholi, became significant. The archives in Gulu were preserved and offered an abundance of documents relating to the 1970s and 1980s. The documents in Gulu and Kitgum pertained specifically to local institutions and actors and as such were more relevant to the project than many of the sources found at Entebbe and Makerere. They have consequently contributed the bulk of the evidential research in this project. The district archives, particularly in Kitgum are un-catalogued and un-preserved. Anyone that attempts to visit them must have the time, patience and diligence to trawl through the storerooms of discarded documents. However, the time invested in carrying out this task will certainly reap fulsome rewards.

1.4. War, Collective Memories and Oral Histories

Nothing good has happened to the Acholi. Acholi are different because they have been mistreated. They have not been given any opportunities. That is what makes us different.¹¹⁵

¹¹⁵ IF/M) NAU: Interview with private security guard, Gulu, 25 June 2012. Interviews were conducted between October 2011 and December 2013 in Kampala, Entebbe, Mukono, Gulu,

For this thesis, oral history was pivotal to researching the history of a people who have traditionally documented their past through oral tradition. Furthermore, the nature of high politics in the Ugandan post-colonial nature state has always utilised a process of exclusion of subalterns. Whilst the archives were useful in understanding the nature of the state and those who control it, those documents generally only provide the historian with one side of the story.¹¹⁶ Much like historical memories, archives and archival documents are social and political constructs. 'Their origins lie in the information needs and social values of the rulers, governments, businesses, associations, and individuals who establish and maintain them.'¹¹⁷ Archives and oral histories are not simply a collection of information, but are in themselves 'sites of contested knowledges.' It is the dichotomy between what is being presented and the meaning, intention and words used to create these sources that are the most significant. Archival researchers should utilise a more contextual approach by adopting ethnographic methodologies rather than just extracting information.¹¹⁸ Subsequently, oral interviews and testimonies can help the researcher to obtain a clearer understanding of the stories to be told by engaging with those who are not engaged with in the archives. Furthermore, although the archives can offer some insight into questions regarding identity such as 'who are we?', when the question is posed to an individual who has lived the experience it becomes less about the

Kitgum, Lamwo, Koro, Pader, Nwoya, and Anaka. The majority of the informants requested that their names be omitted from the written thesis. For the purpose of uniformity the names of those who did not request anonymity will also be omitted. Where informants have been quoted or referenced in the thesis, the day month and location of the interview have been cited.

¹¹⁶ M. Foucault, 'The Statement and the Archive', *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (London: Routledge, 2002), 79–134; A. L. Stoler, 'In Cold Blood: Hierarchies of Credibility and the Politics of Colonial Narratives', *Representations*, 37 (1992), 151–189.

¹¹⁷ J. M. Schwartz and T. Cook, 'Archives, Records, and Power: The Making of Modern Memory', *Archival Science*, Vol. 2 No. 1-2 (2002), 3.

¹¹⁸ A.L. Stoler, *Along the Archival Grain: Epistemic Anxieties and Colonial Common Sense* (Princeton University Press, 2010); Stoler, 'In Cold Blood: Hierarchies of Credibility and the Politics of Colonial Narratives'; Richards, *The Imperial Archive*, 73.

content of the answer and more about the intention, interpretation, terminology and context. This allows the researcher greater depth in understanding the concepts of a lived identity and in some cases brings to light structural relations between the state and the locality that may have otherwise been overlooked.

Because the politically active generation from the 1950s is dying, there is less use of oral testimonies in chapter three. However, oral testimonies were particularly pertinent when faced with a proliferation of documents produced by military intelligence agents in the 1970s and 1980s. The militarisation of politics in Uganda from the late 1960s meant that anti-subversive task forces such as the General Service Unit (GSU) and Amin's infamous State Security Bureau (SSB) became the primary producers of military intelligence in the Acholi districts. However, 'members of the GSU were untrained for their anti-subversive role [and] could well have been tempted from time to time to proffer dubious items of information as evidence of their diligence'¹¹⁹ The nature of the sources for these decades demanded more stringent use of oral testimonies to understand the relationship between the state and the locality beyond the premise of structural state violence and control. The clandestine nature of these reports were however particularly insightful in bringing to light state decay, corruption and paranoia. Given that many of the documents were likely never intended for public view, they unwittingly convey civil agency in the face of authoritarian rule. The government's fear of subversive behaviour and the unrelenting directive to target anyone who posed a threat to the administration opened an avenue for official politico-military engagement with civilians within the archives. Through oral testimonies the researcher can see how some local actors engaged with, conformed to, challenged and manipulated state institutions within a violent and oppressive political climate.

Oral testimonies are particularly important in the Acholi context because historians have shied away from conducting any in-depth archival

¹¹⁹ K. Ingham, *Obote: A Political Biography* (London & New York: Routledge, 1994), 133.

Quote by Gerald Murphy, former senior colonial officer and head of the Ugandan CID under Obote. Murphy was called in to investigate the GSU after Obote was overthrown in January 1971.

research on Acholi history prior to the LRA conflict. The period between 1960 and 1985 has largely been marginalised in favour of Acholi colonial history and the LRA insurgency. This is partly because the instability of Uganda's post-colonial past, in common with many sub-Saharan nation states, has meant that national and district archives have been largely neglected or destroyed.¹²⁰ This is particularly true for Northern Uganda, which was a conflict zone for well over twenty years. Consequently, many of the district archives in Acholi have remained largely inaccessible, understaffed and underfunded. Indeed, as Stephen Ellis discusses, 'contemporary historians do not have at their disposal the conventional archives afforded to those whose interests lay primarily in the colonial period.'¹²¹ The difficulties faced by researchers in accessing archival material due to lack of government investment in the preservation of the nation's archives, and the prominence of the LRA war, has ensured that Acholi post-colonial history been largely marginalised in favour of contemporary international academic discourses regarding the LRA insurgency. In this sense, the events in northern Uganda over the past twenty years have informed how the histories of the peoples of the region has been written and debated.

Undeniably, the prominence of the LRA insurgency in the Acholi historical and political narrative, coupled with a lack of any significant archival research on the Acholi past has in the present day led to the reification of a collective history of 'victimisation'.

The 'victim' is the diminished agent par excellence . . . Victims are, by definition, passive objects who have been acted upon by other forces, not active agents. They are defined by the mark that has been made on them rather than the mark that they have made on the wider world. In as far as they are victims; they are devoid of volition or intent.¹²²

¹²⁰ S. Ellis, 'Writing Histories of Contemporary Africa', *The Journal of African History*, Vol. 43, No.1 (2002), 12.

¹²¹ Ibid.

¹²² C. Gilligan, 'Constant Crisis/Permanent Process: Diminished Agency and Weak Structures in the Northern Ireland Peace Process', *The Global Review of Ethnopolitics*, Vol. 3 No.1 (2003), 29

As such there are continual references by the international media to the “Acholi and child soldiers”, the “Acholi and the LRA” and the “Acholi and the Displacement Camps”.¹²³ The perpetuation of the ‘victim identity’ has not been limited to international commentators. It has also been effectively utilised by the Acholi to highlight their grievances to a previously indifferent international and regional community.¹²⁴ In many ways it is this ‘victimisation’ discourse, channelled externally through ethnopolitics, which continues to drive the political economy of Acholi today. Moreover, this ‘victim identity’, as this research will show, is not a new construct. It can also be observed in how the Acholi engaged with late colonial and post-colonial political institutions by utilising grievances of regional underdevelopment.

This research is also in many ways a continuation of this presentist discourse, as it acknowledges that the past and the present are intrinsically linked.¹²⁵ Firstly, as Foucault’s analysis of subjectivity in historical research argues, it is futile to argue that historians can completely detach themselves from that which is being researched.¹²⁶ Complete objectivity, or a detachment from contemporary discourses and experiences is something the historian may strive for, but can never fully achieve. Secondly, the process of discussing significance and meaning when analysing archival sources and oral testimonies undoubtedly forces the historian to make certain judgements and conclusions drawn from outside the archives, since information does not exist, nor can it be conveyed, within a vacuum.¹²⁷ However, this is a process that is necessary as historical research depends as much upon ‘intuitive as upon analytical methods.’¹²⁸

¹²³ Laruni, *The De-politicisation of War*.

¹²⁴ ‘The Bending of Spears’ producing consensus for peace & development in Northern Uganda, commissioned by: International Alert December 1997 (Personal copy); *Community Perspectives on the Mato Oput Process, Collaborative Transitions Africa*, The Institute for Global Leadership, Tufts University.

¹²⁵ H. White, ‘The Burden of History’, *History and Theory*, Vol. 5 No.2 (1967), 125

¹²⁶ M. Foucault, *Power/ Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972-1977*, edited by C. Gordon (New York, Pantheon Books, 1980).

¹²⁷ T. Richards, *The Imperial Archive: Knowledge and the Fantasy of Empire* (London & New York: Verso, 1993), 73.

¹²⁸ White, ‘The Burden of History’, 111.

This thesis focuses primarily on how political events and structures within Uganda have shaped Acholi identities over a period of thirty-five years. It is axiomatic that identities, be they collective or individual, are continually evolving and are shaped by the histories from which they were formed and nurtured. They are not contained within a 'dead past', but instead their very existence is given credence by a continued dialogue between the past, present and the future.¹²⁹ This assessment becomes even more pertinent when dealing with oral testimonies from those whose memories of the past cannot be disentangled from their present situation.

Northern Uganda is currently going through a process of post-conflict rehabilitation, aided by numerous governmental and non-governmental organisations that are placing emphasis firmly on post-conflict reconstruction, transitional reconciliation and ethnojustice. Consequently, institutions such as Justice and Reconciliation Project, (JRP), Acholi Religious Leaders Peace Initiative (ARLPI), and Civil Societies for Peace in northern Uganda, to name but a few are numerous in the region. The primary arguments that emerged following the various failed peace talks with the LRA, were that any process of transitional justice would have to factor in Acholi indigenous methods of reconciliation. The consensus emerged even before the withdrawal of LRA troops in northern Uganda. In April 1997, *kacoke madit* (big gathering), a meeting of a cross section of Acholi including religious leaders, government ministers and representatives of the LRA and NRM was held in London with the aim of discussing ways of bringing lasting peace to the region by accommodating traditional methods of reconciliation.¹³⁰ Furthermore, in 2000 the *Ker Kwaro Acoli* (KKA), the Acholi cultural institution, was reinstated by article 246 of the Ugandan Constitution.¹³¹ KKA claims to have its 'roots in the

¹²⁹ R.G. Collingwood, *The Idea of History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994).

¹³⁰ 'The Bending of Spears' producing consensus for peace & development in Northern Uganda, commissioned by: International Alert December 1997, (Personal Copy).

¹³¹ 'Community Perspectives on the Mato Oput Process, Collaborative Transitions Africa, The Institute for Global Leadership, Tufts University: The Institute of Peace and Strategic Studies, Gulu University, October 2009.

traditional and political organisations of the Acholi people as chiefdoms.¹³² Finally clause 3.1 of the unsigned Juba Peace Accords stated that, 'traditional justice mechanisms . . . shall be promoted with necessary modifications as a central part of the framework for accountability and reconciliation.'¹³³

The popularisation of 'ethnojustice' in the region has not been without its critics. Adam Branch states that since the mid-2000s increased foreign funding and foreign agencies and donors have contributed to the promotion of traditional reconciliation and justice to make it a major growth industry in northern Uganda.¹³⁴ Furthermore, the emphasis on chiefly authority, derived from 'authentic' pre-colonial Acholi cultural traditions, and advocated for by groups such as the KKA is predominately exclusive of those that do not fit into the patriarchal chiefly hierarchy, particularly Acholi women and young men.¹³⁵

The LRA conflict, post-conflict reconstruction and the emphasis on ethnojustice and chiefly authority, raise some important points regarding the limitations of historicising Acholi 'moral ethnicity' in relation to how the interviewees that were consulted for this project remembered the past. Undeniably, the experience of war, collective suffering and post-conflict reconstruction has served to reinforce Acholi ethnic identity both internally and externally, by reaffirming group solidarity through collective suffering and remembrance. This can be observed within current discourses, formal and informal, regarding the NRM's perceived political persecution of Acholi, accusations of genocide and the governments 'plan' to eradicate the peoples of Acholi all together, as revenge for Acholi actions in Uganda's political past.¹³⁶

These local discourses bring to light some of the limitations concerning oral history and the act of remembering the past in the context of the present. The relationship between the Acholi past and its present can notably be observed when some informants argued adamantly that the position of Laloyo

¹³²Justice and Reconciliation Project, <http://justiceandreconciliation.com/about/partners/>, [Accessed, 22 August 2014].

¹³³ *Community Perspectives on the Mato Oput Process, Collaborative Transitions Africa*, 4.

¹³⁴ Branch, *Displacing Human Rights*, 154.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, chapter 5.

¹³⁶ Finnström, *Living with Bad surroundings*, 169.

Maber (Good ruler/Acholi paramount chief) preceded the 1930s, when in fact the post was officially sanctioned by the British in 1959. This observation could be used to argue that the current emphasis on chiefs as the pillars of 'authentic' pre-colonial Acholi traditions has gone some way to perhaps elevate perceptions of their power in the Acholi political past. More significantly, within the discourses of victimisation, the government failure to effectively facilitate post-conflict reconstruction, and the emphasis on Acholi 'tradition' as a mechanism to affect justice and reconciliation, has placed 'ethnicity' and 'tribe' at the centre of Acholi formal and informal political discourses. However, this is not to argue that the prominence of ethnopolitics in Acholi today is simply a result of the LRA conflict. In fact, whilst it has been argued that tribal identities are irrelevant at village level social interactions, 'at least until soldiers start killing each other', Uganda's violent post-colonial history, ensured that there has been more periods of instability than stability.¹³⁷ Consequently, especially within the context of the LRA conflict, how has the experience of war shaped how the past is now remembered? The answer to this question is more difficult to ascertain from the archives of the period under research, but oral histories can offer some insight. This is when the act of remembering, the language and terminology used by the interviewee whilst recounting past experiences become pivotal. This was observed by the author when informants would use expressions such as 'human rights abuses and violations', whilst recounting their experiences during the preceding decades prior to war, although this international rhetoric only appears in the local archives in the mid-1980s. Whilst all these points could benefit from further research beyond the scope of this thesis, it is important to acknowledge how localised social categories of ethnicity and identity continue to be shaped by contemporary debates and social contexts.

Critics of oral history such as Marwick and Hobsbawm have pointed to the methodology's subjugation to human memory, specifically its unreliability and the social factors that shape that which is being memorialised, with

¹³⁷ T. Allen, 'Ethnicity and Tribalism on the Sudan-Uganda Border', in K. Fukui and J. Markakis, (eds.), *Ethnicity and Conflict in the Horn of Africa*, (Oxford: James Currey, 1994), 133.

Hobsbawm adding that oral history is a slippery medium for preserving facts.¹³⁸ Evidence of ‘false memories’ readily presented themselves when the researcher was conducting interviews in Northern Uganda. When recalling their memories of the HSM, two informants pointed to a specific time where Alice Lakwena used her spiritual powers to cause a large rock or mountain to internally combust. While this account is highly dubious, it also provides an opportunity to access how stories became ‘factual’ accounts and how they are then remembered. Other researchers have detailed similar stories regarding the ‘exploding rock’, in some form or other, which seems to have its origins in the teachings of Alice Lakwena who told her followers that any stones thrown at the enemy would be blessed and subsequently explode like a grenade.¹³⁹ However, this could also be an indication of how researchers influence the memories of their informants. It is possible given the large number of academics currently doing fieldwork in Northern Uganda, that some of them without prompting could have brought up the story of the exploding rock, creating, as Hobsbawm states, flaws in the informant’s memory.¹⁴⁰ However, the significance of oral history ‘is not that the methodology is merely interested in facts,’ but as Portelli argues, ‘is concerned more with the participant’s perception of what is true.’¹⁴¹ Much in the same way as the financial account audits found in the district archives in Uganda convey a history of economic poverty, oral testimonies reveal how those who lived through that poverty experienced, understood and conceptualised it. In a similar vein, historical memories are intrinsically linked to current events that continue to shape memories of the past. For the majority of the interviewees consulted for this project, the LRA conflict and Amin’s dictatorial rule

¹³⁸ A. Marwick, *The New Nature of History: Knowledge, Evidence, Language* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2001), 136; E. Hobsbawm, *On History* (London: Weidenfield and Nicolson, 1997), 206.

¹³⁹ H. Eichstaedt, *First Kill Your Family: Child Soldiers of Uganda and the Lord’s Resistance Army* (Chicago: Chicago Review Press, 2009), 15; Behrend, *Alice Lakwena and the Holy Spirit*, 31.

¹⁴⁰ Hobsbawm, *On History*.

¹⁴¹ A. Portelli, *The Death of Luigi Trastulli and Other Stories. Form and Meaning in Oral History* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1991).

continually serve as a reference point to how pre-war experiences are remembered. Informants overwhelmingly painted a picture of Obote's first presidency as prosperous and progressive, yet the archival documents refute this. Given the events that occurred after 1970, it is unsurprising that their memories are largely comparative between what was 'bad' and what was 'worse'. Furthermore, Obote's standing as a 'Northern' President, compared to the current President's Southern identity brings to light what part regional, ethnic affiliations and political processes play in historical memory. "The discrepancy between fact and memory ultimately enhances the value oral sources as historical documents" by helping to see how people make sense of significant events and indeed what makes these events significant to them.¹⁴² It is dangerous to undervalue oral history, a methodology which, if approached with due diligence 'and interdisciplinary collaboration can allow 'reliability of a high order [to] be achieved.'¹⁴³

The transformation of archival and oral sources into a historical narrative is clearly a subjective one.¹⁴⁴ The question remains, how is this subjectivity further challenged when the researcher, as it is in this case, is a native to the region being researched? Any form of qualitative research is affected by the role of researcher, their personal views, their understanding of the environment they are studying, and more importantly in the case of oral research, how they are viewed by the people they are trying to study. Practically, my British and Ugandan identities were both an asset and a hindrance. Born in Uganda to an Acholi father and Lango mother, my Ugandan identities were instrumental in allowing me unrestricted access to the local archives in Gulu and Kitgum, as well as to Acholi informants. Undoubtedly, the fact that I could speak the local language, as well as having an easily identifiable Luo name, were contributing factors for this. However, whilst my 'Acholiness' opened access to informants, my British identity placed

¹⁴² Ibid.

¹⁴³ J. M. Vansina, *Oral Tradition as History* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1985), 200; P. Thompson, *Voice of the Past: Oral History* (Oxford University Press, 1998).

¹⁴⁴ H. White, *The Content of Form: Narrative Discourse and Historical Representation* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1987); M. Manoff, 'Theories from Across the Disciplines', *Libraries and the Academy*, Vol. 4 No.1 (2004), 9-25.

limits on me being comprehensively accepted by Acholi informants.¹⁴⁵ I was immediately marked out as a potential collaborator who could use my Western identity to highlight the plight of the Acholi, their historical suffering, victimisation, and economic and political neglect by the current Ugandan government. This clearly made it more difficult to conduct interviews as a large amount of time was spent discussing the current political situation. But as the interviews progressed it proved to be beneficial in giving the informants time to become used to the interview environment and consequently talk more openly.

My personal connection to Acholi will clearly raise questions about 'objectivity'. Undeniably the impact that the LRA/HSM war has had on own family has undoubtedly shaped my informal understanding of the Acholi political past. Moreover, coming to United Kingdom as the dependent of a political asylum seeker initiated a process of self-identification rooted in the discourses of victimisation that is prevalent among the Acholi Diaspora in the United Kingdom who have been directly or indirectly affected by the process of war. This 'victim identity' was instrumental in stoking my own interest in to researching the Acholi political past in order to move beyond the premise of simply what was done to them, and show how, despite their tumultuous history, the peoples of the region adapted and survived by developing and mobilizing their own political agency. It is futile to argue that my life experiences, Western education and cultural background have had no bearing on my analysis of the sources, as it is impossible to completely disentangle ones 'subjective self' from that which is being researched.¹⁴⁶ Bearing all this in mind, this researcher has nonetheless attempted to approach the sources critically; contextualise information by utilising wider academic discourses and tried to obtain as comprehensive a historical narrative as methodologically possible.

¹⁴⁵ M. Agar, *The Professional Stranger: An Informal Introduction to Ethnography* (New York: Academic Press, 1996).

¹⁴⁶ Foucault, *Power/ Knowledge*; V. Wilkerdine, *Daddy's Girl: Young Girls and Popular Culture* (London: Macmillan, 1997), 59.

1.5. Interview Samples and Methodology

In order to provide a multifocal analysis interviewees were drawn from a diverse group of Acholi informants. However, the time restraints of a doctoral research project restricted the number of informants who could be consulted. The participants ranged from rural peasant farmers, security guards to civil servants, with a relatively equal split between men and women. In total fifty-four individuals were formally and informally interviewed, including two separate group interviews consisting of fifteen and ten individuals. The larger group consisted entirely of Acholi women with the smaller group equally split between the genders. The decision to conduct a group interview with only female participants was in part due to the previous interview experiences, where it was difficult to draw out the voice of women in a rural household, particularly if their husbands were present. In these cases the wife would continually defer to her husbands narrative in view of him being the head of the household.

The samples of informants were somewhat random in as much as no individuals were identified as potential informants prior to embarking on the fieldwork. However, given the time frame of the period under research and the theories under discussion all those that were interviewed needed to be within a certain age bracket, with a minimum age of forty-five. This minimum age was set to ensure that the informants were old enough during the period under research where they could be able to articulate and recall clearly their past experiences. There also needed to be an equal split between various socio-economic statuses' representing urban and rural dwellers. Inevitably, many of the informants who fitted into the category of *Lawino* were located predominately in more rural areas of northern Uganda, whereas the *Ocols*, consisting of large business owner, civil servants, were more prominent in the larger towns and cities such as Gulu, Kitgum, Entebbe and Kampala.

Whilst in northern Uganda, I decided to employ a local research assistant who knew the town and surrounding areas well, as it would not have been advisable to simply walk into a village and ask to interview individuals without prior introduction. Consequently, as designated 'insider', my research

assistant did the preliminary work in identify potential informants after being given a brief of the demographic I was interested in consulting. He was also pivotal in providing transportation to more remote villages where he accompanied to make initial introductions.

I was also able to gain access to potential informants through a local NGO which I volunteered for as a researcher in Gulu. Whilst my work was to interview their beneficiaries regarding the merits of traditional mechanisms of justice and reconciliation in Acholi post conflict, one of my stipulations was that I would be able to conduct research for my thesis among their beneficiaries who fit my age profile and agreed to the interview. My work with the NGO allowed me to gain access to groups based all around in Acholi in rural areas surrounding Gulu and Kitgum. It must also be noted that among the interview samples, informants living in Gulu and its environs are overly represented in comparison to Kitgum and its surrounding rural areas. This is primarily because I was based in Gulu and would make frequent trips lasting one to two weeks to Kitgum to consult that archives and conduct interviews.

The initial plan was to conduct the archival research in Kampala, Entebbe and Mukono first before travelling to Gulu (West Acholi) and Kitgum (East Acholi) to spend a period of 3-4 months where most of the interviews would take place. As well as being host to the district archives, these two sites were chosen because they are the two major towns in Acholi, with an estimated population of around 375, 0000 and 260,000 respectively.¹⁴⁷ However, because of migration in and out of Acholi districts, during the archival research in southern Uganda, I inevitably came across Acholi informants who fit the required profile. Living and researching in Kampala and Entebbe gave me the opportunity to interact with a diverse group of Acholi residing in these areas, whether it be civil servants working in the archive sites, security guards at houses of friends and colleagues, or Askaris at local

¹⁴⁷ Kitgum District Local Government Five-Year Development Plan, Republic of Uganda, 27 April 2012, <http://npa.ug/wp-content/themes/npatheme/documents/North/Kitgum%20DDP.pdf> [Accessed, 25 July 2014]; Gulu District, Ministry of Water and Environment, Republic of Uganda, 2010, [file:///Users/a/Downloads/gulu%20\(1\).pdf](file:///Users/a/Downloads/gulu%20(1).pdf), [Accessed, 29 July 2014]. These figures are estimates and have likely increased, as there has not been a population census carried out in Uganda since 2002.

restaurants and shopping centres. Some of these individuals had migrated out of Acholi during the timeframe of the period under research whereas others were new migrants. Moreover, some of the Acholi informants I had the opportunity to interview in Gulu and Kitgum, were also predominately based in Kampala and Entebbe. These groups and individuals provided an interesting narrative of Acholi migrants living outside of the region and their continued connection to their ancestral villages in Acholi, which is explored in more depth in chapter four.

The formal interviews were in-depth conversations lasting from one to three hours, which was inevitably very time-consuming. However, this was necessary to create an environment whereby the interviewee could have the time to be comfortable and speak as openly as possible. Furthermore, as the research methodology utilised more of a narrative interview style, it was important to give informants time to tell their stories from their own individual perspectives. Where a question and answer methodology was adopted it was structured to allow the informants to think about the themes being discussed within this thesis, mainly religious and political affiliations, Acholi indigenous cultural practices, social hierarchies and gender roles. Inevitably some informants needed less prompting during the interview process as the act of remembering the past allowed them to self prompt as each story and/or memory fed into another. In view of the previous discussion on how the present interlinks with the past, there were situations where I had to guide the informants back to the scope of the research questions when memories and experiences of the LRA conflict became overly dominant within their narrative. This had to be approached sensitively and thoughtfully so as not to appear dismissive or disinterested in the trauma of war. In nearly all cases, I deliberately chose not to interrupt these recollections, as it seemed important and helpful for the informants to relay these experiences to me. Whilst these experiences were recorded, they have not been used directly in the thesis even though all the informants were happy for me to do so, not least to highlight the horrors of war faced by many Acholi within the last thirty years.

There were also a number of informal conversations, mainly carried out during long journeys in crowded minibuses, social events, bars, and restaurants. These informal interactions contributed significantly to my overall

understanding of ethnicity, culture and identity in Acholi. Whilst informal, all the peoples I spoke to were made aware of the research I was conducting in the region, as this would naturally follow after introductions, with discussion of what I was studying and why I was interested in pursuing certain topics for conversation. In addition, during formal one-to-one interviews, family members, friends, would walk in with refreshments, hear the tail end of a conversation, contribute something, joke or disagree and then walk out. Sometimes it could be as brief as one minute, sometimes a little bit more and in some instance, if the informant agreed I would make arrangements to interview the contributor at another time within a more formal capacity, if they fit into the age bracket. Where this was not possible, these brief interjections were nonetheless recorded and placed under my list of informal interviews and interactions.

1.6. Thesis Structure

The following chapter of the thesis will cover the early colonial period by examining the processes that led to the formation of the Acholi as a politically and geographically centralised ethnic group. This chapter will be used to establish long-term trends of ethnicity in Acholi and Ugandan politics and will provide the baseline for analysing shifts in Acholi post-colonial identities.

The chapter covering the 1950s will provide the base-line for the interrogation of the relationship between high and low politics in Acholi during the run up to independence. More generally, by incorporating the politics of decolonisation and the rise of Ugandan 'nationalism' we are able to see more clearly the corollaries of colonialism in post-independence Ugandan and Acholi politics. All the chapters will deal specifically with how social, political and cultural structures formed, harnessed and changed Acholi identities. The emphasis once again will be on processes, and as such it proved important to follow a chronological trajectory rather than a thematic one. The thirty-five years covered were undoubtedly the most tumultuous and formative in Uganda's colonial and post-colonial history, and any attempt at following a thematic structure would have only served to further confuse the already complex historiography. Each decade following the 1950s offers its own

monumental event, from the end of British rule, first decade of independence, the rule of Idi Amin in the 1970s, to the subsequent coup d'états that characterised the early 1980s. Only by laying out the chronology can one really begin to understand the patterns, themes and structures that drove those formative years.

All the chapters will look at how Acholi identities were utilised externally through 'political tribalism', how they were shaped and reconciled in the locality within the Acholi 'moral ethnicity'. This will allow for a much clearer understanding of the relationship between the political centre of the state and periphery.¹⁴⁸ However, the 1980s offers an interesting perspective as during this period we witness a merger of these two platforms. The economic and political collapse of the state opened an avenue for political pluralism giving multiple 'power contenders' the opportunity to engage outside of their

¹⁴⁸ Lonsdale, 'Political Tribalism and Moral Ethnicity'.

Chapter 2.0. Indirect Rule In Acholi

The very nature of Acholi political organisation made it unsuitable as a tool of British administration.¹⁴⁹

Tarsis Kabwegyere argues, 'if the colonial administration of Acholi did not amount to the "the creation of a "tribe", it is difficult to see what else it was."¹⁵⁰ Kabwegyere follows an established group of Africanists who have argued that ethnic ideologies only developed in contact with the European 'thinking about tribes', which the missionaries and colonial officers brought to Africa. In short: that 'tribes' and 'tribalism' in Africa are by and large a colonial 'invention'.¹⁵¹ However, whilst it is widely accepted that the colonial encounter instigated the centralisation and politicisation of tribal identities in Africa, in order to fully understand the salience and complexities of ethnopolitics within African states, we must as Carola Lentz points out, identify not only the importance of understanding 'the colonial construction of ethnic categories', but also their 'embeddedness in pre-colonial models of identity.' Lentz advocates for a multifaceted approach by 'analysing how ethnic categories, boundaries and institutions were created and continually redefined by colonial officials,

¹⁴⁹ R.M. Bere, 'An Outline of Acholi History', *Uganda Journal*, Vol.11 No.1 (1947), 58

¹⁵⁰ T.B. Kabwegyere, *The Politics of State Formation: The Nature and Effect of Colonialism in Uganda* (Nairobi: East African Literature Bureau, 1974) quoted in A. Branch, *Displacing Human Rights*, 48.

¹⁵¹ Lentz, *Colonial Constructions and African Initiatives*, 131; for arguments for 'ethnic constructivism' and the invention of the 'tribe' by colonial institutions, see 'J. Iliffe, *A Modern History of Tanganyika* (Cambridge University Press, 1979); T. Ranger, 'The Invention of Tradition in Colonial Africa.' In *The Invention of Tradition*, (eds.), E. Hobsbawm and T. Ranger, 211–62 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983); T. Ranger, 'Missionaries, Migrants and the Manyika: The Invention of Ethnicity in Zimbabwe' in Vail, L. (ed.) *The Creation of Tribalism in Southern Africa* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), 118–50; A. Southall, 'The Illusion of Tribe' in P. Claus & W. Gutkind (eds.), *The Passing of Tribal Man in Africa* (Leiden: Brill, 1970), 28–50; J. Reader, *Africa: A Biography of the Continent* (New York: Brill 1998); D. R. Wright 'What Do You Mean There Were No Tribes in Africa? Thoughts on Boundaries: And Related Matters in Precolonial Africa' *History in Africa*, Vol. 26. (1999), 409-426.

missionaries, anthropologists, chiefs, labour migrants and educated elite.¹⁵² This approach allows us to assess tribal identities within African societies outside the colonial construction framework by ascertaining how certain groups and individuals internalised the colonial political demarcation of local communities, and what part these groups placed in the reaffirming and maintaining these politicised tribal identities. By doing we are able to assess not only the corollaries of colonial rule within the post-colonial state, but also help to explain the salience of tribalism and tribal identities within the post-colonial state. Indeed, as Tim Allen argues, the term “tribe” has now become an indigenous term for something which can be of immense importance.¹⁵³

The very nature of indirect rule, drawn from the ethos of ‘divide and rule’, undoubtedly centralised and politicised localised clan and groups in Acholi, as colonial officers and missionaries sought to label social groups in an effort to better administer the peoples of the regions. Western missionaries in particular, contributed to the creation of tribal boundaries in colonial Africa, through the development of vernacular languages and the production of written accounts of local/tribal tribal histories. In doing so, they ‘helped create a powerful new idiom and new avenues for the expression of consciously identified and clearly bounded ethnic (tribal) identity.’¹⁵⁴ This was drawn from the underlying belief that if the civilised people of Europe belonged to nations, Africans must then belong to tribes. Thus the missionaries set about identifying dominant groups and neatly placing them into tribal categories. The popularisation of standardising the vernacular language resulted in a large number of publications concerned with historicising clan groups in Uganda and colonial Africa more generally.¹⁵⁵

¹⁵² Lentz, ‘Colonial Constructions and African Initiatives’, 109.

¹⁵³ T. Allen, ‘Ethnicity and Tribalism on the Sudan-Uganda Border’, 116.

¹⁵⁴ Atkinson, *The Roots of Ethnicity*, 7.

¹⁵⁵ See: J. Roscoe, *The BaGanda: An Account of their Native Customs and Beliefs*, (1911); A. Malandra *A Study of the Acholi Language: Grammar and Vocabulary* (1938); J.P. Crazzolara, *The Ancestral Shrine of the Acholi*, (1939); V. Pellerigini, *Lok pa Acoli Macon: A History of the Acholi* (1949).

When it came to establishing the effective occupation of Acholi, the first British colonial administrators and missionaries to encounter the Acholi in the late nineteenth century had already had prolonged encounters with the Baganda in the South, and consequently their assessment of Acholi and its peoples was largely comparative to their views of these centralised southern kingdoms. Acholi and its peoples had to be moulded to fit British colonial economic ambitions, mainly to serve as a source of labour, cash-crops such as cotton, and manpower for the army for the wider development of the colony, whilst Buganda would remain as the political and administrative hub of the Protectorate.¹⁵⁶ By the turn of the twentieth century the British administration in Uganda had decided that Northern Uganda's future lay in its union with the Bantu speaking south as opposed to Sudan. Despite administrators' views of the people in Acholi as 'naturally lazy' and the land as economically unviable, competition from French and Belgian colonial interests in the region forced them to bring Acholi into the political fold of the Uganda Protectorate.¹⁵⁷ Acholi was colonised at the peak of high imperialism and its corollary environment of scientific racism. Consequently, the British deployed preconceived nineteenth-century racial stereotypes upon the peoples of Acholi to fit their political and economic ambitions in the wider Protectorate. Describing the Northerner as an immoral person who often went naked, they also remarked on his 'woeful independence and the haphazard division of territory among chiefs none of which had much control over their subjects [sic].'¹⁵⁸

In greeting and salutation there is a complete absence of the humble demeanor of the Bantus. A curt how do you do? May be accompanied with a military salute or offer of a hand to shake [sic]. A warrior will remain standing upright, grasping his spear and looking straight in the face of the interlocutor, even if he be an important official or a big chief. This independent character of the Nilotic tribes is apparent in all their

¹⁵⁶ Kasozi, *The Social Origins of Violence in Uganda*, 6: M. Mamdani, *Imperialism and Fascism in Uganda* (Nairobi: Heinemann, 1983), 10-11.

¹⁵⁷ Girling, *The Acholi of Uganda*, 149-50.

¹⁵⁸ The term 'Northerner' in this period is inclusive of all the people in the northern region mainly, the Luo speaking group who include, the Lango, Teso, Karamojong, Alur, Madi and Acholi.

dealings with outsiders, marking itself in open contempt of Bantu peoples and complete indifference to even the arts and learning of the white man. Each man is inclined to take an independent line of his own, and to win a chief to Christianity does not require the adherence of his subjects. On the other hand such a character affords the finest soils for the growth of a stalwart type of Christianity.¹⁵⁹

Indirect rule had already proved to be relatively successful in Buganda, and it was a system that the British were keen to introduce in Acholi. British representatives were sent to the Northern region to secure as much support from the chiefs as possible to ensure a smooth establishment of colonial rule. Treaties were quickly drawn up ready to be signed by the chiefs. Dwyer describes these documents as being 'couched in the most formal diplomatic prose and containing blank spaces for the appropriate names and dates' being purely a 'pre-emptive attempt to control the foreign affairs of Acholi.'¹⁶⁰

However, whilst the British faced initially faced minor armed opposition from larger and more prosperous Acholi chiefdoms such as the Payira chiefdom between 1898-1900, and rebellions from the peoples of Lamogi in 1911-12¹⁶¹, these were easily quashed using the colonial administration's military resources and capabilities. Chief Awich of the Payira chief was reported to have mobilised around 5000 men who proceeded to distract and evade government troops.¹⁶² He was eventually captured and exiled in 1900.¹⁶³ The British soon realised however that regardless of the problems posed by some recalcitrant chiefs, the most challenging task they faced was convincing the Acholi to produce more than they consumed. This was made

¹⁵⁹ UCU: Uganda Notes and Diocesan Gazette, No.1 Vo.13 (1913).

¹⁶⁰ Dwyer, *The Acholi of Uganda*, 61-62.

¹⁶¹ Between 1911 and 1912, members of the Lamogi chiefdom, west of Gulu, rose up in a series of rebellions against growing British authority in the region. The main point of conflict in Lamogi was driven by a confluence of factors, including the continued brutality of Sudanese troops stationed in Lamogi, the colonial use of forced labour, and the issue of gun control through a process of mandatory registration. The Lamogi continued to defy a direct order by refusing to bring their guns for registration. This resulted in a final military confrontation in early 1912 with the British resulting in defeat for the Lamogi; see: Adimola, 'The Lamogi Rebellion 1911-1912'; Dwyer, *The Acholi of Uganda: Adjustment to Imperialism*, 188.

¹⁶² Dwyer, *The Acholi of Uganda*, 77.

¹⁶³ Girling, *The Acholi of Uganda*, 150.

more difficult without the mobilising influence of a paramount chief. Therefore, one of the first requests made by newly appointed British administrative officer R.J.D. MacAlister was the return of Awich, whom he assessed, would 'be useful if worked properly.'¹⁶⁴

Although Frederick Lugard would not officially codify the policy of indirect rule until 1920, with limited resources and European manpower the British had long realised that they needed authoritative educated chiefs who could effectively to govern indirectly under official supervision.¹⁶⁵ The more educated the chief, the more power and responsibility was bestowed upon them, a fact that Awich and many other Acholi quickly realised. Soon many were taking full advantage of the missionary schools, with chiefs sending their sons to be educated. It was the realisation, as Finnström states, that the Acholi needed knowledge of the colonial system in order to oppose or collaborate with the British which drove the Acholi to seek to understand the language of their colonisers.¹⁶⁶

The institutionalisation of British rule in Acholi followed a process of disarmament of the local population which saw an estimated total of 5000 rifles being collected.¹⁶⁷ Following this, the first British administrative centre was established in Gulu in 1910 and in 1914 a second one was established in Kitgum in East Acholi. Following the end of the First World War British influence in Acholi became overtly intrusive:

Acholi firearms were confiscated and destroyed. Following this, many people were forced to move near roads built throughout the district, facilitating both communication and administrative control. Political authority in the district was also restructured. First, the imported Buganda-style council of chiefs, with a new 'paramount' chief, was further entrenched. Second, many formerly independent chiefdoms were amalgamated, thereby extending the authority of some chiefs over peoples they had never previously ruled. Third, even those chiefs remaining in office were controlled much more than before, with "their duties prescribed and their political activities strictly supervised." Cotton

¹⁶⁴ Ibid., 92.

¹⁶⁵ F.D. Lugard, *The Dual Mandate in British Tropical Africa*, 5th Edition (Hamden, CT: Archon Books, 1965).

¹⁶⁶ Finnström, *Living With Bad Surroundings*, 42.

¹⁶⁷ J.V. Wild, *Early Travellers in Acholi* (Edinburgh: Thomas Nelson and Sons/East African Literature Bureau, 1954), 58.

production also, of course, furthered two fundamental material objects of colonial rule: the Acholi could use the money to both pay taxes and purchase the imported European consumer goods increasingly penetrating the colonial economy.¹⁶⁸

In an attempt to establish an effective system of Native Authority one of the first things the administration did was to allow only chiefs who had been appointed the administration to keep their rifles. This had a twofold effect. First, it gave the chiefs weapons, which allowed them to exercise military and social power over their subjects thus reinforcing their big man persona. However, its second effect was to keep the chiefs under control, as any acts of rebellion would result in the loss of their colonial sponsored authority. The principle premise that guided indirect rule was that the British lacked the manpower and economic resources to administer directly. However, even if they had possessed the resources, it is questionable whether they would have utilised direct rule given the success indirect rule had had in the Kingdom of Buganda.¹⁶⁹ Regional border demarcations began in Acholi, and British DCs were appointed for each region to ensure effective administration of the Protectorate. To this end, the decision was made in 1914 to separate some of the northern-most chiefdoms, which now make up the town of Nimule, leaving them within the Sudanese border. This was in exchange for the government of Sudan relinquishing control of the West Nile.¹⁷⁰ Dwyer discusses the effect of regional boundaries on Acholi socio-political structure and blames the British for failing to comprehend how difficult it must have been for the Acholi to understand why a line was being drawn between them and their Lango and

¹⁶⁸ Atkinson, *The Roots of Ethnicity*, 5-6.

¹⁶⁹ D.A. Low, *Buganda in Modern History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971), 84-101.

¹⁷⁰ Sudan-Uganda Boundary Rectification, *Uganda Journal*, Vols. 26-27 (1962), 147; Unfortunately, not much archival research has been conducted regarding the experiences of Acholi soldiers during the First World War and they impact returning troops had on the region. However, archival documents indicate that by the outbreak of the Second World War, a high percentage of Acholi men had been or were members of the colonial army and police. This indicates that that during the inter-war period there was a rapid militarisation of Acholi men driven by the scarcity of employment opportunities and the colonial premise that members of the Acholi tribe were inherently 'martial'; Atkinson, *The Roots of Ethnicity*, 6-7.

Sudanese neighbours.¹⁷¹ The consequences of this were the division of the region along tribal lines, which not only reinforced tribal identities, but also created new regional ones.

The British administration immediately tasked itself with creating and appointing suitable chiefs who could effectively transmit British interests in the region. As a consequence, the chosen chiefs, whether hereditary or non-hereditary, found themselves bestowed with a substantial amount colonially sanctioned of power. They were given vast responsibilities over their subjects, and were armed and supported by the police.¹⁷² The numerous pre-colonial chiefdoms provided colonial administrators with the foundations for the native administrative units.¹⁷³ 'Competent' chiefs were left to rule under British 'guidance', and if no such chief was available, a new one with no traditional hereditary claims was instated. For example, Oteka Okello-Mwaka of Puranga was installed as a non-hereditary chief, specifically because of his political astuteness, education and willingness to comply with the colonial administration.¹⁷⁴ To this end, Acholi chiefs increasingly acted as cultural and political intermediaries between a centralised and economically viable Acholi on one hand and British indirect rule on the other.¹⁷⁵

2.1. Acholi Challenges to Indirect Rule

Much has been written about the oppressiveness of chiefly authority in colonial Uganda, with the focus being placed firmly on the Kingdom of Buganda. This is primarily because Buganda remained the centre of British economic and political interests and was thus deemed to be more significant for British colonial ambitions in the Protectorate. The Kingdom already 'had a highly developed and centralised political system and a chiefly hierarchy. This

¹⁷¹ Ibid.

¹⁷² J.R. Postlethwaite, *I look Back* (London: T.V Boardman and Co. Ltd, 1947), 56-7; Girling, *The Acholi of Uganda*.

¹⁷³ Behrend, *Alice Lakwena and the Holy Spirit Movement*, 18.

¹⁷⁴ Dwyer, *The Acholi of Uganda: Adjustment to Imperialism*, 171; Also see, Ocitti, *Oteka Okello-Mwaka*.

¹⁷⁵ Dwyer, *The Acholi of Uganda: Adjustment to Imperialism*, 188.

made possible a readily workable association with the British.¹⁷⁶ The 1900 agreement signed between the British and Buganda, bestowed a substantial amount of power on Baganda county chiefs (Bakungu) at the expense of traditional clan elders in the Kingdom.¹⁷⁷ Under the agreement the county chiefs were given land (*malio* estates), which as Twaddle argues, transformed the client-chiefs of Buganda into a landed aristocracy', with their subjects as tenants.¹⁷⁸ Bestowed with the colonial authority to collect taxes, judge cases, 'the sheer intensity of power possessed by Bakungu chiefs in Buganda' meant that they came to dominate the lives of their subjects. Inevitably conflict between the Bakungu chiefs and the subjects arose stemming from land disputes, high taxes, trade restrictions and the increasingly autocratic rule of the chiefs. This eventually resulted in political organisations such as the Young Buganda Association (YBA) being formed in 1919 to voice the grievances of young, most educated Buganda men against the authority of colonial appointed chiefs.¹⁷⁹

Drawing from his on research resistance movements in rural Uganda - primarily the southwestern - and urban South Africa, Mahmood Mamdani argues that as opposed to enforcing custom and enabling power among the African tribes, the introduction of the colonial Native Administration actually 'consolidated the non-customary power of chiefs in the colonial administration.'¹⁸⁰

It did so in two ways that marked a breach from the pre-colonial period. For the first time, the reach of the Native Authority and the customary law that it dispensed came to be all embracing. Previously autonomous

¹⁷⁶ G. Thompson, *Governing Uganda: British Colonial Rule and Its Legacy* (Kampala: Fountain Publishers, 2003), 44.

¹⁷⁷ Dwyer, *The Acholi in Uganda: Adjustment to Imperialism*, 192; Signed in 1900, the Buganda Agreement defined the boundaries of the Buganda Kingdom, later extended to the whole Protectorate. It subjected the Kingdom to the laws of British including tax collection, land tenure, boundaries, chiefly power and set conditions on the operations of the Buganda Parliament (Lukiko) and local council administrations.

¹⁷⁸ M. Twaddle, 'The Bakungu Chiefs of Buganda under British Colonial Rule, 1900-1930' *The Journal of African History*, Vol. 10, No. 2 (1969), 310.

¹⁷⁹ A.D. Low, *Buganda in Modern History* (California: University of California Press, 1971), 89

¹⁸⁰ M. Mamdani, *Citizen and Subject*, 110.

social domains like the household, age sets, and gender associations now fell within the scope of chiefly power. At the same time any challenge to chiefly power would now have to reckon with a wider systematic response.¹⁸¹

Chiefly authority in Mamdani's assessment 'was like a clenched fist' resulting in the creation of despotic leaders in the locality.¹⁸² In Acholi however, the relationship between chiefs and their subjects was far more complex than Mamdani's assessment, primarily because colonial chiefly authority in Acholi drew its power in part from pre-colonial clan and chiefly allegiances, as apposed from just colonial sanctioned authority. Secondly, the Acholi, unlike the Baganda and Banyoro had not lived under a prolonged system of monarchical-political centralisation, making it harder for the British to unitise its administration. Consequently, British rule in Acholi was arguably only intrusive on rudimentary administrative and political level, but less so on the indigenous social-political structures within Acholi communities, especially among the rural peasantry.

Outside Buganda, the 1919 Native Authority Ordinance had defined and institutionalised the powers of colonial chiefs giving them the official authority to administer their designated territories in matters relating to public order, the native courts, and tax and rent collection.¹⁸³ Indeed, many of the chiefs quickly realised how effectively they could abuse the new system for their own gains. Cases of nepotism and clan favouritism became well documented often placing the offending chiefs at odds with their subjects.¹⁸⁴ Undeniably, the institutionalisation of colonial chiefly authority in Acholi resulted in the creation of some oppressive chiefs. British Social anthropologist Franklin Knowles Girling who had spent nine months in Acholi from 1949-50 conducting research for his doctoral thesis, recalled observing divisional chiefs ordering 'beatings, fines and imprisonments. 'You see we

¹⁸¹ Ibid.

¹⁸² Ibid.

¹⁸³ J. Jørgensen, *Uganda: A Modern History* (New York: St Martin's Press, 1981), 82.

¹⁸⁴ UNA/E C.20881 Box 19: Amalgamation of Gulu and Chua District, Acholi District. Letter from Governor O.E Mitchell to the Secretary of State for the Colonies c.1938. Girling, *The Acholi of Uganda*, 189.

must rule by fear. The people are lazy, they do not realise what good things the government is doing for them. How can we Acholi progress unless we grow cotton, pay our taxes and dig latrines as the government wants us to do?’¹⁸⁵ However, when the Native Councils were re-organised circa 1937-8 it was not simply a response to the Acholi reacting against to ‘despotic’ chiefly authority as much as the British Administration’s realisation that chiefly authority was being challenged by pre-colonial clan allegiances. Furthermore, it was also an acknowledgement that ‘unqualified British support’ for colonial appointed chiefs who had no customary rights to their office, ‘would eventually make the colonial administration the target of resistance [in Acholi].’¹⁸⁶ The tension between hereditary and non-hereditary chiefs in Acholi, was further reaffirmed by Girling what stated that:

The Acholi are always careful to distinguish between the *ladit kaka me Governmente*, (government chief) and the *ladit kaka me cik Acholi* (elder according to Acholi custom). The latter performs the ritual of his lineage, and has a certain authority over its members. Thus at every level of the present political structure of the Native Administration in Acholi District there is a divorce between the present political authority of the Government appointed chiefs and the ritual authority which is all the remains of the past political power of the traditional functionaries.¹⁸⁷

Girling’s comprehensive study of the Acholi was one of the first attempts to establish a detailed examination of Acholi social practices and political structures. Prior to his research in Acholi, Girling has already spent time in Barcelona volunteering for the International Brigade during the Spanish Civil War and was member of the Oxford Communist Party who was sympathetic to Marxist ideology. Girling’s political leanings may have been inscribed on his ethnographic research in Uganda, particularly regarding his observations on the intrusion of the western capitalist economy on the peoples of Acholi. Girling conveys that prior to the colonial encounter, clan communities within Acholi placed emphasise on the sharing of goods, labour as a means to ensure the smooth running of a household, village and domain, with each

¹⁸⁵ Girling, *The Acholi of Uganda*, 198. (Quote from county chief in Acholi interviewed by Girling during his fieldwork in the region in 1949-1950).

¹⁸⁶ Branch, *Displacing Human Rights*, 49.

¹⁸⁷ Girling, *The Acholi of Uganda*, 198.

member being allocated a productive rule.¹⁸⁸ This system according to Girling, allowed the peoples of pre-colonial Acholi, to maintain a 'relative' homogeneity' of social order.¹⁸⁹ The transformation of the 'moral economy' of pre-colonial Acholi following the institutionalisation of British rule undoubtedly disrupted socio-political power relations, fostering, in Lonsdale's terms, new 'social competitions' between local competitors, each trying to find their footing with the emerging colonial political economy and claim a share of the 'colonial cake'.¹⁹⁰

The introduction of non-hereditary chiefs had not been met with enthusiasm among the Acholi, particularly among the hereditary chiefs and their clan members. Girling argues that the arbitrary powers of the chiefs were kept in check by the existence of hostile groups, be it marginalised hereditary chiefs, or competing clan leaders from whom any aggrieved Acholi could seek support.¹⁹¹ Consequently, chiefs, particularly non-hereditary ones, did not hold the monopoly of power in Acholi. By 1936 the British had decided to implement a completely hereditary system of clan chiefs within the Acholi Native Authority. This meant that chiefs would no longer be nominated or even created by colonial government. The new system meant that each clan chief was given a designated area that roughly coincided with pre-colonial clan boundaries, resulting in around fifty such divisions.¹⁹² If the clans were too small, they would be combined with another clan with which they were friendly. However problems arose when it became clear that the clans were too numerous and simple administrative duties such as the trying of Native Court cases were becoming impossible. As a consequence, the system was once again changed in 1943.¹⁹³

The process of restructuring the Native Administration in Acholi was designed to make the administration manageable and, most importantly,

¹⁸⁸ Ibid., iii

¹⁸⁹ Ibid., 28

¹⁹⁰ Lonsdale, 'Moral Ethnicity and Political Tribalism', 78.

¹⁹¹ Ibid., 199.

¹⁹² Ibid., 175.

¹⁹³ TNA/CO 1018/81, Lord Hailey Papers 1946-1955, J.W Stell to Lord Hailey, Native Administration and the Native Council (1947).

acceptable to the Acholi. The fifty county divisions that had been acknowledged in 1936 were eventually reduced to twenty-two areas called *Jagoates*, which were in turn grouped into six counties, a reduction from the original eight. The chiefs in each county, called *Jagos*, were a mixture of hereditary and non-hereditary chiefs elected after nomination from the District Council and the final approval of the District Commissioner (DC). Tellingly, the archives give more insight into how some of the non-hereditary chiefs were treated. Responding to Lord Hailey who had questioned whether all six Acholi county chiefs had hereditary claims, the DC of the Northern Province responded that 'some had, some were good men who had been moved into the area. There are two of this type who are now doing very well, although they do not do so well in their own areas.'¹⁹⁴ It could be argued that the reason why the two non-hereditary chiefs were unpopular in their areas was because there would have been un-appointed chiefs who had hereditary claims within that particular county. Understandably the people of that county would no doubt have a sense of loyalty towards that chief, whom they would have considered to be the rightful head of the clan. Added to this, the non-hereditary chiefs would have been viewed as a direct tool of the British administration and would have had to deal with the negative connotations which that role may have brought.

Under the chiefs in the new political hierarchy were the *mukungu* (parish chiefs) chosen by the county council. There would be around two or three of these under the *jago*, depending on the size of the county, totalling around seventy-one in all. Each *mukungu* would be responsible for between four hundred to seven hundred poll tax payers.¹⁹⁵ To avoid any conflict of interest, if the council elected a *mukungu*, he could no longer represent his own clan in Acholi. Another perhaps more important reason for this, was that from the British perspective, emphasis was placed on the creation of a wider Acholi tribal identity. Thus Chiefs could act as unifying political figures who would centralise the various clans into a larger tribal group that could be more

¹⁹⁴ Ibid; B. Hailey, *An African Survey. A Study of Problems Arising in Africa South of the Sahara* London: (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1938).

¹⁹⁵ TNA/CO 1018/81, Lord Hailey Papers 1946-1955, J.W Stell to Lord Hailey, Native Administration and the Native Council, (1947).

easily administered. As colonial officer Bere later commented, 'the urgent trend of modern administration has been to bring the clans together and to make Acholi conscious of their unity as a single people.'¹⁹⁶ As such it was imperative that the villagers were encouraged not to attach too much importance to their clan identities.¹⁹⁷ It was also an indication that pre-colonial clan identities still remained an important point of reference for many Acholi.

2.2. Christian Missionaries in Acholi

Clan identities were largely unaffected by colonial rule primarily because colonial authority did not directly dictate the domestic lives of many Acholi. That responsibility was left in the hands of Anglican and Catholic missionaries, who went about trying to convert and 'civilise' the indigenous population.

Indirect rule as practiced by the British encouraged to a certain extent the continuation of traditional life. The peasants were supposed to change only in particular ways. They were to support an administration appointed chief, pay taxes, convert to Christianity, and acquire some education. Otherwise they were to carry on with their traditional life.¹⁹⁸

The institutionalisation of British rule in Northern Uganda ran parallel to missionary activity, with the main organisation in the region being the Verona Fathers (VF) and the Church Missionary Society (CMS). No other agent had more impact on Acholi society than the missionaries, whose influence became so great that they in fact became a tool of indirect rule.¹⁹⁹ Whilst Native Administration acted as a main artery for colonial power, missionary

¹⁹⁶ Bere, 'An outline of Acholi History', 1.

¹⁹⁷ Girling, *The Acholi of Uganda*, 175.

¹⁹⁸ A. Whiper, *Priests, Politics, and Protests*, Makerere Institute of Social Research Library, Kampala (1964); C. Taylor, *Sources of the Self: The Making of Modern Identities* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1989), 11-12. cited in J. Comaroff, 'Governmentality, Materiality, Legality, Modernity on the Colonial State in Africa', 115. in, J.G Deutsch, P. Probst and H. Schmidt, (eds.) *African Modernities: Entangled Meanings in Current Debate* (Portsmouth: Heinemann; Oxford: James Currey, 2002).

¹⁹⁹ Wild, *Early Travellers in Acholi*, 58.

institutions were, within a limited capacity, its capillary authority.²⁰⁰ The Verona Fathers were the first to enter the region, building their first missionary station in Gulu in 1911.²⁰¹ However, the British CMS had full support from the colonial government and acted as an extension of the British administration. This was re-enforced by some CMS missionaries who behaved like colonial administrators and took on duties such as collecting taxes, passing legal judgements and paying salaries. The acquisition of power in Acholi quickly became geared towards identification with the missionaries.²⁰² In most cases, being Anglican was the pre-requisite for becoming a chief. In 1913, of the thirty-six Acholi baptised, thirteen were appointed as native chiefs. The Catholic missionaries, not wanting to be outdone, embarked on a recruitment campaign and in some cases went as far as to bribe Protestants with material goods in an attempt to get them to convert to Catholicism.²⁰³ The missionaries' success in Acholi lay in first converting the locals and then using converts to proselytise. The spread of Christianity in region was accelerated through access to new structures of opportunity which having a Christian education and identity be it Catholic or Protestant provided. This was something that the peoples of Acholi quickly became aware of. Becoming a 'Christian agent' became an attractive prospect as it opened many doors to the newly emerging market economy, especially if one was a teacher or had received a Western education. However, as missionary teachings and the commodities that they provided became more entrenched in Acholi

²⁰⁰ Foucault's theory on the mechanism of power discusses it's 'capillary' existence where power reaches in to the very grain of individuals and asserts itself in their actions attitudes and everyday life. However, Frederick Cooper argues that colonial power in Africa was arterial, concentrated spatially and socially and was not very nourishing beyond these domains and not as invasive as Foucault's analysis. M. Foucault, *Power/Knowledge*, 82-87; F. Cooper, 'Conflict and Connection: Rethinking Colonial African History,' *American Historical Review* 99 (1994), 1516-45; F. Cooper, *Colonialism in Question: Theory Knowledge and History* (University of California Press, 2005).

²⁰¹ Behrend, *Alice Lakwena and the Holy Spirit Movement*, 113-115.

²⁰² *Ibid.*, 115.

²⁰³ Dwyer, *The Acholi of Uganda: Adjustment to Imperialism*, 217.

worldviews, the political contest for power in the locality between the two denominations and their Acholi converts also became more prominent.²⁰⁴

When in 1919 famine was reported in Chua, East Acholi, the colonial administration was prompted to create the Chua Relief Fund. Due to the climate in Chua being relatively harsh, the peoples of the region had become accustomed to dealing with sporadic outbreaks of famine by travelling to other parts of Acholi to source food. Consequently, the human cost the famine had been kept relatively low with four deaths reported by February 1919. To help alleviate the effects of the famine, the colonial administration requested that the VF, who had a mission station in the area, undertake the responsibility of distributing food to the population.²⁰⁵ There are two key points to bear in mind here. First, in view of the VF distributing food relief to the people of Chua, the connection between resources and religion was in this case being reinforced. Moreover, oral testimonies suggest that in regards to the initial conversion of souls, the Acholi utilised the politics of survival, aligning with a denomination that was better served to provide them with the most resources, be it food, clothes, and the proximity to hospitals or schools.²⁰⁶ The second key point regarding the distribution of food during famine was that British administrators utilised Acholi colonial chiefs, who provided the much-needed connection to the central administration. As well as the chiefs, the pastoral work of the missionaries in the remote regions and their collaboration with the colonial state was instrumental in the attempt to bridge the gap between the rural periphery and the administrative centre in Gulu. It is this connection, which would play a pivotal role in the centralisation of Acholi ethnic identity in post-independence years, where the symbiotic relationship between the locality and central government would prove to be a highly prized and contested political tool.

However, much like colonial administrators the missionaries lacked the manpower to directly oversee a comprehensive 'conversion' of the Acholi to Christian teachings.

²⁰⁴ UNA/E C.2456 Box 22 'Mission Schools: Denominational Differences' 1937-38.

²⁰⁵ UNA/E Box 1 No. 2135C: Northern Province Annual Report for 1918-19.

²⁰⁶ Oral interviews conducted in Gulu, Kitgum 2012; UNA/E File C:2456: Mission Schools: Denominational Differences. 1937-38.

The mission attempt to exercise strict control only over the households living in the immediate vicinity of their churches, who are regarded as “the people of the mission”. [However] the indirect influence of the missions extends beyond the confines of these villages. They maintain varying degrees of authority over their scattered congregations in many parts of the areas through their schools and in other ways.²⁰⁷

Despite the growth of the colonial market economy and increased investment in cash crops, a vast majority of Acholi still remained very poor, with subsistence agriculture being the dominant method of farming.²⁰⁸ As one government report concluded, ‘the traditional attachment to the land occupied, combined with the rigidity of tribal boundaries, retarded local migration’, thus ensuring that a sizable percentage of the population remained contained within their pre-colonial clan boundaries.²⁰⁹ Furthermore, census estimates for the years 1911, 1921, 1948 and 1959 showed that the Acholi had one of the lowest population densities in the Protectorate.²¹⁰ Even by 1962, the region was still vastly under-populated. Acholi was fifty per cent larger, but had a population thirty per cent smaller than the average district in Uganda. The sparse distribution of the population and the size of the district greatly hindered the distribution of services to the remotest areas. What this meant was that large numbers of the Acholi peasantry were left relatively untouched by the formal colonial economy. Even missionaries, whose reach far extended that of the Native Administration, could only play a relatively superficial role in the institutionalisation of colonial rule in Acholi. Consequently, alongside emerging Acholi identities shaped by the experience of colonialism, Acholi pre-colonial practices such as polygamy and traditional religious practices continued to be emphasised among those on the hinterlands of colonial power.

²⁰⁷ Girling, *The Acholi of Uganda*, 188.

²⁰⁸ The Economic Development of Uganda: Report of a Mission Organised by the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development at the request of the Uganda Government. (John Hopkins Press, 1962), 15 & 17.

²⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

²¹⁰ B.W Langlands, ‘The Population Density of Acholi District’, Occasional Paper N.30; Department of Geography (Kampala: Makerere University, 1971), 20.

TABLE I

Uganda Political Divisions and Population (Thousands)*

Province and District	Total Population	African Population	Land Area in Square Mile	Population Density per Square Mile
Buganda Province	1,881	1,834	16,138	117
Mengo East	613	607	5,101	120
Mengo West	725	688	4,588	158
Masaka	444	440	3,781	117
Mubende	99	99	2,668	37
Eastern Province	1,903	1,873	10,971	173
Busoga	677	661	3,443	197
Mbale Township	14	8	9	937
Bukedi	400	398	1,575	253
Bugishu	353	353	1,638	215
Teso	458	453	4,306	106
Western Province	1,503	1,498	17,098	87
Bunyoro	129	128	4,723	27
Toro	349	347	4,745	74
Ankole	531	530	5,728	90
Kigezi	494	493	1,902	260
Northern Province	1,249	1,245	33,327	37
Acholi	287	286	10,783	27
Lango	354	353	4,464	79
Karamoja	172	171	12,216	14
West Nile, Madi	436	435	5,864	74
Total	6,536	6,450	77,534	

* SOURCE: Uganda Protectorate, 1961 Statistical Abstract, East Africa Statistical Department. ²¹¹

This meant that any centralised Acholi tribal or ethnic identity emerging during the colonial period continued to have a strong indigenous cultural

²¹¹ The Economic Development of Uganda: Report of a Mission Organised by the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development at the request of the Uganda Government. (John Hopkins Press, 1962), 16.

content, weakening colonial intrusion and allowing stronger development of pre-colonial lineage based clan identities.²¹²

2.3. The Colonial Market Economy and the Birth of the *Ocols*.

In Acholi and Uganda, the colonial government continued to reap the rewards of increased cash revenue derived from the export of cotton, the main cash crop in the Northern Provinces from 1920 to the late 1930s. Cotton exports reached an all-time peak of 402,000 bales in 1937-38 and by the mid-1950s cotton and coffee accounted for eighty per cent of Uganda's export earnings.²¹³ But most of the money produced from cotton production and trade was not being redirected back into developing the region. In 1946 the total revenue drawn from direct taxation and other grants in Acholi stood at £33,545. The total expenditure for that year, including spending on education, salaries for chiefs, prisons, police and the maintenance of roads, was £26,804, suggesting a 'profit' of £6741. The British continued to under-develop Acholi by taking out more money than they were willing to invest toward equitable prosperity among the populace. However, this was the reality of the political economy of British indirect rule in Uganda. It was driven by the need to designate certain regions as more economically and politically viable for colonial ambitions, as with Buganda, whilst Acholi was to act merely as a reserve for labour and cash crops.²¹⁴

Nonetheless, colonial institutions still offered some Acholi the opportunity to capitalise on the growing colonial market economy. For chiefs in the Native Administration, high wages and colonial sanctioned power were an incentive to continue to operate within the colonial political economy. Becoming a member of the Native Council was lucrative and highly competitive. County chiefs were paid £105 to £270 annually, depending on the length of service and the number of taxpayers. They also received a house and pension. Parish chiefs received £21 to £45 annually but without a

²¹² Dwyer, *Politicians and Policies*, 13.

²¹³ *Ibid.*

²¹⁴ Kasozi, *The Social Origins of violence in Uganda*; Thompson, *Governing Uganda*.

pension or a house.²¹⁵ In comparison to Acholi subsistence farmers who survived from hand to mouth, this amount of money paid to a single individual was unprecedented. The monetary rewards afforded to government chiefs elevated their pre-colonial status as traditional heads of clans and made them viable economic and political contenders entrenched in the colonial system. However, the principle reality that guided political economy in Acholi was the realisation that the British Administration was the focus of political power. Girling reported that, 'many Acholi, both educated and otherwise believe that the Divisional and County chiefs are potentially subject to the direct control of British officials.'²¹⁶ This chasm between the direct authority of the chiefs and indirect rule of the British provided the space for political engagement within which chiefs could be bypassed and appeals made directly to the 'big man.' The challenge to chiefly authority was not as Mamdani argued a response to their despotic rule: rather, it was a result of the emergence of a new Acholi political-consciousness rooted in the colonial market economy.

From the 1920s, Acholi had become firmly entrenched in the market economy and national labour market. The cultivation, trade and sale of cotton introduced a socio-economic structure never before seen in the region. To aid the movement and trade of cash crops, new roads were built which in turn created new market towns.²¹⁷ The process of resettlement around the new roads had started in 1914 when a compulsory system of moving a vast number of the Acholi near the main roads was initiated. As well as ensuring that administration was easier, another reason for this forced migration was to remove the Acholi from communal cultivation, which according to the colonial government, was necessary for the 'intellectual, economic and moral progression of the people.'²¹⁸ New jobs and opportunities gave young mission-educated Acholi men the incentive to move around the region and the Protectorate to seek employment. They were no longer compelled to stay within their clan structures and work the land of their fathers and forefathers before them. Even for those who decided to stay, economic opportunities

²¹⁵ Gertzel, *Party and Locality in northern Uganda 1945-1962*, 59.

²¹⁶ Girling, *The Acholi of Uganda*, 198.

²¹⁷ Girling, *The Acholi of Uganda*; Atkinson, *The Roots of Ethnicity*.

²¹⁸ Girling, *The Acholi of Uganda*, 175.

were still available at home, with many staying to take advantage of rising cotton prices.²¹⁹ Whilst there are few reliable or official figures detailing demographic growth at this time, Langland's population survey shows the population of major towns such as Gulu growing consecutively every year from 1911.²²⁰ Unmarried young men who were not tied down by familial responsibilities were more likely to migrate to urban towns. Labour migration also proved to be a viable way for those on the periphery of localised political and economic power to go out and seek their fortune in the wider Protectorate. Colonial administrators were all too willing to encourage this movement because the more labour they could utilise in Uganda the higher the yields from cash crops. As well as travelling to the southern regions of Jinja and Kampala, Acholi labour migrants also stayed closer to home. Many Acholi migrant workers joined plantations in Bunyoro where planter permits were issued by the British to allow workers to be recruited from areas such as the West Nile, Gulu and Chua, with migrants coming in 'considerable numbers.'²²¹

As movement in and out of the Province became easier, the border divisions became more stringent. As cash crop returns grew, colonial officers turned their eyes to the business of tax collection, a task that was easier to administer through set political borders. This task fell primarily to the chiefs, some of who carried out the task faithfully. Others took a more opportunistic view, and accusations of embezzlement and incompetence were levied by both colonial officers and competing chiefs.²²² Acholi demands for internal border demarcations were driven largely by the realisation among chiefs of the informal economic and political rewards that could be obtained by administering larger tax boundaries. Consequently, it was no longer the

²¹⁹ UNA/E: Box 1 No. 0982B: Northern Province Quarterly Reports, 1921.

²²⁰ B.W Langland, *The Population Density of Acholi District*, Occasional Paper N.30; Department of Geography (Makerere University, Kampala, 1971), 20.

²²¹ UNA/E Box 1 No. 2135C: Northern Province Annual Report for 1918-19. 2 June 1919.

²²² UNA/E Box 1 No. 0982B: Northern Province Quarterly Reports, 1921.

British reinforcing the borders but indigenous political elite who began to advocate for new internal demarcations.²²³

Among educated Acholi youth, demands for political representation coincided with the colonial institutionalisation of chiefly power. These demands were mobilised through an organisation known as the Young Acholi Association (YAA). Formed in 1921, three years after the formation of the Young Baganda Associations, the YAA started as a semi-political organisation demanding political reform and a place within the Native Administration. This was the first time that Acholi youth were identified as a specific political category. In pre-colonial and colonial Acholi, aside from chiefly or ritual power, the gerontocratic social order posited a social hierarchy within the community along lines of age, marital status and gender.²²⁴ The importance of marriage in Acholi is further highlighted by p'Bitek who stated that in Acholi society, 'you may be a giant of a man. You may begin to grow grey hair. You may be bold and toothless with age. But if you are unmarried you are nothing.'²²⁵ To be considered a 'man', Acholi men were expected to get married, have children and thus ensure that the paternal clan lineage was carried through to the next generation. As discussed previously, Acholi pre-colonial societies were highly socialised with designated productive roles that ensured the effective running of a village, clan and chiefdom. This placed emphasis on familial units and consequently if a man remained unmarried and single, he would be unable to fulfil the culturally prescribed social obligations and productive roles within this system.

Missionary education and new economic opportunities created a new generation of educated Acholi men whose economic and political aspirations extended beyond the social obligations of village life. Members of the YAA were men who had been educated primarily in the mission schools, although

²²³ UNA/E C.20881 Box 19: Amalgamation of Gulu and Chua District: Acholi District, Letter from the Governor O.E Mitchell to the Secretary of State for the Colonies c.1938.

Also, see; B.W. Langland, *The Population Density of Acholi District*, Occasional Paper N.30; Department of Geography (Kampala, Makerere University, 1971).

²²⁴ Ociiti, *African Indigenous Education as Practiced by the Acholi in Uganda*; Mamdani, *Politics and class formation in Uganda*.

²²⁵ p'Bitek, *Song of Lawino*, 105.

some had had the opportunity to further their education by attending institutions such as Makerere College in Uganda's capital Kampala. They had found employment in administrative positions as schoolmasters and government clerks.²²⁶ They had had the opportunity to mix with students outside Acholi, and had seen some of the discontent that was steadily growing among the young and educated elsewhere in Uganda, particularly in Buganda. While little is known about the Association, at this time there were other similar ethnic based movements from other parts of the Protectorate, most notably the Mubende Bunyoro Committee, the Young Lango Association, and the Basigu Welfare Association.²²⁷ Outside of Acholi, the rise of these organisations was a reflection of the changing face of the Ugandan polity. The Native Council Ordinance of 1919 had not only created new administrative positions for Ugandans, but it had also created a new breed of white collar, educated, Ugandan civil servants.²²⁸ This new bureaucratic class inevitably started to demand more rights, particularly in regards to salary and working conditions. Jan Jelmert Jørgensen argues that the creation of white-collar unionism was a result of state refusal to improve working conditions. The demarcation of these youth associations along ethnic lines has two explanations. First, as Jørgensen rightly points out, the colonial state's unwillingness to listen to their grievances meant that such associations were a fertile recruitment ground for 'state appointed chiefs' who, because of their positions and background, were more likely to channel their political grievances along ethnic lines.²²⁹ Second, given the colonial state's systematic demarcation of Uganda along regional and ethnic lines, it was a self-fulfilling prophecy that ethnic identities began to play such a visible part in Ugandan daily life. The politicisation of this identity became more evident as socio-political and economic cleavages became more apparent within the market economy and political arena.

²²⁶ TNA/CO 1018/81, Lord Hailey Papers 1946-1955, J.W Stell to Lord Hailey, Native Administration and the Native Council (1947).

²²⁷ Jørgensen, *Uganda: A modern history*, 179.

²²⁸ *Ibid.*

²²⁹ *Ibid.*

Post-war colonial concerns about the onset of growing political discontent in the colonies prompted Lord Hailey in 1947 to lead a research team tasked with conducting survey to assess political associations that had been formed in Britain's African colonies.²³⁰ A report to Hailey from the DC of the Northern Province in Uganda provides very little information on the early political aspirations of the YAA and any activities that its members may have engaged in. However, it does offer a detailed account of how the colonial administration went about de-politicising members of the group. Accepting that the organisation was started mainly because younger Acholi wanted a place in the Native Administration, the DC assessed that the rising discontent could be dealt with by nominating many of the members of the Association into the Native Councils and committees. As well as this, an Acholi Association was formed with the patronage of the British, with the aim of organising sports tournaments and social gatherings. A clubhouse was built with a library which received book donations and a grant of twenty-five pounds from the British Council on behalf of the King George V Memorial Trust. The Association also received an annual grant of two hundred pounds from the Acholi Native Administration.²³¹

The Acholi Association was created primarily to counter-act the political aspirations of members of the YAA. Its success is echoed in the DC's letter explaining how the political aspirations of the younger members of the tribe had been satisfied. By including them in the Native Administration, increasing available facilities, and keeping them busy with social activities, the colonial administration had succeeded in the 'cessation of interest in the Young Acholi Association.' He went as far as to say that there was now very little danger of any similar organisations springing up in the district.²³² Furthermore, organisations such as the Acholi Traders Supply Co-operative Association were formed, with the approval of the British, specifically to 'satisfy those

²³⁰ Hailey, *An African Survey, Revised 1956: A Study of Problems Arising in Africa South of the Sahara* (London: Oxford University Press, 1968).

²³¹ TNA/CO 1018/81, Lord Hailey Papers 1946-1955, J.W Stell to Lord Hailey, Native Administration and the Native Council (1947).

²³² *Ibid.*

members of the tribe who look to trade as a form of achievement.²³³ The DC concluded that the creation of these organisations in the field of politics, economics, and social welfare would be sufficient to meet the demands of the future. Presumably, given that the letter was written in 1947, against a background of growing anti-colonial movements in southern Uganda, the British felt that it would not be long before that discontent spread into Acholi. What this tells us about the political aspirations of young and largely educated demographic of Acholi men is that, at this point at least, their political grievances were not specifically aimed at the colonial administration or alien rule: rather it was the emergence of a generational conflict born out of the paradox of the colonial administration. As Terrence Ranger explains more generally:

The pre-colonial movement of men and ideas was replaced by the colonial custom-bounded microscopic local society. It was important for colonial authorities to limit regional interaction and thus to prevent a widening of focus on the part of Africans. But at the same time the colonial powers wanted to extract labour from these rural societies, so that young men were being drawn to places of employment very much more distant than the range of journeying in the pre-colonial past. These young men were expected to be at one and the same time workers in a distant urban economy and acceptant citizens in the tightly defined microcosmic society.²³⁴

What this meant in Acholi and Uganda was that the growing demographic of educated young men and migrants were shaped by the administration to service the colonial economy returned to their tribal homes only to be subjugated to the authority of elders and the Native Administration. This set the stage for a generational conflict where elders, feeling threatened by the skills of this new educated and well travelled demographic, retaliated by emphasising the importance of gerontocratic authority and tradition.²³⁵ As Richard Waller points out, elders in Africa 'continued to hold most of the cards throughout the colonial period.'²³⁶ The formation of the YAA and the

²³³ Ibid.

²³⁴ T. Ranger, 'The Invention of Tradition in Colonial Africa', 458.

²³⁵ Ibid., 459; R. Waller, 'Rebellious Youth in Colonial Africa', *The Journal of African History*, Vol.47 No.1 (2006), 81.

²³⁶ Waller, 'Rebellious Youth in Colonial Africa', 81.

appeasement of its members by the British indicated the growing internal political competition among young educated Acholi men. It was also an indication of the growing resentment towards the authority of the elders and the limited access to the Native Administration. Yet indicators of generational conflicts such as negotiations over bride price and marriage do not readily appear in the district archives in Acholi. However, Timothy Parsons notes the conflict between elders and young returning Acholi soldiers after the Second World War regarding high bride prices. 'In Uganda, Acholi veterans complained that elders conspired to appropriate their savings by making it more costly to marry.'²³⁷ The fact that Acholi was one of the last regions to be incorporated into the Protectorate meant that their exposure to the colonial economy was later in coming.

Furthermore, restricted access to education and British economic underdevelopment in the region meant that the *Oco/s* position as political power brokers emerged after a longer period of colonial rule. It would not be until the 1950s that the *Oco/s* would become more politically vocal and economically visible. More significantly, by containing this emerging educated demographic within politically demarcated regional and ethnic territories, the British were unwittingly sowing the seeds for the creation a new generation of politically minded Acholi men whose political conscious would be deeply rooted within their ethnic boundaries. The formation of the YAA marked the birth of the *Oco/s*, a new generation of Acholi men who had been born and brought up in the colonial political economy and who would grow up to become the political face of the Acholi ethno-national identity, in late colonial and post-independence Uganda.

Another migrant labour group that must also be considered are those Acholi who joined the rank and file of the army, mainly the King's African Rifles (KAR). From the onset of the First World War the British started to

²³⁷ T. Parsons, 'All Askari are Family Men: Sex Domesticity and Discipline in the Kings African Rifles, 1906-1964' in Killingray, D. and E.Omissi (eds.) *Guardians Of Empire: The Armed Forces Of The Colonial Powers C. 1700-1964* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999), 168

actively recruit in the Northern Province.²³⁸ Colonial records indicate that during the recruitment process 1,117 infantry recruits were drawn from the region with 155 from Acholi a number which would rise steadily in future. The majority of the recruits, totalling 954, came from the West Nile.²³⁹ The high proportion of Northern recruits in the armed forces can be observed with a complaint made circa 1928-29 by African soldiers in the 4th Battalion KAR stating that several of them who were stationed in Bombo had been refused permission to attend church services. The document provides a list of the seventy-four complainants, of which thirty-six had Luo/Nilotic names. Although it is difficult to ascertain how many of these men were Acholi, it does reaffirm that there was a disproportionate number of Northerners in the army.²⁴⁰ For the majority of Acholi recruits who were motivated by monetary considerations rather than other factors such as a forging a high-ranking military career, the army offered a steady wage-compared to the intermittency of local labour wages-clothing and food, a fact that the colonial officers were all too aware of. Regarding complaints that some discharged army personnel who were returning to their homes had not received their pay, the Provincial Commissioner warned that these complaints were 'likely to act as a serious deterrent for recruiting.'²⁴¹ Gardner Thompson makes the argument that the high proportion of Northern recruits in the army should be attributed to 'hardship and want' as opposed to 'contemporary tribal stereotyping' that defined the peoples of the region as 'martial races'.²⁴² Thompson's point is valid in so much as there were fewer job opportunities in the North compared to the relatively prosperous South, thus making the region a prime recruiting ground for the army. However, the designation of the Northerners as martial

²³⁸ D. Killingray and E. Omissi, (eds.) *Guardians of Empire: The Armed Forces Of The Colonial Powers C. 1700 1964* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999).

²³⁹ UNA/E Box 1 No. 2135C: Northern Province Annual Report for 1918-19, 2 June 1919. Military: Letter to the Assistant District Commissioner, 2 June 1919.

²⁴⁰ UCU Box 115, Folder 4: African Rifles, 4th Battalion soldiers -Attendance at Service, c. 1928-9; Also see, GDA Box 533: Replies to Questionnaires on Tribal Composition 4th Ugandan Battalion KAR/ 7 Appendix 'A' c. January 1950.

²⁴¹ UNA/E Box 1 No. 0739: Northern Province, Monthly Reports for 1917.

²⁴² Thompson, *Governing Uganda*, 105.

tribes was also reinforced by the colonial government's wider political and economic ambitions in the Protectorate. In so much as the Bantu speaking peoples of southern and central Kingdoms, mainly the Baganda were deemed to be more politically conscious and administratively sophisticated, by predominately recruiting soldiers from Northern regions, the British could, as Doornbos argues 'create a power balance' based on the 'divide and rule model' by concentrating military authority away from the administrative and political hub in southern and central Uganda.²⁴³ The Northern tribes could, if the need arose, be used to suppress any political or military challenges from the South. Consequently, whilst initially a regional designation, with the election of a Northern President in post-independence Uganda, and the continued disproportionate recruitment of Acholi and Lango soldiers into the national army, the designation would become more specifically ethnic, as will be discussed further in chapter four.

2.4. Conclusion

Formalised through the Native Authority, British indirect rule in Acholi subsumed a large portion of Acholi indigenous social-political structures. This created a bifurcated bureaucratic state, which emphasised the customary authority of the locality through the Native Administration and civil authority of the colonial government in the centre.²⁴⁴ Despite attempts by the British to make the Acholi conscious of their identity as a political and tribal 'unit', the Native Administration served to reinforce Acholi clan and chiefly allegiances. This created fragmented internal socio-political organisations that challenged colonial attempts to unitise the 'Acholi tribe.' The establishment of Native Administration structures elevated chiefly power above its pre-colonial status, resulting in the politicisation of clan and chiefly allegiances as competition for access to political office increased. Christian missions provided avenues for incorporating Christianity and Western education into Acholi society, while the

²⁴³ M. Doornbos, 'The Uganda Crisis and the National Question' in (eds.) H.B. Hansen and M. Twaddle, *Uganda Now: Between Decay and Development* (Athens Ohio: Ohio University Press, 1988), 265.

²⁴⁴ Mamdani, *Citizen and Subject*, 17.

colonial market economy allowed labour to be bought and produce to be sold. However, these avenues were limited to a select few who had direct access to arterial sources of power, through their proximity to a major town, road, school or mission complex. At the same time, despite the growth of the colonial market economy and increased investment in cash crops, a vast majority of Acholi still remained poor and on the periphery of colonial authority. Low population density and the geographical size of Acholi greatly hindered the distribution of services to remote rural areas. What this meant was that large numbers of the Acholi peasantry were left relatively untouched by the formal colonial economy. This meant that any centralised Acholi tribal or ethnic identity emerging during the colonial period continued to have a strong pre-colonial cultural content, weakening colonial intrusion and allowing stronger development of indigenous cultural institutions. However, in the coming decade, this demographic would also become aware acutely of the 'benefits' of the colonial political economy as they strove to provide access for their sons to a Western education that could one day open new professional opportunities away from village subsistence farming.

Indirect rule also brought preconceived racial stereotypes which were made to fit colonial economic and political ambitions, as members of the Northern tribes, including the Acholi were marked out as the strong 'martial race' whose men were better formed to service the army. Furthermore, British economic ambitions designated the peoples of the North were to act as a reservoir for menial labour, whilst their southern and central counterparts were earmarked for the service sectors. Yet these labour migrants and servicemen were politically contained within their tribal boundaries, reinforcing once again the connection to their ancestral homesteads.

More significantly for the development of Acholi ethno-national identities, colonial rule opened new avenues for educated young Acholi men to challenge the traditional systems that emphasised gerontocratic power. This fostered an ongoing generational conflict which was sustained by the political economy of colonial indirect rule. The British encouraged labour migration to sustain their colonial ambitions yet at the same time discouraged ethnic and regional integration within the wider Protectorate. This resulted in the creation of a well-educated, young male Acholi demographic that was

politically contained within microcosmic and mono-ethnic societies. To fulfil their emerging political and economic ambitions and gain access to the Native Administration, this demographic would have to challenge the traditional authority of chiefs. Primarily because of their high levels of education and exposure to political structures outside of Acholi, it was to be this young educated elite that would be instrumental in the politicisation of Acholi identity during the last decade of British rule in Uganda. Whilst they had learnt the language of the colonisers and their regimes of power, the localised political vocabulary which developed, as the next three chapters will show, was to be distinctively ethnic in its content.

3.0. Using the Language They Taught Us: Decolonisation and the Acholi 1950-1962.

I joined the UNC because I thought that the Kabaka wanted to become king of Uganda.²⁴⁵

Contrary to Mamdani's assessment of the emergence of African nationalism, Ugandan nationalism was not born out of some sort of African polyethnic collective class struggle against imperial/capitalist oppression. Nor did it arise from Ugandans wanting to be recognised as 'trans-ethnic', or as a unitary nation: it was instead the divisive politics of ethnonationalism which served as the principle tool for making separatist demands against the colonial government.²⁴⁶ The administrative and political segregation of native authorities through the ethos of 'divide and rule' had proved crucial in preventing interregional and interethnic violent conflict. As the different ethnic regions were administered separately, there was little or no competition for resources such as land and political office.²⁴⁷ With the onset of decolonisation, the British would, in a sense, become victims of the success of their own project. For the British administration, the decade leading up to independence would be spent combating the separatist ambitions of the Baganda, by emphasising the political importance of local governments and Native Authorities outside of the Kingdom. By the eve of independence this exercise would prove to be a catch twenty-two position, as by encouraging strong ethnically divided local governments, colonialism paved the way for the divisive politics of ethnonationalism. Strong localised political institutions created by the British, meant that in the decade leading up to independence, the politics of decolonisation was to be driven by local rather than national

²⁴⁵ (F/M) NAU: Interview with subsistence farmer, Anaka, Nwoya District 28 June 2012.

²⁴⁶ Mamdani, *Beyond Settler and Native as Political Identities: Overcoming the Political Legacy of Colonialism*, 655-656; Mamdani, *Citizen and Subject*.

²⁴⁷ Y. Barongo, 'Ethnic Pluralism and Political Centralisation: The Basis of Political Conflict in Uganda', International Seminar on Internal Conflict, Kampala, Paper 4. Kampala: Makerere Institute of Social Research (1987).

considerations. Consequently, in the lead up to independence, local politicians, chiefs and religious leaders, adopted the language of tribal sectarianism, as they evoked tribal stereotypes, clan allegiances, religious, regional, and ethnic demarcations, as political tools against potential national and local competitors, rather than the colonial authority.

In Acholi, the emergence of anti-colonial nationalist sentiments was not initially a direct attack on European rule. Firstly, the colonial native administrations in the Acholi districts were largely founded on Acholi indigenous socio-political identities. If anything, the colonial systems of governance emphasised clan, regional and ethnic political allegiances as opposed to fostering Ugandan nationalism. Moreover, the colonial administration's political focus on the Kingdom of Buganda and its drive to develop the Acholi Local Government (ALG) provided the opportunity for members of the Native Authority to engage in the comparative politics of regional underdevelopment. Utilising the British's own political ambitions, Acholi chiefs sought to further extend their authority within the locality by lobbying for the creation of key political posts and the installation of a paramount chief who could potentially rival the status of the Kabaka. However, chiefly authority in Acholi was countered by the emergence of a new breed of local politicians as viable political power contenders against colonial sponsored chiefly authority in the locality. Born out of the colonial political economy, these politically minded *Ocols* actively embraced the emergence of political parties, using them not only as tool to challenge the dominance of chiefs within the local government, but also as an avenue to gain access to the political centre.²⁴⁸ Between these competing local factions, the 'victim identity' emerged as a key unifying political tool that could be used nationally, to make economic and political demands against the colonial state on behalf of the peoples of Acholi and their northern counterparts.

However, competition for political office was fierce and competitive as local politicians campaigned along religious, clan and intraregional

²⁴⁸ In this analysis, the 'Ocols' constitute local politicians as well notable members of the emerging Acholi middle class who were actively involved in formal politics and were able to influence political activity in the locality through economic, social or political patronage. These include businessmen, local government administrators, religious leaders and teachers with a higher socio-economic status who have had access to formal education.

demarcations to gain votes, placing limits on the emergence of a politically coherent Acholi ethnonational identity. For the *Lawinos*, situated outside of formal politics, religious identities became sharpened, as affiliations with a Christian denomination would open the door for mission-run institutions that could provide access to education and health services.²⁴⁹ Capitalising on these religious identities, local and national politicians reinforced a two party system driven by partisan religious politics which pitted Acholi Catholics against their Protestant counterparts. Furthermore, the *Lawinos* containment within the rural periphery ensured that whilst, on one hand, this demographic strove to gain access to the world of the *Ocols*, clan and chiefly allegiances still remained an important point of reference. Thus, even within the emerging competition between the *Ocols* and the chiefs, political activity in Acholi was not a straightforward contest between the 'modern' *Ocols* and the 'traditional' chiefs, insofar as the *Ocols* needed to engage with the language of the old system to secure their political footing in the new era of party politics.

3.1. Regionalism and the 'Northern' Identity.

Cherry Gertzel argues that political activity at the district level in Acholi from 1945 to 1962 was largely nationalistic in orientation, and that it was focused in the district primarily because there were 'institutions at that level within which the colonial administration could be challenged.'²⁵⁰ These councils became an arena for nationally orientated local leaders, who provided the links through which an African leadership at the centre could challenge the colonial government. Local governments offered easier opportunities to be elected into office and as such district councils developed faster than legislative councils. Gertzel disagrees with the argument that political parties developed slowly in Uganda because politics at the district level was satisfactory enough for the actors and as such there was less desire to participate at a national

²⁴⁹ In this analysis the *Lawinos* encompass both Acholi men and women living predominately in the rural periphery or within urban towns engaged in menial labour who have had limited or no access to formal education.

²⁵⁰ Gertzel, *Party and Locality in northern Uganda*, 15-23.

level.²⁵¹ However, as Dwyer suggests, the concept of nationalism is in itself an ambiguous one. In Africa, nationalism could be related more towards local or sectional grievances.²⁵² Gertzel's argument is true in some respects, particularly regarding the local councils as a platform for political activity. The disagreement arises in the assessment that political activity in the district, especially in the 1950s was largely nationalistic in orientation. Undeniably Acholi politicians embraced the new emerging national consciousness and tried to ensure that their political positions in the locality would be guaranteed post-independence. However, on a regional level, localised grievances took centre stage, and this was in turn channelled to the political centre through the politics of ethnonationalism and regional factionalism. In this respect the idea of an all-encompassing Ugandan nationalist movement was superficial from its inception. Anti-colonial rhetoric lacked any unified political coherency as they were channelled through specific local grievances. Since ethnic groups divided regions, these divisions were translated to the national political stage.

Within the decade leading to independence in 1962 the principal problem faced by British officials was the lack of unity that manifested itself into tribal, linguistic, religious, economic, political and social factionalism. With Uganda split between four major kingdoms and ten districts, each political entity ruthlessly guarded their identity, power and resources.²⁵³ Questions regarding who was better equipped to rule and which ethnic group was the most culturally advanced and most politically qualified for leadership, started to appear more frequently in the Ugandan national media from the early 1950s. The comments section in *The Ugandan Herald/Argus*, a daily national newspaper written in English, provided the platform for the educated parties on all sides to air their views. As the mudslinging ensued, old colonial tribal stereotypes were readily utilised as political weapons reinforcing ethnic and regional identities.

Between the Bantu and the Nilotics, Bantu people are more advanced of the two and account for three fourths of the population. They have

²⁵¹ Ibid.

²⁵² Dwyer, *The Acholi in Uganda: Adjustment to Imperialism*.

²⁵³ J. Carter, 'Independence for Uganda', 373

had a longer culture. Nilotics never covered themselves until the white man arrived, and they often mutilated themselves. Of all the peoples of the Protectorate, the Buganda who inhabit the Central Province have been in the forefront in the shaping of things and all the dramatic happenings in the Protectorate have taken place in Buganda, giving the Protectorate its name, its history, its culture, its education and its religion.²⁵⁴

The question of Buganda superiority and what role the kingdom would play in the new nation state of Uganda had started long before the 1950s.²⁵⁵ The British and the Baganda had enjoyed a relatively favorable relationship even before the 1900 agreement, with Baganda Christian agents helping the British to consolidate control of the Protectorate.²⁵⁶ However, relations between the two parties became strained as early as 1931, when it became apparent that the British were considering creating an East African Federation encompassing, Kenya, Uganda, and Tanganyika.²⁵⁷ The Baganda feared that if such a federation were to be created it would lodge most of its powers with the white settler population in Kenya, making their kingdom a mere satellite state.²⁵⁸ The return of the Kabaka in 1955, following his deposition in 1953 his continued belligerence towards British authority, marked the beginning of overt grass-roots opposition specifically aimed at British colonial rule in Buganda.²⁵⁹ In 1952 Uganda's first national political party the Uganda National Congress (UNC) was formed in Kampala, championing the demands

²⁵⁴ E.M.K. Mulira, 'Troubled Uganda', Controversy Series, N.6. (London: Fabian Colonial Bureau, 1950). Mulira was a prominent Muganda politician, educated in the United Kingdom who went on to establish the Baganda based elitist and conservative, Progressive Party (PP) in January 1955.

²⁵⁵ Low, *Political Parties in Uganda*, 29.

²⁵⁶ Dwyer, *The Acholi in Uganda: Adjustment to Imperialism*, 192.

²⁵⁷ UCU Box 72 Folder 1: Memorandum, The Women's League of Buganda. Kampala, Uganda, August 1953.

²⁵⁸ Low, *Political Parties in Uganda*, 29.

²⁵⁹ Mutibwa, *Uganda since Independence*, 14; Thompson, 'Colonialism in Crisis: The Uganda Disturbances of 1945', *African Affairs*, Vol. 91, No.365 (October, 1992), 622-623; Low, *Political Parties in Uganda*.

of the farmers, industrial workers, peasants and anyone who felt aggrieved by the political and economic inequalities of the colonial administration.²⁶⁰

The significance of the UNC was not simply that it was officially Uganda's first major political party, but that it transcended regional borders, attracting support all the way from the South to the Northern Provinces. The formation of the UNC in 1952 was relatively late compared to other British colonies.²⁶¹ Anthony Low makes the argument that emergence of political parties in Uganda was tardy because before the 1950s very few Africans from Uganda had been educated in or even visited Britain or America. The small minority that did had not even gained layman's knowledge of Western politics. Furthermore, the lack of European or Asian political organisations within the Protectorate meant that unlike Rhodesia and South Africa where non-African political organisations provided a stimulus to modern African political movements, in Uganda, this did not occur. There were few countrywide political confrontations between Europeans and Africans that could stir up Ugandans.²⁶² Rather than looking at how the marginalisation of Ugandans from Western political and formal democratic intuitions stunted nationalistic politics, it could be argued that this exclusion actually strengthened its localised roots. Furthermore, just because a larger number of Ugandans were not being sent abroad does not mean that they were wholly excluded from

²⁶⁰ O. Odongo, *A Political history of Uganda: The Origins of Museveni's Referendum* (The Monitor Publications Ltd, 2000), 25-27; Grass roots activism against colonial institutions had emerged earlier from another and more pronounced grievance, over the unequal distribution of wealth that cash crops were bringing into the Kingdom and the Protectorate. These grievances manifested in two key strikes in 1945 and 1949 across major towns in southern Uganda, testing British power in the Protectorate. The strikes instigated a political awakening derived from economic grievances and resulted in the creation of arguably Uganda's first political party, the Bataka Party (BP) in 1947 and the politicisation of the Uganda African Farmers Union (UAFU). The riots led to the banning of these two organisations as the British sought to take away the means in which the Ugandans could formally channel their grievances: G. Thompson, 'Colonialism in Crisis: The Uganda Disturbances of 1945', 622-623.

²⁶¹ In Ghana the Convention People's Party (CPP) was formed in 1949 and the Kenya African Union in 1942, ten years prior to the formation of the UNC.

²⁶² Low, *Political Parties in Uganda*, 13-14.

Western political thought-processes. When considering the Acholi, Western style education was being provided by the missionaries in the locality, which allowed for the incorporation of British Christian political doctrines into Acholi/Ugandan political consciousness. Ugandan political parties that did emerge were more inward looking: they gave the participants the time and opportunity to deal specifically with local and regional political grievances. And while there were reports on the struggle for freedom in Kenya, and in South Africa, there were no figures like Jomo Kenyatta or Julius Nyerere to nationalise political, social and economic grievances within Uganda.²⁶³ If such a leader had existed, regional political institutions would most likely have rejected them, because strong local institutions had created strong localised political identities.

The UNC arrived in Acholi in 1953 after establishing headquarters in Lango. However, the party quickly realised that unlike in Lango, where they enjoyed somewhat of a political monopoly, in Acholi they would face greater opposition. Three years after the first UNC headquarters opened in Gulu; the Democratic Party's (DP) arrival in the district would provide a formidable political adversary creating a competitive ground from which 'Uganda would become a two-party state.'²⁶⁴ Benedicto Kiwanuka, a Muganda Catholic politician established the DP in 1956 as a moderate conservative party. However, the DP quickly became known as a party for Catholics and southerners, as it sought to counter the dominance of the largely Protestant-led UNC.²⁶⁵ The founders of the UNC, Ignatius Musazi and Abu Mayanja, both southerners, visited Gulu in 1953 to appoint a chairman for their Acholi branch. Peter Oola, an Acholi, was chosen knowing that he was better served to appeal to his own ethnic homeland. Oola was educated in a CMS school in Gulu, served in the KAR, and then had returned back to the region to work as a civil servant. His service in the KAR meant that he had spent some time in Nairobi and had come in contact with Kenyan politicians who would have

²⁶³ Reports were frequent in *The Uganda Argus* and focused on political struggles within British Africa and those Ugandans who could speak English would have consumed this.

²⁶⁴ Gertzel, *Party and Locality in northern Uganda*, 56.

²⁶⁵ D.E. Apter, *The Political Kingdom in Uganda* (Princeton University Press, 1961).

undoubtedly influenced his political views.²⁶⁶ Peter Oola's first meeting with Musazi was in Kampala where he became acquainted with the UNC.²⁶⁷ In fact, a vast majority of the Acholi party leaders, be it DP or UNC, were drawn from this pool of educated young men, some of whom had had the opportunity to travel outside Acholi and had had their interests peaked in regards to African politics. Upon returning to their districts they were able to capitalise on the growing tensions within the Protectorate, particularly matters pertaining to land, cash crop farming and the rights of the rural peasantry within Acholi districts.²⁶⁸ There was also the issue of the 'Baganda question' and the Kingdom's place within the Protectorate. Acholi UNC and DP supporters, while showing loyal allegiance to the respective parties, did not primarily identify with other UNC and DP supporters in the rest of the Protectorate, in particular Buganda. Added to this, the connection between the UNC branch in Gulu and the headquarters in Kampala was relatively lax. Despite Oola making several visits to Kampala and abroad as a member of the UNC delegation, political activities in Acholi meant that rather than the UNC headquarters controlling the branch in Gulu, Oola was able to touch base with the centre and but never allowed the centre to control him. This allowed the UNC in Acholi to develop more as an autonomous branch of the UNC nationwide.²⁶⁹

Rivalry between the UNC and DP ensured that political cohesion in Acholi remained impossible, despite the need for a strong political front to combat continued economic and political underdevelopment in the region. Rather than campaign specifically on these populist issues, both the UNC and DP in Acholi, at least externally, conceptualised their election campaign through the politics of regional and ethnic factionalism. Both political parties quickly capitalised on the growing hostility towards the Baganda and the Kabaka, mobilising the Acholi to join the UNC to counter Buganda political dominance. As one Acholi recruit to the UNC recounted, 'I joined the UNC

²⁶⁶ Gertzel, *Party and Locality in northern Uganda*, 69; Leys, *Politicians and Policies in Acholi*, 18.

²⁶⁷ Leys, *Politicians and Policies in Acholi*. 18-19.

²⁶⁸ Jørgensen, *Uganda: A Modern history*, 196.

²⁶⁹ Gertzel, *Party and Locality in northern Uganda*, 62.

because I thought that the Kabaka wanted to be king of Uganda.²⁷⁰ Being a largely Southern-based party proved to be problematic for the DP, as the perceived political and economic superiority of the Buganda Kingdom, made Acholi DP recruits inherently hostile towards their Southern counterparts. This was primarily because in Acholi the Kabaka was rejected as a symbol of Ugandan self-determination. The politics of decolonisation gave opportunistic politicians the perfect tools to mobilise followers along localised grievances using the economic and political marginalisation of the 'Northerner' to gain political support in Acholi. Politicians continued to encourage debates that juxtaposed the Baganda and the rest of the Kingdoms within the Protectorate and the tribes in Northern Provinces, further ethnicising local and national politics. To gain votes, win elections and access the centre, Acholi politicians needed to appeal to the constituents in their locality. To remain in power, they had to advocate for the needs of their ethnic constituents at the national level. They could neither cut these ties without sustaining loss nor gain a substantial grass roots following outside of their ethnic political base.

By 1958 the UNC had won five out of the ten seats nationally available for African representatives in the Legislative Council elections, while the DP only won one, with the other four taken by independents. In Acholi, the elections results were not as clear-cut, as the UNC candidate only clawed his way to victory by 320 votes with 14, 483 against the DP's 14, 163 total. This was in contrast to the results in Lango where the UNC candidate beat his DP competitor by 32, 218 votes.²⁷¹ The remarkable victory for the UNC in Lango was made possible under the leadership of the educated, young and dynamic Lango politician, Milton Obote, who not only gave the UNC second highest majority in the country, but also the highest percentage of votes overall.²⁷² With his success in the Legislative Council elections he was quickly elevated to Deputy Prime Minister of the UNC under the Chairmanship of Joseph Kiwanuka. From 1960, disputes within the UNC resulted in several splits, with Obote eventually leaving the party to form the Uganda People's Congress

²⁷⁰ (F/M) NAU: Interview subsistence farmer, Anaka, Nwoya District 28 June 2012.

²⁷¹ 'Results in Acholi at a Glance' *The Uganda Argus*, 27 October 1958.

²⁷² *Ibid.*

(UPC) in 1959-60. This was to be the death knell of the UNC as a political force among the Acholi and the rest of the Protectorate, as illustrated by their poor performance in the 1960 elections.²⁷³

Milton Obote encompassed both the Lango identity regionally and the Northern/Nilotic one nationally. The transference of Acholi political support from the UNC to the UPC can be understood in terms of the North-South divide and the leadership of Obote. Even during the internal conflicts within the UNC, the party branch in Acholi had already shown its allegiance to Obote. When a dispute broke out between Obote and Kiwanuka regarding UNC funds donated by China, the branches in Acholi and Lango passed a resolution calling for the resignation of Kiwanuka, despite condemnation from the Party headquarters in Kampala. As Obote started to gain a greater following within the UNC, he utilised his political capital by calling for Sir Frederick Crawford's resignation, specifying the sluggish pace towards self-governance. Once again the UNC headquarters rebutted him stating that only the Secretary-General of the Party had the authority to make such a statement.²⁷⁴ Evidently, even before the official split of the UNC, the Northern branches of the Party were already showing independence from the official party mouthpiece in Kampala. In Obote, the Acholi found a political spokesman with whom they could identify regionally. This political utilisation of the Northern identity did not go unnoticed. Following his dismissal from the Party as Chairman, Kiwanuka remarked that his suspension was a manifestation of tribalism, while Obote simply dismissed it as 'Operation clean up.'²⁷⁵

The physical, cultural and linguistic proximity of Acholi to Lango was a valuable political tool for Acholi UPC politicians. The fact that Lango provided the UPC with its strongest support base in the country meant that Acholi politicians could further capitalise on the political capital of the Northern identity. Under the leadership of Obote, the UPC in Acholi continued to

²⁷³ Leys, *Politicians and Policies in Acholi*.

²⁷⁴ 'Gulu Resolution Unconstitutional' *The Uganda Argus*, 8 August 1958.

²⁷⁵ 'Chairman Mr J.W Kiwanuka Suspended' *The Uganda Argus*, 14 August 1958.

strengthen regional and political allegiances with Lango.²⁷⁶ Obote was opportunistic enough to exploit this regional connection. In 1960 he had written a letter to the supervisor of the elections in Lango offering an alternative boundary division of the electoral districts in Lango and in Acholi. The British were immediately suspicious and critical of the proposal, claiming that if the boundaries were to be amended it would split areas over which the UPC had a weaker hold, and amalgamate them into larger UPC constituencies assuring a victory for the party in Acholi. This was seen as a deliberate political ploy to strengthen Obote's party support base at the expense of the DP. However, such was Obote's popularity in Lango the British conceded that regardless of whether the boundaries were adjusted or not, a UPC victory in Lango was almost guaranteed.²⁷⁷ The election supervisor suggested that Obote's proposals should be considered locally with regards to the impact they would have in Acholi, as it was it was probable that Obote's proposals were more of an attempt to tailor the elections results for the benefit of Otema Alledi and Peter Oola, the two UPC candidates in Acholi. Both candidates were known to have strong political and personal ties to Obote and frequently sought his advice on how to run their own election campaigns. The reorganisation of the boundaries would then have been of mutual convenience for them.²⁷⁸ Obote's popularity in the North was commented on by the election supervisor who concluded that, within the DP, no Acholi representative 'holds a place in his party hierarchy comparable to that of Mr Obote, and would scarcely seem to be in a position to bring the same influence to bear on matters under discussion as their rivals.'²⁷⁹ But was this because he was a Northerner? Irrefutably yes. Even though the electoral map was evenly split between the two parties in Acholi, it is apparent from the fact that the leader of the DP, Benedicto Kiwanuka, a Muganda, did not command the same admiration as Obote did in Acholi.

²⁷⁶ UNA/E Box 2 Ref 3, Letter from the DC of Lango to the supervisor of Elections, 24 March 1960; UNA/E Box 2 Ref 3: Letter from the DC of Acholi to R.C. Peagram, 2 September 1961.

²⁷⁷ UNA/E Box 2 Ref 3, Letter from the DC of Lango to the supervisor of Elections 24 March 1960

²⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

Aside from his Lango identity, Obote was astute enough to recognise early on that to gain support in his ethnic region, he needed to highlight the political and economic grievances of the Northern Province. Prior to joining the UNC, he had sent a letter to *The Uganda Herald* arguing that the political underdevelopment of the Northern region by the British had left the Province and its peoples at a distinct political disadvantage.

We semi-hamites and Norsemen [Nilotes] of Uganda feel that the Congress aiming at 'Self-governance' in Uganda is therefore hastening and leaving us behind because of our present inability to aim so high. It must be pointed out to the Congress here and now that with us the question of questions lies in education and rapid developments of African Local Governments.²⁸⁰

A question that could be posed is, did this letter make Obote a tribalist, considering the events that were about to unfold in post-independence Uganda? The answer is probably not, but in this context he can be considered as a regionalist. As a designated 'Northerner' and an aspiring politician, he needed to appeal to his base by emphasising that it was he alone who truly understood the grievances that plagued that region. The North was still vastly underdeveloped compared to the South, particularly in regards to education. In 1952 there were 1912 pupils in secondary schools in the Protectorate but only 151 were from the Northern Provinces. In the junior schools they constituted only 501 out of 3605 pupils.²⁸¹ Through his letter to *The Uganda Argus*, Obote was also playing on the fear that as the Baganda had already been privileged with better educational facilities, they inevitably would become the leaders in an independent Uganda.²⁸² By emphasising regional economic divisions Obote created an image of himself not as a Ugandan politician, but a politician from the North. This identification would later come back to plague him throughout both of his presidential terms as the political landscape shifted.

²⁸⁰ 'Unification of Tribes' *The Uganda Herald*, 28 October 1952.

²⁸¹ Gertzel, *Party and Locality in northern Uganda*, 13; T.K. Kabwegyere, *The Politics of State Formation and Destruction in Uganda*

²⁸² Mutibwa, *Uganda Since Independence*, 11-12.

By the late 1950s the colonial government had resigned itself to relinquishing control of the Protectorate. The Wild Report of 1959 had already codified the handing over of political power to Ugandans. Ugandans were to cast their vote in 1961 for country's first nationwide direct elections to the Legislative Council in preparation for self-governance.²⁸³ However, Buganda was still proving to be a nuisance for the British as internal divisions within the kingdom regarding what part, if any, the Baganda would play in an independent Uganda reached fever pitch in 1960. While some Muganda politicians saw no reason why the kingdom should not participate in the upcoming 1961 elections, others saw it as a complete betrayal of the Lukiko and the Kabaka.²⁸⁴ The Buganda government called for a boycott of the 1961 elections, ensuring that less than two per cent of eligible voters from the kingdom exercised their right to vote.²⁸⁵ Despite this, the rest of Uganda enthusiastically exercised their political rights and participated in the elections with a voter turnout of seventy-five per cent.²⁸⁶ While Ugandans embraced the idea of political freedom from the British, the Kabaka wanted to ensure that it would be his kingdom that would either stand as the centrepiece of Ugandan nationalism, or be granted outright independence.²⁸⁷ For their part, the British were unsure about how to deal with the 'Buganda question'. They were reluctant to leave the kingdom at the mercy of non-Baganda given the political and economic power that the Kingdom held. However, they were more inclined to accept a unitary Ugandan state as opposed to any sort of national federation that guaranteed Buganda autonomy, which could prove a hindrance to their future political and economic ambitions in the region.²⁸⁸

²⁸³ MUL/AS: Constitutional Commission Wild Report: Report of the Constitutional Committee. 1959.

²⁸⁴ UCU Box: 37, Folder 1: E.M.K. Mulira 'Uganda: The next Crisis Country', Political Statement, 1960; Carter, *Uganda at Independence*, 375.

²⁸⁵ Jørgensen, *Uganda: A Modern History*, 200.

²⁸⁶ Carter, *Uganda at Independence*, 375.

²⁸⁷ Ibid.

²⁸⁸ UCU Box: 37, Folder: E.M.K. Mulira 'Uganda: The next Crisis Country' Political Statement, 1960; Carter, *Uganda at Independence*, 375.

The debates regarding the 'Buganda question' were further exacerbated by the Bukedi Riots which broke out in January 1960 in the Eastern Provinces. The riots were mainly centred on economic issues pertaining to taxation, and the oppressive authority of the local chiefs in the kingdom.²⁸⁹ There was an increase of attacks on colonial infrastructure including railway lines, Owen Falls Dam, Kampala north switching station, district offices and non-African businesses. Detailed emergency plans were sent out to all the DCs in the Protectorate giving them the legal power to deal with any further strikes, while the KAR battalion in Jinja were placed on high alert.²⁹⁰ To combat the civil disturbances, the British continued to introduce emergency legislations outlawing any activities that could lead to public disorder, including the prohibition of any gatherings exceeding twenty-five people.²⁹¹ In some 'problem' areas such as Masaka and Mubende, strict curfews were enforced along with notices prohibiting the carrying of sticks, and the forced surrender of firearms as well as the control of the movement of vehicles and persons. Restrictions on the media including press censorship and radio monitoring were also enforced.²⁹²

Table 2: Central Government, Expenditures Law and Order/ Defence 1947-61²⁹³

Year	Value in £ `000							
	1947	1950	1953	1956/57	1957/58	1958/59	1959/60	1960/61
Administration, Defence	535	881	1,244	2,413	2,644	2,670	2,553	2,259

²⁸⁹ Odd-Helge Fjeldstad and O. Therkildsen, 'Taxation and State-Society Relations in East Africa,' in D. Brautigam, Odd-Helge Fjeldstad, M. Moore (eds.) *Taxation and State-Building in Developing Countries: Capacity and Consent*, Cambridge University Press, 2008); L. Gardner, *Taxing Colonial Africa: The Political Economy of British Imperialism* (Oxford University Press, 2012).

²⁹⁰ GDA Box 541: 'Ugandan Protectorate Draft Emergency Legislation' Government Printer Entebbe. Received in the Office of District Commissioner of Gulu, 2 September 1960.

²⁹¹ Ibid.

²⁹² Ibid.

²⁹³ The Economic Development of Uganda: Report of a Mission Organised by the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development at the request of the Uganda Government. (Baltimore, 1962), 454

Law and Order	264	522	900	1,659	1,889	2,097	2,304	2,415
Total	799	1,403	2,144	4,072	4,533	4,767	4,857	4,674

Following the disturbances in Buganda that had begun in 1947, the Colonial government continued to increase expenditure on defence year on year. From 1947 to 1961 there was an average annual increase of forty-two per cent spent on maintaining law and order in the Protectorate. In Acholi, police surveillance had begun from the moment the UNC had arrived in the region in 1953. The Police Special Branch was tasked with recording and reporting the details of political meetings in within Acholi districts. The nature of the colonial government's surveillance on political activists in the locality effectively set a precedent and provided the blue print for military intervention and intelligence gathering that would continue to be utilised by future regimes. In Buganda, the colonial government's aim of ending violent anti-colonial campaigns was systematised through the implementation of various states of emergencies from the 1950s.²⁹⁴ This sanctioned the use of military force and state censorship as a means of dealing with political dissidents.

In Acholi however there were no notices placed that restricted travel or any state imposed curfews. In the lead up to the 1961 elections, minor clashes were reported during public meetings, although these were not serious enough to warrant any meaningful intervention from the predominately Northern police force. Local chiefs were instead instructed to try and contain the disturbances.²⁹⁵ Similar riots such as the one seen in Bukedi were not replicated and if any did break out, they were small and sporadic and had very little to do with events going on in Southern and Eastern Uganda. Only three strikes were recorded from 1961-62, and were due to specific local issues, such as a strike by workers in Acholi Inn due to late payment of wages.²⁹⁶ Nonetheless, Acholi UPC and DP politicians in the region were quick to

²⁹⁴ Thompson, *Governing Uganda*, 246-268.

²⁹⁵ GDA Box 542 File: 'Acholi District' Monthly District Intelligence Reports, January 1962-March 1964.

²⁹⁶ MUL/AS Ref EAU/A (058): J.P Twining, Acholi District Commissioner: Annual Report: Acholi District Council 1962.

capitalise on the national debates and disturbances that were taking place by giving them a regional nuance. Some deliberately sought to mislead potential supporters in regard to how they should vote by stating that the Wild Report had recommended that people should only vote for the DP, as they were the only party that was concerned with development. In another incident DP politicians told a crowd of supporters that the UPC were directly responsible for the outbreak of the Bukedi Riots and would hinder national progression and independence.²⁹⁷

The UNC/UPC²⁹⁸ in Acholi saw the Bukedi Riots as a way to level the playing field, particularly after they lost several seats to the DP in the local council elections of 1959. Because the DP now controlled the council, UPC politicians mobilised supporters in the region by claiming that if the DP were victorious, they would raise poll-tax rates for all Acholi. The allegation was strongly denied as DP representatives countered that in fact poll tax was only being increased for government workers earning over 750 shillings per month. Furthermore, tax for the ordinary person would remain unchanged.²⁹⁹ Although the standard rate of taxation was fifty shillings, in some divisions local council assessment committees were known to regard a lesser rate of thirty-five shillings as a reasonable standard for the ordinary man. In fact, only a very small number of Acholi, around seven per cent, actually paid a higher tax rate than the set standard.³⁰⁰ The Acholi who were liable to pay the higher tax brackets were few and far between, and mainly worked in civil service jobs or in plantations in the South.³⁰¹ Poll-tax rates in the region remained relatively stable from the late colonial period through to the end of Obote's first presidency. When the standard rate was increased to sixty-one shillings in

²⁹⁷ KDA: Police Special Branch and District Intelligence Reports (Kitgum) January -December 1960.

²⁹⁸ From 1960 disputes within the UNC resulted in several splits, with Obote eventually leaving the party to form the Uganda People's Congress (UPC) in 1959-60. This was to be the death knell of the UNC as a as a political force among the Acholi, and in fact the rest of the Protectorate as illustrated by their poor performance in the 1960 elections.

²⁹⁹ KDA: DP meeting report by Provincial Special Branch Officer, 13 June 1960.

³⁰⁰ Leys, *Political Parties in Acholi*, 62.

³⁰¹ UCU: Box 34, Folder 12 Letter to the Bishop of the upper Nile from the Archbishop Brown of Namirembe, 2 August 1960.

1961 it was quickly reduced the following year after being deemed too high.³⁰² In summation, taxes were not a significant enough issue to drive Acholi to the streets to riot. Regional underdevelopment and lack of industry placed restrictions on the formation of any mass, centralised, proletarian workers' movement in the region. More importantly, economic marginalisation limited the development of a pronounced economically grounded Acholi class identity that could be fed into a larger national industrial workers movement.

Despite the political tensions brought on by the Bukedi Riots, direct elections to the Legislative Council went ahead as planned in March 1961 resulting in a victory for the DP. The DP's success in the elections lay in the animosity between the Protestant-dominated royal establishment of Buganda's government hierarchy, and the DP's largely Catholic leaders. When the Buganda government requested a boycott of the elections the DP ignored the instruction and went on to claim victory.³⁰³ 'Hence the first Prime Minister of Uganda, Benedicto Kiwanuka, was reviled by the Buganda government for both ignoring the boycott and daring to place himself, a Catholic Muganda commoner, in position superior to the King of Buganda.'³⁰⁴ By this time the UNC had become completely factionalised into various smaller parties, and the UPC, still under the leadership of Milton Obote emerged as the main challenger to the DP's political dominance. The failure of the Buganda Kingdom to segregate, and the fallout from the DP victory prompted a coalition between the UPC and the newly formed Kabaka Yekka (KY) (Kabaka Only) party. It was a calculated decision by both the Kabaka and Obote to ensure victory in the 1962 elections.³⁰⁵ As Horowitz assess, 'both the Kabaka Yekka and the UPC regarded the DP as their rival. Only the UPC and KY had not been competing for votes because neither competed in the territory of the other.'³⁰⁶ Under the terms of the coalition, the UPC had

³⁰² MUL/AS EAU/A (058) 1: J. Twining, Acholi District Commissioner: Annual Report: Acholi District Council 1962.

³⁰³ Jørgensen, *Uganda: A Modern History*, 200.

³⁰⁴ Ibid.

³⁰⁵ Ibid.

³⁰⁶ D. L. Horowitz, *Ethnic Groups in Conflict* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 373.

agreed to support Buganda's demands at the 1961 and 1962 constitutional negotiations in London for a federal post-colonial state. The conference was held between September and October 1961 and during the negotiations UPC and KY delegates agreed that the Kingdom would be granted the option of having some member of the National Assembly indirectly elected by the Lukiko. It was agreed that 'Buganda would also control her own civil services without supervisory interferences from the Ugandan government.'³⁰⁷ If the coalition was to prove successful in the 1962 elections, the Kabaka was to be installed in the largely ceremonial role of President, with Obote as Prime Minister. The terms of the coalition ensured that the Buganda government would have its power strongly entrenched within the post-colonial state.³⁰⁸

From 1950 to 1962 Ugandan nationalism was driven by the divisive politics of ethnopolitics and regional factionalism, which served as the principle tool for making separatist demands against the colonial state. The colonial system of governance, which had emphasised clan, regional and ethnic political allegiances, provided the platform for which Ugandan and Acholi politicians campaigned for electoral support and political power. This meant that anti-colonial rhetoric lacked any unified political coherency as they were channelled through specific local and regional grievances. In the locality, regional underdevelopment and lack of industry placed restrictions on the formation of any mass, centralised, proletarian workers movement that could be fed into a larger national political movement. Consequently, the 'Northern identity' provided a more unifying political tool to mobilise the peoples of the region. In addition, the political dominance of the Buganda Kingdom provided the UNC/UPC and DP in Acholi a clear political platform in which they could engage in the comparative politics of underdevelopment, by utilising the 'Northern identity'. Through the political prowess of the Milton Obote, Acholi politicians capitalised on the UPC's growing dominance, by forming strong political allegiances with their regional counterparts, the Lango, further ethnocising party politics in the run-up to independence.

³⁰⁷ S.R. Karugire, *The Roots of Instability in Uganda* (Fountain Publishers, 2003), 47.

³⁰⁸ Jørgensen, *Uganda: A Modern History*, 200.

3.2. Clan Politics and the Extension of Chiefly Authority

There were among northerners more awareness of events taking place in the south than one might have thought, although the population generally appeared to be concerned only with its small circle.³⁰⁹

At a local/regional level, within the Acholi Local Government (ALG), there was an emerging expression of political activism driven by Acholi chiefs in reaction to the Kabaka's post-colonial political ambitions in Uganda. With the colonial government's political focus placed firmly in resolving the 'Buganda question', Acholi chiefs saw an opportunity to manipulate the political situation to suit their own ambitions in the locality. Like Obote, Acholi chiefs were quick to utilise the politics of regional underdevelopment, using it to renegotiate the power relations between the British and members of the ALG. In 1951 Acholi chiefs in the ALG sent a petition to the Governor of Uganda, pointing to the economic disparities between the Northern and Southern Provinces which they felt placed the Acholi in a perpetual cycle of 'ignorance poverty, and disease.'³¹⁰

Our sons and daughters are regrettably absent in the United Kingdom. The whole province cannot possibly be devoid of suitable candidates. The present method of selection in the Protectorate is not appealing to them. We state frankly that the South, the developed part, has had far more attention given to it . . . we suggest a provincial election or candidates by quotas. We stress still that the *Northern Province should receive immediate and special attention*.³¹¹ (emphasis added).

The petition offers some insight into the perception of Southerners and British rule in Acholi. The 'victim' identity pointed at institutional marginalisation and sought to designate regional underdevelopment as a political battleground. Once again, this was not an unfounded accusation by the councillors. In 1951, of the ten students in contention for an overseas scholarship, only one was

³⁰⁹ Lango district Archives Touring Report in Gertzel, *Party and Locality in northern Uganda*, 12.

³¹⁰ UNA/E C.3824 Box 29: Letter sent by the Acholi Local Government as a Petition to James Griffiths, Secretary of State for the attention of the Governor of Uganda, 11 May 1951.

³¹¹ *Ibid.*

from the Northern Province. Alluding to the reasons for this, the colonial administration acknowledged that as the region was lagging behind in education they could not find more suitable candidates from the North.³¹² Furthermore, data for the total income of Ugandan households in 1959 showed that the Northern Province had the lowest cash incomes per head compared to all the other provinces the Protectorate.³¹³

The economic and political profile of Buganda fed into the growing North-South divide and the politics of 'them' and 'us.' Acholi politicians and chiefs designated the Southerners as the overly privileged group in the Protectorate, a characteristic that would be evoked over and over again throughout the decade. However, just as the councillors were rejecting their counterparts in the South, they were also embracing another group, this time to the North.

Regarding the inter-territorial boundary between the Sudan and Uganda, this point has been raised several times by the Government. It is indeed a difficult task and requires international consideration, but we still feel that our lost brothers who are Acholi speaking should be included in our Province, for the sake of our progress *as a unit*.³¹⁴ (emphasis added).

This was in response to a border adjustment between Northern Uganda and, what is now South Sudan, which meant that a small population of Acholi speaking people were now designated as Sudanese nationals. The terminology expressed by the councillors in particular the usage of words such as 'unit' and the call to the lost brothers and sisters now designated as Sudanese instead of Acholi, points to a greater sense of an Acholi ethnonational identity. This idea can be further reinforced by the request of

³¹² Ibid.

³¹³ The Economic Development of Uganda: Report of a Mission Organised by the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development at the request of the Uganda Government (Baltimore, 1962), 442.

³¹⁴ UNA/E C.3824 Box 29: Letter from the Acholi Local Government as a Petition to James Griffiths, Secretary of State for the attention of the Governor of Uganda, 11 May 1951. (emphasis added).

the councillors for the government to develop them more economically so that they too could gain more political independence.³¹⁵

The British had in 1950 created two new ministerial posts in the council, the *Lawirwodi* (Paramount Chief) and *Lagolkop Madit* (Chief Judge).³¹⁶ The creation of the positions had come about after three years of negotiations with the colonial administration, and was not so much a concession but a politically opportunistic ploy by both the British and the Acholi chiefs. In 1949 the Acholi Local Council had first set forth a resolution requesting that the positions be created, although it was not passed due to the fact that the standing committee had not been given the opportunity to discuss the directive.³¹⁷ Within the colonial administration there were immediate concerns regarding the vague, often extreme ideas put forth by the Acholi councillors regarding the creation of the two posts.³¹⁸ It was decided that before the councillors made such major alterations to the constitution, it was imperative that they were shown first-hand the potential disadvantages that might arise from the creation of the posts. A tour of fifteen councillors had

³¹⁵ UNA/E C.3824 Box 29: Letter sent by the Acholi Local Government as a Petition to James Griffiths, Secretary of State for the attention of the Governor of Uganda, 11 May 1951.

³¹⁶ There were very few sources related to the Native Courts in Acholi pertaining to the period covering this research. Even Girling's research in 1949 makes very few references to the Native Courts in Acholi. Whether the sources were destroyed or located somewhere other the archives that were consulted is unclear. It is possible that rather than utilising formal legal processes low-level disputes could have been negotiated and resolved among community members utilising Acholi pre-colonial legal processes. This can be observed now with the ongoing debate regarding the re-absorption of former LRA soldiers back into Acholi communities and the emphasis on tradition justice and reconciliation over formal legal procedures. For more information on the current issues concerning transitional justice in post-war Acholi see: Branch, *Displacing Human Rights*, Chapter 5; Allen, *Trial Justice*; E. Laruni and K. Lonergan, 'Learning from Practice: the Role of Traditional Cultural Practices of Reconciliation in post-conflict Northern Uganda' (Grassroots Reconciliation Group, Gulu, 2012).

³¹⁷ GDA Box 532: Letter to M.J Bessel District Commissioner of Bunyoro, from District Commissioner of Northern Province discussing the tour by Acholi District Councillors, 14 April 1950.

³¹⁸ *Ibid.*

already been arranged by the request of the Acholi councillors so that they could travel to other Provinces to observe their political institutions.

The councillors were encouraged to examine the local government machinery of the districts in the Eastern Provinces and Bunyoro with focus being on similar positions of paramount chief, Secretary-General (katikiro) and Chief Judge. The councillors were undoubtedly influenced by the political structures and activities within the other districts in Uganda, in particular the Kingdoms of Buganda and Bunyoro. The close proximity of Bunyoro meant that the Kingdom was easier to observe and the dominance of Buganda within the Protectorate ensured that it maintained a high political profile. In this endeavour, the councillors had the support of the populace, and when the posts were finally created they were very well received. But as it would transpire, the councillors would not limit themselves to mere ceremonial positions, they wanted to emulate the power that was afforded to their counterparts elsewhere in the Protectorate.

The two offices were to be held in rotation among the county chiefs. Those who held the positions were afforded enormous prestige and ceremony, as the councillors themselves readily acknowledged. 'The holders of these positions are far above the country chiefs and this is something that they did not have before. They look forward to further such developments so that they can have a strong central office for their local government.'³¹⁹ Although, it was intended that the position of *Lawirwodi* would be purely ceremonial, it grew in status rapidly. The appointment of an Acholi paramount chief gave council members political confidence in their dealings with the colonial government. They soon began to bypass political hierarchies and overreach their authority within the locality. The situation prompted the DC to complain that, 'it had been increasingly difficult to get council members to understand that their powers were limited and that they did not have the authority to overrule government policy or a decision by a higher council.'³²⁰ In return, the councillors argued that if it was the intention of the colonial

³¹⁹ UNA/E File: C.3824, Chief Secretary's Office. Letter sent to James Griffiths, Secretary of State for the attention of the Governor of Uganda from the Acholi Local Government as a Petition. 11 May 1951.

³²⁰ Gertzel, *Party and Locality in northern Uganda*, 59.

administration to develop what they termed as ‘their backward people’ these two post holders should be awarded greater responsibility within the local government. ‘Given that both the *Lawirwodi* and the *Lagolkop Madit* had provided such long service to the administration, it was only right, that that His Majesties Government should recognise officially the seniority and the powers that such chiefs held.’ Interestingly enough one of the signatories of the letter was none other than the *Lawirwodi* himself.³²¹

The petition makes apparent certain power dynamics in Acholi at this time. Firstly, it relates to the power structures between the colonial government and the Acholi Local Government. The language used is not that of the powerless and subjugated. Yes, the councillors are self-deprecating in regards to ‘their peoples’ economic and social backwardness, but they also knew who they were talking to and were willing to concede these points to allow them to make more demands on the administration.

If it is the interest of his Majesty’s government to develop our backward people by handing over power to them, as the people prove capable of exercising such, give more responsibility to local government. The creation of the two new posts in our local administration would only be nominal until this position is rectified and brought to reality. We do not mean to bring the power held by the Protectorate government as per with the level of the local governments but at least a corresponding release of power should be affected [sic].³²²

This was a strong, confident local council, which was manipulating the political structures that were initially nurtured by the British in order to make demands on their colonisers, while at the same time strengthening their political and social positioning within the Protectorate. The response to the petition by the administration was equally telling. Given what was now happening within Buganda, it served British interests to encourage political growth among other tribes, particularly in the North and the West of the Protectorate. This was to

³²¹ UNA/E File: C.3824, Chief Secretary’s Office. Letter sent to James Griffiths, Secretary of State for the attention of the Governor of Uganda from the Acholi Local Government as a Petition. 11 May 1951. (Quotation paraphrased)

³²² UNA/E File: C.3824 Chief Secretary’s Office. Letter sent to James Griffiths, Secretary of State for the attention of the Governor of Uganda from the Acholi Local Government as a Petition. 11 May 1951. (Quotation paraphrased).

be conducted through the development of institutions of local government. The 1949 African Local Government Ordinance had previously provided each district with an African Local Government that consisted of chiefs and the District Council and gave a statutory basis to the system. By 1955 the Ordinance allowed for larger and more representative District Councils who were responsible for district affairs.³²³ The most important thing to emerge for these ethnically homogenous district councils was that the districts that they represented assumed political prominence in the 1950s. This was largely because they provided the institutions in which political support could be gained, as by that time local governance had already acquired political significance for the local population.³²⁴ Outside of their districts local council members were given some opportunities to represent their various regions by being nominated to institutions such as the Uganda Development Council (UDC). The UDC had been enlarged not only to include all ministers directly involved in economic policy, but also to incorporate an African representative from all the provinces in the Protectorate.³²⁵ Consequently the British had already laid down the foundations of strong local councils that could be used to deal with the 'Buganda problem.' As Darwin states, 'the British had no mercy for separatism but in this case they could tolerate nationalism.'³²⁶ Appealing to the tribes who already resented the idea of Baganda superiority, they started to magnify Ugandan Local and Legislative Councils at the expense of the Buganda Lukiko. As a result, ideas were put forward such as providing the first printing press to serve the Nilotic areas, as the Bantus already had numerous periodicals written in the vernacular, with the Provincial Commissioner remarking that he considered 'the need for one to be a very high priority, not only on political grounds but also in the development and welfare campaign.'³²⁷

³²³ Gertzel, *Party and Locality in northern Uganda*, 8-19.

³²⁴ *Ibid.*, 20-21.

³²⁵ 'Ugandan Development Council Enlarged' *The Uganda Argus*, 7 December 1956. Makerere University Africana Section.

³²⁶ J. Darwin, *Britain and Decolonisation*.

³²⁷ UNA/E File: C1329: Letter to the Chief Secretary J.W. Steil of the Northern Province forwarded by the Provincial Commissioner, 8 December 1947. Also see: "Uganda's Total of

There was an active push for the education of local chiefs in Western systems of governance and economic structures that took the form of organised tours in the United Kingdom. In 1949, it was decided that a group of chiefs from within the different regions of the Protectorate would travel to the UK so that they could gain a better understanding of British systems of governance. Against the backdrop of the Buganda riots, it was hoped that the visit would help promote better relations between Africans and the colonial administration. These trips continued throughout the decade, with another party of eight Ugandan councillors being sent on tour in 1956. Alongside these tours Ugandan students were sent abroad to study at colleges in the UK, with two Acholi male students out of a total of seven nationwide being sent to South Devon Technical College and awarded diplomas for a course on the British system of governance.³²⁸

Antonio Opwa, county chief of Chua, was the representative from Acholi chosen to participate in the 1949 tour. His memoirs suggest that he understood the part he was expected to play and exactly what was expected of him. 'Naturally, most people have more faith in what is explained to them by one of their own rather than a foreigner.'³²⁹ The tours were also an opportunity

Clubs and Scouts nears 7000" *The Uganda Argus*, 1956: From the mid-1950s the colonial government was certain that independence was now a question of when instead of if. The administration started to invest heavily in community development, welfare, agriculture and education as they started to prepare African men for positions in power. In Acholi, as well as chiefs, youth groups were targeted as the British sought to properly mould the new generation of potential leaders. A new library was also opened up at Sir Samuel Baker School in Gulu where the Governor Sir Andrew Cohen remarked that although other people in the Protectorate may have had longer periods of education those in the Northern Province had every chance ahead of them. There was a drive to get the young to join local youth clubs and scout groups to teach them skills of communication and team building which seemed to be gaining some success as the 1954 Census showed that there had been an increase of 7,000 scouts within a period of a year with the best increases coming from the Acholi were 999 scouts had been recorded. Scout groups had been growing steadily after the war when members were encouraged to serve their communities by working in post offices sorting mail or other duties that were deemed to be socially meaningful.

³²⁸ 'Ugandan Chiefs Visit Britain' *The Uganda Argus*, 6 October 1956.

³²⁹ A. Opwa, *An East African Chief in England: Chief Antonio Opwa. A Chief of the Acholi People of Uganda* (Nairobi, Kampala, Da es Salaam: The Eagle Press, 1952).

for chiefs, from all around the Protectorate to interact with their regional counterparts. It was an opportunity to gather information on how the other districts in Uganda compared socially, economically and politically. The tours themselves were exhaustive with the chiefs expected to visit as many British intuitions as possible. These included courts, prisons, various infrastructures and industries, farming schools and farms, and co-operative societies from all over the country. Chief Opwa's testimony, published in 1952, is somewhat problematic, not least regarding the language and terminology used. Describing an instance where they were invited to attend a church service in Balmoral where the Royal family was in attendance, Opwa recounts the moment when he first saw the King; 'we were close to the man on whose shoulders rested the heavy responsibility of looking after the British Empire. He stood erect and silent while we asked God to let him reign long over us.'³³⁰ However, the original manuscript written in Acholi, found in Gulu district archive, is not only missing this statement, but does not have many of the British expressions in the published manuscript. This indicates that for all intents and purposes the book was altered dramatically during its translation to English. The question of why this was done can be found in the response to the manuscript by the then acting Commissioner of the Northern Province D. K. Burner,

Mr Allen's opinion of Mr Opwa came as a disappointment especially as Mr Opwa was about the most suitable person to send to England from the Northern Province. I myself have seen Mr Opwa since his return and heard him give a talk to Africans on his experiences. He certainly seems to think that all that is necessary is to send the youth of Acholi to be educated in Great Britain and then all will be set fair in Acholi. Mr Opwa records an advanced and progressive life but it seems to have been accompanied not by corresponding impression of the centuries of effort in skill and work required to achieve it, but rather just by feeling that it happens, and that the only thing required to make it happen here is to send a lot of people to be educated in England. In short my first opinion of what Mr Opwa has gained is disappointing to me.³³¹

³³⁰ Ibid., 37; GDA Box: 532: Correspondences between D.K Burner, Ag. Provincial Commissioner, Northern Province and the Chief Secretary in Entebbe. Reply to Mr Allen's report on the UK Tour, 8 September - 5 November 1949.

³³¹ Ibid.

Given the general disappointment in Chief Opwa and his original manuscript, the insight he had 'gained' from the tour was a bittersweet pill for the British to swallow. Internally it fed into the belief held in London and among British officials in Protectorate that Ugandans were nowhere near politically evolved enough to be granted independence. As such, the insertion of 'may he forever reign over us' into the manuscript was really a belief that they should continue indefinitely to hold close economic and political ties with the Ugandan state, regardless of whether independence was granted or not.³³²

Yet the belief that Ugandans were not ready for independence was a blow to British post-colonial economic ambitions, which placed emphasis on the continued agricultural development of the Protectorate. A developed agricultural sector meant more produce and more money, and a stable political climate meant that the economic ambitions could be carried on peacefully after independence. In fact as calls for independence became more frenzied later on in the decade, it appeared that the British were going to hold out until the political and economic situation was stable enough for their exit. Some British politicians opposed to independence warned Ugandan politicians amidst the campaigning that they should 'never forget that while the world can get on without Uganda, Uganda cannot get on without the world.'³³³ This cautionary tale was echoed by the Governor Sir Andrew Cohen who said when questioned about a target date for independence, 'our task jointly with you, is to build up Uganda into a strong, happy and prosperous country which when the time for self-governance come can take its proper place in the world.'³³⁴ The concessions that the British started to make to the local governments were in a sense a reflection of their wider political ambitions concerning post-independence Uganda. Rather than laying the foundations for Ugandan nationalism, the consolidation of power in local governments actually emphasised regional and ethnic identities. This policy would not only come back to derail British post-colonial ambitions in the Protectorate, but it

³³² Thompson. *Governing Uganda: British Colonial Rule and Its Legacy*.

³³³ 'Motion calling for independence lost by majority' *The Uganda Argus*, 1 May 1957,

³³⁴ 'Cohen, 1961 is not a target date for independence' *The Uganda Argus*, 25 April 1956.

would make its attempts at peacefully centralising political and social institutions in post-independence Uganda almost impossible.

Returning to the installation of *Lawirwodi* and *Lagolkop Madit*, for the Acholi, these positions were considered major victories, as they believed that it placed them on par with the Baganda and their King. Chiefs defied the administration by continually using the term 'paramount chief' despite being warned that it was 'nothing of the sort.'³³⁵ After all, the colonial government was already dealing with one problematic 'King' in Buganda, they did not wish to contend with another in the North. While the administration in this sense encouraged Acholi ethnonationalism, they were openly reluctant to provide the tools that could help to form strong Local Administrative Governments independent of British authority. What the interplay with the ALG and the colonial administration shows is that while the councillors wanted more access to political power in the locality, they were still prepared to work within colonial authority. Acholi politicians and chiefs in this sense were astute enough to manipulate the political situation in Buganda by making increased political demands on an administration that was slowly losing authority over its Protectorate. If the British wanted a more politicised and centralised Acholi ethnic identity, then they had to be willing to make certain concessions and actually give more power to them. This was, as Low terms it 'the liveliness of fourth phase politics' in Acholi that occupied and satisfied a great deal of those in the local councils.³³⁶

As local government intuitions and their members continued to gain prominence, internal debates within Acholi became increasingly politicised. These debates focused on specific regional issues pertaining to land, taxation, boundaries and social welfare. Acholi chiefs were instrumental in stoking many of these political confrontations as they sought to extend their growing power beyond their specific political domain. Sanctioned by state policy that focused on Native Authorities, county chiefs and sub-parish chiefs used their authority to extend clan borders, increase tax revenue and

³³⁵ UNA/E File: C.3824 Chief Secretary's Office. Letter sent to James Griffiths, Secretary of State for the attention of the Governor of Uganda from the Acholi Local Government as a Petition. 11 May 1951.

³³⁶ Low, *Political Parties in Uganda*, 15.

challenge potential competitors. Complaints started to flow into the DC's office in Gulu outlining disputes between chiefs trying to overreach their designated clan boundaries. In 1952 the DC A.H. Russell was summoned to resolve a complaint brought forward by the chief of Aswa against his counterpart in Omoro district, regarding the latter sanctioning the movement of certain taxpayers without his consent. The minutes detailing the dispute show a pronounced jealousy among the chiefs:

From time to time when I was Secretary of the Local Government there had been people who had disliked [me], and who indeed had wanted to kill [me]. I have no desire to make Aswa any bigger or alter any boundaries and I am quite willing to be moved from Aswa, if Rwot Omoro wanted to move to Aswa and thereby have a larger population.³³⁷

These boundary and land disputes were not isolated and as the decade progressed boundary disputes became overtly political going hand-in-hand with the formation of political parties in the region. They became so frequent that they started to become a hindrance to the daily running of the Acholi local councils. The disputes were however less about the actual boundaries themselves but were rather a manifestation of the competition and jealousy among the chiefs seeking to extend their political authority. As discussed in the previous chapter, hereditary chiefs and their subjects jealously guarded Acholi pre-colonial clan identities. The large number of traditional chiefs had proven a problem to the colonial administration as clan allegiances were used by the Acholi to undermine the installation of non-hereditary chiefs. To contend with this, the British incorporated a large number of these clan groups into the border divisions within Acholi. Although the number of Acholi chiefs in the Native Administration had been reduced in 1938-39 from fifty to thirty Acholi chiefs were still overly represented within local government. In 1957 out of the thirty-five members of the ALG with seats, thirty were chiefs. This is compared to the West Nile where chiefs only accounted for thirteen out of thirty-three and in Teso where only five chiefs took the twenty-five seats represented despite the latter having a larger population

³³⁷ GDA Box 541: Minutes of a Meeting held by A.H Russell District Commissioners Office Gulu, 11 August 1952.

British administrators were often called in to mediate disputes as it was not simply enough for the county chief to be present, as their authority was also subject to challenge by local political competitors. Given the numerous clans and chiefs within the region, it would have been very unlikely that someone other than a British official would have been able to facilitate the meetings. Even the elected *Lawirwodi* did not have a mandate, as he was not accepted by all the different clans in Acholi, not least because the majority of Acholi would have undoubtedly wanted a chief who came from the clan/and or district. As the British placed more power in the hands of the chiefs those living within the domains were swept up in the quarrels that were burdening the local councils, taking sides and further reinforcing chiefly political boundary demarcations. Threats against sitting chiefs increased, often instigated by former-chiefs and their supporters. In one particular case in Puranga, the county chief complained to the DC that that campaign against him had become so bad; his supporters had 'become fearful for their own lives.'³³⁸

Clan and tribal allegiances became more pronounced as the stakes on who would control them became higher. This was further roused by the colonial government's directive for economic stimulus through the agricultural sector, which encouraged progressive farms and farmers.³³⁹ The directive was reinforced in 1955 by the East African Royal Commission (EARC), which stated that if efficient mixed farming were to succeed traditional systems of land tenure would have to be reassessed and changed. 'The EARC Report was critical of the fact that under customary land tenure, land was not treated as a commodity that could be sold, leased, mortgaged or otherwise dealt with commercially. Hence, it had no commercial value.'³⁴⁰ Consequently, there needed to be a move towards properly demarcated smallholdings,

³³⁸ GDA Box 541: Letter from the People of Puranga Awere, Omoro County to DC Gulu. 9 June 1952.

³³⁹ G. Carswell, *Cultivating Success in Uganda: Kigezi Farmers & Colonial Policies* (Oxford: James Currey, 2009) Introduction.

³⁴⁰ J. Mugambwa, 'A Comparative Analysis of Land Tenure Law Reform in Uganda and Papua New Guinea' *Journal of South Pacific Law*, Vol. 11 No.1 (2007), 41.

individualisation of land ownership, mobility in the transfer of land and encouragement of progressive farmers.³⁴¹

In Acholi the idea that a single individual could own land proved to be highly contentious. The EARC report 'caused a political stir' in Uganda with most districts overwhelmingly rejecting its recommendations.³⁴² Acholi traditional systems of land ownership meant that the tribe as a whole used it, with only members of that particular tribe having the right to cultivate on the land, as long as there are no interferences with the neighbours 'boundaries.' The cultivators were guaranteed full security as long as they were making use of the land. The 'ownership' of the land was generally transferred at the death of the father to the son, uncles or the closest male heir. As land was generally plentiful due to the low population density, clan disputes regarding cultivation were generally few and far between. Cultivation of the land had always been a communal endeavour with every member of the clan participating in the work. This form of group work was generally conducted by the 'wang kweri', a group of able-bodied men in the community who agreed to work together during cultivation seasons. They would be led by the 'rowt kweri' (chief of the hoe) who would be tasked with mobilising the workers and designating tasks among other things. Traditionally this work group would not be paid but instead food and other non-monetary provisions would be provided. This was to ensure that the aim of the group would remain helping members instead of profiting directly from group work. This in a sense was a traditional co-operative society that was beneficial to the group as a whole and the individuals that participated in them. Every member would have the right to call upon the 'wang kweri' if they needed their land to be cultivated or harvested.³⁴³

As more Acholi started to become involved in private business enterprises or migrated in and out of the districts, the communal system of farming inevitably faced challenges. Among communal labourers an informal system called 'piece work' was gradually introduced during the mid to late-

³⁴¹ Carswell, *Cultivating Success in Uganda*.

³⁴² Mugambwa, 'A Comparative Analysis of Land Tenure Law Reform in Uganda and Papua New Guinea', 41.

³⁴³ W.O. Lutaro, *Agriculture in West Acholi* (Bsc Thesis, Makerere University Library, 1956).

colonial period which meant that each individual would have a specific task to do, which could only be completed by that person. This ensured that those who were avoiding their duties and concentrating more on personal enterprises would be forced to do their fair share of group work. As the colonial drive for progressive farming increased, other factors began to affect traditional systems of group work. The introduction of a tractor hire system in the late 1950s reduced the number of labourers who were needed to cultivate the land. Added to this, new farming schools took in young Acholi men and taught them how to look at farming as a business instead of as a means for sustenance. A number of Acholi Makerere University students, through the Agricultural Department were allocated funding to go and research farming mechanisms in their relevant ancestral lands with an emphasis on how progressive farming could benefit the areas.³⁴⁴ The success of these farming institutions seems to be negligible and there is very little evidence to suggest that the skills taught in the schools were actually applied in the field. When some farmers in West Acholi were instructed to plant cotton in mid-May and mid-June, as this would produce a better crop, they disregarded the advice believing instead that the earlier the crop was planted in the year, the better the yield. Furthermore, the advice to use narrower lines while planting seeds was ignored, with farmers believing that larger lines would encourage larger crops. Moreover if they were forced to adhere to these teachings, they would ensure that next time they were cultivating they would do it somewhere where the authorities were not present. Such cotton plots became known as 'mukungu kwiya', which translates to 'parish chief does not know.'³⁴⁵

Inevitably, this belligerence towards the teachings of the Department of Agriculture meant that those who choose to work with department, in particular the progressive farmers were treated with hostility. As some farmers

³⁴⁴ These dissertations started in the late 1950s and were generally researched and written by Acholi Makerere students many of which spent around two to three months in Acholi interviewing farmers and officers in the department of Agriculture. They became more prolific in the 1960s particularly with Obote's move to the left and the common man's charter and even right through the Amin regime as Agriculture still served as the central focus of economic development.

³⁴⁵ W.O. Lutaro, *Agriculture in West Acholi* (Bsc Thesis, Makerere University Library, 1956).

started to officially demarcate land and apply for land titles, they faced opposition from neighbours who evoked tribal land tenures to challenge the new civil ones.³⁴⁶ In 1959 the chief of Omoro raised an issue concerning a secret society in the county called *Koro Anywali* (Koro citizens/natives). They had held several meetings some of which were attended by prominent politicians, former chiefs and some progressive farmers in the area. It was reported that one of the tasks of the society was to look after the wealth of the people of Koro, including matters pertaining to land, forests and rivers. The members argued that the local council had in the past been giving away this land to individuals without the consent of the people within the divisions. The society's activities were reportedly directed against progressive farmers and property connected to progressive activities. The DC was informed of the growing numbers of land and clan disputes in Koro and the time and effort that was being spent with clan leaders and chiefs in the local council trying to settle them.³⁴⁷ Colin Leys argues that the reputation of the Acholi in Uganda for inter-clan rivalry is often explained by the segmentary nature of Acholi society where the main social obligation of an individual is determined by his/her clan. As such, a clan member can claim economic aid from other clan members, including securing a government job for some highly placed clan members or even swaying an election. If you were a chief or a member of the local council it would not be unusual for these clan ties to inform administrative decisions as well. The inter-clan feuding that occurred in pre-colonial Acholi became replaced with intra-clan feuding for political office. Consequently, political rivalry in Acholi is often explained in the terms of clan affiliation. However, the assessment of Acholi politics in these terms is reductive and easily exaggerated. Firstly, the role of clan and chiefdom allegiances is mostly important in relation to political office, and as such it only affects the internal politics of the ruling party or the administration that controls the appointments.³⁴⁸ For the Acholi in the 1950s there was no ruling party that controlled appointments in the local councils other than the British

³⁴⁶ Ibid.

³⁴⁷ GDA Box 541: Letter from the County Chief of Omoro to DC Acholi, 24 November 1959.

³⁴⁸ Leys, *Politicians and Policies in Acholi*, 16.

administration. The only Acholi who held any political capital and that could realistically influence appointments were the chiefs and the local administrators who had positions in the local councils. It was they, under the umbrella of the colonial government who could play the politics of patronage, clientalism and nepotism. During this period, the politics of clan affiliation would inevitably have a greater role than any party affiliation. Clan conflicts were not simply internalised in local council debates, non-political actors were also drawn into the land and clan conflicts, primarily because for the Acholi the importance of the clan predated that of colonial institutions. In fact as Leys himself points out, 'most Acholi to whom I talked to could tell me the chiefdom, and often the clan, of any prominent Acholi.'³⁴⁹ As chiefs gained more prestige through the Native Administrative, clan allegiances inevitably became more pronounced.

3.3. The *Ocols*, Party Politics and the Fight for the Locality

My father was a county chief and he was very well respected in the area. He never dabbled in politics but privately he also had his own opinion. He believed that Uganda was not ready for independence and was very fearful of the politics that was taking place in the region. People were rushing and they had no idea what it would be like after the British had left.³⁵⁰

Obote's political rhetoric regarding the 'underdeveloped North' was translated back to the locality, particularly within the Acholi Local Government and Acholi politicians. A vast majority of the policies that the UNC put forth to mobilise the peoples of Acholi were very similar to the ones that the Baganda had demanded after the 1949 riots. In the mid to late 1950s, the UNC branch in Gulu started to demand, like their Baganda counterparts, direct elections to the local councils. This was an undeviating attack on the Native Administration system, and served two purposes. Firstly, the young party leaders understood that the 'the existence of the chiefs who needed to be wooed meant that district leaders could not expect a monopoly of power at

³⁴⁹ Ibid.

³⁵⁰ Formal and informal Interviews, Gulu and Kitgum, May-August 2012.

district level.³⁵¹ To gain political support Acholi UNC and DP politicians knew they had to convince the populace that the chiefs rule of force in the region, such as collecting taxes and coerced agricultural labour, was not only a burden to their daily life but also grossly unfair.³⁵² Immediately, accusations of nepotism were directed against chiefs in the ALG, particularly their manipulations of the indirect LC elections whereby voting was engineered so that certain pre-selected candidates would gain a seat in the council.³⁵³ Inevitably there was some resistance to the proposed changes within the LC among chiefs, but even they could not stop the tide, especially when both the DP and UNC added their political weight to the campaign, joining forces to pave the way for direct elections to the LC in 1958.³⁵⁴

The inclusion of directly elected councillors into the ALG opened the door for open political confrontation between the 'Ocols' and chiefs, as well as adding to the political hostilities between the UNC/UPC and the DP. Directly elected council members were impatient and unwilling to listen to advice being given by experienced staff and chiefs, and took any criticism as an attempt to undermine the authority of the new council. The British DC complained that some councillors were only concerned with pursuing personal, political and clan vendettas.³⁵⁵ By 1961 the disputes within the ALG had escalated to a point that the 1959 council was dissolved because the Acholi people had lost faith in it due to its 'poor record, walkouts, boycotts and endless delegations to Entebbe.'³⁵⁶

The colonial government's response to the arrival of the UNC in Acholi was one of hostility. As the party started to attract a larger following, particularly in the rural areas, the District Council, perhaps fearful of a repetition of the events that were occurring in Kampala, passed a resolution

³⁵¹ Gertzel, *Party and Locality in northern Uganda*, 67.

³⁵² Leys, *Politicians and Policies in Acholi*, 7.

³⁵³ Burke, *Local Government and Politics in Uganda*, 62.

³⁵⁴ 'Acholi demands for elections' *The Uganda Argus*, 5 November 1958; 'Election for Council in Acholi', *The Uganda Argus*, 30 November 1956.

³⁵⁵ MUL/AS: EAU/A (058): J.P Twining, Acholi District Commissioner: Annual Report: Acholi District Council 1962.

³⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

banning all public meetings outside of the main towns of Gulu and Kitgum, with restrictions only being lifted in 1956.³⁵⁷ The banning of public meetings and the arrest of Party chairman Peter Oola in 1953 for inciting civil dissidence however only served to arouse more sympathy towards the UNC, with its members gaining increased success in elections to the Acholi District Council.³⁵⁸ Political rivalry between the UNC and DP was particularly prevalent in Kitgum and the surrounding areas where the DP had a wider support base in comparison to West Acholi. Both parties tried to discourage supporters from giving money to the opposition, levelling allegations of corruption and embezzlement.³⁵⁹ Some overzealous party activists even went as far as demarcating political territories. In one instance UPC members informed the DP that they would no longer be allowed to hold meetings in Paloga, Kitgum, as it was their area.³⁶⁰ The UNC's hotly contested battlegrounds were mainly in North-East Acholi in districts such as Lamwo and Chua which had a strong Catholic missionary presence. In these areas, the VF did their part to encourage converts to show allegiance to the DP by emphasising partisan religious-politics. The UNC continued to draw considerable support in West Acholi, which was a CMS stronghold.³⁶¹ In many ways, the British were perhaps justified in their reaction to party political activity in the Acholi, particularly considering the effect that pronounced political factionalism would have within an independent Uganda. Factionalism erupted almost immediately as not long after the 1961 elections Acholi politicians started to challenge ballot results.³⁶² DP member Tiberio Okeny who had been defeated in North Acholi signed an affidavit one day after the results were announced alleging irregularities and lodging an election petition claiming that his ballot box was tampered with. He made a statement to *The*

³⁵⁷ 'Acholi Meetings Not Repressed,' *The Uganda Argus*, 23 November 1956.

³⁵⁸ Gertzel, *Party and Locality in northern Uganda*, 61-62.

³⁵⁹ KDA: Police Special Branch and District Intelligence Reports, 11 January 1960.

³⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

³⁶¹ 'Congress to hold Gulu Conference.' *The Uganda Argus*, June 24. 1958; Leys, *Politicians and Policies in Acholi*, 18.

³⁶² UNA/E Box 2 Ref 3, 'Election results', Letter from the DC of Acholi to R.C. Peagram, 2 September 1961.

Uganda Argus claiming, 'that if there is a new election I will get into the Legislative Council in any case.'³⁶³ The same challenge was made in South West Acholi where the DP had only won by a margin of fifty-two votes. Mr Alexander Latim, the unsuccessful UPC candidate, requested that the elections results be declared null and void as there were concerns regarding the validity of the votes. He was successful in his appeal and the Legislative Council seat for the constituency changed hands from DP to UPC.³⁶⁴

Competition among Acholi politicians was not just limited to DP and UPC rivalries; internal divisions within both parties also became more apparent. During the 1962 general elections UPC member Otema Allimadi opted to run against the official UPC candidate Peter Oola to contest the seat in North West Acholi, reflecting the power struggle within the party. Both candidates were strong UPC activists and had already amassed strong support bases within the constituency. In fact when it was reported that Allimadi might be expelled for attempting to stand against Oola, a meeting of delegates from various branches of the UPC was organised in his support, with attendees declaring that any move to remove Allimadi was detrimental to the future of the party.³⁶⁵ Although Allimadi's election bid eventually failed, these examples set a precedent for the contestation of election results that would come to characterise national and local politics in Uganda and continues to do so today.³⁶⁶ However, the appeals against election results in Acholi should not be seen as a rejection of the election process or even a lack of confidence in it. In fact, there was a great belief among Acholi politicians in the power structures that dictated national and local politics. Rather, the political hostilities should be viewed in the context in which these debates were taking place. Decolonisation and independence reinforced the mechanisms of power that had encouraged the young to challenge the old systems. The majority of politicians who put themselves forward as candidates for political office were younger men who had worked diligently towards acquiring the 'right education', strengthening their support base and

³⁶³ 'DP whip alleges irregularities' *The Uganda Argus*, 11 April 1961.

³⁶⁴ 'Mr Ojera to challenge election votes' *The Uganda Argus*, 23 May 1961.

³⁶⁵ 'Gulu rally backs Allimadi' *The Uganda Argus*, 30 August 1962.

³⁶⁶ 'Mr Allimadi stands on UPC ticket' *The Uganda Argus*, 11 September 1962.

preparing themselves for the day when they would lead Uganda to independence. However, the ethnically demarcated electoral map of Uganda and the colonial emphasis on strong local government institutions meant Acholi politicians were inevitably restricted in where they could run for political office. They would not have the same appeal in Buganda or Busoga, and so there was really only one place in which they could practice their politics: within their various constituent bases in Acholi.

In his analysis of political structures in Latin America, Charles Anderson argues that given the multiplicity of power contenders operating within political structures, elections are never definitive.

They are consistently held, just as they are conscientiously and consistently annulled. They are part of an on-going process of structuring power relations in which elections are important to some contenders, but not to all. Since there are other contenders in the political process, whose power is not contingent on this type of support, (the ability to aggregate mass consent) elections do not define political relations. Rather the results of an election are tentative, pending the outcome of negotiations between other power contenders and groups that have demonstrated a power capability through election.³⁶⁷

As another group of power contenders in the locality, Acholi politicians marked out the election process as a means of gaining political access to the centre. Internal competition for political office meant that election results in Acholi were continually challenged because electoral defeat had far greater ramifications for the *Ocol's* wider political ambitions. In the centre, party politics was characterised by religious and ethnic factionalism rather than any pronounced class based identities. It was only by emphasising ethnic demarcations through local economic and political grievances that Acholi politicians could access the political centre. However, these politicians needed the support of the locality to be given permission to speak nationally for their constituent base: if they lost the locality, they lost their access to the centre. It is then unsurprising that Allimadi defied his party by running independently hoping that it would split the UPC vote in his favour and even encourage some wavering DP supporters to come on his side. Nor should it be a surprise

³⁶⁷ Anderson, 'Towards a Theory of Latin American Politics', 2.

that Tiberio Okeny and Alexander Latim decided to challenge that election results when it transpired that they lost.

Consequently, political activity within Acholi was lively and contentious, leading the DC in Acholi to remark on the eve of the 1962 National Assembly elections that, 'right from the beginning of registration it was evident that the political parties were out to fight the election with all their strength.'³⁶⁸ Party agents from both sides placed themselves strategically at registration posts and campaigned energetically, taking care to ensure that the process of voter registration was widely publicised. Nearly all the candidates who put themselves forward were drawn from a pool of relatively well-educated Acholi men who had had various degrees of experience in politics, local administration, teaching and/or the military. Filling in an unofficial questionnaire one thirty-two year old candidate commented on his first class certificate in education received during his tenure in the army, and the fact that he was widely travelled.³⁶⁹

The differences between the new leaders and the colonial chiefs who had long held a monopoly over power in the district are never more apparent than in the observation made by an election supervisor regarding the employment of local polling staff. Wanting to replicate the procedures for elections in the previous year the British decided that once again non-English speakers would not be considered for the positions. Not only did this mean that many of the chiefs were excluded, but the supervisor of the election complained that he, 'had considerable difficulty in getting enough English speakers as staff and had to retreat to the mission schools.'³⁷⁰ The upside of this was that he was able to get chiefs to concentrate on maintaining law and order during the elections.³⁷¹ The difficulties faced by the election supervisor

³⁶⁸ UNA/E Box 2 No. 11: Report on the National Assembly Elections in April 1962 Acholi District, 30 May 1962.

³⁶⁹ UNA/E Box 2 Ref 3: Letter from the DC of Lango to the supervisor of Elections, 24 March 1960; P. Ekeh. 'Colonialism and the Two Publics in Africa: A Theoretical Statement.' *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, Vol. 7 No.1 (1975), 101.

³⁷⁰ UNA/E Box 2 No. 11: Report on the National Assembly Elections in April 1962 Acholi District, 30 May 1962.

³⁷¹ *Ibid.*

highlight two problems. Firstly, there was a lack of educated lower-ranking local chiefs within the region. Of all the candidates listed as running for political office, none were chiefs. This was mainly because under the Protectorate government, chiefs were forbidden from directly participating in any political activities that may have result in a conflict of interest or interfered with their chiefly duties. They were consequently excluded from the political mainstream and were essentially forced to simply sit and watch as politicians campaigned for power within their domains.³⁷² Yet, even if they had been able to put themselves forward as political candidates for seats in the Legislative Council, would they have been successful? They already had an established support base they presided over which they could easily mobilise to gain votes. They had a vast amount of administrative experience and for many years had been dutifully collecting taxes, dealing with squabbles and maintaining law and order among their subjects. These were all the traits that would arguably make for a successful political candidate. However, many of the chiefs, particularly at sub-county or parish level, lacked one major credential: very few had a strong command of English, the language of national politics. As Leys asserts, education in Uganda was not simply a means of widening a person's understanding of the world, it was in itself a political issue.³⁷³ In his work on political values and the educated class in Africa, Ali Mazrui highlights the contradiction between primary and secondary education and the higher education institutions in Africa which has contributed to a crisis a of identity within cultural societies.

At the level of primary and secondary schools part of the aim of education is to inculcate in the children the values and norms of the society to which they belong. Such inculcation must be a form and moral and cultural indoctrination. And then, the child duly indoctrinated, may enter Makerere as an undergraduate. What happens at this level? What I am suggesting seems to imply a sudden change. Instead of the

³⁷²(F/M) NAU: Interview with retired civil servant, Gulu Town Centre, 9 June 2012; Out the 18 elected Africans to the LG in 1958, none were chiefs. They included a priest, businessmen, politicians, doctors, union employees and lawyer. Six of the members listed their father's occupation as government chiefs, in D. E. Apter, *The Political Kingdom in Uganda: A Study in Bureaucratic Nationalism* (London: Routledge, 1997).

³⁷³ Leys, *Politicians and Policies in Acholi*.

child being taught what to value, the young person is now taught to be critical of almost every value. Instead of cultural indoctrination, there is now partial cultural challenge and self-criticism.³⁷⁴

Primary and secondary education in Acholi was monopolised by missionaries and centred on 'civilising the natives' within their cultural communities through Christian doctrine. However, higher education institutions outside the region allowed for more plural cultural and political debates, as the few Acholi students came into contact with students from other ethnic groups. Strong colonial and post-colonial ethno-political borders ensured that the select few who had access to institutions such as Makerere were restricted to expressing their emerging political cognizance within their ancestral bases. This inevitably set the stage for a confrontation between 'traditional' and 'modern' mechanisms of power. Peter Ekeh ably discusses more generally the legacy of colonialism, and the emergence of what he calls 'the two publics' in Africa. He differentiates between the educated African bourgeoisies, born out of colonialism, and the uneducated 'native Africans' living within the 'primordial' political domain.

In the course of colonization a new bourgeois class emerged in Africa composed of Africans who acquired Western education in the hands of the colonizers, and their missionary collaborators, and who accordingly were the most exposed to European colonial ideologies of all groups of Africans. In many ways the drama of colonialism is the history of the clash between the European colonizers and this emergent bourgeois class. Although native to Africa, the African bourgeois class depends on colonialism for its legitimacy. It accepts the principles implicit in colonialism but it rejects the foreign personnel that ruled Africa. It claims to be competent enough to rule, but it has no traditional legitimacy.³⁷⁵

Many lower level Acholi chiefs could not compete with the immaculate oratory skills of Obote, delivered in the Queen's English, nor the extensive educational backgrounds and international experiences of Peter Oola or Otema Allimadi. They spoke the language of culture and tradition, the

³⁷⁴ A.A. Mazrui, *Political Values and the Educated Class in Africa* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978), 187.

³⁷⁵ Ekeh, 'Colonialism and the Two Publics in Africa', 96.

language of the locality, and in many ways the language of the colonial native authority. In fact, much of the correspondence written by chiefs to the DCs by sub-county and parish chiefs was written in Acholi, and later translated for their recipients. Post-independence, there was a real danger that unless they countered the growing dominance of this new breed of local politician, the chiefs risked being marginalised.

My father was a county chief and he was very well respected in the area. He never dabbled in politics but privately he also had his own opinion. He believed that Uganda was not ready for independence and was very fearful of the politics that were taking place in the region. People were rushing and they had no idea what it would be like after the British had left.³⁷⁶

Acholi party politicians understood that before they could properly find their footing within the national politics, they needed to gain firm control of the local government apparatus, at the expense of the chiefs. Four months before independence, the Acholi Local Administration tabled a new local constitution that equated to a complete reworking of the council. The amendments to the constitutional regulations would have the effect of removing county chiefs from ex-officio membership in the council. The only positions that were to remain the same were the positions of Secretary-General and Treasurer. To reinforce their impending independence from colonial rule, Protectorate government workers were banned from the council as well as any staff working for the DC.³⁷⁷ The first council meeting held in the same month without council chiefs was tense, leading the DC to open up the session by appealing for unity and co-operation.³⁷⁸ But if the British DC and his advisors were looking for someone to blame regarding the events in Acholi District Council, he need only have looked to his government's policies leading up to Ugandan independence. By encouraging strong ethnically demarcated local

³⁷⁶ (F/M) NAU: Interview with local business owner, Gulu 25 June 2012: Other sons and daughters of Acholi chiefs expressed the same sentiment in interviews across Northern Uganda, Interviews: Langol, Anaka, Lukung, Lamwo, June-August 2012.

Interview with retired civil servant, Gulu Town Centre, 9 June 2012

³⁷⁷ 'Acholi Council Rules Anger UPC' *The Uganda Argus*, 17 June 1962.

³⁷⁸ 'Acholi Urged to Cooperate' *The Uganda Argus*, 22 June 1962.

institutions as a mechanism to deal with Baganda separatism, they actually reinforced ethnonationalism in the localities at the expense of the centre.³⁷⁹ The UPC and the DP in Acholi consequently understood the importance of gaining control of local government, with each party of the manoeuvring to get their candidate elected. The children of the Young Acholi Association had matured and were no longer sated by youth groups, club houses and sports tournaments: they wanted real political power that would allow them to control and eventually transcend the Native Administration.

3.4. The Chiefs Fight Back: The Acholi and ‘*Laloyo Maber*’

To combat the growing dominance of party politicians within the ALG, chiefs sought to exploit the success they had had with the British in the installation of *Lawirwodi* in 1950. In this endeavour they were prepared to go to any means necessary to re-assert their position within the locality, even if it meant a ‘re-invention of tradition.’ As with the position of *Lawirwodi*, chiefs within Acholi District Council had continued on their quest to install a paramount leader who would garner the same pomp and circumstance that the Kabaka of Buganda inspired.³⁸⁰ The neighbouring Lango had already created a similar post of the *Won Nyaci* (Paramount Chief) in 1960, fuelling the campaign in Acholi for a similar post. The colonial government had already conceded to the request, but disputes arose regarding exactly how much executive power such a position would have. The British had once again insisted that the role would be purely ceremonial with no functioning power, similar to restrictions placed when the post of *Lawirwodi* was created. They wanted to ensure it was made clear to the Acholi that any person elected to the post of *Laloyo Maber* (Good Ruler) would have no executive or official political powers whatsoever. In response to a letter written by district council members who had asked that one of the tasks that *Laloyo* would be responsible for would be the power to ‘inspect services’, the acting British Secretary-General A.C. Badenoch

³⁷⁹ Gertzel, *Party and Locality in Northern Uganda*, 21.

³⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 75; N. Kasfir, *The Shrinking Political Arena: Participation and Ethnicity in African Politics, with a Case Study of Uganda* (University of California Press, 1976), 101-102,

remarked, 'I think the words "inspect services" are slightly dangerous in that they may lead the *Laloyo* taking executive action. Perhaps some other word instead of "inspect" may be used.'³⁸¹ If such a head was to be elected the British wanted to ensure that there would be no recriminations in the future by making sure that the *Laloyo*'s post was as undisputed as possible and unifying for the Acholi.³⁸² There were further concerns regarding the financial provisions that the District Council was asking to be earmarked for the *Laloyo*. They had requested more money than was being paid to the Lango equivalent, which, in itself, was not as problematic as the proposal to use council revenue to pay a person who was not be an officer, chief, employee or member of the council. Yet there was an urgency to appoint, not least because of the proposals popularity among the Acholi, but also because the colonial government felt it was important to resolve the matter before independence, so as to oversee any potential political fallout.³⁸³

Neither the UPC nor the DP in Acholi could see a practical need for a *Laloyo*, but they were forced to accept the idea due to its local popularity.³⁸⁴ But if both parties were to throw their political weight behind the election of *Laloyo*, they needed something in return. The campaign for *Laloyo* provided an opportunity for Acholi politicians to further expand their support base by utilising clan loyalties. As discussed previously, the chiefdom of Payira, which had already proved a formidable opponent against the British during the early years of colonialism, still stood as one of the most prominent chiefdoms in Acholi. In both the general elections of April 1962 and the district elections in September of the same year, politicians drawn from the Payira chiefdom had played a disproportionately large role. The official UPC candidates for the two parliamentary seats in West Acholi (which is also the location of the Payira chiefdom), Peter Oola and Alex Okera, were both Payira men.³⁸⁵ As with all

³⁸¹ UNA/E Box 3 Ref 3/DG C124: Letter from Ag Secretary A.C Badenoch to Permanent Secretary, 11 September 1961.

³⁸² Ibid.

³⁸³ Ibid.

³⁸⁴ Gertzel, *Party and Locality in Northern Uganda*, 75; Leys, *Politicians and Policies in Acholi*, 19-21.

³⁸⁵ Leys, *Politicians and Policies in Acholi*, 21.

the candidates in Acholi, Okera and Oola had relied partly on chiefdom loyalties during their election, promising their supporters that the retired County Chief Yona Adida would become *Laloyo Maber* of Acholi. When Adida was defeated, Secretary-General Peter Oola used the support of the UPC in Kampala to delay the official installation of the *Laloyo* to his post for two years. It was not until Oola was voted out of office in 1965 that the *Laloyo* was officially instated.³⁸⁶ This scenario 'illustrates the interplay of social and traditional ties with party and area loyalties.'³⁸⁷ More importantly, it shows that politics in Acholi was not a straightforward contest between old and new power structures. As much as these new breed of local politicians saw their place in post-independence Acholi as the new leaders of the local government apparatus, internal cultural politics ensured that pre-colonial and colonial structures of governance could not be completely disregarded. Chiefly power and clan loyalties were still an essential part of the Acholi polity. Public support and clan ties meant that chiefs could not simply be dismissed and contained politically to the periphery. If the *Oco/s* wanted to succeed in their political ambitions, they needed to engage with these traditional political institutions.

As a result of the internal political rivalry, the appointment of *Laloyo* became a valuable tool that was used by council members, chiefs and politicians.³⁸⁸ Prior to the appointment, there were lengthy debates in the District Council regarding all matters including pay and length of term. One such session lasted for up to nine days and when a decision had still not been reached the council shelved the decision for another three months, refusing to sit any longer. Divisions between East and West were further emphasised when the Kitgum council members requested that the post should be temporary with elections every six years to elect a new candidate, while in Gulu council members stipulated that it should be a permanent position. Councils in Kitgum and Gulu put forward their own candidates for the position. The British requested that candidates from for the position be drawn from an

³⁸⁶ Ibid., 19-20.

³⁸⁷ Ibid., 21.

³⁸⁸ MUL/AS: EAU/A (058) 1: J.P Twining, Acholi District Commissioner: Annual Report: Acholi District Council 1962.

unrestricted field of candidates. In contrast, Acholi council members favoured those with a chiefly background or someone that already held an esteemed position within Acholi society. Acholi chiefs and clan leaders waded into the debate convening meetings under the Acholi Cultural Association (ACA: Ker-Kwaro Acholi) specifically to discuss the matter.³⁸⁹ By mid-May one of the only things that was agreed upon regarding the *Laloyo* issue was how much he was going to be paid.³⁹⁰ The candidate elected to the post would be granted a salary of £1000 per annum, offered a £6000 official residence, and given a car worth £1500. He was also to be given provisions for a private secretary, driver, ceremonial robe and an entertainment allowance of £60.³⁹¹ This was despite the fact that the Acholi District Council was in a dire financial situation, a matter that was continually being reported in the national media.³⁹² However, the need to create a ceremonial head for Acholi was believed to be so urgent that the council were willing to ignore the huge financial burden that the post would have on local government finances.

The elections were held under in a tense political atmosphere and had served as a point of heated discussion among the Acholi.³⁹³ The increase in media outlets, particularly in Gulu, including radio coverage and vernacular newspapers meant that the topic became widely discussed in bars, restaurants and streets across Acholi.³⁹⁴ After months of negotiations, the former *Lawirwodi*, Mr Philip Adonga, the DP candidate from East Acholi was finally elected as *Laloyo Maber*. But the political fallout from the results continued for two years after the results were announced. In April 1964, eight UPC councillors walked out of the District Council led by the Vice Chairman during a meeting in Gulu after the *Laloyo* arrived to open the proceedings.

³⁸⁹ This was an informal group comprising of chiefs and Acholi community leaders who generally met to discuss matters regarding Acholi culture. It has its roots in the pre-colonial era where clan leaders would meet to discuss matters affecting the wider community.

³⁹⁰ 'Decision of Laloyo shelved for three months' *The Uganda Argus*, 5 May 1960,

³⁹¹ 'New attempt to elect Laloyo' *The Uganda Argus*, 20 May 1960.

³⁹² *Ibid.*

³⁹³ GDA Box: 542: File: 'Acholi District' Monthly District Intelligence Reports, January 1960-March 1964.

³⁹⁴ MUL/AS: EAU/A (058) 1:Y.H. Wacha Olwol, Annual District Report 1963.

The *Uganda Argus* reported that a number of UPC supporters demonstrated outside the building in protest against the paramount chief. The Publicity Secretary for the UPC added that the protest was carried out primarily because many UPC supporters in the region had been opposed to his election.³⁹⁵

More opposition to the election of Mr Adonga as *Laloyo* came from those arguing that since he was not a hereditary tribal chief he had no claim to the position. His opponents argued that he should step down in favour of Yona Odide, who was not only the candidate favoured by those in West Acholi but was also a hereditary chief. Others were more philosophical and put forward the argument that since there was no such thing as 'kingship' in Acholi, these criticisms were moot.³⁹⁶ Most of the disagreements were derived from clan and political affiliation and had very little to do with any claims to 'royal' blood. The interesting point that this debate brings to the forefront is that, among some people in Acholi, there was a real attempt to create a 'King' along the Buganda model. This was not simply a matter of elevating a chief to a ceremonial role, nor was it just a political issue: the Acholi were willing to borrow and invent tradition in an attempt to adapt to the political landscape of post-independence Uganda. Buganda had throughout the history of the Protectorate served as a central point of reference for Acholi looking outside of their region. Not only that, the Kingdom monopolised British, economic and political attention in the decade leading up to independence. The Acholi had seen the adoration and political power that the Kabaka held and watched the status of the Kingdom grow. As it became clear that the Kabaka would become a ceremonial President of the new Ugandan nation state, it became imperative that the Acholi should have a representative that could rival the status of the King, if they were to be able to compete with the other kingdoms in the country. The election of the *Laloyo* was also an attempt by Acholi chiefs to contest power and in the process underpin their relevance within Acholi polity. The position of *Laloyo* transcended the conventional roles of the chiefs in Acholi, as the position holder was elevated to a cultural and political

³⁹⁵ 'Walk out in Acholi' *The Uganda Argus*, 30 April 1964.

³⁹⁶ GDA Box 542: District Intelligence, October 1962.

figurehead with centralised political powers that far surpassed those of a native chief. It was a hybridisation of identity forged within traditional Acholi cultural structures, to be adapted and centralised in post-independence Acholi.

3.5. Religious Politics and the *Ocols*

Politicians from both parties were aware that the peoples of Acholi would be harder to mobilise behind a unilateral political or economic issue. Consequently both parties focused their attentions on mobilising the Acholi by emphasising religious and clan identities as well as developmental inequalities between East and West Acholi. The DP's historically close relationship with the VF served as a valuable tool for the UNC/UPC during the run up to the elections. During a meeting in Madi Opei, East Acholi, DP politicians had to address accusations by the UPC that the VF mission had been trying to purchase land without the consent of the people. Both parties played upon anti-colonial/foreign rhetoric as a means to diminish the opposition, accusing each other of selling land to Europeans and Americans in exchange for Acholi students receiving scholarships to study abroad. In defence of their denominational base the DP argued that the VF had only asked to lease land so that they could build more schools in their attempt to increase the educational facilities in East Acholi.³⁹⁷ Nationally, both the Anglican and Roman Catholic churches were acutely aware of the religious rivalries that were plaguing the country, and tried to subdue some of the animosity, at least officially.³⁹⁸ The Anglican Church was also embarking upon its own journey for independence, as from 1962 it would become the Church of Uganda in its own right. The division of the new Church into new dioceses, coupled with the upsurge of tribal, nationalistic and racial tension was cause enough for the Anglicans to tread as carefully as possible. During a sermon, the Bishop of the Upper Nile in 1960 urged the Church to:

³⁹⁷ KDA: Police Special Branch Report: DP Meeting in Kitgum, 28 March 1960.

³⁹⁸ UCU Box 33 Folder 207: CMS Upper Nile Mission, minutes of the General Council Meeting held in Gulu c. 1960.

Resist the temptation to identify our particular Archdeaconry or Diocese or Province with a particular tribe or race. We must also be on our guard against the acceptance of the Church of pagan traditions and nationalistic slogans. Future nationalist governments and indeed present tribal jealousies may well attempt to glorify the new African states at the expense of truth and Christian unity.³⁹⁹

The Church had reason for concern, particularly given political tone of some high profile Ugandan politicians at the eve of independence. As the UPC leader, Obote had staunchly warned religious organisations to keep out of politics and declared that he would not permit one religion to dominate or run the country. To his mind tribalism and religious associations in politics were thwarting self-rule.⁴⁰⁰ Obote's views were unrealistic in the new Ugandan state, and if he hoped that Ugandans would automatically take on a more secular identity after independence, he was to be bitterly disappointed. Yet the situation also proved to be a catch-22 for the young, educated politicians who had had the chance to travel outside of the Protectorate and had been exposed to different systems of governance grounded in more secular political systems. Growing anti-colonial sentiments had opened the door to a critique of colonial institutions and their place within an independent Uganda. In this sense criticisms of Western religious institutions could also serve as a valuable tool against colonialism itself. However, given the growing attachment to religious institutions in Uganda, any talk of secularism would not have proved popular, as UNC leader Musazi found out. In 1956 Musazi had made a speech denouncing the introduction of religion into politics. He urged listeners to forget their religious differences, as essentially all monotheistic religions were introduced by foreigners and must then be treated as foreign objects. One reader took exception to this statement asking Musazi to explain whether Ugandans should similarly do away with cups, basins and English, because they too were foreign objects. Furthermore, he expressed apprehension at a UNC lead independent Uganda as it seemed that by

³⁹⁹ UCU Box 21 Folder 8: Sermon by the Bishop Usher Wilson to the Upper Nile Diocesan Council, 27 April 1960.

⁴⁰⁰ 'Keep out of politics Church told' *The Uganda Argus*, 19 September 1960.

Musazi's own words, 'religion under the UNC would have a hard time.'⁴⁰¹ Both religious institutions continued to hold substantial political capital, inspiring new converts and retaining the old. Obote was politically astute enough to recognise this, and a month before independence, he changed tack and took a more pragmatic view of religion in Uganda, conceding that it was here to stay.⁴⁰² This was a clear attempt to appeal to Catholic voters in Uganda who were more inclined to vote for the DP.

In Acholi, the DP capitalised from one of the only print mediums in the Northern districts owned by the VF. The Catholic Church in Acholi was able to convey its denominational and political doctrine through a bi-monthly family newspaper called *Lobo Mewa* (Our World), printed in the vernacular. Added to the political rivalries at the time, 'the press was developed to promote [Catholic] political ideals and programmes.'⁴⁰³ Up until 1966 the contents of the paper were largely political as it strived to push the Catholic agenda in national and local politics. The Acholi were urged to go and vote with details of the number of registered voters in the various counties printed and space given to DP candidates to air their political manifestos. In *Lobo Mewa* the Catholic Church was keen to remind to Acholi voters of the work that Catholic missionaries were doing in the region. Articles would frequently highlight new hospitals, parishes and schools funded and built by the mission. Often the number of Catholic schools were printed according to counties and compared to Protestant ones reiterating how much more work the Catholic missions were doing.⁴⁰⁴ Recipients of Catholic mission scholarships were published along with their full names and counties of birth. Disputes between DP and Protestant members of the Local Councils were often publicised highlighting

⁴⁰¹ 'Religion and Politics' *The Uganda Argus*, 23 November 1956.

⁴⁰² 'Church here to stay says Obote' *The Uganda Argus*, 23 August 1962.

⁴⁰³ A.G. Ginyera-Pinyawa, *Some Dimension of pre-Independence Politics in Uganda: A case study based on the Catholic Church and politics in northern Uganda in the decade, 1952-1962* (Thesis. Ph.D. University of Chicago, 1972).

⁴⁰⁴ 'Wel Lutino ma tye I primary schools ma ia Acholi I 1958' *Lobo Mewa*, 1 February 1958; 'Lutino Me Scholarship 1958' *Lobo Mewa*, January 1958; 'school manyen, *Lobo Mewa* 1 March 1959; 'Kalongo Midwifery School' *Lobo Mewa*, 1 March 1959; 'School me Katoli I lobowa' *Lobo Mewa*, 15 September 1960.

the perceived mistreatment of DP council members by their UPC counterparts.⁴⁰⁵ The DP victory in the 1961 national elections received a full cover page spread, detailing how each of the counties had voted.⁴⁰⁶

Another reason as to why the two-party system became more pronounced in Acholi, as opposed to Lango, was not only because of the diverse chieftain system, but also because of underdevelopment and regional demarcations within Acholi itself. Gulu, in West Acholi, was the home of the colonial headquarters in the region and from this, its status as a major town grew faster as it was afforded more commodities than the next largest town, Kitgum, located in East Acholi. The river Acwa that runs in from Lira all the way to South Sudan separates the two regions geographically, and for a short time in the 1930s the British had attempted to administer them as two separate districts. However, due to its large geography, sparse population and much drier climate, Eastern Acholi proved much more difficult to administer and it was subsequently run as a sub-district of Gulu.⁴⁰⁷

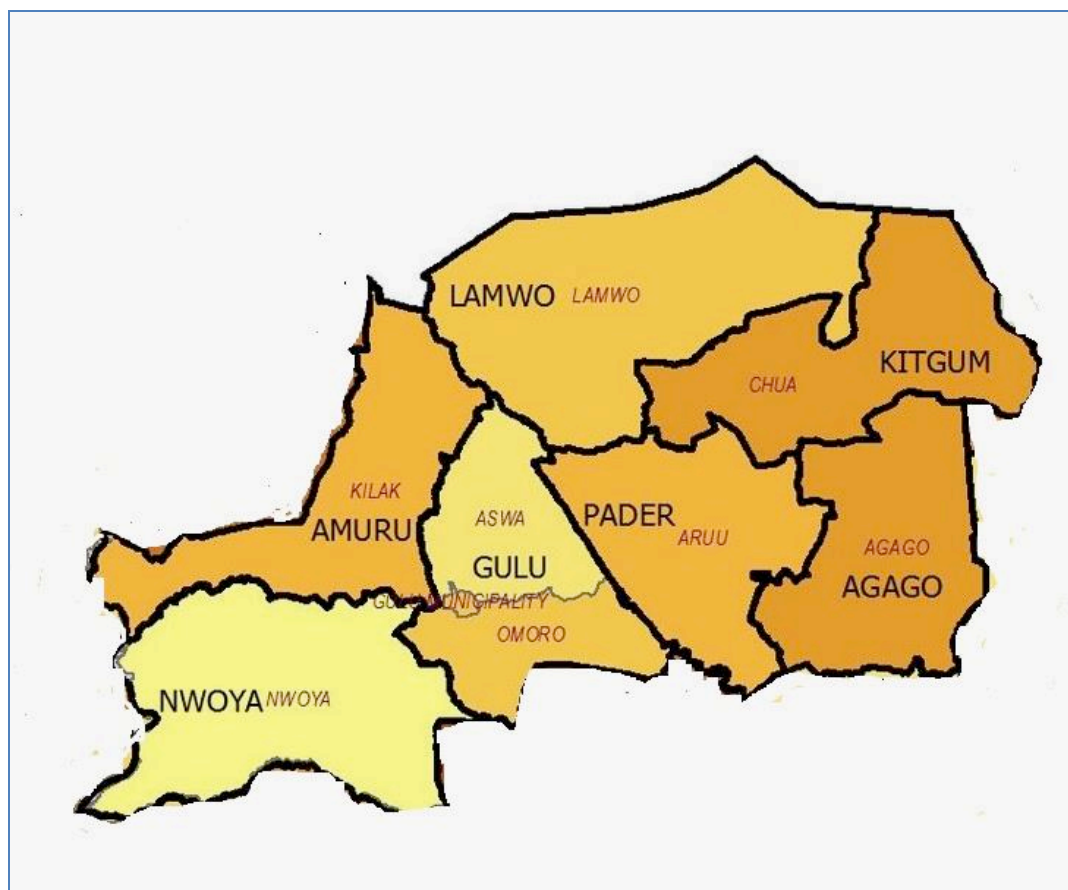
Gulu was afforded more educational facilities, including farm schools run by either the CMS or the VF, was the first town in the region to be electrified and had better transport links to the capital city in Kampala. It was also home to the headquarters of the CMS and the surrounding areas around Gulu were the first to have CMS missionary schools opened. Being the most urbanised town in the region, Gulu inevitably attracted a large number of migrants from other districts in Acholi and was particularly attractive to the young who longed for a more profitable life than that offered in the countryside. This is supported by the 1959-69 censuses which showed Gulu to be one of the fastest growing towns in the Protectorate with an annual growth of fourteen per cent.⁴⁰⁸

⁴⁰⁵ 'Council diyo Katoli pi tiyo gin ma dinigi kwero' *Lobo Mewa*, 15 January 1959; 'DP Kacoke' *Lobo Mewa*, 15 July 1959.

⁴⁰⁶ DP Oloyo Yer' *Lobo Mewa* 26 March 1961.

⁴⁰⁷ Leys, *Politicians and Policies in Acholi*. 18.

⁴⁰⁸ Langlands, 'The Population Density of Acholi District', 21.



Map 3: Eastern and Western Acholi Districts.⁴⁰⁹

East Acholi: Kitgum, Lamwo, Agago, Pader

West Acholi: Nwoya, Amuru, Gulu

The fact that there were fewer local services in East Acholi than in the West was a continual bone of contention for the DP, and by the late 1950s there emerged voices within the Local Councils for the separation of the two, giving Kitgum official district status.⁴¹⁰ On the eve of independence, one of the few major infrastructural projects on track to be finished by 1963 was the Karuma Bridge connecting Gulu to Masindi in Bunyoro.⁴¹¹ It was hoped that the bridge would provide a much-needed boost to the cotton industry by making it easier to transport produce. In this regard, Gulu's status as a communications and trading centre seemed assured, as did the prospects for economic development in West Acholi. This development came at the expense of Kitgum and East Acholi which were still lagging behind economically. The last

⁴⁰⁹ Refugee Law Project, Districts in Uganda. www.beyondjuba.org. (online resource).

⁴¹⁰ Gertzel, *Party and Locality in northern Uganda*, 69.

⁴¹¹ *Ibid.*

British DC in Acholi, J.P. Twining, conceded that unless something was done to rectify the situation, the gap between East and West would only continue to widen.⁴¹² Consequently, the DP strategically placed itself as the advocate for economic development in East Acholi capitalising on its strong support base in the region and the dominance of the VF mission in the region.

UNC/UPC and DP politicians knew that it was imperative to incorporate religious groups into the target demographic of supporters if they were to have success in local and national elections. In Acholi the VF assumed an even greater role in the political mobilisation of Catholic identities against the UNC and Protestants. In 1958 an argument erupted among UNC supporters and a Catholic priest who had refused to permit a number of UNC supporters to draw water from a borehole near his mission ground in Agago County.

Malandra is stopping my wives from collecting water from the borehole. . . [They] say we are Protestants and that my wives should not draw water from there since the Protestants caused the failure of Antonio Opwa in the District elections. Since presently all the people within and around the mission are at present drawing from the pumps, why should my wives and I not?⁴¹³

When asked to respond to the allegations, the Italian priest at the centre of the argument, Father Malandra, replied that because the borehole was on mission ground, it was his prerogative to choose who could draw water from it. This was despite the fact that such boreholes were public property and were free for all to use. The wider political implications of this disagreement should not be overlooked. Firstly, the complainant Danyeri Curu, had at his disposal another borehole which was only 300 feet from the one at Malandra's mission ground. However, he decided that he would try to use that particular borehole instead. When he was denied access to it, he sent a letter of complaint straight to the DC at the behest of the UNC. The dispute provided a political opportunity for the UNC to stoke anti-Catholic sentiments in Agago. UNC leaders quickly sent a letter to the DC complaining about how the Catholic priest had treated Curu. This is not to say that Acholi Catholics unflinchingly sided with the heads of their Churches, in fact as the DC noted

⁴¹² Gertzel, *Party and Locality in northern Uganda*, 69.

⁴¹³ GDA Box 541: Letter from D. Curu to Father Malandra, 8 December 1958.

their continual involvement in local politics, in particular in Agago district, had created a feeling of antipathy towards the Italian Catholic Fathers. There were a few Acholi Catholics who felt that the Italian Catholic Father went a little bit 'too far into politics.'⁴¹⁴ The hostility between Catholics and Protestants in Agago was attributed to the uncompromising nature of the Catholic priests and their unfortunate involvement in local politics.⁴¹⁵ In this matter the British were aware that it was important not to appear to be taking sides, and when the request was made by the UNC to remove Malandra from his position, they concluded that this would be politically unwise. 'Acholi Catholics would not meet any action that may be viewed as beneficial to the UNC with much sympathy. As such it was important that it should not be viewed as a victory for the UNC or the NAC.'⁴¹⁶

The success of the UNC in the 1958 local elections further antagonised the political situation within DP and VF strongholds in Acholi. Following the election results, the church and schoolhouse of the NAC at Patongo and a church in Waal were damaged by fire. The local council agreed that these were cases of arson and allegations were made that some Catholics in the area had carried out the attacks. The council decided that the rebuilding of the Churches should be a matter of public service and that 'all members of the community should be involved.'⁴¹⁷ Although the resolution was passed directing community members to provide labour, the county chief informed the DC that Father Malandra had insisted that Catholics would not be permitted to assist in the reconstruction of Protestant Churches, as it was against the principles of the religion. This was despite the fact that Muslim and 'Pagan' groups in the area had accepted the order without any remonstrations.⁴¹⁸ Mission schools became a breeding ground for religious tensions as schoolmasters of both denominations encouraged their students to show their faith through their political affiliations. The administration deemed teachers to

⁴¹⁴ GDA Box 541: Letter DC Acholi to the Provincial Commissioner, 11 February 1959.

⁴¹⁵ Ibid.

⁴¹⁶ GDA Box 541: Letter from the DC of Acholi to the Provincial Commissioner, 12 December 1958.

⁴¹⁷ GDA Box 541: Letter from DC Acholi to the Provincial Commissioner, 11 February 1959.

⁴¹⁸ Ibid.

be particularly active in this endeavour, so much so that the most antagonistic ones were considered for transfer outside of respective districts.⁴¹⁹

For the Acholi swept up in these religious confrontations, the question needs to be posed as to whether these divisions were purely ideological and spiritual, or simply politically or economically pragmatic?⁴²⁰ The conversion rates in the region in the 1950s certainly show a steady increase of Christian converts and would indicate that the missionaries were gaining success in their quest for the conversion of souls (or at least bodies).⁴²¹ Both missionary groups wanted to ensure that the Acholi were not merely paying lip service to Christian doctrine, and were also applying it to their day-to-day lives. The Anglican Church in particular wanted to ensure that this message was taken to even the remotest parts of Acholi, resulting in increased missionary presence in rural areas. Church statistics for the Acholi region for 1955-56 show that there were around 121 village churches, with forty-two in Gulu, fifteen in Kitgum and twenty-eight in Paluo. For that year they registered 3622 baptisms alone, with 217 of those being infants. The following year around twenty-two new village churches had been built and a further 2539 people baptised, with the biggest increase in Kitgum, in East Acholi.⁴²² These statistics, added to the political rivalries between Catholics and Protestants in the late 1950s, would suggest that the Acholi conversion to Christianity was anything but superficial. However a closer look at the numbers presents us with a more nuanced picture concerning the Christian conversion of Acholi.

The increases in baptisms, particularly the annual increases of the number of infants being baptised, should not be taken as a direct indication of a spiritual religious conversion. Baptism into a religious denomination was predominately driven by the need to access certain commodities, be it education, health facilities, or employment through becoming a Christian

⁴¹⁹ Ibid; GDA Box 541: Letter from DC of Acholi to the Provincial Commissioner, 12 December 1958.

⁴²⁰ O. U. Kalu, 'Color and Conversion: The White Missionary Factor in the Christianization of Igboland,' 1857 -1967, *Missiology* Vol. 18 No. 61 (1990), 61-74.

⁴²¹ BUL/CMS: ACC 265-24: Questionnaire and Church Guidelines, J. Taylor, March 1956.

⁴²² UCU Box 73, Folder 8: Education: Church Statistics for Upper Nile Diocese, 1955-56.

teacher: 'In those days teachers were the only ones who wore shoes.'⁴²³ Furthermore, training institutions such as farming schools were largely run by churches and as such admission to them was easier if one were affiliated to the denomination that had administrative control of that institution.⁴²⁴ To ensure that your children could attend a missionary school, they had to be baptised as infants, consequently increasing parental demands for more Churches and missionary schools to be built in remote areas.⁴²⁵ In some cases proximity to a church or mission school would determine whether one would become a Protestant or a Catholic:

My father was not a religious man, but he moved the whole family from Atyak (North West Acholi) to Kalongo (East Acholi) because he was told that there was a very good school there. My brothers and I were enrolled and we became Catholic. To this day I am still a Catholic and I still go Church regularly. I also became a very strong DP supporter when I saw how we Catholics were being treated in Uganda. We needed to stand up for our beliefs and our religion.⁴²⁶

Religion offered an alternative means to acquire resources, be it medical, farming institutions or access to education. As more and more Acholi converted to Christianity, religious identities provided a strong base for political parties to mobilise. The demarcation between Catholics and Protestants was effectively used to further reinforce religious political affiliations both nationally and locally.

Even as the number of baptisms and churches increased, one area that the missionaries still could not effect change was in eradicating Acholi indigenous religious practices, particularly concerning polygamy.⁴²⁷ In 1955 the NAC accepted that it was not known how many Christians had more than

⁴²³ (F/M) AU: Interview with subsistence farmer, Langol, Nwoya District, 16 May 2012.

⁴²⁴ UCU Box 21, Folder 5: Minutes for a meeting of the standing committee held at Ngora 16 December 1954.

⁴²⁵ UCU Box 73, Folder 8: Education: Church Statistics for Upper Nile Diocese, 1955-56; UCU Box 73, Folder 56; Education: Church Statistics for Upper Nile Diocese Statistics for 1957-8.

⁴²⁶ (IF/M) NAU: Interview with retired civil servant, Gulu, 9 June 2012.

⁴²⁷ UCU Box 72 Folder 1: Minutes of a meeting by the Diocesan Council of the Upper Nile held in Ngora regarding marriage law proposals, 10 May 1955.

one wife. In some cases it has been reported that Christian teachers married their wives according to native custom, but would then go and hide them from their Christian colleagues/friends. The Bishop of the Upper Nile complained that their task in dealing with the matter was being made more difficult because parents and other more 'responsible' citizens were simply not reporting the offenders.⁴²⁸ This defiance of Church teachings by the Acholi was not the result of a fundamental disaffection with Christian doctrine and symbolism.⁴²⁹ Nor were the Acholi who continued to engage in native marriage ceremonies seeking to consciously organise, revive or perpetuate selected aspects of Acholi indigenous culture in the face of Christian indoctrination.⁴³⁰ It was merely the incorporation/Africanisation of Christian symbolism and teachings in Acholi traditional religious beliefs and practices.⁴³¹ Thus among the Acholi it was acceptable to have both identities and still be able to call oneself an Acholi and a Christian.

If the missionaries were hoping for a holistic conversion to Christianity by the Acholi, then they were to be disappointed. During a conference in Ngora, Eastern Uganda, some members of the CMS acknowledged some of the obstacles they were confronted with while trying to Christianise/Westernise the tribes of the North. Notwithstanding their 'lack of faith' and inherent belief in several spirits, the Northern tribes had no effective written language until perhaps the 1920-1930s. As the ideas and practices of Western systems of economics and politics permeated the African consciousness, they in turn sought successes in the physical world by acquiring the material standards that were afforded to their European counterparts. There was a concern that as more young Africans became educated, they would begin to think that the Church had no relevance to their individual progress, and that it served even less purpose in the economic and political development of his or her tribe or land. However, the CMS believed

⁴²⁸ Ibid.

⁴²⁹ J. W. Fernandez, 'African Religious Movements', *Journal of Modern African studies* Vol. 2. No.4 (1964), 534-42.

⁴³⁰ Ibid.

⁴³¹ S. Kaplan, 'The Africanization of Missionary Christianity: History and Typology' *Journal of Religion in Africa*, Vol. 16, No. 3 (1986), 166-186.

the biggest obstacle to African progress was the fact that these 'tribes' were so closely linked to the past, it hindered their ability to be able to progress and modernise.⁴³² The Anglican missionaries bemoaned Acholi political allegiances, which appeared to be based on 'tribal feelings and land consciousness that defeated reason and individual initiative.'⁴³³ In the eyes of the CMS representatives, this unyielding connection indigenous practices and traditions meant that political leaders were given support based on tribal/clan ties instead of merit.⁴³⁴ What members of the CMS who attended the Ngoro conference failed to realise, was that rather than tribal ties being a hindrance to the advancement within their prescribed systems of modernisation, it was actually as Young described a 'realisation of an authentic African socio-political system that incorporated both the Western and indigenous political and social structures.'⁴³⁵ It was the continued negotiations between the two systems that eventually created and shaped politics and society in post-independence Uganda. In this sense, the introduction of Christianity in Acholi did not lead to a holistic conversion. Christian ideology was simply another layer to add to the established social, religious, political and economic structures within the region.

3.6. Cultural Caretakers? Domesticity as an Ethnopolitical Factor

In the conventional male dominated political field of the 1950s, Acholi women did not feature significantly in local politics, and if a minority did, their participation was not deemed significant enough to place them on the radar of the colonial government, or so the archives would suggest. All those Acholi selected to participate in the tours to England were male chiefs or councillors.⁴³⁶ Even when an attempt was made by the British to be more inclusive of women, they were unable to find any 'suitable' Acholi women who

⁴³² UCU Box 34, Folder 11: CMS Conference Ngora: 'The People to whom we present Christ', 18 August 1959.

⁴³³ Ibid.

⁴³⁴ Ibid.

⁴³⁵ Young, *The African Colonial State in Comparative Perspective*.

⁴³⁶ GDA Box 532: Letter from Provincial Commissioner to Rwot Erisa Lakor, 6 May 1958.

could participate in a similar tour in 1959. In fact, when the *Lawirwodi* was asked to suggest a suitable female candidate from the region, the only name that was considered was that of a Muganda schoolteacher positioned at Lira Paluo, who ‘had a sufficient knowledge of English.’⁴³⁷ Driven by increasing international pressure to recognise women’s rights as a key marker of civilisation and progress, the colonial government started to seriously consider ways in which they could encourage African women to participate more in local and national politics. Impending self-governance in the Protectorate and party politics was another motivation as new political organisations such as the Southern-based Progressive Party (PP) sought expand their electoral base by courting women voters. From its formation in 1955 the PP could count thirteen women in their founding membership group.⁴³⁸ However, Acholi women’s professional participation in local, let alone, national politics was severely limited. Any women who were working in local councils were generally employed in restricted gender specific roles such as secretarial and cleaning duties.

Missionary agents involved in the education of women in Uganda were keen to improve domestic skills within the native household as they saw it as a stepping stone to women’s achievements in both the public and private sphere.

All mission schools, whether run by Protestants or Roman Catholics, stressed ‘domesticity’ for girls. Domesticity, the idea that good women would remain in the home, concentrating on their husbands and children and utilizing their practical skills as housewives, was a bulwark of middle-class patriarchy in late Victorian Britain and on much of the European continent. When it was carried to Africa by missionaries and colonial officials, it was seen as central component of the civilizing mission.⁴³⁹

⁴³⁷ GDA Box 532: Letter from DC Acholi to Lawirwodi, 11 November 1958.

⁴³⁸ ‘New Political Party Formed: Progressive Party *The Uganda Argus*, 31 January 1955; Policy Statement by Progressive Party, *The Uganda Argus*, 7 February 1955.

⁴³⁹ G. Bantebya Kyomuhendo and M. Keniston McIntosh, *Women, Work and Domestic Virtue in Uganda, 1900-2003* (Oxford: James Currey, 2006), 54.

Missionaries believed that it was women's domesticity that gave them certain essentialised attributes for conveying an interest in human welfare, thus making their indirect contribution to the public sphere all the more important.⁴⁴⁰ Consequently, there was an emphasis on domesticity through Christian doctrine.⁴⁴¹ Ugandan women were encouraged through clubs and associations to move away from the homestead and become more involved in community organisations. Women's organisations emphasised participation in activities within the fields of health, welfare and the extension of home craft and mother craft activities, all centred on roles already being played in the private sphere. Memberships to associations such as the Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA), formed in 1952, and the Family Planning Association of Uganda (FPAU), formed in 1957, were encouraged specifically for this endeavour.⁴⁴² The YWCA emphasised the role of women in farming, through the agricultural extension programme, taking its teachings to Ugandan women in the villages.⁴⁴³ However, even this was gendered: whereas farming programmes taught men how to produce a better yield for their cash crops, the founder of the YWCA Barbara Saben remarked that the importance of the programme was to teach women how to get better nutrition from what they grow as 'they don't know how to feed a child.'⁴⁴⁴ Even within these institutions Acholi women were still marginalised. Both the YWCA and the FPAU were initially formed in Kampala and their activities centred on the surrounding areas. Lack of finances and human resources prevented the effective implementation of these programmes in Acholi.⁴⁴⁵

⁴⁴⁰ A. M. Tripp, 'A New Look at Colonial Women: British Teachers and Activists in Uganda, 1898-1962', *Canadian Journal of African Studies*, Vol. 38. No.1 (2004), 124.

⁴⁴¹ D. Gaitskell, 'Housewives, Maids or Mothers:

Some Contradictions of Domesticity for Christian Women in Johannesburg, 1903-39', *The Journal of African History*. Vol. 24. No. 2 (1983), 241-56.

⁴⁴² M. Tatria, 'Uganda's Women's organization: Their Contribution towards Raising Uganda's Standard of Living', *African Spectrum*, Vol. 8, No. 2 (1973), 217-226.

⁴⁴³ 'Clubs for women will benefit from UN Grant' *The Uganda Argus*, 20 April 1957.

⁴⁴⁴ *The Blade*, Toledo Ohio, 25 November 1962.

<http://news.google.com/newspapers?nid=1350&dat=19621125&id=hP1OAAAAIBAJ&sjid=LAEEAAAAIBAJ&pg=4455,2245635>, [Accessed 2 December 2012].

⁴⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

Even overtly political organisations such as the African Uganda's Women's League (AUWL), formed in 1953, which encouraged women to run for political office and to vote lacked membership among Acholi women.⁴⁴⁶ Interviews with Acholi women in the region showed that very few of them in the 1950s had joined any of these organisations, citing lack of transport and rural isolation as well as time constraints as factors limiting their political engagement.⁴⁴⁷ Tripp makes the argument that unlike their counterparts in Kenya and Tanganyika, education for women in Uganda had a head start compared to other colonies, primarily as a result of early missionary work of the CMS. Ugandan women were already attending secondary schools in the early 1930s and some had even entered Makerere College as early 1945.⁴⁴⁸ This may be true for some women in the more developed South, but for Acholi women this was not the case. By the 1950s only a handful of Acholi men had entered Makerere. As higher education facilities were skewed in favour of men, it stands to reason that if their male counterparts were being marginalised regarding their access to these institutions, Acholi women stood even less of a chance. In short, women in the North were not given the same educational opportunities as their male counterparts. In fact, even by 1958 there was still no senior secondary school for girls in the Northern Province.⁴⁴⁹ As Acholi households tended to have multiple children, if money was available for education, boys would always take priority over the girls.⁴⁵⁰ Thus, in the field of education at least, Acholi women faced a double marginalisation.

In his book on Acholi indigenous education, J.P. Ocitti details the status of women in pre-colonial and early colonial Acholi societies.⁴⁵¹ The male heir was the most prized of the children as marriages practices in Acholi meant

⁴⁴⁶ A. M. Tripp, 'Women's Mobilization in Uganda: Non-racial Ideologies in European-African Asian Encounters, 1945-1962,' *The International Journal for African Historical Studies*, Vol. 34, No. 3 (2001), 562.

⁴⁴⁷ NAU: Group Interview 1 (15 Female Participants) Nwoya, 4 July 2012.

⁴⁴⁸ Tripp, 'Women's Mobilization in Uganda'.

⁴⁴⁹ UCU Box 21 Folder 5: ', Letter from the Northern Diocese Gulu, to the Permanent Secretary Ministry of Social Services, 12 September 1958.

⁴⁵⁰ Formal and Informal interviews in northern Uganda, May-August 2012.

⁴⁵¹ Ocitti, *Acholi indigenous Education as Practiced by the Acholi of Uganda*.

that it would always be the women who left the clan to marry, and the men would remain to carry on the clan bloodline keeping the homestead alive. The Acholi homestead was an institution where Acholi children learnt the cultural norms that reinforced their Acholi identities internally and externally. This, as Barth and Lonsdale describe, provides the foundations of a cultural group that underpins the 'external face' of an ethnic identity.⁴⁵² As such, etiquette regarding marriage, death and birth rituals, language, religion, the foods that were to be eaten and connections to the environment all informed what it was and is to be Acholi. When the question was posed to a group of Acholi women regarding the determinants of Acholi identity, the general arguments expressed were derived from the cultural norms that were taught in the homestead. Acholi girls were taught how to be Acholi in the household, while the boys received their education with the men around the 'wang oo', a traditional practice where men would gather around a fire in the evening in their villages and exchange stories and teachings while the young boys listened.⁴⁵³

It is difficult for archival historians to fully research the social, political and economic role women from indigenous African societies have played. Many of the archives presented have a distinct gender bias meaning that the history that has been recorded is that of the male narrative.⁴⁵⁴ In an attempt to give voice to this subaltern group, most of the literature concerning women in the pre-colonial and early colonial eras tends to emphasise oral traditions, histories and testimonies. When women do appear in the archives, it is generally because they behaved or done something exceptional that did not conform to the designated gender roles.⁴⁵⁵ In Acholi, the 'mass/silent majority', did not feature in the archives primarily because their contribution to Acholi politics did not fit into the masculine perceptions of the political actor. However, they should not be dismissed as insignificant or somehow apolitical

⁴⁵² Barth, *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries*; Lonsdale, 'Moral Ethnicity and Political Tribalism.'

⁴⁵³ NAU: Group Interview 1 (15 Female Participants) Nwoya District, 4 July 2012

⁴⁵⁴ G. Lerner, 'Placing Women in History: Definitions and Challenges' *Feminist Studies*, Vol. 3, No. 1/2 (1975), 5-14.

⁴⁵⁵ D.L. Hodgson and S. McCurdy, (eds.), *'Wicked' Women and the Reconfiguration of Gender in Africa* (Oxford: James Currey, 2001).

or disinterested in what was going on around them. Even if Acholi women's interaction with colonial institutions were limited to missionary teachings of Christianity and domesticity, their role within this sphere cannot be overlooked and must be considered as a contributing factor to the politicisation of Acholi cultural and ethnic identities. They were the ones who stayed at home, brought up the children and instilled in them the norms and values that they and others attributed to 'being an Acholi.' As the men joined the army, left to study or migrated for work, the children, the next generation of Acholi, stayed at home with their mothers and extended family. Another aspect to consider is that Acholi women tended to migrate less than their male counterparts, and if they did they would generally be travelling with their husbands or another male from the clan. Consequently there was very little opportunity for them to mix with men and women outside their cultural regions. This isolation of the Acholi rural woman, both internally in the homestead and externally in the region, reinforced a contextual identity grounded in traditional cultural institutions governed by 'moral ethnicity' rather than more politically salient ethnically driven identities derived from 'political tribalism'.⁴⁵⁶

During a group interview with Acholi women in Koro, the question was posed as to whether any of the women had ever considered or had the opportunity to marry a man outside their ethnic group, in a particular a Southerner. Surprisingly, all the women in the group answered that they had not, but only because as one women said 'they never came here so we did not have the opportunity to do so.'⁴⁵⁷ Whilst the women were a mixture of ages, ranging from fifty to eighty-two, even the eldest, who were of marriage age during the 1950s and 1960s, responded in the same manner. This reinforces that argument that women migrants during this time were few and far between and if they married outside the ethnic group it was with an incoming migrant. Undoubtedly, there would have been some female migrants who could have moved unofficially and not returned to the region, however cultural practices and expectations placed restrictions on the permanent

⁴⁵⁶ R. E. Goodin and C. Till, (eds.) *The Oxford Handbook of Contextual Political Analysis* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 72.

⁴⁵⁷ NAU: Group Interview 1 (15 Female Participants) Nwoya, 4 July 2012.

migration of single women away from their ancestral lands. It would stand to reason that number of women who migrated and did not return would have been very small.⁴⁵⁸ Moreover, cultural isolation did not automatically mean that Acholi women held negative feelings towards men outside of their tribe and ethnic group. The fact that they were willing to consider marrying outside of the tribe is a small testament to this.

Contrary to p'Bitek's depiction of *Lawino* and *Ocol*, indigenous and missionary systems of education were not mutually exclusive of each other. The existence of one did not negate the other; rather there emerged a symbiotic relationship that allowed the Acholi to have a stake in both worlds. Just as the mothers and caregivers wanted their children to receive a Western education, learn English and participate in the politics of their land, those that already had those attributes continually returned to the homestead and drew solace from their cultural upbringing. Returning to Barth's work on social boundaries and culture, the exclusion of Acholi women from male dominated political institutions and their internal isolation in the homesteads actually served to reinforce the Acholi cultural identities, sharpening the cultural tool kit. The patriarchal social order that governed Acholi ensured that men were situated as the external face of the cultural group engaging with the politics of 'political tribalism'. Internally, the inclusivity of 'moral ethnicity' provided a platform for women through domesticity to reinforce cultural norms and values. This was a reciprocal relationship whereby the domestic sphere strengthened and maintained the foundation of the cultural group, while within the public or political sphere Acholi men manipulated, sharpened and utilised the same cultural tools to reinforce the Acholi ethnic identity.

Conclusion

From its inception Ugandan nationalism was a localised movement driven by ethnically homogenous local governments and Kingdoms. It was a by-product

⁴⁵⁸ Formal and informal interviews in northern Uganda, May-August 2012; T. Falola, A. A, Usman, (eds.) *Movements, Borders, and Identities in Africa*. Rochester Studies in African History and the Diaspora (Book 40, University of Rochester Press, 2009).

of British indirect rule which placed emphasis on local institutions through ethnic demarcations. Strong local identities meant that political leaders drew most of their support on a national stage from their region, district or ethnic group. The political and economic prominence of the Buganda Kingdom provided educated Northern politicians and Acholi chiefs the opportunity to engage in comparative politics, whilst utilising discourses of the Northern Provinces' economic underdevelopment to make demands on the colonial state. To combat Buganda political dominance, British officials further reinforced the political importance of local governments and ethnic identities by extending power within the Native Authority. In Acholi, the recognition of the loosening grip of colonialism heralded a new dawn of political negotiations led by local council members, politicians and chiefs. Acholi chiefs saw an opportunity to extend their authority further by advocating for a unitary paramount chief who could place the Acholi Local Government on the same political platform as the Lukiko and the Kabaka. However, pre-colonial clan and chiefly allegiances meant that the Acholi Native Authority remained fragmented, placing limits on the creation of a chief who could politically unite the peoples of Acholi.

Strong local institutions meant that even with the emergence of party politics, political allegiances were driven by local rather than national considerations. Thus the UNC/UPC and DP in Acholi developed as autonomous local institutions as opposed to a national political movement. Internally, economic disparities between East and West Acholi provided the local politicians the mobilising tools to reinforce a two-party system driven by partisan religious politics. As demands for education, health and training facilities and mission institutions grew; Acholi voters began to place more political emphasis on their Christian identities. In the same vein the rural masses who continued to live within the periphery of the colonial political and economic economy, drew on Acholi traditional teachings and practices to govern their day-to-day lives, while striving to bring up the next generation of *Ocol/s* who could one day use education to leave the mundane life of subsistence farming. The factors that drove ethnonationalism in Acholi from 1950 to 1962 all therefore emphasised the economic, political, social and cultural importance of the locality.

4.0. Independence and Myth of Ugandan Nationalism, 1962-1970.

In divided societies, ethnic conflict is at the centre of politics. Ethnic divisions cause challenges to the cohesion of states and sometimes to peaceful relations among states. In divided societies, ethnic affiliations are powerful, permeative, passionate and pervasive.⁴⁵⁹

Ethnic conflict in post-independence Uganda from 1966 was a consequence of the confrontation between strong ethnically divided local institutions and the post-colonial push for political centralisation, under the guise of nation building. To strengthen one, the other had to be weakened. Self-governance meant that the stakes for political power sharpened at national and local levels, ensuring that ethnic antipathies became more pronounced. Ugandan independence opened the door to a national stage within which political negotiations could take place. Politicians who had succeeded within local polities were elevated to represent their various regional and ethnic groups at the centre. However, these politicised ethnic demarcations were not, and should not, be considered simply as a product of the Ugandan post-colonial state. Rather they were a continuation of pre-colonial and colonial political structures that had emphasised locality, ethnicities and the 'tribe.' These were the structures of power that were left embedded within Ugandan politics at the eve of independence.⁴⁶⁰ Furthermore, it was not that Ugandans lacked the imagination or the initiative to create a state that was completely altered from the colonial state, but rather that the post-colonial state was and *should* be considered an African reality, steeped in the politics of tradition, patriarchy, clientalism, nepotism, and strong localised political structures.⁴⁶¹ The emphasis on, and institutionalisation of, tribal allegiances by the colonial state ensured that in the fight for control of the centre, ethnic identities became a viable tool to make localised political demands. Consequently, the

⁴⁵⁹ Horowitz, *Ethnic Groups in Conflict*, 12.

⁴⁶⁰ Young, *The African Colonial State in Comparative Perspective*, 283-284; Davidson, *The Black Man's Burden*;

⁴⁶¹ Bayart, *Africa: The Politics of the Belly*; Chabal, *Power in Africa*; B. Berman, 'Ethnicity, Patronage and the African State: The Politics of Uncivil Nationalism' *African Affairs*, Vol. 97 No. 388 (1998), 305-341.

discrepancy between the political reality (ethnonationalism) and the political rhetoric (detrribalisation) meant that by the end of the decade, the nationalist project had comprehensively failed as Ugandans witnessed an army mutiny, the suspension of the constitution, the eradication of traditional leaders and Kingships, and the installation of one party rule.

The euphoria of *uhuru* (freedom) meant that at independence most Ugandans hoped self-governance would eliminate all the years of political mistrust, social, economic marginalisation and colonial control.⁴⁶² Despite the political turmoil that was to characterise the decade, the handover of power on 9 October 1962 was not preceded by the protracted violent clashes that had been witnessed in neighbouring countries such as Kenya. In fact at independence, Uganda was left relatively economically and politically stable.⁴⁶³ However, political independence did not bring an end to the forms of colonial 'native' control that emphasised tribal or ethnic identities.⁴⁶⁴ Nor did it bring an end to the established networks of patrons, kingships and clientele, which had subjugated the majority to the rule of an elite minority.⁴⁶⁵ Consequently, the rhetoric of nationalism, detrribalisation and democracy did not translate effectively to the locality. This was primarily because the very same political actors that were advocating against tribalism and imperialism were reliant on the politics of ethnic differentiation to secure their own footing within central and local government.

The new Ugandan constitution reflected the political disunity of the newly independent state, and was primarily a document of compromise. The constitution was:

engineered on the basis of an unusually complex formula: a constitution which provided for the existence of four Kingdoms within an independent state, one of which (Buganda) was to enjoy a federal relationship to the central government, the three others to have quasi-federal powers, while the rest of the country was to be administered

⁴⁶² GDA Box: 542: 'Acholi District' Monthly District Intelligence Reports, January 1960- March 1964.

⁴⁶³ Kasozi, *The Social Origins of Violence in Uganda*, 3.

⁴⁶⁴ Mamdani, *Citizen and Subject*.

⁴⁶⁵ Young, *The African Colonial State in Comparative Perspective*, 286.

through a form of district government which left a fair amount of discretion to the local administration.⁴⁶⁶

With the UPC and KY coalition securing victory in the 1962 elections, Obote was sworn in as Prime Minister with the Kabaka as the ceremonial President. Within two years of the KY/UPC election win however, relations between the two parties had rapidly deteriorated. Aided by opportunistic defectors from other political parties, the UPC had by 1964 formed an overwhelming majority in parliament to the extent that it no longer needed the coalition to remain in power.⁴⁶⁷ To further consolidate the UPC's authority, Obote sought to suppress the political apparatus of the Baganda Kingdom by diminishing the power of the KY.⁴⁶⁸ He warned KY party officials that they had no political power outside Buganda as, 'Kabaka was not a policy and people could not be expected to live from day to day merely by joining an organisation whose major policy was to uphold the prestige of an individual ruler.'⁴⁶⁹ The relationship between the KY and the UPC was further exacerbated with the on-going issue of the 'lost counties' of the Kingdom of Bunyoro. The two counties of Buyaga and Bugangazi had been allocated to Buganda during the 1900 agreement with the British. Bunyoro had always contested the arrangement and the counties were the subjects of several deputations to London during the colonial period. The British had left the issue unresolved before independence and the task of resolving the conflict fell on Obote who in 1964 resolved that the matter should be left to the peoples of the lost counties to decide. In the same year the peoples of the two counties were asked to decide whether they wanted to remain part of Buganda or to return to Bunyoro. When they inevitably opted for the latter, the Kabaka was outraged. The fallout from the referendum results caused irreparable damage to the already fragile coalition.⁴⁷⁰

⁴⁶⁶ Doornbos, *Not all the King's Men*, cited in Mutibwa, *Uganda at Independence*, 26.

⁴⁶⁷ Karugire, *The Roots of Instability in Uganda*, 51.

⁴⁶⁸ Kasozi, *The Social Origins of Violence in Uganda*, 59-84.

⁴⁶⁹ 'Obote: KY would be digging its own grave' *The Uganda Argus*, 6 January 1964.

⁴⁷⁰ Kasozi, *The Social Origins of Violence in Uganda*, 75.

Matters were made worse for Obote when on 22 January 1964 several units of the Ugandan Rifles in Jinja mutinied, demanding higher pay and a new system that allowed for accelerated promotions. After the British negotiator who was sent in to reconcile with the mutineers was held hostage, Obote in the end conceded many of the demands made by the rebellious units. This resulted in the rapid 'Ugandanisation' of the army, as young officers were quickly promoted and British officials reduced to an advisory role. A new intelligence operation was created known as the General Service Unit (GSU), a paramilitary group tasked with monitoring subversive behaviour and potential threats against the government. Headed by Obote's relative Akena Adolo, GSU recruits were drawn mainly from the Northern region, consisting of junior officers recruited for their political allegiances rather than on merit, and who were largely untrained for their anti-subversive operations. The GSU was to become well known for its recruits' 'amateur gullibility and dubious items of evidence, resulting in a number of wrongful arrests and detentions.'⁴⁷¹ The 1964 mutinies and the creation of the GSU proved to be the first stage of the militarisation of politics in post-colonial Uganda.⁴⁷² From this stage onwards, Obote systematically continued to marginalise civil liberties under the guise of thwarting subversive behaviour. He utilised many of the same tactics used by the British during the 1950s, as they had attempted to diminish political activity and contend with continued riots and strikes in Buganda. In 1968 Obote introduced the Emergency Act giving ministers the power to make and implement regulations for the maintenance of national security. The Act was an extension of the 1967 Public Order Security Act, which provided for the preventive detention of suspected subversives and the continuation of the state of emergency in Buganda that had been sanctioned after the deposition of the Kabaka.⁴⁷³ Thus the government, like its colonial predecessor, legally institutionalised military surveillance of its

⁴⁷¹ K. Ingham, *Obote: A Political Biography* (London & New York: Routledge, 1994), 132-133.

⁴⁷² 'Uganda New Army Chief' *The Uganda Argus* July-September 1964; 'Operation counter-spy' *The Uganda Argus*, July 1964.

⁴⁷³ K. Rupesinghe and C. M. Rubio (eds.), *The Culture of Violence*, Volume 81 (Tokyo, New York and Paris: United Nations University Press, 1994), 149.

own citizens, with security units spying on Ugandans inside and outside of the country, setting a dangerous precedent for years to come.⁴⁷⁴

As Obote's fear of internal opposition increased, he continued to recruit and promote a disproportionately large number of Northerners into the army, following the colonial pattern. In a passing out ceremony in 1966, seventy per cent of the 800 recruits were Northerners.⁴⁷⁵ In this respect Obote followed the colonial trend of targeting a particular region for recruitment into the army. While this trend can be viewed as a specific political ploy, it was also circumstantial. As in the colonial period, Northerners, particularly the Acholi, remained an easy demographic to recruit. Employment opportunities in Acholi within the formal economy were few and far between, making the army an attractive avenue for employment. Furthermore, limited opportunities to gain higher education in Acholi placed limitations on social mobility from the farm to the office. The army provided a relatively quick way to gain access to a regular wage. Furthermore, soldiering was a profession that still commanded respect among the Acholi. Young boys seeing a soldier in full uniform walking around the villages would dream that someday that could be them.⁴⁷⁶ It was a means to escape the monotony of rural life and a way to obtain a relatively respected profession.⁴⁷⁷ The tribal composition of the KAR and the politics of underdevelopment in Acholi became intrinsically linked in late colonial and post-independence Uganda. Acholi men joined the army because there were few employment opportunities in the locality. However, their high profile in the army corps post-independence ensured that they became a representation of state authority/power nationally. They were to be feared or encouraged depending on who was leading the country and what regional identity they ascribed to or was inscribed on them.

In trying to break down tribal barriers and forge a centralised national identity, Obote still resorted to tribal ties to consolidate his power. By challenging the supremacy of the Kabaka, Obote evoked anger from pro-

⁴⁷⁴ Kasozi, *The Social Origins of Violence in Uganda*, 89.

⁴⁷⁵ Ibid., 83; Omara-Otunnu, *Politics and the Military in Uganda, 1890-1985* (London: Macmillan Press, 1987), 75.

⁴⁷⁶ Formal and informal interviews Gulu and Kitgum, June-July 2012.

⁴⁷⁷ Ibid.

Kabaka supporters in parliament, who in turn began to plot against the Prime Minister's inner circle of supporters. This cumulated in the arrest of the plotters and the official cessation of the coalition.⁴⁷⁸ A new constitution was enacted placing Obote as paramount leader of the Uganda. When the Kabaka and the Baganda rebelled in reaction, Obote ordered the Kabaka's palace to be stormed, essentially driving the King into exile.⁴⁷⁹ Horowitz argues that the

weakening of the coalition partner entailed an attempt to undermine its ethnic strength. Consequently, the dynamics of the coalition relationship, especially the desire to be free of it, fostered that very ethnic conflict that was at the root of the electoral cleavage that had made the coalition necessary in the first place.⁴⁸⁰

Ali Mazrui's assessment of shifts in Obote's leadership style in the 1960s from reconciliatory to confrontational can be viewed by his 'shaken faith in the viability of institutionalised pluralism in his country.'⁴⁸¹ At independence, Obote believed that he could continue the colonial policy of encouraging strong ethnically demarcated local institutions as a mechanism to deal with Baganda separatism. This policy was reinforced after independence with the Local Administration Ordinance of 1962, which stipulated that in the future all local administrations would consist of ruler/ministers and a council, or a chief executive officer and a council, and all would enjoy the same authority and responsibility.⁴⁸² However, the continued political challenge from the KY and the Kabaka meant that from 1966, Obote decided to embark on the gradual elimination of the divisive elements, particularly the Kings who were symbols of regional autonomy, in an attempt to establish national unity and regain control. However, as Mazrui continues:

⁴⁷⁸ H. B. Hansen and M. Twaddle (eds.) *From Chaos to Order: The Politics of Constitution Making in Uganda* (Kampala: Fountain Publishers, 1994).

⁴⁷⁹ Horowitz, *Ethnic Groups in Conflict*, 373.

⁴⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 374.

⁴⁸¹ A. A. Mazrui, *Soldiers and Kinsmen in Uganda: The Making of a Military Ethnocracy* (London: Sage Publishers, 1975), 15.

⁴⁸² Gertzel, *Party and Locality in Northern Uganda*, 21.

The trouble with the politics of confrontation is that it can release forces which make the politics of reconciliation more difficult in later years. [Consequently] in 1966 the big issue for Obote was not only how to keep the system going, but how to survive politically.⁴⁸³

Given the internal threat against his leadership, from 1964 Obote's selection of political allies stemmed from his ethnic ties to Northern Uganda, calling upon those from whom he could command absolute trust and loyalty.⁴⁸⁴ His promotion of the physically imposing but under-qualified Idi Amin to Major-General and later to Commander-in-Chief of the Uganda army was a direct reaction to the events in 1964. However, just like the riots in Buganda during the late colonial period, the mutiny had not been an attempt to overthrow the Prime Minister but was instead a result of the growing economic hardships faced by many Ugandans at the time. They had not been planned for any length of time and did not involve any high-ranking army officials, nor were the 420 men that were eventually discharged for involvement following any specific orders.⁴⁸⁵ Nonetheless, the actions of these mutineers were to set a dangerous precedent in the relationship between the army and central government.

The ethnic composition of the army started to become a matter of acute political sensitivity. In 1968 when an American Peace Corps teacher asked about the tribal composition of the Ugandan army while drinking in bar in Kitgum, he was immediately placed under surveillance.⁴⁸⁶ Fearful of being labelled a 'tribalist' Obote continued to defend himself in the national media urging his critics to believe that his government was not in the business of 'corrupting tribes to ensure his political position.'⁴⁸⁷ But his protestations were to no avail as his political opponents, particularly in Buganda, now saw the military as Obote's personal Northern militia:

⁴⁸³ Mazrui, *Soldiers and Kinsmen in Uganda: The Making of a Military Ethnocracy*, 16.

⁴⁸⁴ MUL/AS: Dr I.M Lewis, UCL 'Social Security and Tribalism' Speech Published in the Argus. Plenary Session of the Symposium organised by the East African Academy, 19 September 1966.

⁴⁸⁵ KDA: Police Special Branch and District Intelligence Reports, February 1964

⁴⁸⁶ KDA: District Intelligence Report c. 1968.

⁴⁸⁷ 'Obote denies allegations' *The Uganda Argus*, 14 February 1966.

Southern politicians questioned the army's recruiting preferences in the National Assembly but Obote's allies defended the practice on the grounds that northern Nilotic-speakers were natural soldiers. [Defence Minister Felix Onama] claimed that the army had to retain its KAR 5'8" height that made it difficult for shorter Southern recruits to enlist because "we do not want our soldiers to look like *totos* (small children). In reality the KAR had used a 5'3" height requirement for most of the 1950s.⁴⁸⁸

From 1966 Obote started to tour the Northern Provinces more frequently, often visiting army barracks and attending passing out parades.⁴⁸⁹ During one ceremony celebrating Uganda's second year of independence, Obote made sure that it coincided with the unveiling of the new Ugandan Air Force. The speech given by the President during the ceremony was filled with analogies of Uganda as the 'troublesome child', mirroring colonial discourses of the 'child-like' African.⁴⁹⁰ 'The child is now two years old. I am the custodian of that child and I am delivering you the child. The child is in good health and it is your responsibility as witness to see that the child grows.'⁴⁹¹ As the child became more petulant, measures had to be taken to discipline it and make it obedient, and this was the responsibility of all Ugandans. With the progression of his presidency Obote continued defending the methods by which the child was being raised, stressing the importance of having a strong army and police force as a mechanism to protect and 'preserve Ugandan culture.'⁴⁹² As such from 1964 onwards Obote's presidency would be defined as one that sought to retain control at all costs through the threat and use of military force, creating what Kasozi calls the first 'military dictatorship' in post-colonial Uganda.⁴⁹³

⁴⁸⁸ T. Parsons, *The 1964 Army Mutinies and the Making of Modern East Africa* (Wesport Connecticut: Greenwood Publishing Group, 2003).

⁴⁸⁹ 'Northern tour' *The Uganda Argus*, 23 August 1966; 'President visits the army' *The Uganda Argus*, 27 August 1966.

⁴⁹⁰ R. Kipling, *The Collected Poems of Rudyard Kipling* (Wordsworth Editions, 1994), 334.

⁴⁹¹ 'Uganda Air force Makes Debut', *The Uganda Argus*, 10 October 1964.

⁴⁹² 'Dr Obote Hails Special force.' *Ugandan Argus*, 4 April 1968.

⁴⁹³ Kasozi, *The Social Origins of Violence in Uganda*, 83; Otunnu 'Politics and the Military', 75.

4.1. Uniting the ‘Northerners’: The Battle for the Centre.

The removal of the Kabaka in 1966 by Obote was met with widespread support among the Acholi. This support had its basis in the rivalry that had been promoted in late colonial Uganda between the Kingdom and the Acholi. The historical social, political and economic dominance of the Buganda Kingdom was a matter of sensitivity among the less developed regions within the Northern Province. The perception that Buganda was not conforming to the post-colonial nationalist agenda was seen by the Acholi as a deliberate attempt to emphasise the kingdom’s political supremacy at the expense of wider economic and political progress in the rest of the country. As one interviewee stated, ‘Obote’s government was purely developmental, nobody was taking about tribal issues at that time. I mean in Buganda they only wanted recognition for their King.’⁴⁹⁴ Even ardent DP supporters among the Acholi put aside their rivalry with the UPC and expressed approval at the deposition, arguing that it was the only way that Uganda could move forward politically. One Acholi civil servant who was living in Kampala in 1966 during the storming of the Kabaka’s palace commented on the atmosphere of that day:

When the Kabaka was exiled in 1966, there was fighting. I could hear gunshots. I was at Makerere and I could see smoke from the palace. I did not attend lectures for two days. The Baganda are always united when it comes to their King, a feeling that we do not have in our area.⁴⁹⁵

The Acholi Local Administration reacted positively to the declaration of the Ugandan Republic and the removal of the Kabaka, expressing their endorsement in the national media. Shortly after the deposition, the Secretary-General of the Acholi Local Council, issued a statement expressing his support, asserting that Obote’s actions were not only welcomed in the

⁴⁹⁴ (F/M) AU: Interview with civil servant, Entebbe, 15 January 2012.

⁴⁹⁵ (F/M) AU: Interview with UPC politician, Kampala, 4 February 2012.

region, but that the rest of Uganda 'should rally behind the Acholi people to support the government.'⁴⁹⁶ Even in parliament and despite their rivalry some prominent Acholi DP politicians were publically sympathetic to Obote's actions. DP politician Mr Alexander Latim, speaking on the behalf of eight other opposition leaders, stated that whilst they did not ideologically agree with the actions taken, it was the duty of politicians and Ugandans to unite behind the President in his time of need.⁴⁹⁷

In an interview with the author, one Acholi DP supporter who was old enough to remember the events of 1966 also reiterated his support for Obote. 'I supported the man, but not the party, even if you belong to a different party, you appreciate something that is good, and we understood that there was no democracy in being King.'⁴⁹⁸ In fact, the overwhelming perception of Obote and his first administration by interviewees of different backgrounds and classes still living in Acholi was largely positive. This should not be seen as definitive verdict of Obote's regime however. The men and women who were interviewed spoke about Obote's Uganda purely retrospectively. Their memories were shaped by the decade that followed with the rule of Idi Amin, and to some extent the current administration. As such, many of the views were comparative, overwhelmingly favouring Obote. Statements such as 'we Acholi were happy under Obote', or 'our children were going to school under Obote,' and 'at least we had proper roads when Obote was in power' were recounted time and time again.⁴⁹⁹ The recollections are undoubtedly a judgement on what the peoples of Acholi believed then and now to be what politicians need to deliver to be considered successful and positive influences. In comparison to Amin's regime and the political turmoil of the 1980s, which further stunted economic development in Acholi, Obote's first administration is unsurprisingly placed in a more positive light. But in reality, Acholi had not benefitted much from Obote's economic policies. From 1964 the Acholi District Administration frequently reported large deficits in their budget.⁵⁰⁰ This

⁴⁹⁶ 'Obote's action supported', *The Uganda Argus*, 3 March 1966.

⁴⁹⁷ 'Obote action saved many lives', *The Uganda Argus*, 2 February 1966.

⁴⁹⁸ (F/M) AU: Interview with civil servant Entebbe, 4 January 2012.

⁴⁹⁹ Formal and informal interviews, Gulu, Kitgum, Entebbe, Kampala January-August 2012.

⁵⁰⁰ GDA Box 542: Memorandum by the President, 23 March 1968.

was a complete departure from the colonial period where district accounts were kept relatively balanced. However, even if the Native Administration had deficits in its accounts these were not large enough to warrant a report in the district account audits.⁵⁰¹ Added to this, the region was among the poorest in the country, with the 1969 census showing that Acholi had the fourth highest infant mortality rate out of all the districts in Uganda.⁵⁰² Even for staunch UPC supporters the economic situation in the region compelled some to complain directly to central government. The UPC Youth Wing in East Acholi, the most economically and socially deprived region of Acholi, were so dissatisfied with Obote's economic policies that they were mobilised to write a memorandum directly to central government requesting more amenities to be provided in Kitgum. Particular requests were made for hospitals and schools for girls, and they placed the blame for the continued underdevelopment of Acholi districts on institutionalised nepotism that allowed only certain individuals to benefit financially.⁵⁰³ The youth group requested that the government explain why the interests of those in the higher echelons of the party appeared to be greater than the villagers who had placed them in power in the first place.⁵⁰⁴ In fact, as Frimoni Banugire argues, during Obote's first presidential term there was no evidence of any substantial economic development in the North, as Obote structurally continued the colonial trend of underdevelopment of the region relative to the South.⁵⁰⁵ However, even despite the harsh economic

⁵⁰¹ The Economic Development of Uganda: Report of a Mission Organised by the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development at the request of the Uganda Government; Makerere University Archive: Uganda National Archive: Gulu District Archive: Kitgum District Archive.

⁵⁰² Langland, 'Population Density', 31.

⁵⁰³ KDA: Letter from UPC Leaders from Padibe (Okello Obowc Youth Leader, Y.L. Dyangbi-UPC Youth Chairman Padibe, Mrs Anywal, UPC Women's Leader) to UPC Headquarters Kampala c.1969.

⁵⁰⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁰⁵ F. R. Bangugire, 'Uneven and Un-balanced Development: Development Strategies and Conflict' in K. Rupensinghe (ed.), *Conflict Resolution in Uganda* (London: James Currey, 1989).

conditions being faced in Acholi, there was a general consensus that support should be shown to the President over the Buganda and Kabaka issue.⁵⁰⁶

As matters with Buganda became more strained, and as the Northern identity increasingly became associated with Obote and the UPC, there was at least one politician who sought an electoral base outside his ancestral region. Daudi Ocheng was a prominent Acholi politician who was not only an outspoken critic of Obote and the UPC, but also a member of the KY party. Ocheng was instrumental in raising accusations against Obote for smuggling gold and ivory tusks from the Democratic Republic of Congo and embezzling funds from Uganda. In 1964 he stood in parliament alongside another Acholi DP politician Alexander Latim, and publically accused the President and the then Commander of the Uganda Army, Idi Amin, of corruption. This action resulted in Ocheng's arrest and subsequent death under suspicious circumstances a few years later.⁵⁰⁷ There is little evidence regarding Ocheng's earlier life or indeed what motivated him to become an ardent Kabakarist. He is known however to have had close personal ties with the Kabaka and was instrumental in negotiating the coalition terms between the UPC and KY in 1961.⁵⁰⁸ In his assessment of Ocheng's political allegiances Jan Jørgensen states that

the fact that a major leader in the so-called Nilotic or UPC centre faction was [Godfrey] Binaisai, a Muganda, and that a major leader in the so-called Bantu or conservative faction was Daudi Ocheng, an Acholi who owned land in Buganda and served as Secretary-General of Kabaka Yekka, should warn us that class interest could and did override ethnic identity.⁵⁰⁹

One interviewee who knew Ocheng personally gave some insight into his earlier life:

⁵⁰⁶ 'Lumus Secret Plan' *The Uganda Argus* 27 July 1966.

⁵⁰⁷ 'Parliament Accepts Ocheng Motion seeking Amin probe' *The Uganda Argus*, 5 February 1966.

⁵⁰⁸ Jørgensen, *Uganda: A Modern History*, 200.

⁵⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 227.

His father was a chief in Acholi here. He sent his kids from primary to study at Kings College in Buda. Ocheng was in the same class as Sir Edward Mutesa II (The Kabaka). They developed a very close friendship and this continued. Daudi became a member of the Lukiko. He spoke excellent Luganda. At independence he became a member of the KY after the Kabaka nominated him and Ocheng became completely on that side.⁵¹⁰

Ocheng certainly did not fit the stereotype of the Acholi politician. He was not content to be just another Acholi politician trying to make his way in central government advocating regional and ethnic policies.

Most of the UPC leaders were notables who derived their authority from colonial appointments as traditional chiefs or civil servants. Many were lineal successors of chiefs or clan leaders, and a number had gone to boarding school based on the British public school system. With the exception of Daudi Ocheng, and a few others, their political bases were confined to the districts where they were born, and they were influenced by the ethnic and religious composition of, and competition within their home districts.⁵¹¹

Ocheng was not the only Acholi politician opposing Obote at the time; many DP supporters had publically critiqued the President. In fact, Ocheng frequently joined Alexander Latim, the DP Minister for North West Acholi, in publically denouncing Obote's increasingly authoritarian political policies.⁵¹² He was however the only prominent Acholi to become a card-carrying member of the KY. For his part, Obote was astute enough to capitalise on his two opponents regional identities to combat accusations of tribalism within his government. He argued that as both Ocheng and Latim were from the North and still opposed him, his presidency was therefore far from tribalistic.⁵¹³

Among the Acholi back in the villages and in Kampala, Ocheng was something of a paradox:

When he [Ocheng] visited here he would come and go as he liked nobody cared and nobody bothered him. Ocheng's father was very enlightened. At that time the Acholi thought he was a traitor. Why send

⁵¹⁰ (IF/M) NAU: interview with retired civil servant, Gulu, 9 June 2012

⁵¹¹ Kasozi, *The Social Origins of Violence in Uganda*, 61-62 (Quotation paraphrased).

⁵¹² 'Acholi for Buganda Jinja Plantations' *The Uganda Argus*, 2 February 1966.

⁵¹³ 'Obote action saved many lives' *The Uganda Argus*, 2 February 1966.

your kids to learn Luganda? I personally refused to learn the language in Makerere, the Baganda were so proud of their language. I was in the Capital of Uganda, why should I learn Luganda?’⁵¹⁴

The latter part of the statement indicates that even among educated Acholi migrants working in a white-collar profession in Kampala, there was still prejudice against Buganda materialised through their conscious and sub-conscious rejection of Luganda. Some Acholi who had lived in the region for years and brought up families had either refused to learn Luganda or just simply did not have the time to do so. As one Acholi student at Makerere remarked, ‘English is the language of the educated, when I was at university I was only friends with those that spoke it, why would I waste my time learning Luganda?’ Yet many were happy for their children who were being brought up in Kampala to learn the Bantu language. However, some drew the line when it came to speaking it at home, although this is mainly due to the fact that in most cases both parents were unable to speak Luganda. The reinforcement of Acholi identity through linguistics was important among these migrants as the majority married Acholi wives and emphasised to their children the importance of speaking their mother tongue.⁵¹⁵

The tendency to reject Luganda or Lusoga (spoken in Busoga) was not only prevalent among educated white-collar workers living in Buganda and Jinja. Although those whose professions were not in the civil services did not necessarily have the same objections to the language, it was still uncommon to find fluent Luganda-speaking Acholi. Acholi soldiers and policemen stationed in the South offer a good example in this regard. Among the army personnel Kiswahili became the lingua franca, negating the need to learn Luganda or even English for lower ranking soldiers. Because of the disproportionately large numbers of Northerners in the Army, Kiswahili became identifiable with that group. Consequently in post-independence Uganda as it was during the colonial period, English quickly became the language of civility and Kiswahili the language of the soldiers.⁵¹⁶ Interestingly

⁵¹⁴ (IF/M) NAU: Interview with retired civil servant, Gulu, 9 June 2012.

⁵¹⁵ Formal and informal Interviews in Kampala, Jinja, Entebbe, November 2011-August 2012.

⁵¹⁶ P. Oketcho, ‘The Retrospective Development of Uganda’s Educational language Policy success and Challenges. National Curriculum Development Centre’ (Kampala, 2010); J.

among the soldiers and service workers interviewed by the author none expressed discomfort in regards to their children speaking Luganda at home. As one soldier who was stationed in Kololo Kampala in the 1960s recalled, 'I brought my kids to Kampala to get a better education. This was the only way. The children were all fluent in Luganda and even though they could speak Acholi they did not to do so at home.'⁵¹⁷ Those of older generations who had lived their whole lives in Kampala admitted during the interviews that that they were still unable to speak Luganda.⁵¹⁸ The high-ranking army officials who had had an education that exceeded primary level deemed that it was more important for their children to learn English by attending the top schools in the capital. But even despite this, the households that these children were being brought up in generally consisted of two Acholi-speaking parents. Although the children learnt the languages of the region they were living in, at home most were still socialised into Acholi culture, be it the food being cooked, hearing their parents converse in Acholi, or even seasonal trips back to the village to visit family.

For Acholi living outside other regions the Northern identity was not and could not easily be erased or superseded by another. In fact, even the names given to these children immediately made them identifiable as Northerners. Luo/Nilotic names are easily distinguishable from Bantu ones. The names are derived from particular, cultural, environmental, social or political circumstances and have spiritual significance developed from everyday language.⁵¹⁹ Male and female names are easily distinguishable with girls' names commonly start with an, 'A' as in *Arach* or *Apiyo*, and boys starting with an 'O' as in *Okello*. In some rare cases a child's name could also begin with an, 'L' as in *[L]abong* or *[L]apat*. The names are almost indistinguishable from Lango names and as such it is harder to identify a Lango or Acholi through name to without hearing the dialect being spoken.⁵²⁰

Ssekamwa, *History and Development of Education in Uganda* (Kampala: Fountain Publishers, 1997), 138.

⁵¹⁷ (F/M) NAU: Interview with private security guard, Kitgum, 1 August 2012.

⁵¹⁸ Formal and Informal Interviews, Entebbe, Kampala, November - March 2012.

⁵¹⁹ D. S. Okello, *The Acholi Ritual Ceremonies* (BA Thesis Makerere University, 1969), 28.

⁵²⁰ *Ibid.*, 28.

It is not uncommon for an Acholi meeting someone from outside the region, and upon hearing their non-Christian name to ask 'where in the North are you from? Thus one's 'Northern' identity is made apparent simply by divulging a name. This had unfortunate repercussions for Acholi migrants living in the South at the time the palace of the Kabaka was stormed. As Baganda hostility towards the 'Northerner' Obote grew, Acholi migrants and students living in the capital found themselves in an uncomfortable position. Many had made friends with students from all over Uganda on campus and although none of them could recount any overt hostilities from the Baganda students towards them, there were cases where they were made to feel uncomfortable about their Northern identity. One student recounted having a conversation with his Baganda friends at the time in which they stated that all Northerners were murderers because of what they had done to the Kabaka.⁵²¹

Whilst it was easy to externally identify someone as Acholi, another process of internal identification was also taking place. A vast number of Acholi students studying at Makerere in the 1960s chose research topics on Acholi culture, economy and agricultural practices that enabled them to go back to their villages to conduct research. Very few, if any, were writing about agricultural and marriage practices among the Baganda or Basoga. Nor were they researching any other cultures but their own. Lecturers at Makerere such as Okot p'Bitek were popular with Acholi pupils, with one student remarking on how he chose the Acholi poet's class because of its cultural content and praised him for speaking Luo during classes at the expense of non-Luo speakers.⁵²² In this way they were defining themselves as Northerners and Acholi whilst pursuing in their education subjects that would prepare them to find jobs back in their respective regions.

With events going on within national politics, an army that was now perceived as being Northern and tensions between Buganda and Obote, Acholi migrants in the South were continually defined by the politics of the centre. In an attempt to challenge the idea of Baganda superiority, the educated Acholi felt that it was their right as Ugandan nationals to speak only

⁵²¹ (F/M) NAU: interview with retired civil servant, Gulu Town Centre, 15 July 2012.

⁵²² Ibid.

English in the capital and contested the need to learn Luganda. Acholi soldiers found a ready-made home within their barracks where Kiswahili was the language of preference. Blue-collar workers living and working in the capital simply left it to their children to acquire language skills as they settled into small communities of other migrants from the North. However, the main commonality among these groups of migrants was the unbroken connection to their homesteads in Acholi. That even someone like Daudi Ocheng who went against the political grain would still make regular visits to his village indicates that ancestral ties for Acholi migrants were almost never fully cut.

4.2. Politics of the Belly: The Acholi Local Government

We must never forget that the colonial state in Africa was an authoritarian bureaucratic apparatus of control and not intended to be a school of democracy.⁵²³

When looking at the dichotomy between change and continuity from the colonial state and post-independence Uganda, Acholi Local Government (ALG) actually offered little change from colonial administrative and political structures. The symbolic and evidential argument for continuity rather than rupture, can be seen when comparing the last British DC's annual report to his Acholi successor. Not only is the layout of the report the same, but also the tone, rhetoric and style of writing mirror each other. If one were to take away the signatures signed at the bottom, the two reports could have well have been written by the same person.⁵²⁴ In fact, internal politics in Acholi within the local councils included many of the same debates that had occupied local government members during late colonial period. Council meetings were still characterised by walkouts, boycotts and staff complaints. It took months to reach decisions as members failed to give clear directions to staff and then became angry and frustrated when nothing was done. Financial mismanagement and corruption meant that the local councils were unable to

⁵²³ Berman, 'Ethnicity, Patronage and the African State', 329.

⁵²⁴ MUL/AS EAU/A (058) 1: J.P Twining, Acholi District Commissioner: Annual Report: Acholi District Council 1962.

provide many of the services needed for the people. With many of the council members now affiliated to the two major parties in the region, party political rivalries continued to dominate committee meetings, making it difficult to engage in any meaningful and productive debates.⁵²⁵ Economic disparities ensured that the political demarcation between West Acholi and East continued to be emphasised as local politicians sought to strengthen their constituent base. The separation of the two districts had been continually discussed in the late 1950s and was finalised on the eve of independence. News of the separation was received with 'great happiness' among the populace in East Acholi.⁵²⁶ However, the move from being quasi-governmental to a fully-fledged governing body was rushed, as by 1962 Kitgum had no town clerks and only one permanent staff member.⁵²⁷ The administrative and political division of Gulu and Kitgum was largely instigated by the political rivalry between the UPC and the DP in the region. The two parties were more concerned with the political benefits of the division rather than the practicalities.⁵²⁸ As the UPC and DP acquired more power in the centre, in the locality the two parties fought to gain control of the local councils and mobilise the populace. Thus whilst political grievances were channelled through ethnic discourses at the centre, in Acholi regional, religious, class, and clan identities were given more prominence. The British DC in his parting report expressed concern at the way the District Councils were running, adding that 'without a medium for the creation of policy or for planning . . . [the district council] will develop into a talking shop with no aims but to talk about staff grievances.'⁵²⁹

Whilst the 1962 constitution had emphasised the political semi-autonomy of the four major Kingdoms, it had also left the ALG with a large amount of political authority, continuing with the colonial system of indirect

⁵²⁵ Ibid; MUL/AS EAU/A (058) 1: Y.H. Wacha Olwol, Annual Report Acholi District Council 1963.

⁵²⁶ MUL/AS EAU/A (058) 1: Y.H. Wacha Olwol, Annual District Report 1963.

⁵²⁷ Ibid.

⁵²⁸ Ibid.

⁵²⁹ MUL/AS EAU/A (058) 1: J.P Twining, Acholi District Commissioner: Annual Report: Acholi District Council 1962.

rule. In Acholi, the 1962 constitution gave local politicians, ALG mid to high level staff control of the locality, public funds and reaffirmed their control of the patron-client network.⁵³⁰ Services such as the routine maintenance of law and order, control of raising local tax rates, maintenance of inter district roads, control of primary schools, and provisions of medical services all fell under responsibility of the Acholi District Administration (ADA). By 1965 the ADA employed 1,600 people, 1000 of which were teachers.⁵³¹ However, political rivalries between the UPC and DP, and financial mismanagement continued to hamper administrative duties. By 1963 at least two senior council members had been charged and convicted for embezzlement of public funds.⁵³² The district finances remained poor and the collection of taxes unstable resulting in only two-thirds of estimated taxes being collected for the year ending 1963.⁵³³ Attendance by council members was low and sporadic, resulting in numerous meetings being postponed simply because there were not enough people.⁵³⁴ Social services in the region were still few and far between, with a dangerous shortage of primary and secondary educational facilities.⁵³⁵ Regional development programmes being propagated by central government, such as the extension of progressive farming methods to the masses, were hampered by nepotism and corruption within the local district administrations which placed economic and political power in the hands of a select few.⁵³⁶ This ensured that social mobility from the farm to the office was mainly limited to those who had the right education or tribal lineage. In 1967 just over one per cent of the population in Acholi was employed in occupations outside of agriculture.⁵³⁷

⁵³⁰ Ibid.

⁵³¹ Leys, *Politicians and Policies in Acholi*, 23-24.

⁵³² MUL/AS Ref: EAU/A (058) 1: Y.H. Wacha Olwol, Annual District Report 1963.

⁵³³ Ibid.

⁵³⁴ Ibid.

⁵³⁵ Ibid.

⁵³⁶ Leys, *Politicians and Policies*, 44.

⁵³⁷ The Economic Development of Uganda: Report of a Mission Organised by the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development at the request of the Uganda Government (John Hopkins Press, 1962), 94; L.L. Luciyamo, *The Relationship Between Traditional Farming and Social Structure in Acholi* (Bsc Thesis, Makerere University, 1970)

Table 3: ADA CAPITAL EXPENDITURE APPROVED ESTIMATES 1965.⁵³⁸

	<i>Draft Estimates 1965</i>	Main Items		<i>Approved Estimates 1965</i>	Main Items
1. Laloyo	£ 8,000	Official residence	(1)	nil	
2. Administration	£ 50,150	Councillors' Hostel £ 6,150; Quarters for two senior officials in Gulu £ 5,000; Rent of 10 junior staff quarters in Gulu; building 4 divisional headquarters in permanent materials £ 32,000. Extension of Central Offices, Gulu £ 2,000.	(2)	£ 16,000	Two divisional headquarters (Loan from Local Authorities Loans Fund)
3. Police and Prisons	£ 2,000	Tractor implements (for prison farms) ...	(3)	£ 1,000	Improvements to prison (balance of £ 2,000 grant made by central government in 1964)
4. Subventions and Miscellaneous	£ 1,500	Development Grants to County Councils £500; Improvements to Pece Stadium £ 1,000	(4)	£1,000	Improvements to Pece Stadium (balance of grant made from King George V Memorial Fund in 1964)
5. Education			(5)	£ 4,750	District Education Offices (central government grant) ⁸
6. Health	£ 80,501	Ambulances £ 8,000; improving dispensaries £ 1,000; new maternity and health centres and dispensaries £ 71,500.	(6)	£ 10,000	Two Maternity and Health Centres (Loan from Local Authorities Loans Fund)
7. Water supplies	£ 15,270	Borehole drilling £ 12,000; motor vehicles and Tractors £ 3,270.	(7)	£ 10,000	Boreholes (Loan from Local Authorities Loans Fund)
8. Public Works	£ 11,001	Improvements to bridges £ 1,000; lorries £ 10,000.	(8)	Nil	
Total	£ 168,422	Total		£ 42,750	

Practices of nepotism and corruption were particularly common within local institutions such as the Ministry of Agriculture.⁵³⁹ The main problem was that the land planning services were biased towards those who held posts in the civil service or those with capital to invest.⁵⁴⁰ This occurred at the expense of Acholi peasant farmers who actually required the most help. One prominent Acholi politician was criticised for having a large farm in Kitgum, causing the

⁵³⁸ *Ibid.*, 38.

⁵³⁹ D.Q.R. Laboke, *Socio-Economic Aspects of Farm Planning in Acholi District: Northern Uganda* (BSc, Thesis, Makerere University College, 1968), 17.

⁵⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 65.

local council to wonder how he had the time to attend to ministerial duties as well as his farm.⁵⁴¹ Full-time peasant farmers in the region were being neglected and passed over by the Department of Agriculture, and they complained that the government did not attach any importance to them.⁵⁴² As one Acholi student complained '[members of parliament] lobby for subsidies for the 'poor Acholi' yet they are the first to exploit these subsidies.'⁵⁴³ Obote's progressive farming policies, like those of the British, were supposed to focus on trying to encourage peasant farmers away from subsistence farming to progressive methods that were more financially lucrative. Under the Public Land Act of 1962, promulgated just after independence, Ugandans now had the right to occupy any unalienated public land without prior consent. The rights regarding customary land tenure were again extended with the 1969 Public Lands Act, which meant that any land fully occupied by customary tenants could no longer be alienated without the consent of its occupants. Customary tenants could apply for a lease over the lands that they occupied.⁵⁴⁴ The legal changes that were being implemented actually had very little impact, as very few peasant farmers were aware of the laws and continued to hold and to farm land communally.⁵⁴⁵ It was still common to find a farmer working on land with no clear boundaries, cultivating until he came into contact with a neighbour.⁵⁴⁶

Added to this, education was not compulsory at this time and those who wanted to send their children to school had to pay fees, further limiting social and economic advancement. In 1962 there was a drop in school

⁵⁴¹ UNA/E (Box unknown) Ref d/6/6-8 Acholi District: Political Activities: summary of the Development of the Acholi District (secret) c.1968.

⁵⁴² 'Acholi man speared' *The Uganda Argus* Thursday, 8 October 1968.

⁵⁴³ Laboke, *Socio-Economic Aspects of Farm Planning in Acholi District*, 65 & 81.

⁵⁴⁴ Mugambwa, 'A Comparative Analysis of Land Tenure Law in Uganda'; P. McAustin, *Bringing the Law Back In: Essays in Land, Law, and Development* (Ashgate Publishing Ltd) , 280.

⁵⁴⁵ Luciyamo, *The Relationship Between Traditional Farming and Social Structure in Acholi*, 23.

⁵⁴⁶ Laboke, *Socio-Economic Aspects of Farm Planning in Acholi District*, 12-13.

enrolment due to parents being unable to afford school fees.⁵⁴⁷ There were more opportunities at primary level where the number of schools in the mid-1960s stood at around 196, compared to only ten secondary schools, mostly located in West Acholi.⁵⁴⁸ Mission schools remained popular as they were considered to provide a better standard of education than state schools, and thus presented a better opportunity to progress to higher education⁵⁴⁹ Mission schools could also depend on subsidises from foreign donors and offered more opportunities for individual scholarships, lifting some of the financial burden from Acholi parents.⁵⁵⁰ Missionaries in this sense provided the institutions that were not being made available by local and central government. As the ALG continued to lose credibility, religious institutions, particularly in the more rural areas gained increased local authority.

However, just as the *Lawinos* had to contend with a life of poverty, the district accounts for the ADA from 1962-1965 showed a marked increase of expenditure on salaries and provisions for council members.

One prominent item in the growth of expenditure has been the overhead cost of politicising the district administrations, the salaries and allowances of constitutional heads, secretaries-general, finance secretaries, boards and the councils themselves have been substantial. Between 1962-1965 about 15,000 was added to Acholi's overhead costs in this way, expenditure which was approved because it flowed logically from the decisions to create these posts, and to have elected councils. It must be recognised though, that the people who have benefitted also constitute an influential pressure group in favour of increasing these expenditures. The sphere of finance, local and central politics are very much intertwined⁵⁵¹

⁵⁴⁷ The Economic Development of Uganda: Report of a Mission Organised by the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development at the request of the Uganda Government (John Hopkins Press, 1962), 94; Luciyamo, *The Relationship Between Traditional Farming and Social Structure in Acholi*.

⁵⁴⁸ Luciyamo, *The Relationship Between Traditional Farming and Social Structure in Acholi*, 23.

⁵⁴⁹ Formal and informal interviews Northern Uganda, May-August 2012.

⁵⁵⁰ E.H., Frankema, 'The Origins of Formal Education in sub-Saharan Africa: Was British Rule more Benign?' *European Review of Economic History*, Vo. 16 No.4 (2012), 335-355; Interviews Northern Uganda, London, January 2012-May 2013.

⁵⁵¹ Leys, *Politicians and Policies*, 44.

Acholi council members continued to lobby for increased personal allowances and in 1965 they unsuccessfully requested funds for a hostel to be built in Gulu for themselves funded through the public purse.⁵⁵² Peter Ekeh discusses the rise of tribalism in post-colonial Africa as a conflict between 'segments of the African bourgeoisie regarding the proportionate share of the resources of the civil public to the differentiated primordial (ethnic) publics'.⁵⁵³ Thus the *Ocol/s* as the political leaders of the 'primordial public' saw no problem in taking money from the civil public to feed individuals within their ethnic group. However, one of the ironies of the struggle for independence is that although the *Ocol/s* had boasted of their education, qualifications and advocated for the development of their ethnic regions, the reality was that they were driven largely by personal political and economic motivations.⁵⁵⁴ Consequently, whatever money was being obtained, or embezzled from the public purse, was not redistributed to the *Lawinos*, but was instead retained by individuals in the higher echelons of Acholi society.⁵⁵⁵ The *Ocol/s*' aspirations to join the patronage network superseded any need to distribute resources equally to the *Lawinos*, as Bayart argues more generally;

One of the decisive breaks with the past at independence lay in the ability of indigenous elites, previously restrained by the coloniser's tutelage, to have access to state resources. The end of the colonial occupation lifted a number of constraints, political, economic and

⁵⁵² *Ibid.*, 44

⁵⁵³ Ekeh, 'Colonialism and the Two Publics in Africa: A Theoretical Statement', 94.

⁵⁵⁴ P. Ekeh, 'Colonialism and the Two Publics in Africa: A Theoretical Statement.'

Comparative Studies in Society and History, Vol. 17, No. 1 (1975), 94

⁵⁵⁵ MUL/AS EAU/A (058) 1: J.P Twining, Acholi District Commissioner: Annual Report: Acholi District Council 1962; MUL/AS EAU/A (058) 1 Y.H. Wacha-Olwol, Acholi District Commissioner Annual Report: Acholi District 1963; MUL/AS GEAU/A (088) 2: Acholi District Admin, 1965, ADA Estimates: 1967, 1968, 1969. The account records and estimates show sharp increases in accounts deficits, increases in staff corruption and embezzlement, loans and block grants from the government. In 1969 the financial situation of the ADA was so bad they decided to raise taxes to draw more revenue, although this was not implemented. Yet the ADA continued to spend on the upkeep of chiefs houses and compounds, and wages for county, parish and sub-parish chiefs, and salaries ADA staff remained consistent and steady through the decade; Bayart, *The State in Africa*, 64.

administrative, which had frustrated the aspirations of the African accumulators.⁵⁵⁶

The *Oco/s* had in late colonial Uganda witnessed the prestige and authority bestowed on chiefs and British officials. They had seen the lucrative salaries and houses offered to government chiefs by the British. They had grown up with a political economy built on patronage and client networks that emphasised the authority of the 'big man' over his subjects. The more resources the patrons had the more power he could command in the locality. Furthermore, the weakness of the colonial state had left a substantial amount of power to the Native Administrators, who could use their political discretion in regards to tax collection and law and order, further emphasising the political authority of the chiefs. As the new power players in the locality, the *Oco/s* simply copied their predecessors, accumulating power and money to reinforce their status as the patrons, the political elite and the 'big man.' At the centre, they emphasised the Northern identity to combat Buganda political power and secure their own positions within national government. The symbiotic relationship between control of the centre and control of the locality meant that as much as they sided with Obote against the Kabaka, when their authority within the locality and access to state resources was eventually challenged, the Acholi ethnonational identity became the dominant tool for making demands against central government.

4.3. Acholi Ethnonationalism: Fragmenting the 'Northern Identity'

[We] are very proud of having one of our own as Prime Minister.⁵⁵⁷

The UPC's victory in the 1962 elections intensified the political hostilities between the UPC and the DP in Acholi. As Obote's political star continued to rise nationally, among some Acholi politicians there was a growing feeling of unease towards the UPC leader. This hostility was derived from the growing perception that the Acholi were being treated less favourably than their Lango

⁵⁵⁶ Bayart, *The State in Africa*, 64.

⁵⁵⁷ 'Obote Receives Pope's Medal' in Lira (Lango) *The Uganda Argus*, 11 January 1964.

counterparts. Even before Obote became Prime Minister, there were public accusations of nepotism and corruption directed against him by Acholi politicians. In his capacity as Legislative Council member he was accused of bypassing the proper protocols by awarding his brother a scholarship to go and study law in the United Kingdom. The Legislative Council members argued that it was wrong of Obote to give his brother another scholarship when other applicants had been refused the chance to study abroad.⁵⁵⁸ One DP supporter at the time recalled his growing distrust of the Obote:

When we got independence, I was already doing my A-Levels. Being a Catholic I was suspicious. The way Obote behaved regarding scholarships made me even more suspicious. He gave scholarships for people to go to the Soviet Union; he only favoured his tribe and Protestants. This was also the same for promotions. There was already tension between the two tribes, the Lango and the Acholi. Even though Obote was a Northerner, behind him we were still suspicious. The division in 1985 was something waiting to happen.⁵⁵⁹

District intelligence reports and the minutes for the local council meetings reflected a growing enmity between the Acholi and the Lango with on-going hostilities over border disputes. One informant was so concerned about the volatile situation he recommended that officers posted in Acholi should not be of Lango origin.⁵⁶⁰ Regionally, the main disputes between the two groups, as with the colonial period, centred on the political and economic border between the Acholi and the Lango. The Acholi chiefs whose task it was to collect taxes within their constituencies were generally the main protagonists of these arguments, as they sought to protect their tax and constituent boundaries. They made official complaints to the local council about Lango farmers and

⁵⁵⁸ 'Opposition to Lango Council Supported' *The Uganda Argus*, 26 September 1960.

⁵⁵⁹ (IF/M) NAU: Interview with local business owner, Gulu, 18 June 2012

⁵⁶⁰ UNA/E (Box unknown) Ref d/6/6-8: Acholi District: Political Activities: summary of the Development of the Acholi District (secret) c.1968; KDA: 'Acholi-Lango Border Dispute' Letter from County Chief Agago to DC Gulu, 4 April 1966.

herders repeatedly crossing into Acholi and attacking Acholi sub-county chiefs.⁵⁶¹

Acholi DP politicians were resourceful in utilising the border disputes with Lango to their own political gains, as they attempted to paint Obote as a dictatorial tribalist. Following the army mutiny in 1964 and the deposition of the Kabaka, Obote's rule had become increasingly authoritarian, which inevitably had a major impact on political activity in Acholi. This is reflected in the proliferation of intelligence reports in the district archives, gathered by the GSU surveying political meetings.⁵⁶² The documents are indicative of the continued militarisation of the centre and the locality. In Acholi, the military presence was even more pronounced, given the districts close proximity to the Sudanese and Karamojong borders.⁵⁶³ There was a continued flow of refugees and rebel group members coming from southern Sudan. This had begun in the late 1950s as the civil war between northern and southern Sudan escalated.⁵⁶⁴ In some instances Acholi chiefs were stationed near the border to stem the 'influx' of refugees. As well as frequent reports of rapes, beatings and thefts by the refugees, some Acholi chiefs capitalised on the situation by attempting to illegally extort tax payments from unsuspecting Sudanese refugees.⁵⁶⁵ There were at least two major settlement camps opened for the displaced Sudanese in Acholi, with the biggest one in Awach County. Mission schools, particularly those run by the VF were in some instances used to house a small number of refugees as the Acholi Local Council struggled to deal with the displaced population.⁵⁶⁶ The flow of refugees showed no sign of abating, and in 1969 the Kitgum intelligence sub-committee wrote that the situation in and around the border of Acholi and Sudan was now 'a common

⁵⁶¹ UNA/E (Box unknown) Ref d/6/6-8: Acholi District: Political Activities: summary of the Development of the Acholi District (secret) c.1968; KDA: 'Acholi-Lango Border Dispute' Letter from County Chief Agago to DC Gulu, 4 April 1966.

⁵⁶² GDA/KDA: District Intelligence Reports, 1964-1971.

⁵⁶³ Finnström, *Living With Bad Surroundings*, 53.

⁵⁶⁴ GDA Box: 533: Intelligence Reports, 1964-1982.

⁵⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

⁵⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

state of affairs.⁵⁶⁷ Obote capitalised on the situation by dispatching extra security to the region, under the guise that some of these refugee camps could be used for 'illegal night meetings.'⁵⁶⁸ The state's increasing use of the military force as a mechanism of political control, continued the colonial pattern of the politicisation and militarisation of quotidian violence in Uganda through organisations such as the GSU and legal directives such as the Emergency Act. The military and police were utilised to ensure that it became increasingly difficult for a political party other than the UPC to operate effectively in Acholi. By 1968 Obote had issued a life ban on all DP and Progressive Party rallies, an action that evoked considerable anger from DP supporters nationwide:

We have a government in which the people have no voice. The people are refused the right to elect their own representative in parliament, district councils and municipal and city councils. We refuse to call UPC a representative of the people and as soon as the ban is lifted a general election should be held.⁵⁶⁹

In response the DP set about trying to expose all the wrongs of Obote's regime. Whilst the party could no longer mobilise support officially in Acholi, it retained its previously elected members in the Local Council ensuring that it was still a political force to be reckoned with, especially in East Acholi.⁵⁷⁰ District intelligence reports showed that although many Acholi remained quiet about their support for the DP, there was still a strong underground network of supporters. They continued to hold meetings under religious pretexts where supporters would collect money and high-ranking DP politicians would visit the region to hand out financial incentives to supporters to encourage loyalty. This activity was particularly strong in Kalongo, where the DP had always had a strong support base.

⁵⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁶⁸ Ibid; GDA Box 542: Minutes: Meeting in Agoro to Discuss Acholi Karmojong Border Conflicts, 21 July 1966; Dr Obote Hails Special Force' *The Uganda Argus*, 4 April 1968.

⁵⁶⁹ 'Life Ban on DP rallies' *The Uganda Argus*, 20 April 1968.

⁵⁷⁰ Leys, *Politicians and Policies in Acholi*.

Mr Obonyo MP (DP) for the South Eastern Constituency . . . is trying to stop people of Kalongo from doing anything for the national interest. Telling people not to give funds to the President's police appeal, this can be seen that compared to other counties less has been collected here by the chiefs. It has been alleged that Mr Obonyo is distributing letters purporting to prevent people from participating in anything that that the government advises them to do, such as maintaining their roads and paths. Members of the public are defying the chief's authority and telling them to ask the government to do the jobs that the chiefs have been urging the people to do.⁵⁷¹

In 1964 DP Catholics in Gulu, Anaka, Awach, Opit, Pabbo and Atyak in West Acholi published a resolution criticising Obote's policies, which they argued favoured their UPC and Protestant counterparts. The resolution cited numerous incidents of discriminatory attitudes by the Acholi Appointment Board and unwarranted dismissals of Catholic members of the Acholi Local Administration.⁵⁷² The main criticisms were directed at the then Secretary-General Peter Oola and the Finance Secretary who had allegedly made inflammatory statements during a UPC rally inciting violence against Catholics.⁵⁷³ They alleged that Oola had instructed UPC youth wingers to kill any Catholic priests who were found to be going to the villages to provide religious instruction. A similar incident was again reported a few years later involving UPC youth wingers who attacked a priest because he did not have a permit to pray.⁵⁷⁴ The petitioners criticised the tax system in the region that asked Catholic missionaries to pay a flat graduated tax of 300 shillings per year, although this reassessment had excluded Protestant and Muslim missionaries. The proposed amalgamation of Protestant and Catholic schools by the Acholi Education Committee was another bone of contention as petitioners argued that Catholic pupils being moved to the Church of Uganda schools would confuse the children's beliefs. This, they believed was a

⁵⁷¹ KDA: District Intelligence Report, September 1968.

⁵⁷² KDA: Resolution by Catholic Christians in the Parishes of Gulu Town, Anaka, Awac, Opit, Pabbo and Atyak passed by a public rally of the Christians held in Gulu on 5 September 1964. Sent to Hon Prime Minister of Uganda, Dr. M.A. Obote From Catholic Christians West Acholi Signed A.L Oloya: President, 7 September 1964.

⁵⁷³ Ibid.

⁵⁷⁴ GDA Box 541: Open Letter of Complaint and Prayer by Father Cipriano Kihangie, Bishop of Gulu, 3 October 1969.

deliberate attempt by the UPC to convert Catholics to Protestantism and to further diminish the role of Catholics in Uganda.⁵⁷⁵

The DP was instrumental in mobilising supporters to protest against what they deemed to be their unequal treatment in comparison to UPC and Protestants in Acholi, and the under-development of East Acholi in comparison to the West. In one DP rally, groups of Acholi in Kitgum gathered in protest, holding placards lambasting the UPC to 'go west now.'⁵⁷⁶ They urged the government to facilitate adequate supervisions of schools in Acholi and to build an education office in Kitgum. Other placards asked why there was 'education in Uganda but not in Kitgum.'⁵⁷⁷ This particular placard is interesting as it designates Kitgum as separate from Acholi and Uganda, even though the whole region was suffering from a lack of educational facilities. The DP in the area had successfully convinced their supporters that West Acholi, in particular Gulu, was now in the same situation as the more economically developed districts in Uganda, although this was far from the truth.⁵⁷⁸

Although the UPC party hierarchy in Kampala and Acholi increasingly began to consider DP members as *persona non grata* in the locality, the DP continued its campaign against the UPC-dominated district councils and the President, albeit clandestinely. GSU intelligence officers were often tasked with infiltrating and reporting on illegal DP meetings. The general contents of the reports consisted of purported assassination plots against the Obote being planned in Sudan and conspiracies with the exiled Kabaka to overthrow the government.⁵⁷⁹ The allegations made in these reports are questionable,

⁵⁷⁵ KDA: Resolution by Catholic Christians in the Parishes of Gulu Town, Anaka, Awac, Opit, Pabbo and Atyak passed by a public rally of the Christians held in Gulu on 5 September 1964. Sent to Hon Prime Minister of Uganda, Dr. M.A. Obote from Catholic Christians West Acholi Signed A.L Oloya: President, 7 September 1964.

⁵⁷⁶ KDA: Letter from the District Special Branch Officer, U. Oloya East Acholi regarding DP rally in Kitgum, sent to Senior District Special Branch Officers, 21 January 1965.

⁵⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁷⁹ KDA: 'Secret meetings by DP and KY 1968-9'. Report from the Chief General Service Officer Kitgum sent to Mr Akena-Adoko Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Internal Affairs, 8

mainly because the intelligence officers were predominately Acholi men and clearly had something to gain by staying loyal to the government. They often reiterated what was already being reported in the national media. However, interviews with DP members still living in Uganda support the argument that the party was still very active even under political and military scrutiny.⁵⁸⁰ One police report stated that in August of 1969 the DP in East Acholi held at least seven illegal meetings. 'The meetings can no longer be called secret meetings; they are simply political meetings. They are being held openly without any request or information given to the police, nor to the chief in that area.'⁵⁸¹ Instead of town halls and market places however they were held in private homes.⁵⁸² DP members were not alone in their growing opposition to the President. Even within the UPC there were sharp divisions, particularly within the Acholi District Administration.⁵⁸³ The UPC in Acholi district was divided into two factions led by Alex Ojera and Eric Lakidi. The party already held forty-four out of the fifty possible seats in the council and the seats were in turn divided almost equally between the pro-Ojera and pro-Lakidi supporters. Both men represented the power struggle within the UPC in Acholi, with Lakidi not afraid to side with the few DP members in the council if it suited his own political ambitions.⁵⁸⁴ Thus even among his own politicians, Obote could not expect unwavering loyalty in Acholi.

Matters between the Acholi and the Lango came to a head in 1968 when the Acholi Local Council passed a resolution criticising Obote's economic policies in the region. On 16 and 17 February *The Ugandan Argus* published a report detailing the discussions and resolutions made at a

August 1969; KDA: DP Meeting Orom. Report from Q.C Police Kitgum to the District Police Commander, Gulu, 13 December 1969.

⁵⁸⁰ Interviews, Entebbe, Kampala, Gulu Kitgum, November 2011-August 2012.

⁵⁸¹ KDA: DP Meeting Orom', 13 December 1969; KDA: Illegal DP Meeting, 1 September 1969.

⁵⁸² Ibid.

⁵⁸³ UNA/E (Box unknown) Ref d/6/6-8: Acholi District: Political Activities: summary of the Development of the Acholi District (secret) c.1968.

⁵⁸⁴ Ibid.

meeting of the Acholi District Council on 13 February 1968.⁵⁸⁵ The fallout from the article was to prove detrimental to the already fragile relationship between the Acholi and Obote. The resolutions were primarily concerned with the treatment of the Lango in comparison to the Acholi in the region. Council members made numerous allegations against the government for giving the lion's share of industries to Lango when they had previously been promised to the Acholi:

They were angry that the nearest television station was in Lira (the main town in Lango), even though they had requested that one be built in Gulu. The Acholi the councillors felt that they were being forced to leave their homes in search of employment simply because Obote had not included them in the economic revolution that was going on in the rest of the country.⁵⁸⁶

Armed with their resolutions the council sanctioned a six-man delegation to take the matter directly to the President. Obote's response to the allegations was swift and decisive. Outraged by the accusations of tribalism, he penned a twenty-six-page report the following month, countering every allegation made by the council members. The President was keen to stress that Acholi districts, like all others in Uganda, had been treated fairly and all possible efforts were being to develop the region by the government without the influence of tribal preferences. Furthermore, he stressed that central government budgets had hindered development in all other districts and it was not just the Acholi who were suffering:

What is disturbing is that although nearly every other District is affected by the cuts of 31 December 1965, the Acholi District Council has taken the cut for the district to mean an action by the Government against the people of the District. The Council's resolution directed the Secretary-General to give publicity to these allegations in order to indicate the degree of anger of the Acholi people against central government. That, as anyone can see, was an open attempt to use the name of Acholi as a whole in order to promote their personal and group interests.⁵⁸⁷

⁵⁸⁵ GDA Box 542: Memorandum by the President, 23 March 1968 (points summarised).

⁵⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁸⁷ Ibid.

Obote's swift response was a clear indication of his government's sensitivity regarding accusations of tribalism. After all, his political rhetoric had always been about anti-tribalism, a slogan that he continually propagated during his tenure as Prime Minister and President.⁵⁸⁸ However, Obote did not just stop at a written response. A month after his memorandum against the Acholi Council was published he went about completely re-organising the Acholi District Administration, relieving those who had criticised him from their duties. Even UPC members were not spared. He then proceeded to re-appoint his long-time supporter Peter Oola back to his previous position as Secretary-General, replacing Mr Akera. These steps, he argued in *The Uganda Argus* were necessary because:

Some people held mistaken views about the role of the district council. They believed that they were separate from central government, an unfortunate consequence of colonial politics that allowed them to ignore the authority of the central government. The Acholi needed to understand that there should be no competition between the local administration and the Ugandan government and as such steps needed to be taken to remind them of this. The fact that council members felt that they could pass such a resolution under their own authority was an indication of the utter confusion reigning in the minds of the councillors.⁵⁸⁹

The reworking of the council was presented nationally as an attempt to rejuvenate Acholi, which was lagging behind economically, and needed new life injected into its administration. The President publically accused the council of failing to provide their constituents with roads and other services, while only being concerned with passing useless resolutions. Furthermore, he condemned clan and tribal rivalries that had separated the region between East and West and the constant attempt by council members and politicians to stir up hostilities between the Acholi and the Lango⁵⁹⁰

Many Acholi did not see it that way however, and supporters of the dismissed councilmen responded strongly against the President's actions.

⁵⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁸⁹ 'Acholi lagging behind: New leaders named' *The Uganda Argus*, 4 April 1968 (quotation paraphrased).

⁵⁹⁰ Ibid.

The following month the DP penned an anonymous memorandum to the Acholi people reiterating many of the allegations made by the council and accusing Obote of being a tribalist and acting unconstitutionally.⁵⁹¹ Utilising these regional hostilities, Acholi and Lango politicians proceeded to challenge each other during parliamentary debates.

All Acholi know that some years ago Acholi were promised a textile industry and that it would be in Gulu. This would have promoted wealth in Acholi and provided employment for school leavers . . . Okae a member of parliament and a Lango, stood up and said he was surprised [that such] a motion was allowed to be discussed in parliament since it was advocating development for a particular region and that this equated to tribalism. In fact, Okae argued, since Uganda had achieved independence the Lango had got nothing.⁵⁹²

The DP memorandum urged the peoples of Acholi to welcome as heroes those who had been dismissed, as they were being punished simply for standing up for the rights of their constituents.⁵⁹³ The condemnation levelled against Obote transcended all political lines, drawing in both UPC and DP supporters. Although many of the members of the six man delegation that had sought an audience with the President were predominately UPC supporters, such was the public support for the motion Acholi politicians argued that it should instead be considered as a delegation representing the Acholi people and not just UPC supporters.⁵⁹⁴ Those who remained in the Obote camp were continually harassed and accused of betrayal. There were open confrontations between Eric Lakidi, who was considered one of the architects of the council rebellion, and Peter Oola. In return Oola used his new position as Secretary-General to threaten pro-Lakidi members of the council that they were liable to lose their jobs if they continued to disregard department protocol.⁵⁹⁵ On their part, central government continued to target

⁵⁹¹ GDA Box 542: Memorandum from the DP office in Gulu to 'All Acholi People' April 1968
Received in the office of the DC, 1 May 1968.

⁵⁹² Ibid.

⁵⁹³ Ibid.

⁵⁹⁴ KDA: Intelligence Committee Minutes, 30 March 1968.

⁵⁹⁵ KDA: Intelligence Committee Minutes, July 1968.

DP meetings and gatherings were often dispersed with force.⁵⁹⁶ In Acholi, various complaints were made to the Police Commissioner and in some instances directly to the President himself, about the maltreatment of DP politicians at the hands of police in Acholi and within the local councils.⁵⁹⁷ In trying to centralise control of the country through military force, Obote's increasingly authoritarian rule served to alienate him internally in Acholi. As members of the ALG's political authority was challenged, Obote's Lango identity became a valuable tool used to diminish his credibility as a leader. As a consequence, the 'Northern' identity, presented largely by the Acholi and consumed by external observers as unified and unyielding, had by 1968 become internally politically fragmented.

Conclusion

Ugandan politics post-independence were characterised by the contest between the attempted creation of a unitary nationalist state and the politics of ethnonationalism, driven by local governments and Kingdoms. Uganda's post-colonial legacy emphasised the political and cultural importance of the locality and each ethnic group jealously guarded its territory. It was only by adopting more authoritarian mechanisms that Obote was able to challenge the authority of local governments. For Acholi politicians the 'Northern identity' proved a valuable tool for challenging the political aspirations of the Kabaka and his Kingdom, as political actors from opposing parties united in their support of the President. However, Obote's increasingly authoritarian rule also served to alienate him in Acholi. As the *Ocol's* authority in the locality was threatened, there emerged a more politicised and centralised Acholi ethnopolitical identity that dominated any regional affiliations. For Acholi soldiers, lack of employment opportunities in the locality meant that they were easy recruits for the Ugandan army. However, Obote's transition from reconciliatory to confrontational leader meant that Acholi and Northern

⁵⁹⁶ KDA: Intelligence Report: DP Meeting in Orom. 13 December 1969.

⁵⁹⁷ KDA: Letter from Atwoma Tiberio Okeny, National Organiser of the DP to the President of Uganda, 19 February 1969.

soldiers became the face of military oppression, dictatorship and state violence, reinforcing the colonial stereotype of the 'martial race'.

Educated and uneducated Acholi migrants in the South retained the connection to the locality through marriage, migratory trips home and language. Acholi civil servants and politicians rejected Luganda, choosing instead to speak the language of the colonisers, of detribalisation, and of the 'Ocols'. Yet in the locality, the *Ocols* who had waited for so long to gain political control of the ALG, immediately started to engage in the politics of the belly, strengthening patron networks at the expense of the *Lawinos*. For the *Ocols* the material rewards drawn from access to political power, fed administrative and political rivalries, which stunted the function of the Acholi District Administration. For the *Lawinos*, restrictions on social mobility and access to political power and material resources kept them largely contained within the client network. Thus the symbiotic relationship between the *Ocols* and the *Lawinos* continued, with the *Ocols* reliant on the *Lawinos* to legitimise their claim to power, whilst the *Lawinos*, unable to speak the language of national politics were reliant on the *Ocols* to take their political grievances to the centre. Once again, the political interplay within Acholi during the first decade of independence emphasised the political and cultural importance of the locality.

5.0. Acholi in the 1970s: *The Politics of Survival?*

When Amin took over I thought that it was not real. I did not believe it. After all he was from a small tribe.⁵⁹⁸

There is no denying that Amin's regime was brutal, and the body of literature on his dictatorial rule tends to reflect this violent legacy.⁵⁹⁹ This has contributed to a historical narrative of unbridled violence, destitution and a state in suspension, placing the emphasis on *what* Amin did to Ugandans while paying little attention to *how* Ugandans adapted, survived and lived under his rule.⁶⁰⁰ For the Acholi, historical narratives of Amin's rule have continually emphasised the violence perpetrated against the peoples of the region. Acholi dominance in the army, as well as their perceived political adherence to Obote, immediately placed them at odds with the new regime, making them viable political target for Amin. Consequently, there was an instant migration of prominent Acholi politicians and soldiers, with many self-exiling in fear of their lives, while others fled to Tanzania and Sudan to join the anti-government rebel groups.⁶⁰¹ However, the vast majority of Acholi remained in Uganda and continued with their day-to-day lives. This demographic have largely been ignored by existing histories of the period. They are the people who did not have the capital to escape, and whose memories and experiences of living in Idi Amin's Uganda are often marginalised in favour of a narrative from the 'big men'. However, what the

⁵⁹⁸ (F/M) NAU: interview with retired civil servant, Gulu Town Centre, 15 July 2012

⁵⁹⁹ H. Kyemba, *State of Blood: The Inside Story of Idi Amin* (New York: Putnam Publishing Group, 1977); T.P Melady and M. B. Melady, *Idi Amin Dada: Hitler in Africa* (Kansas City: Sheed Andrews & McMeel, 1977); W. Kato, *Escape from Idi Amin's Slaughterhouse* (London: Quartet Books, 1989); M. Leopold, *Idi Amin Dada: Africa's Icon of Evil* (New Haven: Yale University Press 2013).

⁶⁰⁰ Woodward, 'Ambiguous Amin.' *African Affairs*, Vol. 77, No. 307 (1978), 153-164; A. Southall, 'General Amin and the Coup: Great man or Historical Inevitability?' *Journal of Modern African Studies*, Vol. 13 No. 1 (1975), 85-105.

⁶⁰¹ GDA Box 541: Letter from the Minister of Provincial Administration to all DCs, 14 November 1973; GDA Box 541: Letter from W.B. Masolo, Tsetse Officer Spray Unit to Senior Tsetse Officer Acholi/Karamoja, April 1971.

district archives in Gulu and Kitgum show is that whilst experiences in the region were characterised by fear, constant surveillance and economic hardships, the politics of identity still continued.

The violent and repressive nature of Ugandan politics in the 1970s and the lack of political parties to channel local grievances through the lens of 'political tribalism' meant that political activity within Acholi became even more focused on the locality. The flight to the villages by migrants and the exile of local political power brokers served to weaken the connection between Acholi and the rest of Uganda politically, isolating the peoples of the region while emphasising their connection to their ancestral land. Migration back to the homestead, combined with increased competition for jobs in the district contributed to the social, political and economic tensions in the locality. Debates regarding clan, religious and gender identities increased, as cultural and religious identities provided a safer means for expressing political grievances in absence of formal party politics.

The *Oco/s*, with their high political and economic profiles, immediately began to engage in the politics of survival, with some self-exiling to avoid Amin's retribution. More significantly, the displacement of the local politicians and their patrons from formal politics allowed chiefs to regain control of the locality. The government sanctioned politicisation and militarisation of chiefly roles fragmented communal discourses as clan identities came to the forefront, further emphasising internal allegiances to individual chiefs. As it was no longer safe to engage in 'political tribalism' externally, the locality provided a relatively safe haven from the violence being perpetrated by the state apparatus. Amin's rule was about more than purging ethnic opponents; it was about opportunism, presenting a shift in the hierarchy of power contenders in the locality. The social contract between the *Oco/s* and the *Lawinos* was altered and within this eight-year period we see the *Lawinos* moving closer to the source of power as they were forced to speak directly to the 'big man'. Thus this chapter will seek to look at how the Acholi coped and adapted to a dictatorship and ask the question whether, Uganda under Amin really was 'unhinged' or a state in suspension.⁶⁰²

⁶⁰² D.A. Low, 'Uganda Unhinged' *International Affairs*, Vol. 49, No. 2 (1973), 219-228.

5.1. The fall of the *Ocols*

Obote's increasingly dictatorial rule inevitably resulted in widespread national disillusionment with the UPC regime. By 1970, this disaffection had permeated the top echelons of the Ugandan army corps. Following his rapid promotion during the 1960s, the ambitious Army Commander Idi Amin had by 1971 built up a substantial amount of military support, particularly from tribal groups from West Nile, whom he had been steadily recruiting and training during the 1960s. By the time Obote tried to counter Amin's growing control of the army, it was already too late. While Obote was attending a summit in Singapore, Amin capitalised on the President's absence by successfully staging a military coup on the 25 January 1971.⁶⁰³

A.B. Kasozi refers to the rule of Idi Amin from 1971 to 1979 as being shaped by the 'politics of survival.'⁶⁰⁴ In his attempt to consolidate power, Amin used fear and intimidation to subdue the population. He continued to manipulate religious and ethnic cleavages in Uganda, and embarked on a systematic campaign to eliminate political and military rivals to ensure his regimes survival.

Genocide is not the word for Amin's rule; it was far more chaotic than that. He simply killed or caused to be killed those who got in his way, while allowing his troops considerable licence to carry out personal grudges and further their economic aims.⁶⁰⁵

During his eight-year rule it is estimated that 80,000 to 300,000 Ugandans were killed.⁶⁰⁶ 'Amin used violence more openly and certainly more brutally than his predecessors.'⁶⁰⁷ Amin's rule was further characterised by disruptive economic policies that infamously saw the expulsion of 50,000 Ugandan

⁶⁰³ Mutibwa, *Uganda Since Independence*, 81.

⁶⁰⁴ Kasozi, *The Social origins of violence in Uganda*, 104.

⁶⁰⁵ M. Leopold, 'Sex, Violence and history in the lives of Idi Amin: Postcolonial Masculinity as masquerade' *Journal of Postcolonial Writing*, Vol. 45, No. 3 (2009), 321-330.

⁶⁰⁶ Figures vary dramatically in all the sources and to date there is still not a substantiated number of how many Ugandans died during Amin's rule although they tend fall within these estimations.

⁶⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 104-116.

Asians, bringing Uganda to the brink of economic collapse. 'Within three months of coming into power Amin had suspended all democratic rights' and continued his predecessor's ban on all political parties.⁶⁰⁸ This period is still considered to be one of the darkest in Ugandan history.

Whilst the premise of this chapter is not to reiterate the brutality of Amin's military regime, it is still important to convey how the Acholi adapted to an environment driven by the 'political economy of death' and violence, which was both implied and enacted.⁶⁰⁹ From the moment that the army staged the coup, Amin was on the defensive.⁶¹⁰ He had to face external threats from Obote and his supporters who were exiled in Tanzania and Sudan plotting his downfall. Uganda was placed in a heightened state of alert as army patrols increased around the Tanzanian and Sudanese borders, resulting in a dramatic increase of defence expenditure.⁶¹¹ As discussed in the previous chapter, the 'Northern' and 'martial' identities were instrumental in linking Obote to the Acholi both internally and externally. This proved dangerous in Amin's Uganda as the Acholi and the Lango were instantly associated with the overthrown regime. All that was wrong with Obote became all that was wrong with the Acholi and the Lango. The Baganda blamed them for the exile and death of their King, while Amin was mistrustful of them because of their dominance in the army.

The first period of Amin's direct retribution against prominent Northerners came in 1972 following an unsuccessful attempt to invade

⁶⁰⁸ J. Okuku, *Ethnicity, State, Power and the Democratisation Process in Uganda* (Uppsala: Nordic African Institute, 2002), 21; Kasozi, *The Social Origins of Violence*, 115.

⁶⁰⁹ Mbembe, *On the Postcolony*, 115. There is an implicit tension between Mbembe's analysis of 'necropolitics', 'the subjugation of life to the power of death' and the politics of survival in Acholi during this period. Whilst the fear of death permeated the Acholi conscious, the peoples of the region still found various avenues to prosecute individual and political agency as they engaged in the politics of survival. This indicates that they were not completely subjugated to state control and its mechanisms of inflicting death and violence. See: A. Mbembe, 'Necropolitics' *Public Culture*, Vol. 15, No. 1, (2003), 11-40.

⁶¹⁰ For a more detailed analysis on the military takeover see, Mutibwa, *Uganda Since Independence*, 71-97; Kasozi, *The Social Origins of Violence in Uganda*, chapters 4&5.

⁶¹¹ UNA/E Box 8 Ref 28: Uganda's financial situation, Budget Review 1971/72 (secret) Agenda for cabinet meeting due to be held on 5 October 1971.

Uganda by Obote's supporters from their base in Tanzania. This added to Amin's growing paranoia regarding internal and external subversive activity, and he actively began to purge government and the military of any suspected dissidents particularly those from Acholi and Lango. Prominent politicians who had dared to remain in the country such as the former Minister of Labour Eric Lakidi were summoned to Kampala and incarcerated out of fear that they would encourage anti-government activities.⁶¹² The reaction to invasion in Acholi reflected the uneasy atmosphere in the region. When the news regarding the invasion reached Acholi, district reports described an air of euphoria and jubilant celebrations. However, when they learnt that the Ugandan Army had driven Obote's troops back to Tanzania, 'the people became despondent.'⁶¹³ Within a few days of the failed counter-coup, at least ten prominent civil servants, chiefs and businessmen in the region had 'disappeared' from their homes, believed to have escaped into exile.⁶¹⁴

It was not simply the fear of violence that drove Amin's unpopularity among the Acholi. F.J. Ravenhill argues that from the onset of the military dictatorship there could be no doubt as to Amin's genuine popularity among large sectors of the ordinary Ugandans. Because he was an ordinary man with little schooling, the common man could identify more with him than the intellectual leaders who had been educated abroad.⁶¹⁵ Undoubtedly, Amin received a considerable amount of support from the Baganda, where he was able to capitalise on the tensions between his predecessor and the Kingdom.⁶¹⁶ As Kasozi argues, 'The Baganda would have welcomed anyone who replaced Obote.'⁶¹⁷ In Acholi however, local political elites, were pushed into exile by the new regime through fear and/or force, and those who could not leave withdrew from political life. Even those who held prominent civil

⁶¹² KDA: Letter from DC of East Acholi to Permanent Secretary in the President's, Office, 2 September 1972.

⁶¹³ KDA: East Acholi District Intelligence Report October 1972.

⁶¹⁴ Ibid.

⁶¹⁵ F. J. Ravenhill, 'Military Rule in Uganda: The Politics of Survival' *African Studies Review*, Vol. 17, No. 1 (1974), 229-260.

⁶¹⁶ 'The army takes over' *The Uganda Argus*, 26 January 1971.

⁶¹⁷ Kasozi, *The Social Origins of Violence in Uganda*, 111.

service positions in the region retreated further from the towns to the villages: 'My father who was a chief judge in Gulu retired as soon as Amin came into power. He said he could not work under a military man. He left Gulu and went to Anaka to work on his farm.'⁶¹⁸

As the previous chapter demonstrated, Acholi politicians had previously used local and national political arenas to challenge Obote's authority, and while the relationship with the former President was often tumultuous it still adhered to certain established rules of political engagement. These rules recognised social, political and economic hierarchy, and were centred on a certain degree of local political autonomy. Under this political contract, Obote and the Acholi were able to bargain and share commodities, while central government deterred 'competitors from overplaying their hand and endangering state control.'⁶¹⁹ But, as in all matters regarding high politics, there were rules regarding participants. Those who sought to engage in politics at this level needed certain credentials if they were to be taken seriously by their peers. Within the Acholi polity, these credentials could be derived from education, gerontocratic authority, chiefly power as well as monetary capital. Those who had these credentials were elevated to power by the masses through the power structures that governed life in Acholi. Amin however did not adhere to these rules: he lacked education, came from a small tribe, and had no connection to royalty. Consequently although the *Oco/s* publically declared their support for the new President, privately there was an intellectual and ethnic mistrust of Amin. Firstly, the Kakwa tribe to which he belonged was small and had played a negligible part in Ugandan national politics. How, then could a man of no education and no connection to no familial connections to political authority, become President of Uganda? In this regard, Amin's regime unbalanced the relationships between high and low political structures.⁶²⁰

Amin did not care about education. His ministers were very junior people. My secretary became my boss at the time because she was

⁶¹⁸ (IF/M) NAU: Interview with retired civil servant, Gulu, 9 June 2012.

⁶¹⁹ Lonsdale, 'Political Tribalism and Moral ethnicity', 76.

⁶²⁰ *Ibid.*

his friend. Can you imagine? He employed anyone he liked. One day she was serving food; he looked at her and decided there and then that she would be promoted. This woman had no qualifications for the job.⁶²¹

Furthermore, the historic marginalisation of Acholi economically in comparison to the South meant that the acquisition of education had become one of the only means to progress economically and socially. Consequently, social prestige was placed highly by the Acholi on the acquisition of formal education. 'When you are educated and if you have been to study away you are treated like a King when you came back to the villages. They look at you differently as if you are more important than them.'⁶²² As such, p'Bitek's character of Lawino, the village wife who despised her husband's Western education and viewed it as a threat to Acholi traditional practices, is an unrealistic depiction of the normative relationship between the educated and the uneducated in Acholi. The internal contestations between these two groups did not take place because the latter resented the other. Firstly, the relationship was based on the redistribution of resources through the reciprocity of privilege. The *Lawinos* encouraged the educated *Ocols* to access and occupy positions of power that they were unable to. They hoped that the privileges and resources obtained from these high-ranking positions would be redistributed back to them.⁶²³ Thus the internal contest was derived from the *Lawinos* wanting to access the commodities that came with being an educated Acholi in Uganda. Similarly, because of the prominence of ethno-politics in the centre, the local politicians needed to maintain effective connections to the locality to bolster their legitimacy. Within these structures of legitimate political authority, Amin did not appeal to the 'common' Acholi because he did not represent what many of them aspired to be. He was an outsider, both ethnically and politically. He was not like Obote, drawn from the political elite who had gained their political education at district level before moving to the national platform. Nor was he the son of a prominent King or

⁶²¹ (IF/M) NAU: Interview with retired civil servant, Gulu, 9 June 2012

⁶²² (F/M) AU: interview with UPC politician, Kampala, 4 February 2012.

⁶²³ K. Davis, *Human Society*, (New York: Macmillan Co, 1949), 367; G. E. Lenski, *Power and Privilege: A Theory of Social Stratification* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1966).

chief. His lack of education and cultural prestige, rather than being an appeal to the 'common man', actually served to diminish his credibility as leader and a politician on the local stage.

Publically there remained an unspoken tension between the Acholi and Amin's regime, as each side represented a risk to the other. The Acholi's perceived allegiance to Obote in Amin's view meant that in his capacity as President he had to play a balancing game. Firstly, Amin initially needed to reassure the Acholi that his regime would not intentionally victimise the peoples of the region in revenge for the sins of his predecessor. Seven months after the coup Amin embarked on a tour of the North. Its main premise was to encourage the people to stand behind him and not to be fearful. He sought to legitimise his own claim to power by stressing that without the Acholi he would not be where he was now, as they were the ones who recommended him for promotion in the army. Amin worked to ensure that that district administrators explained to populace the necessity for the military coup.⁶²⁴ Three months after the take-over, the Acholi District Team and Planning Committee held a meeting to discuss some of these points. Unlike the previous minutes prior to the military takeover, this particular one reads as political manifesto for the government, and it is highly probable that officials in central government had prepared the contents. The topics discussed had little to do with matters regarding the day-to-day workings of the local councils, but were instead a list of justifications for a military takeover.⁶²⁵ Amin also recognised the importance of manipulating the existing tensions between the Acholi and the Lango and as such the committee were reminded of Obote's 'favouritism' towards the Lango. During a gathering to welcome the new President in Padibe, East Acholi, Amin reiterated that even though Obote was from the North, he still had not trusted the Acholi.⁶²⁶ It was made clear that there should be no sympathy for the former regime, as it had done nothing to help the peoples of the region. The minutes of the meetings show a marked change in the content of the discussions by the Acholi administrators and

⁶²⁴ KDA: Minutes of Acholi District Team and Planning Committee 9 March 1971.

⁶²⁵ Ibid.

⁶²⁶ 'President warns refugees' *The Uganda Argus*, 24 September 1971.

councilmen. Previous council meetings were characterised with heated debates and participants had not pulled any punches when it came to criticising Obote or his government. They were not inhibited in voicing their opinions or bringing to light any disagreements. However, this meeting was merely a formality and exercise to praise Amin. This was indication of the power and fear that Amin was already creating at the district level. It was a sign that the district councils would no longer be a forum for debate and political negotiations.

Amin's tour of the North had another more ominous motivation. Geographically, the Acholi border with southern Sudan served as an entry point for some of Obote's soldiers. The Acholi were warned not to join the guerrillas and that anybody suspected of being a rebel would be punished. The people of Padibe were asked to tell any of their 'brothers and sisters' who had run away to Sudan and Tanzania after the military coup to come back home 'and report to the police as the government would not do them any harm.'⁶²⁷ Publically Amin could not admit his immediate distrust of the Acholi, as his policy in the beginning was to pursue a charm offensive by endearing himself to the peoples of the region. Privately, given the proliferation of intelligence reports that outlined the hostility in the region towards his Presidency, and the number of Acholi that were 'self-exiling', Amin must have understood the difficulties in engaging in a battle for hearts and minds of the Acholi.

An indication of the number of Acholi and other Ugandans leaving the country was the implementation of the missing person's decree brought into effect in 1973. Dependents of missing persons were instructed to wait for six months before they applied for the missing relative's estate to be administered.⁶²⁸ This was a tactical ploy by the government as it coerced the families to formally report their relatives missing before they could receive money for their estate. If they did not, the properties remained under government ownership. Added to this, it was a direct attack on civil servants

⁶²⁷ Ibid.

⁶²⁸ GDA Box 541: Letter from the Minister of Provincial Administration to all the DCs, 14 November 1973.

and soldiers who had fled Uganda. Family members left behind who were occupying government properties in place of the missing person were expected to vacate the property within three months of the relative being posted as missing.⁶²⁹ The government used the decree to help compile a list of missing persons to be designated as enemies of the state, as under the regime flight became an indication of one's treason. In Acholi, movement out of the districts was frequently reported in intelligence reports, indicating that it was not merely high-profile politicians and soldiers who were 'self-exiling.' In April 1971 nine workers listed as missing from a camp-spraying unit were suspected to have fled to Sudan. Another fourteen workers had not reported to their jobs in Akweri camp. In the month of April 1971 eighty-six workers were unaccounted for with the most missing people registered in, Kilak, Patiko and Chua, all of which were in East Acholi directly bordering South Sudan.⁶³⁰ These intelligence reports were distributed secretly at the top level of government and there is no indication to suggest that they were merely a façade by the regime to try and cover up those who had been illegally detained or murdered by state.

The distribution of local political power dramatically changed under Amin's government. High profile local politicians were now considered enemies of the state. In Obote's regime, particularly before 1966, 'the compromise guaranteeing the welfare of the middle classes and administrative elites had made it possible to ensure the survival of the post-colonial state and provide it with authentically indigenous roots.'⁶³¹ Following the deposition of the Kabaka and the installation of one-party rule, this 'compromise' was inevitably renegotiated. Amin's regime however further diminished the avenue in which these negotiations took place. The Acholi political and administrative elite represented all that Amin was afraid of, as they were seen to be the political mouthpiece of the former regime and could potentially mobilise the Acholi populace against the military government. They had been the political face of the Acholi during Obote's presidency and were

⁶²⁹ Ibid.

⁶³⁰ GDA Box 541: Letter from W.B Masolo, Tsetse Officer Spray Unit to Senior Tsetse Officer Acholi/Karamoja , April 1971; KDA: East Acholi District Intelligence Report January 1972.

⁶³¹ Mbembe, *On the Postcolony*, 51.

immediately marked out as potential collaborators with the rebels groups in Sudan and Tanzania. As one former soldier under Obote recounted, 'Amin only killed those in Kampala, if you had a big belly then you were killed.'⁶³² Those that 'dressed well and spoke Luo' in Kampala were placing themselves at risk.⁶³³ The 'big belly' reference can be viewed symbolically and evidentially as a two-side analogy. Firstly, it offers insight into how the Acholi non-political actor viewed the 'big men' or in this case the *Oco/s*. These were the men, as Bayart argues, who controlled the local and national political apparatus and made themselves powerful and rich at the expense of the masses by manipulating and creating networks rooted in the politics of clientalism and patronage, largely sanctioned by the state.⁶³⁴ They could be visually identified through the clothes that they wore, where they ate, and whom they conversed with. In some instances their physical size betrayed their status, as the more power and money you had, the more food you could buy and consume, creating the physical and symbolic 'big belly'. In Amin's Uganda it became so that 'if you showed that you were somebody you would be killed.'⁶³⁵ In some instances Acholi politicians who had been living in Kampala would flee back to the villages in fear of the lives only to be followed and arrested, although family members without their own political profiles were often spared. The government believed that those who did not have a 'big belly' had little involvement or interest in the negotiations of high politics and as such they were deemed to be relatively harmless.⁶³⁶ The fall of the *Oco/s* meant that local Acholi politicians who had utilised the district councils to bargain for power were marginalised, exiled or executed. Those who remained would find that their basic rights, such as the freedom of movement and political engagement to be severely restricted.

⁶³² (IF/M) NAU: Interview with private security guard, Kitgum Town centre, 4 June 2012.

⁶³³ (IF/M) NAU: Interview with local business owner, Gulu, 18 June 2012.

⁶³⁴ Bayart, *The State in Africa*; Mbembe, *On the Postcolony*, 50-51

⁶³⁵ (F/M) AU: Interview with local youth leader, Langol-Nwoya District, 15 July 2012

⁶³⁶ KDA: Kitgum District Intelligence 1974-1976; Interviews, Gulu, Kampala, Kitgum, Entebbe, London 2012-13.

5.2. State Surveillance and the Rule of Fear

Immediately after the coup d'état, Amin was mindful to distance himself from the authoritarian rule of Obote, and stressed in the national media that the new military government was simply a transitional one that would allow Ugandans to regroup and recover before democratic elections could take place.⁶³⁷ But he faced an uphill battle to deliver on this promise, not only because of the ethnic tensions in Uganda, but also the growing economic crisis, something that his predecessor had failed to deal with. Uganda was at this time facing its most serious financial crisis since independence, with a national debt of nearly three hundred million shillings.⁶³⁸ From September 1970 the balance of payments were in a constant deficit and the reserve levels were running dangerously low. The country was saddled with heavy public debt repayments for loans acquisitioned from abroad. A drought had jeopardised the main agricultural exports, particularly coffee, whilst regional instability in East Africa meant that the prospects of future trade were threatened. The Finance Minister E.B. Wakhweya addressed the cabinet immediately after the coup warning them of the dismal financial situation: 'I would like to inform my colleagues that the government has by now utilised to the very maximum of all the short term borrowing facilities.'⁶³⁹ The Minister recommended that the only way to prevent an economic collapse would be to drastically decrease defence expenditure. However, he conceded that even if the defence budget were cut by fifty per cent, there would still be a deficit of 100 million Ugandan shillings. Although aware of the economic state of the country, due to the security situation, Amin actually went on to spend double the amount his predecessor had spent on defence, rather than heeding Wakhweya's advice.⁶⁴⁰

⁶³⁷ 'The Army takes over', *The Uganda Argus*, 26 January 1971.

⁶³⁸ UNA/E Box 8 Ref 28: 'Uganda's financial situation Budget review 1971/72 (secret) Agenda for cabinet meeting due to be held on 5 October 1971.

⁶³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁶⁴⁰ Kasozi, *The Social Origins of Violence in Uganda*, 111.

Amin also wanted to appear presidential. He was not an educated man nor could he claim to have Obote's extensive political experience.⁶⁴¹ To compensate, and create a façade of legitimacy he spent a large amount of money on cars, residencies and lavish ceremonies. When the Finance Minister was advocating spending cuts, Amin requested one million shillings to buy Mercedes-Benzes for all his ministers and a further nine million on personal security units.⁶⁴² Soldiers loyal to the regime were rewarded with financial incentives and property, and a large amount of money was spent on building new barracks. Army personnel became the main beneficiaries from the expulsion of the Ugandan Asians in 1972 as they were given first priority in auctions of Asian property and cars property.⁶⁴³ To ensure absolute loyalty from his ministers and soldiers, Amin's rule, just like his predecessors, became dependent on the distribution of material benefits to feed the patron client networks.⁶⁴⁴ Amin used material and financial incentives to 'induce unconditional submission' among the army corps, yet these resources did not and could not be extended to wider populace.⁶⁴⁵ Consequently, authoritarianism, violence and military coercion served as a mechanism to ensure ordinary Ugandans remained obedient.

Amin's initial purge of the army corps of Acholi and Lango was brutal and violent.

In March 1971 more than thirty Lango/Acholi soldiers were dynamited at Makindye Barracks. On 22 July 1971 about 150-500 Acholi and Lango from Simba Battalion, Mbarara were herded into trucks, taken to an isolation ranch, and gunned down. Further massacres of these

⁶⁴¹ Amin's insecurity regarding his lack of education is evident from the numerous titles he bestowed on himself. Some of these titles included a CBE, Victoria Cross, and a Military Cross. He conferred on himself a Doctorate from Makerere University, and asked to be referred to as 'President for Life, Field Marshal Al Hadji Doctor Idi Amin Dada.'

⁶⁴² UNA/E Box 8 Ref 28: 'Uganda's financial situation Budget review 1971/72 (secret) Agenda for cabinet meeting due to be held on the 5 October 1971.

⁶⁴³ Ravenhill, 'Military Rule in Uganda, 229-260.

⁶⁴⁴ Berman, Dickson Eyoh, Kymlicka, *Ethnicity & Democracy in Africa*, 5

⁶⁴⁵ Mbembe, *On the Postcolony*, 42.

ethnic groups occurred at military barracks at Massindi, Soroti and Kitgum.⁶⁴⁶

A year after the military coup Amin reorganised the army corps, retiring twenty-two senior officers, many of whom were from the North and suspected of remaining loyal to Obote.⁶⁴⁷ By the mid-1970s it was estimated that only a third of the pre-coup army remained and around ten thousand new recruits had been incorporated into the Ugandan army, mainly from Amin's home region of the West Nile.⁶⁴⁸ Following in the footsteps of his predecessor, Amin created his own secret intelligence units, replacing the GSU with the State Research Bureau (SRB) in November 1971 whilst the Special Force Unit (SFU) replaced the Public Safety Unit (PSU) in 1972. The Anti-Smuggling Bureau was created circa 1972-3 in response to the worsening economic situation and tasked with targeting 'successful businessmen accused of smuggling and hoarding.'⁶⁴⁹ The intelligence units, particularly the SRB, became infamous for their brutality in dealing with whomever its members designated as a suspected dissident.

The external threat from Obote and his supporters was instrumental in the increase of military expenditure and reinforced Amin's belief that authoritarian rule was a necessity to contend with any potential internal and external challenges to his military government.⁶⁵⁰ Along the Acholi and South Sudan border continuous reports of robbing, extortion, killings, as well as the illegal movements of arms and food across the border to Sudan, were noted by intelligence reports and local chiefs. These reports were more prominent

⁶⁴⁶ Kasozi, *The Social Origins of Violence in Uganda*, 111; 'Twelve are sentenced to death in military tribunal accused of treason' *The Voice of Uganda*, 6 September 1977.

⁶⁴⁷ UNA/E: Box 7 Ref 27: Letter from the President's Office to all Permanent Secretaries and all heads of departments, 23 May 1972.

⁶⁴⁸ Ravenhill, 'Military Rule in Uganda', 241.

⁶⁴⁹ Kasozi, *The Social Origins of Violence in Uganda*, 113.

⁶⁵⁰ Give readers correct Info' *The Uganda Argus*, 12 September 1971. UNA/E: Box 8, Ref 20: Minutes of the Meeting between Ministers and DC's held in the Cabinet Library on the 28 April 1971.

during the first two years following Amin's takeover.⁶⁵¹ The conflicts around the border can be attributed to remnants of Obote's supporters fleeing the country as well as more opportunistic individuals taking advantage of the immediate political and military post-coup chaos. The activities around the border were also an indication that at this time at least, the government did not have absolute military control in Acholi. An indication that movement to and from southern Sudan was easier than would have been expected given the increased security measures, can be found in a report written by the DC of East Acholi in 1972. Sudanese migrants who had legally settled in Uganda often crossed back across the border to go and visit their relatives. The DC in Kitgum commented that it was sometimes hard to differentiate between those who were permanent residents of Uganda and those who had crossed the border illegally. Added to this were clashes between Sudanese refugees and local Acholi clans, which continued to inflame already contentious situation. In 1972 a fight over cattle broke out between Lotoku tribesmen from Sudan around Kitgum resulting in three serious injuries and fifty arrests. The quarrel between the two sides became so violent that around 500 Sudanese refugees fled to the local police station for protection, while the rest simply crossed the border back to their villages.⁶⁵² The situation around the border was made worse because many of the chiefs and local residents who were ordered to report anyone suspected of being an 'illegal' entrant and those harbouring them, were not doing so because they feared repercussions from intelligence units for allowing illegal entry into Ugandan territory. More worrying for the regime was that the majority of those who had been apprehended were found to be in possession of illegal firearms.⁶⁵³ Food supplies were being smuggled across the bordering counties of Atyak and Palabek without much hindrance from the local population, indicating that there was local support for Obote's rebel movement.⁶⁵⁴ The families who remained awaited their relatives' return

⁶⁵¹ KDA: Acholi District Intelligence Report January 1972; GDA Box: 541: Security Report from County Chief of Kilak to DC East Acholi, 14 December 1971.

⁶⁵² KDA: East Acholi District Intelligence Report, December 1972.

⁶⁵³ KDA: Acholi District Intelligence Report, January 1972.

⁶⁵⁴ KDA: Acholi District Intelligence Report January 1972; GDA Box: 541: Security Report from County Chief of Kilak to DC East Acholi, 4 December 1971.

and did all that they could to support those in exile. Amin could no more cut these familial and kin ties than he could persuade the Acholi that he had their best interests at heart.

Permission had to be asked in writing to travel in and out of the district to any other counties in the region. Local chiefs were instructed to send fortnightly reports to the DC 'covering all aspects of events in their areas, especially wrongful ones', updating security reports and naming suspected subversives.⁶⁵⁵ Rather than being an indication of the strength of government surveillance, these instructions were more indicative of a weak state that was fearful of the potential subversive capabilities of its civilians. All parish chiefs were instructed to immediately hand over a full list of people living in their area who were Tanzanian nationals or had Tanzanian parentage, regardless of whether they were permanent residents of Uganda.⁶⁵⁶ Any unauthorised visits to neighbouring counties were to be immediately reported to the DC:

Today I will again reiterate the points I made on my safari. These points are very important and anybody who does not follow them is committing a grave offence punishable without mercy. Anybody who wishes to go on a journey must make a report to my office as to where he is going, how long for, what he is going to do and whether the purpose of the journey is true or false will then have to be ascertained. The Jago, introducing the person to the authorities concerned, will issue them with a letter of permission. The rwot kweri (cultivation team headman) must immediately report to my office any visitors that come into the area. The visitors must be asked why they are there and where they will be staying, if they do not make clear these answers they should immediately be arrested and brought to me so that I can report them to the police. Every week the rwot kweri must make two reports to the mukungu (parish chief) concerning absentees and one to me to transfer to the county chief. When the Jago (community leader) is farming the villages roll calls shall be made to make sure that everybody is present. Nobody is allowed to go to the market place without the intention of selling or buying goods.⁶⁵⁷

⁶⁵⁵ KDA: Letter from Jago of Padibe to all Wakungu Chiefs, rwodi kweri in Padibe Division. 24 May 1971; KDA File: DEC/1B 'Applications for Permission to Leave the District' 1972-1973.

⁶⁵⁶ GDA Box 541: Letter from County Chief of Nwoya to all Jagi, 26 February 1975.

⁶⁵⁷ KDA: Letter from Jago of Padibe to all Wakungu Chiefs, rwodi kweri in Padibe Division. 24 May 1971 (quotation paraphrased).

Adopting the language and rhetoric of central government, county and sub-county chiefs sent similar instructions to all parish chiefs and community leaders in the region. Herbst argues that 'states are only viable if they are able to control the territory defined in their borders. Control is assured by developing an infrastructure to broadcast power and by gaining loyalty of citizens.'⁶⁵⁸ Without effective local institutions, loyalty from the peoples of Acholi and the paucity of economic resources to administer power and authority through formal channels, Amin resorted to violence and fear to ensure civil obedience. State surveillance executed by units such as the SRB and PSU became the means by which Amin could in Acholi, survey, coerce and control the Acholi population through the fear of violent retribution and/or detention:

These were the principle organs which were responsible for the kidnapping and liquidation of countless Ugandans at all levels of society, and they operated on unlimited budgets both within and outside the country. These, unlike Amin's army, recruited their personnel from all areas of Uganda and their informers were literally to be found everywhere as their license to kill, main, detain or extort was not subject to any restrictions.⁶⁵⁹

Thus, the borders became prison walls for those who did not have the means of escape and the Acholi became the 'inmates,' used to gather information and coerced to act as state collaborators.⁶⁶⁰ The threat of violence, the constant presence of uniformed personnel and the fear of detention at any given time because of often faulty or manipulated intelligence reports meant that Acholi became a region of direct and indirect terror. The latter was mediated through what Michael Taussig describes as 'the coils of rumour, gossip, story, and chit-chat where ideology and ideas become emotionally powerful and enter into active and social circulation and meaningful

⁶⁵⁸ J. Herbst, *States and Power in Africa: Comparative Lessons in Authority* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2000), 3

⁶⁵⁹ Karugire, *The Roots of Instability in Uganda*, 79.

⁶⁶⁰ M. Foucault, *Discipline and Punishment*.

existence.⁶⁶¹ On the national stage, Amin and his security units became the representation of death, fear and direct violence, perpetuated through public executions, 'disappearances' and mass killings with bodies dumped for public view.⁶⁶² Massacres of soldiers took place in barracks in Masindi, Soroti and Kitgum, with further of purges in Lango and Acholi districts in 1973 and 1977 specifically targeting Acholi elites.⁶⁶³ The arrest and sometimes public execution of high profile figures such as Bishop Benedicto Kiwanuka in 1972, and author Byron Kawada and Archbishop Janani Jakaliya Luwum, in 1977 fed into the emerging persona of the violent tyrant in the national conscious.⁶⁶⁴ In Acholi, the coils of 'rumour, gossip and chit-chat' pertaining to the military regime created a self-perpetuating political climate creating a 'culture of terror and a space of death.'⁶⁶⁵ Consequently, for the populace in Uganda life became consumed by the fear of what was being done and what could be done if one was accused of being a subversive.

In Acholi, fear was reinforced through surveillance, with the most visible level involving the police and army personnel monitoring suspected subversive activities. These soldiers were outwardly visible and their role was clearly understood by the Acholi who encountered them. They wore the uniforms and badges of the state and they became the key representatives of state control and violence. They were soon seen as 'Amin's soldiers', an identification with the personal office of the presidency that had not existed in the region during Obote's presidency.⁶⁶⁶ While this was due primarily to the replacement of Acholi and Lango of top army officials with Amin's own recruits, in part it also had a lot to do with the perceived illegitimacy of the soldiers and their increasing authoritarian activities in Acholi. Army personnel

⁶⁶¹ M. Taussig, 'Culture of Terror, Space of Death. Roger Casement's Putumayo Report and the Explanation of Torture' *Comparative Studies in Society and History* Vol. 26 No.3 (1984), 464.

⁶⁶² Kasozi, *The Social Origins of Violence*, 121

⁶⁶³ Ibid; Branch, *Displacing Human Rights*, 73.

⁶⁶⁴ Kasozi, *The Social Origins of Violence in Uganda*, 116.

⁶⁶⁵ M. Taussig, *Shamanism, Colonialism and the Wild Man: A Study in Terror and Healing* (Chicago & London: University of Chicago Press, 1986).

⁶⁶⁶ Formal and informal interviews, Entebbe, Kitgum, Kampala Gulu, December 2011- August 2012.

were often sent into the villages to arrest suspected spies. The levels of arrests and detentions increased so much that by 1973 the district treasurer for East Acholi commented on the increasing financial strains of feeding central government remand prisoners who were being detained in the locality.⁶⁶⁷ As fear of the men in uniforms grew it became progressively more difficult to travel around freely, even for simple tasks like collecting firewood. In some instances families who were hiding a wanted person would send scouts into trading centres to check if there were any soldiers present before going to sell goods.⁶⁶⁸ Soldiers in Acholi came to be the embodiment of state violence, to be feared, obeyed and avoided if possible.

Although it is estimated that around two-thirds of the pre-coup army was eventually replaced, interviews in the region show that there were still a few Acholi soldiers left within the Uganda army.⁶⁶⁹ Archival documents offer little insight into their treatment or motivations, but interviews in the region suggest that for those who remained, it became a 'catch-22' situation. In this instance, there needs to be a differentiation between politically minded career soldiers, and low ranking army recruits. The latter, restricted by familial and financial ties, stayed behind and continued with their jobs. As one former Acholi soldier under Amin recounted, 'I had a large family. At that time I had three wives and eleven children, I still needed to work to send them to school and provide food for them. Yes things were dangerous under Amin, but as long as you kept yourself clean, you could carry on.'⁶⁷⁰ Given the economic situation in the region, being a soldier under Amin gave recruits access to certain valuable commodities, particularly food. When a situation arose where food was not available the populace were sometimes instructed to feed the soldiers with their own supplies. In 1975 the county chief of Lamwo in East Acholi instructed all the sub-county and parish chiefs to inform their people that some army men who had been stationed at Madi Opei barracks to

⁶⁶⁷ MUL/AS GEA U/A8 (058)59: East Acholi District Admin: Accounts with Report and Opinion by J.A. Maiku Treasurer. 1973.

⁶⁶⁸ (F) AU: Interview with Acholi housewife, Omoro county, 30 May 2012

⁶⁶⁹ Kasozi, *The Social origins of Violence*, 111. There are no official figures for how many Acholi men remained serving in the army during Amin's regime.

⁶⁷⁰ (IF/M) NAU: Interview with private security guard, Kitgum Town centre, 4 June 2012.

'protect' them did not have enough food to eat. The parish chiefs were asked to go and collect chickens, cows and goats from the villages so that the soldiers could be fed.⁶⁷¹ Nonetheless, families were aware of the dangers of allowing their sons and daughters to join or remain in the army, and often discouraged them from doing so:

None of my brothers joined the army; my father discouraged us because of the dangers. But even when Amin was in power, many of my friends still joined. Nobody hated them, after all when you are in the army you are just commanded and have to do what you are told. You don't have any independent thinking. We all understood that this was the case.⁶⁷²

The situation was not as black and white as simply stating that the army corps under Amin became a Kakwa army, nor is it true to suggest that it was simply a Northern army under Obote. The Acholi in the region did not single out the Acholi soldiers who remained in the army, or policemen, as traitors or collaborators primarily because they did not represent the political branch of Amin's government. They were simply doing their jobs just as they had under Obote. Unlike the soldiers from outside the region many of the Acholi soldiers had a cultural connection to the land and the people as well as family ties, and as such there were sympathies and a certain level of support in the region for them. Interviews with Acholi soldiers under Amin indicate that there were support networks among soldiers in the locality to assist those who wanted to flee after becoming fearful for their lives. One interviewee recounted how he was forced to escape to Sudan after a fellow officer told him that his name had appeared in a list of men to be summoned to a barracks in Kitgum for questioning:

This man told me not to go into work that day that it would be dangerous for me. He gave me the contact of a friend who was already hiding in the mission in Kalongo. The man had arranged for me to be smuggled out with a pickup that was also taking others to Sudan. That night I escaped with my life.⁶⁷³

⁶⁷¹ KDA: Letter from County Chief Lamwo to all Jagis, 3 May 1975.

⁶⁷² (F/M) AU: interview with subsistence farmer, Omoro County, 2 July 2012.

⁶⁷³ (F/M) NAU: Interview with private security guard, Lukung, 1 August 2012.

There are also reports of Acholi soldiers and policemen allowing suspects to escape after being captured, claiming to have been overpowered, indicating a small level of internal social and political resistance against the regime. Although their motives do not clearly emerge from the archival records, it is likely that they were motivated by loyalty and clan obligation to friends and family.⁶⁷⁴

Despite the internal fears faced by Acholi recruits in the army corps, if they kept themselves 'clean' soldiering could still provide access to power and material resources in the locality. By wearing the uniform one automatically became untouchable, unchallenged by the civil society and other units of law enforcement. The 'uniform' allowed them to move about safely without the fear, harassment and potential detention faced by Acholi civilians. The Gulu and Kitgum archives show an increasing number of reports of Acholi men being apprehended for impersonating a government soldier. 'At least under Obote everybody knew who was a soldier. They had to carry badges and be able to identify themselves at any time. Under Amin, these rules were not being obeyed.'⁶⁷⁵ It is unlikely that these 'badgeless' army personnel were members of the secret police and army units, as government military intelligence reports were the ones highlighting the these incidents. They could have been members of the rebel groups entering Acholi from Sudan, or they could have been opportunistic Acholi civilians trying to capitalise on the symbolic power of the uniform. The consequences of being caught posing as a soldier were severe as military units were instructed to apprehend and some cases shoot anyone caught committing the offence.⁶⁷⁶ The uniform in this instance became a representation of fear to those that observed it and a form of protection to those that wore it. Because of the clear visibility of the police and soldiers in the region, there was perhaps less reason to be fearful of them. After all you could always avoid somebody that you could identify, or at least mind your words and actions in their presence. In this respect, the

⁶⁷⁴ GDA Box 541: Acholi District Monthly District Intelligence Reports, 12 March 1974- November 1977.

⁶⁷⁵ (F/M) NAU: Interview with subsistence farmer, Anaka, Nwoya District 21 June 2012.

⁶⁷⁶ GDA Box 541: Acholi District Monthly District Intelligence Reports, 12 March 1974- November 1977.

surveillance of these armed personnel was not as clandestine or as dangerous as the second level of surveillance that can also be observed in Acholi at this time.

5.3. The Militarisation and Rise of the Chiefs

It was not only groups of armed militia who were instrumental in ensuring that this culture of fear was maintained: the Acholi themselves became complicit in their own surveillance as fear reinforced the very mechanisms of control that were being utilised by central government. As in Foucault's assessments on governmentality, 'he who is subjected to a field of visibility, and who knows it, assumes responsibility for the constraints of power; he makes them play spontaneously upon himself; he inscribes in himself the power relation in which he simultaneously plays both roles; he becomes the principle of his own subjection.'⁶⁷⁷ Furthermore, Mbembe's discussion of the 'intimacy of tyranny' highlights the postcolonial subject's ability to assume

multiple identities' and thereby to 'provide his or her loyalty, and by compromising with the corrupting control that state power tends to exercise at all levels of everyday life, the subject is re-affirming that this power is incontestable . . . *precisely the better to play with it and modify it whenever possible*.'⁶⁷⁸ (Italics in original).

Archival records show that Acholi county, sub-county, and parish chiefs were the most prolific providers of intelligence to the security units. This is primarily because it was their task, and failure to comply would have placed them at great personal risk. Although they were positioned as spies they were at the same time being spied upon themselves. Chiefs were expected to attend regular security meetings and anybody who failed to attend would be noted and asked to provide a written response as to why within seven days. Absentees would automatically be designated as uncooperative or, worse still,

⁶⁷⁷ Foucault, *Discipline and Punishment*, 202-203.

⁶⁷⁸ Mbembe, *On the Post Colony*, 129.

in league with anti-government rebels.⁶⁷⁹ In this way they were coerced into fully participating in the surveillance of their subjects. The strain placed on chiefs can be seen through reports of increased alcoholism impeding their abilities to carry out their daily tasks.⁶⁸⁰ There are very little archival sources available regarding what the consequences were for chiefs accused subversive behaviour, but the little that does exist indicates that they were relieved of their posts or remanded in prison.⁶⁸¹

Facing such threats, chiefs and local administrators were forced to become the eyes and ears of the government. To ensure that chiefs were identifiable as employees of the state, Amin decided that standard uniforms were to be issued. There was a hierarchy of the cost of the uniforms ranging from over 700 hundred shillings designated to county chiefs and around 400 hundred shillings to the lower level chiefs such as the jago and the mukungu (parish and sub-parish chiefs).⁶⁸² Each chief was required to have two sets of uniform including matching shoes, the costs of which were met by the district administration and recoverable directly from the chief's wages. This was to guarantee that financial restraints could not be used as an excuse not to wear the uniforms.⁶⁸³

The process of uniforming chiefs is indication of the role they were now expected to play in Acholi. They were to be utilised as another vector of state control in monitoring the peoples of the region. Generally chiefs complied with the instructions from the state and sent frequent reports to the DC and to the police reporting and alleging subversive behaviour. Added to their compliance with the state, this increased power also provided an avenue for private gain and pursuing personal vendettas against rival chiefs, mirroring activities within previous Native Councils. In March 1973 the sub-county chief of Alero sent a letter to the DC in West Acholi regarding an illegal meeting that had taken

⁶⁷⁹ GDA Box 541: Letter from Rwot Aswa Acholi to all jagi Paicho, 11 February 1971; GDA Box 541: Intelligence Report, 16 November 1977.

⁶⁸⁰ GDA Box 541: 'Acholi District' Monthly District Intelligence Reports, 12 March 1974- November 1977.

⁶⁸¹ GDA Box 541: Letter from J.Y Owe Jago of Alero to DC Gulu, 11 November 1973.

⁶⁸² KDA: East Acholi District Treasurer with Auditors Comments, 25 October 1977.

⁶⁸³ KDA: Letter from the Ministry of Provincial Administration to DC Kitgum, 4 October 1976.

place in his area. The alleged culprits listed were other chiefs in the region, indicating that it was not only politicians or military rebels who were being reported on.

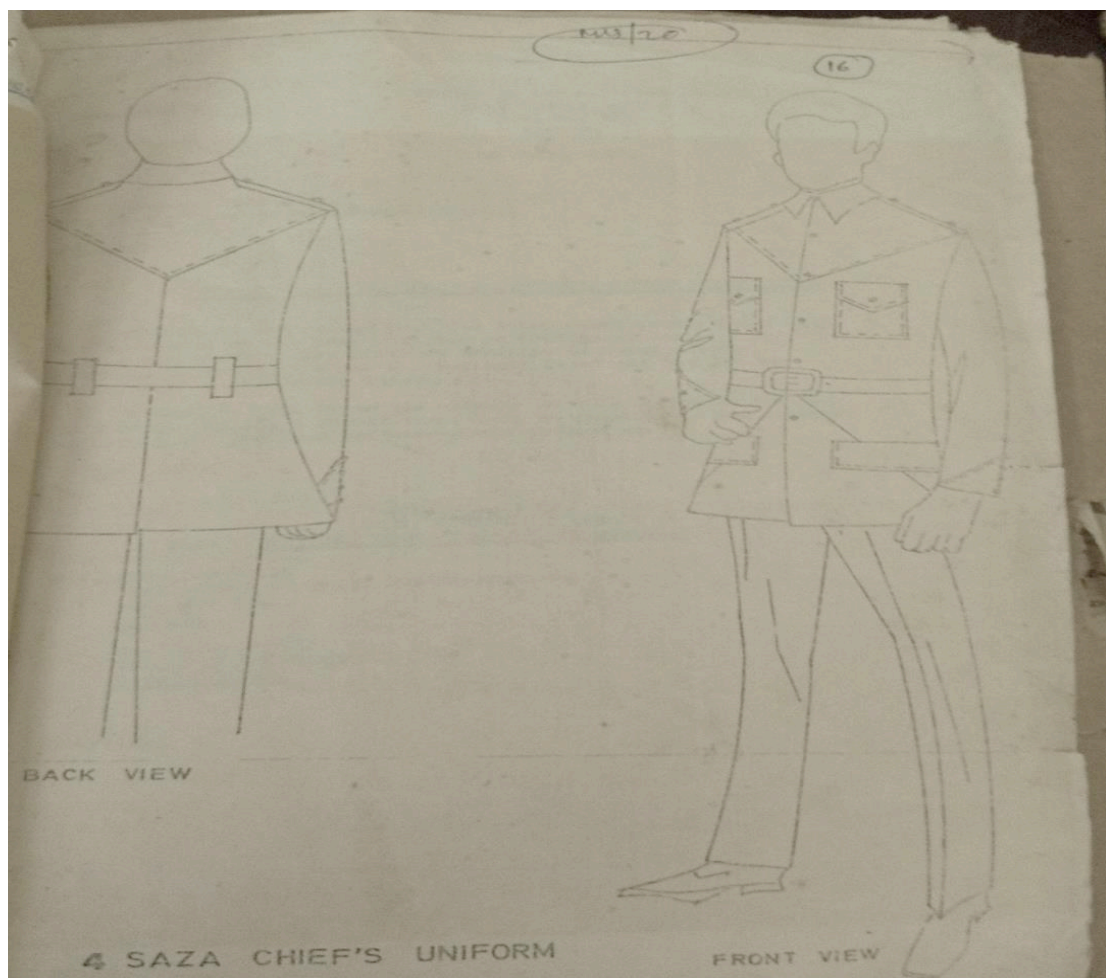


Image 1: Saza (county) Chief's Uniform: East Acholi District, 1977. ⁶⁸⁴

Other reports to the police and the intelligence unit consisted of alleged night meetings, public statements by individuals condemning the government and the distribution of anonymously written letters accusing the government of murder and illegal detentions. All the informants listed names of the individuals involved, their home villages and gave detailed reports on the contents of the meetings.⁶⁸⁵ The fear of reprisals for not reporting suspicious activities was so great that some chiefs became proactive in their fortnightly security reports, detailing any incident that could be misinterpreted as

⁶⁸⁴ KDA: Letter from County Chief Chua to Treasurer East Acholi District, 2 July 1977.

⁶⁸⁵ GDA Box 541: Report from Jago of Alero to DC Gulu, 20 March 1973; GDA Box 541: Letter from County Chief Alokolum Koich to the military station, Kitgum, 17 December 1973.

suspicious or implicate them in any wrong doing. Unknown visitors were promptly reported to the authorities alongside a plea to the intelligence unit denying any wrongdoing or knowledge of why the visitor was in the area.⁶⁸⁶

Another motivation for 'informing' was derived from opportunism, as some of the security reports went further than merely a mandatory obligation. Although chiefs were coerced to participate, they were not above manipulating the political situation for their own goals. Some chiefs saw the situation as a chance to settle personal vendettas and further their own interests. This was not a new phenomenon: chiefly rivalry for commodities and power pre-dated the colonial institution and had continued to thrive post-independence. Under Obote, they had squabbled over land, boundaries, taxes and titles. Under Amin it became possible to take a rival out of the equation completely. As a result, chiefs made frequent allegations of subversive activities against each other that mostly had a personal content. In 1975 the sub-parish chief of Alero made an impassioned plea to the DC of West Acholi responding to allegations that had been made against him by a fellow chief. 'I have been accused of taking a gift given to the people by the government and stealing community materials. They also say that I released a medicine woman who had been accused of murder, because I was bribed. These people are all setting me back in my work.'⁶⁸⁷ In a similar incident another chief accused the county chief of Kilak of participating in the recruitment of anti-government guerrillas, an allegation the latter vehemently denied. The frequency of such allegations were remarked upon by the intelligence officer who singled out two chiefs who had become prolific in reporting each other on false grounds and had been reprimanded for wasting police time.⁶⁸⁸ This is not to say that previous debates regarding land and clan affiliation were brushed to one side. They continued much in the same vein that they had prior to the military coup. In fact, tribal and clan disputes were further emphasised because of central government policies that sought to dictate which chiefs were placed in particular regions.⁶⁸⁹ This meant that in

⁶⁸⁶ GDA Box 541: Letter from County Chief of Kilak to DC Gulu, 11 February 1974.

⁶⁸⁷ GDA Box 541: Letter from Jago of Alero to DC Gulu, March 1975.

⁶⁸⁸ KDA: District Intelligence Monthly Report, 22 June 1976.

⁶⁸⁹ Ravenhill, 'Military Rule in Uganda', 229-260.

some cases lower ranking chiefs at the sub-county and parish levels were often placed in districts where they did not have any ancestral ties, as occurred under the colonial Native Administration. These chiefs had a difficult task in mobilising the populace of the counties because, despite still being Acholi, they were considered as outsiders. Feeling threatened by these new recruits, the chiefs drawn from within their home regions turned their people against the new appointees. Such disputes were documented in the division of Alero where the DC in West Acholi was made aware of the ‘embarrassing situation’ that had arisen because of continued clan disputes:

The people of the area are fond of discriminating against people on tribal and religious differences. People tend to disregard and try to undermine other people who are non-Alero assigned by the government to perform some duties in the area. [These people include] the parish chiefs, sub-parish chiefs and those who claim to be from the royal families [in the area]. In fact sir, these are the people who all the time are trying to convince the public not to follow any policy put to them by the jago. Just recently the public were asked to dig a road, collect charity funds, and come to help in erecting some buildings in a school, yet you find that the characters mentioned above in the villages telling people not to come to work simply because the jago and the head-master of the school are not Alero by birth.⁶⁹⁰

It was not just ‘outsiders’ who were causing disputes in Alero. Internal tribal rivalries between the various clans that lived in the division were becoming a matter for great concern, as individuals were discriminated against solely because of the clan they were born into.⁶⁹¹ As with Moerman’s and Swidler’s work on cultural identities, definitions of ‘Acholiness’ change according to social and political contexts. In stable societies cultural groups can be more inclusive and less stringent requirements are placed on individual membership of the group, precisely because settled cultures constrain political action over time.⁶⁹² In unstable societies popular culture is often replaced by ‘high culture’ as members of cultural groups sharpen specific cultural tools to contend with internal and external threats. Thus, the content of ‘Acholiness’ is more readily scrutinised as blood ties and ancestral

⁶⁹⁰ GDA Box 541: Letter from Jago of Alero to DC Gulu, 11 Nov 1973.

⁶⁹¹ GDA Box 541: Monthly Security Report, July 1976.

⁶⁹² Swidler, ‘Culture in Action: Symbols and Strategies’, 284.

connections are used to identify those who could potentially pose a threat to the group. This can be observed with the practice of inter-ethnic marriage:

My husband was an Acholi and I am Lango. When we married I had to leave my home in Aduku [Lango] and go to his village in Lukung [Kitgum]. We married in 1980, but when all the problems with Obote and the Acholi became worse, the Acholi started to hate me. They said I was weak and could not cook and clean like an Acholi women. They would say that I was sent there to spy on them and that I should go back to the Lango. My auntie also married an Acholi man after independence. She said that she was accepted by his village and lived well there. But they even started to abuse her in the 1980s saying that she was not one of them.⁶⁹³

Yet even internally with the wider Acholi ethnic community there was a further fragmentation. Inter-clan disputes and attacks against ‘outsiders’ became more prominent as economic commodities became harder to come by. The effects of the national economic crisis on the Acholi was reflected in the rise of thefts and the increase of break-ins into properties such as missions and farm schools to retrieve goods for re-sale on the black market.⁶⁹⁴ There were increased attacks on non-Acholi working in the region by locals, as reported in 1979 in Aswa where local villagers attacked non-Acholi ranch workers, spearing and killing the cattle in the ranch and destroying property in protest at jobs being given to ‘outsiders’.⁶⁹⁵ The political climate meant that ‘people started staying more and more in their birth place’ as they went home to hide.⁶⁹⁶ Basic commodities became harder to come by and even when they were available very few could afford them. In some areas people became accustomed to eating food without salt. ‘Things were very expensive under Amin, we would return to our villages in poverty with no jobs while all of Amin’s men grew richer in the towns.’⁶⁹⁷

⁶⁹³ (F/F) NAU: Interview with retired widow Jinja, 27 December 2012.

⁶⁹⁴ GDA Box 541: Letter from County Chief Aswa to DC Gulu, 8 December 1976.

⁶⁹⁵ GDA Box 532: Letter from Ranch Manager in Aswa to DC Kitgum, 22 November 1979.

⁶⁹⁶ (F/M) AU: Interview with local youth leader, Langol-Nwoya District, 15 July 2012

⁶⁹⁷ (F/F) NAU: Interview with Acholi housewife, Kampala, 3 February 2012.

5.4. The Internal Adjustment to a Dictatorship.

Although Amin's economic and political policies resulted in the basic functions of the local councils falling into disarray, including tax collection, maintenance of essential services and council budgets, they did not all together cease to exist. Chiefs were still travelling to collect taxes promptly every year in April, although whether the money was there to pay them was another story. Those who worked in minor roles in the local administrations recounted in interviews that their wages were paid on time, although now the amounts fluctuated. Cooperatives were still functioning to some degree and progressive farmers who needed help were able to utilise them. Chiefs and district administrators carried on paying into their local pension plans, although the numbers of contributors declined year on year.⁶⁹⁸ Employment appointment records were recorded diligently and staff appraisals carried out every year without fail.⁶⁹⁹ The administrative bureaucracy continued much in the same way as the previous regime, with application for licence trades and annual account estimates written and sent to central government. The bureaucratic capabilities of Amin's regime indicate that even with an autocratic military government, there was still a need to show a semblance of administrative structures used to effectively govern sovereign a state. In as much as Amin became primarily reliant on the rule of fear as a mechanism to rule and control the population, he also sought to legitimise his authority by imitating inherited bureaucratic colonial structures of governance.⁷⁰⁰ It also an indication that despite economic constraints, the government was still able to financially feed

⁶⁹⁸ MUL/AS GEA U/A (088) 2: East Acholi District Admin: Approved 1971 Estimates Confirmed 1972.

⁶⁹⁹ Ibid; KDA: Letter from J.M. Masarenhas, Ministry of Public Administration to Town Clerk Kitgum. 6 December 1971; Report to the treasurer East Acholi District Administration, 17 August 1973; Report to the treasurer East Acholi District Administration 26 April 1973; GDA Box: 553: Gulu Municipal Council Accounts for the year ending 1979, 31 December 1979.

⁷⁰⁰ Young, *The Colonial State in Comparative Perspective*, 283.

into this bureaucratic system, challenging the notion that Uganda under Amin was a state completely 'unhinged'.⁷⁰¹

However, the content of these documents give a clear reflection of the disorganisation of the local administration and district councils and the economic situation in Acholi. To acquire more revenue the government emphasised the criminal implications of not having a license fee for fish mongering, trading in liquor or running restaurants. The number of traders being pursued because they had not paid their licence fees was increasing sharply.⁷⁰² The number of civil servants and local council members asking for personal advances because they could not meet their monthly expenses, and the number of staff debtors were increasing year by year. The 1973 accounts show that the total amount of debt incurred by staff in the district administration stood at just over two 206, 000 shillings, of which only one 173,000 had been recovered.⁷⁰³ The figure becomes remarkable considering that in the same year only 13,812 shillings had been spent on education in East Acholi.⁷⁰⁴ By 1978 the financial situation was so dire that the National Curriculum Development Centre in East Acholi was only saved by an injection of 2, 200,000 shillings from UNICEF.⁷⁰⁵ The misappropriation of fees among teaching staff and headmasters further exacerbated the situation.⁷⁰⁶ Requests for increased financial expenditure for ammunition, for the destitute and food for prisoners appeared in the 1974 district administration accounts, appeals that had never been made in previous account estimates. In fact the

⁷⁰¹ D. A. Low, 'Uganda Unhinged' *International Affairs*, Vol. 49, No. 2 (1973), 219-228.

⁷⁰² MUL/AS GEA U/A8 (058) 59: East Acholi District Admin: Accounts with Report, 1973.

⁷⁰³ Ibid.

⁷⁰⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁰⁵ Unfortunately the archives from this period do not convey a dialogue between the Acholi and international humanitarian agencies. Consequently we are unable to assess how, if at all, the Acholi engaged politically with organisations such as UNICEF and the Red Cross. This is also an indication that international human rights discourses emerged primarily from the mid to late 1980s in Uganda as there seemed to be a large number of sources within the archives in Gulu and Kitgum pertaining to aid and humanitarian organisations and the peoples of the region.

⁷⁰⁶ GDA Box: 553: Gulu Municipal Council Accounts for the year ended 1979 with and the auditor's report and opinion, 31 December 1979.

administration accounts for the Acholi districts showed a year on year decrease in revenue and expenditure from 1969 to 1978.⁷⁰⁷ By 1979 the system had failed so comprehensively that the auditor general admitted in his annual report that there 'had been no proper tax assessment and no register of eligible taxpayers had been kept.'⁷⁰⁸

Whilst the decay of state and district institutions was primarily documented in the archives through financial records, its effects were felt across state and society. The disintegration of the state apparatus permeated all aspects of Acholi political, economic and social and cultural institutions. In the 1970s the local district councils could no longer provide the platform whereby internal and external political grievances could be openly debated. By the beginning of the decade the local councils were already struggling to pay staff their salaries and provide essential services to population. This process had begun under Obote but was further exacerbated by Amin's economic and political policies. By targeting the middle class and forcing them into exile, the government essentially purged the local councils of the educated administrators and politicians who had run the institutions: 'Amin targeted important Acholi. People went underground or went into exile. These were the people who made things work.'⁷⁰⁹ Adam Branch argues that Amin's regime destabilised the order that had pertained inside Acholi, and that Amin destroyed 'the link between the Acholi and the national state.'⁷¹⁰ Undoubtedly the exile of the *Oco/s* had a detrimental effect on the relationship between the centre and the locality, however those that remained behind adjusted and found new ways to connect to central government and to engage with the 'big man.'

Political activity in Acholi did not cease to exist during Amin's regime. If anything, Amin's rule actually reinforced informal political mobilisation at a grass roots level. Although the *Oco/s* who remained in the region could no

⁷⁰⁷ MUL/AS GEAU/A8 (058) 58: National Curriculum Development Centre Financial Statement, 1974-78.

⁷⁰⁸ GDA Box: 553: Gulu Municipal Council Accounts for the year ended 1979, 31 December 1979.

⁷⁰⁹ (F/M) NAU: Interview with civil servant, Entebbe, 4 January 2012

⁷¹⁰ Branch, *Displacing Human Rights*, 57.

longer openly participate in politics, they found new avenues of political engagement, which provided an alternative to simply disappearing back to rural life. Spurred on by the news of the anti-government rebels in Tanzania, some were even implicated in mobilising food supplies and arms to those fighting to liberate Uganda.⁷¹¹ Many remained optimistic that the government would collapse and that they would be reinstated in their previous positions. Despite the constraints placed on local politicians, party political rivalries that ensued during the late colonial and post-independence period were still evident in the 1970s. Rivalries between individual administrators for higher-ranking political and administrative positions continued outside the constraints of the local district councils and political parties. The weakening of the local administrative bodies meant that the opportunities to manipulate the system for further personal gain were more readily presented. As Acholi politicians could no longer contest power at a national level, clan, tribal and religious identities became further politicised. As was the case previously, constituency elections were still contested based on clan affiliations and candidates who put themselves forward often found that their success largely depended on whether they could claim ancestral and clan ties to that constituency.⁷¹² This in itself was not unique to the 1970s; clan affiliation had always been a significant factor in determining local elections in Acholi. What is significant is despite the political climate, heightened state of violence and constant surveillance, local politics continued to follow the same patterns as before Amin came to power.

Amin, just like his predecessors Obote and the British, still needed Acholi power brokers to administer control Acholi. Distinct ethnic demarcations of districts in Uganda meant that he could no more successfully install 'outsiders' to govern the Acholi than Obote or the British could. However, this did not mean that he did not try to do so. There was at least one definitive attempt by the regime to 'de-Acholilise' the leadership hierarchy in the region. In 1971 Amin appointed Paulo Mugoyo as DC of East Acholi District. He was a Muguishu from central-eastern Uganda and had no known

⁷¹¹ KDA: District Intelligence Report, July 1974.

⁷¹² KDA: East Acholi District Intelligence Report, April 1973.

ancestral ties to Acholi.⁷¹³ These were deliberate attempts to install an administrator from outside Acholi who would not be swayed by any clan or political affiliations, and whose loyalty would be only to central government. Ironically, it soon became clear, that in order to maintain some level of administrative cohesion within the local councils, the government needed leaders who understood the populace, could speak the language and had a cultural connection to the land. As party politicians were now marked as the enemy of the state, this left only Acholi chiefs who could be utilised to implement government policies, generating a return to the colonial system of governance that emphasised the authority of traditional chiefly power. In this endeavour, the government attempted to reinforce chiefly power through the creation of cultural institutions. In 1972, the DC of East Acholi sanctioned the revival of the Acholi Cultural Association (ACA), an organisation comprising of Acholi chiefs and community leaders, which had all but died out under Obote after the state abolished traditional leaders and monarchical heads in 1967. Furthermore, the Acholi Department of Town and Regional Planning earmarked ten acres of land for a cultural village to be built that would showcase local arts and crafts as well as Acholi cultural traditions for visitors to the region.⁷¹⁴ The initiative to invest in and revive cultural institutions was an indication that Acholi culture at least was seen as an apolitical identity by the government. In this sense cultural activities were permitted to take place, as they were not seen as a threat to security in the locality. Thus cultural institutions and activities were utilised to displace the political forum that had been previously been occupied by the *Ocols*. As cultural rather than political

⁷¹³ KDA: East Acholi District Intelligence Report, November 1971; KDA: Kitgum District Intelligence 1974-1976. In 1977 the appointed DC of East Kitgum was Kuba Hussein. Although his ancestral origins are unknown, it is unlikely, given his name that he originated from Acholi. As previously discussed Luo names are easily identifiable. Even if Mr Hussein had converted to Islam and changed his name in the process, it is unlikely that he would not have retained his Luo surname, as is the common practice for Acholi Muslim converts

⁷¹⁴ GDA Box 540: Letter from DC Gulu to All County Chiefs and Sub-county Chiefs, 7 September 1974.

leaders, chiefs could be utilised to provide the link from local to central government without the fear that informed Amin's treatment of the *Ocols*.⁷¹⁵

Furthermore, by continuing the ban on all political parties Amin had effectively lost a key channel of communication between central government and the populace. To remedy this, all chiefs were recognised as official representatives of the central government. A directive for the election of new chiefs in the villages who would be able to work loyally with the government and the army was immediately initiated, but many of the election results indicated that people simply voted for their former chiefs. 'Amin's dissatisfaction with this caused him to cancel a large number of election results and instructed that elections were to be re-held with only "suitable" candidates being allowed to stand.'⁷¹⁶ During the 1973 elections of chiefs in East Acholi, the DC and the intelligence unit monitoring the proceedings complained that some of the chiefs were not selected because they did not belong to a clan in the area, or were not affiliated to the dominant religious denomination in the area being contested.⁷¹⁷

Political mobilisation was not just limited to clan ties and the election of chiefs. Just as DP members had remained active in Acholi in spite of Obote's attempt to stifle political activity, local political actors continued to conduct secret political meetings under Amin using institutions such as co-operative societies to reinforce allegiances to their respective political parties prior to the military coup.⁷¹⁸ During a meeting organised by the West Acholi Co-operative Society, it was reported that former UPC members were trying to manipulate the elections of the co-operative members to ensure that all the candidates put forward for election were former UPC members.⁷¹⁹ In a similar report, this time for the East Acholi Co-operative Society, it was reported that former politician Tiberio Okeny had held a meeting in his house to ensure all UPC sympathisers were voted out of the society and replaced by former DP

⁷¹⁵ Branch, *Displacing Human Rights*, 57.

⁷¹⁶ Ravenhill, 'Military Rule in Uganda', 229-260.

⁷¹⁷ KDA: District Intelligence, April 1973.

⁷¹⁸ GDA Box 541: District Intelligence, March 1974.

⁷¹⁹ GDA Box 541: District Intelligence, July 1976.

members at the union's upcoming general election.⁷²⁰ There were minor reports early in 1971 of former DP supporters actively mobilising people along religious and political lines in Kalongo and Agago districts in East Acholi. The main perpetrators were teachers at Kalongo secondary school who were holding illegal night meetings to discuss political and religious issues.⁷²¹ In 1971 Acholi members of the Uganda Teachers' Association (UTA) openly heckled the DC and Administrative Secretary during a welcome party held in honour of the District Education Officer. The incident was put down to religious disputes as the leader of the UTA in East Acholi was Catholic and had had some disagreements with some of the Protestant members that spilled over into the meeting. However, the consequences of heckling government representatives were made all too clear, as the perpetrators were marked out by intelligence units as subversive elements, placed under surveillance, and warned not to dabble in any political activities that could threaten regional security.⁷²²

Outside of party politics, local elites were able to capitalise financially on government economic policies for development in the region that still centred on progressive farming by manipulating Acholi class identities. In 1972 a presidential directive announced that all the regions were to amend their agricultural shows within the districts to ensure that the people were made fully aware of the benefits of progressive farming. The shows were to stimulate interest in intensive farming, teach farmers better methods of producing greater yields and create a spirit of competitiveness among local farmers and farming businesses while showing the importance of fixed pricing for produce.⁷²³ The farming institute in Kitgum remained the focal point of government training in the district, offering short residential courses to chiefs, farmers, their wives, and children. Day courses were to be run to stimulate youth interest in progressive farming and change 'non progressive' traditional attitudes towards crops and animal husbandry. Members of the Young

⁷²⁰ KDA: District Intelligence Report, June 1972.

⁷²¹ KDA: District Intelligence Report, January 1972.

⁷²² Ibid.

⁷²³ GDA Box 546: Letter from the Permanent Secretary to all Regional Agriculture Officers, 29 March 1972.

Farmers' Union (YFU) were asked to attend from each county although the numbers were more weighted towards male attendees as progressive farming was still considered to be a male endeavour.⁷²⁴

In 1974 a special research project was commissioned by the Agricultural department, which was conducted by an Acholi student studying at Makerere University. The premise of the research was to evaluate the effectiveness of the East Acholi farming school. Admittance to the institute was highly competitive but was informed by class and gender and clan biases. Of the twelve staff employed in the institute, only four were women, working as secretaries, cleaners and cooks. The female staff devoted most of their time to domestic duties and caring for babies.⁷²⁵ Often recruitment would be left to local chiefs, village leaders and politicians who recruited people on nepotism rather than merit. Among the women attending the course sixty-per cent were found to be the wives of businessmen, teachers, parish chiefs 'or any recognisable person within local politics in the rural areas.'⁷²⁶ Under the system, many peasant farmers and their wives who did not have a noticeable political or economic standing in the community were inevitably excluded from these institutions. Among the peasant farmers who did attend the courses, gender divisions were strongly emphasised. The institute generally accepted men who were married, had families, and could claim some sort of ownership of land, reiterating the economic importance of the Acholi male over the woman.⁷²⁷ Furthermore, it placed unmarried males and Acholi youth at a disadvantage as their marital status hindered them from being accepted into the courses. 'The disadvantage with these defaults was that these 'big people' were frequently liable to be transferred together with their wives,' draining the region of the knowledge that had been gained and furthering the economic

⁷²⁴ W.W. Opiyo, *Evaluation of East Acholi District Farm Institute Programme.1973-1974* (Bsc. Special Project: Department of Agriculture, Makerere University 1974).

⁷²⁵ Ibid.

⁷²⁶ Ibid.

⁷²⁷ When making the distinction between the *Ocols* and *Lawinos* this scenario illustrates that Acholi peasant men, despite sharing a similar economic status as their female counterparts, were still regarded as the heads of the Acholi household and village. Consequently, whilst they may have been marginalised from the world of educated local political elite, they were afforded access to certain commodities primarily because of their gender and marital status.

gap between those that had resources and education and those that did not.⁷²⁸

Among the graduates of the farming school who had applied for loans through banks and co-operatives, research found that most of the approved loans had been granted to local politicians, businessmen and teachers. Some businessmen would then go on to use the loans to buy heavy farming equipment only to go on and sell it at double the price.⁷²⁹ The agricultural staff often favoured these people of means, offering them excellent references and providing help to fill out the loan application forms. In turn the staff members were often bribed with lower prices for crops at market.⁷³⁰ In a similar project conducted on farming practices in West Acholi, it was found that only eighteen per cent of farmers in the region had received an education level beyond primary school, with around ten per cent having not attended school at all. The number of those who had attended a farm school course was around twenty per cent. Furthermore those who held a legal land title and not just customary title only constituted seven per cent of the farmers.⁷³¹ Of the farmers who had received loans from the department of agriculture, one hundred per cent had received an education level of up to secondary school. Consequently, the higher the education level, the more likely a farmer was to receive a loan.⁷³² This is partly to do with the illiteracy levels in the district meaning the under-educated would have found it more difficult to fill in the complex loan forms, but the internal bureaucratic system and practice of nepotism and gender discrimination also, meant that economic, political and social resources were still monopolised by educated well-to-do Acholi men.

⁷²⁸ Ibid.

⁷²⁹ Ibid.

⁷³⁰ Ibid; A.O. Paotto, *A study of Constraints on Greater Groundnut Production in West Acholi, 1974* (Bsc Thesis: Makerere University, 1974).

⁷³¹ J.O. Acima, *An Appraisal of the Impact of the Co-op BANK Ltd as a Source of Farm Commercialism in West Acholi District 1978-79* (Faculty of Agriculture, Makerere University, 1979).

⁷³² Ibid.

5.5. Religious Identities as an Avenue for Political Engagement

One tool for political mobilisation that local actors could still utilise somewhat freely was that of Acholi religious identities. Amin wanted to take advantage of Obote's failure in dealing with religious cleavages in Uganda as a means to consolidate his support base. His predecessor was blamed for interfering too much in religious affairs, particularly in his treatment of Ugandan Catholics. From 'the moment he grabbed power, Amin began to portray himself as an impartial God-fearing religious man, an ecumenical mediator who would see that there was complete religious tolerance.'⁷³³ As a Muslim, the President delivered the majority of government financial support to the Muslim community.⁷³⁴ However, in an attempt to keep the other denominations on side, he bought the heads of the three main religious groups a Mercedes each. In 1971 he announced that the government would donate 100,000 shillings each to the Muslim, Catholic and Protestant faiths.⁷³⁵ In Acholi, the political pandering to the religious denominations by central government manifested itself in the continued politicisation of religious identities. Those who had been active in party politics continued challenging competitors through politicised religious discourses.

Amin's criticism of Obote, particularly the belief that the UPC was predominately a party of Protestants, meant that Catholics and DP supporters, privately at least, hoped that they would have an easier ride under the new regime. In 1972 it was announced that an investigation into the employment of civil servants in Acholi District Administration had revealed that Obote had continuously made appointments on the basis of religious affiliation. The DC of East Acholi promptly announced that under Amin, employment in local government would be considered regardless of religious denomination.⁷³⁶ It is difficult to assess whether this directive translated into

⁷³³ Kasozi, *The Social Origins of Violence*, 107; A.A. Mazrui, 'Religious Strangers in Uganda: From Emin Pasha to Amin Dada'. *African Affairs* Vol. 76 No. 302, (1977), 21-38

⁷³⁴ Amin never wrote or authorised a biography of his life. It is unknown when he converted to Islam. Most references regarding his 'conversion' do not state a specific date.

⁷³⁵ Ravenhill, 'Military Rule in Uganda', 229-260.

⁷³⁶ KDA: District Intelligence Report, January 1972.

the local councils because elections to the councils had been so corrupted by central government. Furthermore, because all political parties were effectively banned under Amin those who were appointed could not openly identify themselves as DP or UPC sympathisers.

The marginalisation of political activity from the local councils allowed for religious disputes to become more prominent at grass root levels. Following previous patterns, religious disputes among the Acholi in the 1970s involved quarrels over land and church buildings being erected in Protestant Catholic dominated areas. In Agago, Kilak and Chua counties, Acholi Protestants became incensed by Catholic chapels being built in a predominately Protestant dominated areas. Protestant leaders sent letters directly to the Bishop of Northern Uganda outlining their complainants. The letters were a result of months of bitter correspondences between the two denominational groups.⁷³⁷ Religious disputes continued to provide an avenue for expressing economic, political and social grievances. These grievances were more pronounced in East Acholi primarily because the region suffered disproportionately from underdevelopment in comparison to West Acholi. The 1970-71 annual report from the Gulu diocese stated that the number of Catholics grew in areas that were being served by Catholic hospitals. Thus there was a direct correlation assumed between the number of converts and the amenities offered by a particular denomination. In West Acholi, there were more hospitals and schools whereas in the East Acholi, the numbers were limited with only one major hospital served by the Catholic VF mission in Kalongo.⁷³⁸ Furthermore, the number of Catholics proportional to the population was far greater than the number in West Acholi. Consequently, religious rivalries were more intense in East Acholi, despite being more sparsely populated in comparison to West Acholi. The importance of religion and religious affiliation to the populace of East Acholi can be observed in 1973 when the Archbishop of Kampala asked for Catholics in the region to organise a collection to build a shrine in Namugongo, near Kampala. A total of

⁷³⁷ KDA: District Intelligence Report, October 1973.

⁷³⁸ RCA: 5 Year Report on the Diocese of Gulu, 1970-1975. Report By Dr Cipriano Kihangie, 1 May 1976.

41, 915 shillings was collected from individuals, schools and parishes. East Acholi contributed nearly 2,000 shillings more compared to the West, and more individuals contributed from East Acholi than from the West.⁷³⁹ To place this number in context, Acholi Catholics contributed just 20,000 shillings less than the amount that had been paid to all the sub-parish chiefs in East Acholi district in 1971.⁷⁴⁰

Parish pastors and priests continued to be instrumental in mobilising converts along denominational lines. In 1975 an argument broke out between the pastor in charge of the Bobi division parish and an Italian priest named Father Santo when the latter started lobbying for the erection of a Catholic church building near a Protestant school. The pastor was involved in stoking grass roots opposition to Father Santo, accusing him of bribing Protestant converts with clothes and medicine to gain support for his chapel.⁷⁴¹ Sub-county chiefs continued to play their part in promoting religious rivalries and used their growing political authority to undermine religious institutions, often for personal gain. Because of the economic crisis in the region, one of the tasks of the chiefs was the distribution and sale of scarce resources such as salt and sugar to the populace. In 1975 sub-county chief of Amuru provoked an outcry from the Christian population when he deliberately chose to sell salt on a Sunday, knowing that many of the parishioners were at service. The parishioners of Acwera village made an official complaint to the DC after the sub-county chief reportedly told them that there was no need to attend the church service, and that if they wanted to buy salt they could do so only on Sunday. After being threatened with retaliation from security units, the Chairman of Trade was coerced into supporting the chief's instruction and the sale went ahead on Sunday as planned. The sub-parish's actions cannot be observed as a direct attack on Catholic and Protestants as both denominations placed Sunday as the day of worship. It is also not clear which if any religious group that the chief belonged to and what his motivations

⁷³⁹ GDA Box 541: 'Archbishop of Kampala Namugongo Shrine', 18 September 1973.

⁷⁴⁰ MUL/AS GEA U/A (088) 2: East Acholi District Admin: Approved 1971 Estimates Confirmed 1972.

⁷⁴¹ GDA Box: 541: Summary of Meeting of the Acholi District Council, 4 February 1975.

were. However, several observations can be made in regards to the incident and how it reflected the political and religious climate in Acholi at the time. Firstly, it is an indication of the growing political, economic and military power that chiefs now had in the region. The fact that a sub-parish chief had enough influence to coerce the Chairman of Trade into compliance by threatening him with potential violent retribution from soldiers indicates the shift in power dynamics in Acholi. With the power to distribute resources, maintain law and order and act as wards of the state, incidents of chiefs taking advantage of their authority at the expense of the populace steadily increased. Secondly, the reaction by the parishioners, particularly the fact that they felt it was important enough to mobilise themselves and Christian communities by reporting the incident directly to the DC, indicates that maybe they too were not above manipulating their religious identity for political gains. The sub-parish chief in question was not very popular within the village that he was stationed and there had been several complaints made against him by individuals and other chiefs around the district.⁷⁴² The parishioners in Amuru took advantage of the political rhetoric of religious freedom being propagated by central government. Thus what religion and religious identity provided was a tangible means of expressing political grievances, without the imminent fear of reprisal from central government.

However, there were limitations as to how far central government and local governing bodies could be challenged through religious channels. As a Muslim, Amin began to emphasise Islam as the religion of the state from 1972, a shift that permeated into local institutions. Many of the religious disputes reported in the district intelligence reports in Acholi during this time did not involve Muslims or Islamic institutions. This was partly due to the fact that there were few Acholi Muslims living in the region. A report into the demography of the faithful by the Gulu dioceses estimated that in 1971 there were around 3,500 Muslims in the district. This was up by 420 from the previous year, compared to over 300,000 Acholi who defined themselves as

⁷⁴² GDA Box 541: Complaint from the Christians at Amuru Letter to the DC Gulu, 8 May 1975.

Catholic or Protestants.⁷⁴³ This slight increase could be attributed to the inclination among the Acholi to favour a 'state' religion.⁷⁴⁴ By 1976 the population of the Christian parishes in the region varied from a maximum of 56,000 to a minimum of 14,000 in the lesser-populated parishes, with the number of Catholics in the parishes ranging from 20,000 to 7,000.⁷⁴⁵ Politically, the low number of disputes against Muslims and Islamic institutions in Acholi and the rest of Uganda was because an attack on Islam would have been perceived as an attack on the state and the President. Following a land dispute arising from a Protestant campaign against the building of a Catholic chapel in Gulu, the DC commented that he saw no reason why the Protestant leaders were against the Church building as a Protestant Church was standing metres away from the Muslim Supreme council, yet there had been no conflicts reported regarding this.⁷⁴⁶

Amin wanted men to convert to Islam. The villagers blamed him for the bad luck that they had, because they believed that if you changed your religion then you would get bad luck. Some were converting to Islam simply to survive. On Friday there would be no school, because that was the Muslim holy day.⁷⁴⁷

Central government policies that emphasised Islam above all other religions meant that for the first time Islam came out of the shadow of the two Christian denominations. Some Acholi Muslim converts saw conversion as an opportunity to access employment opportunities:

I was looking for a job as a security guard in Kampala and I found out that my boss was a Muslim. Even though I was a Catholic at the time I converted so that I could get the job. When I went back Kitgum I

⁷⁴³ RCA: 5 Year Report on the Diocese of Gulu 1970-1975. Report By Dr Cipriano Kihangie, 1 May 1976.

⁷⁴⁴ C.Y.L. OCaya, *The Other Face of Acholi* (BA fine Arts Thesis, Makerere, 1974).

⁷⁴⁵ RCA: 5 Year Report on the Diocese of Gulu 1970-1975. Report By Dr Cipriano Kihangie, 1 May 1976.

⁷⁴⁶ GDA Box: 541: Summary of Meeting Acholi District Council, 4 February 1975.

⁷⁴⁷ F/M) NAU: Interview with retired civil servant, Gulu Town Centre, 9 June 2012

converted back to being a Catholic. In those days you did what you could to survive.⁷⁴⁸

Muslim converts in Amin's Uganda were afforded a certain amount of political and economic bias. Consequently, some Acholi chiefs began to see the benefits of identifying as a Muslim or becoming an advocate for the President's chosen religion. In 1975 the county chief of Kilak wrote a letter to the DC complaining of actions of a Catholic Father and his treatment of the Governor of Northern Uganda during a dinner organised in the latter's honour. The Governor, being a Muslim, had asked for the meat that was to be cooked for the dinner party to be slaughtered by another Muslim who understood the Islamic teachings on the preparation of food. Although Governor missed the dinner, it was observed that the Father had ignored the instructions and had instead allowed one of the sisters in the mission to slaughter the animal instead. 'This happened again and again with other Muslims and it seemed like the Father was doing this deliberately. This practice is very bad considering that Muslims are now proud and they are the highest people in the Country.'⁷⁴⁹ The county chief had on-going issues with the Catholic Father, alleging his refusal to co-operate with the local administration and 'his disregard for the instructions given by the sub-parish and parish chiefs.' 'He would often use land without consulting the chiefs first even though the government had asked all religious leaders to co-operate with the local administrators.'⁷⁵⁰

Another reason for the frequent reports regarding disputes among Acholi Christians is that both the Anglican and Catholic churches still held considerable power in the region and even during Amin's regime the crusade for the conversion of souls did not abate. To make sure that converts were made aware of the 'true Christian life and spirit of worship' the Catholic Dioceses in Gulu would often make apostolic safaris to villages to preach the word of God. Audio-visual and written instructions were used to make the faithful aware of the obligations to attend mass regularly and not only when

⁷⁴⁸ (F/M) NAU: Interview with private security guard, Lukung, 1 August 2012.

⁷⁴⁹ GDA Box 541: Letter from Rwot of Kilak to DC Gulu, 10 March 1975.

⁷⁵⁰ Ibid.

priests visited them. Baptisms were held once a month at the chapels in dioceses as well as frequent communions among school children. Priests were encouraged to preside over many of the traditional funeral services held in the villages. The Roman Catholic (RC) Church was active in operating and opening institutions to try and alleviate many of the social hardships in the parishes, opening elderly people's homes in Gulu and Kalongo in East Acholi, as well as a centre for polio victims in Opim. In 1975 the Bishop of Gulu commented the work that was done in the region remarking that 'the Christian religion is accepted by a great majority with enthusiasm and dedication.'⁷⁵¹ However, the RC still felt that conversion and the diffusion of Christian teaching were being hindered by local customs.⁷⁵² Even though the number of children being converted through schools and baptisms was growing annually, the Bishop complained that parents and guardians were usually indifferent to the religious instructions of their children.⁷⁵³ The issue of traditional versus Christian marriage ceremonies was brought up again as the Acholi continued to engage in polygamous relationships and conducting traditional marriage ceremonies in the village. Gulu diocese reports remarked on the increase of bridewealth across the region, which was often set above the means of the man asked to pay it, with families trying to capitalise on the economic value of their daughter. For wealthier or urban families bride wealth could be paid in

⁷⁵¹ RCA: 5 Year Report on the Diocese of Gulu, 1970-1975. Report By Dr Cipriano Kihangie. Bishop's House, Gulu. 1 May 1976.

⁷⁵² A.O. Paotto, *A study of Constraints on Greater Groundnut Production in West Acholi*, 1974 (Bsc Thesis. Makerere University, 1974), 36: Adults who attended church still participated in many of the traditional Acholi rituals back in the villages. In a case study of one hundred Acholi farmers in West Acholi of marriage age conducted in 1975, forty-five per cent of the men admitted to having more than one wife, indicating that polygamy was still being widely practiced; Ocaya, *The Other Face of Acholi*, An Acholi attending Sunday service in the morning would in the evening attend 'jogi' (spirits) ceremonies while patients in hospitals would be given traditional herbs by family members or an 'ajwaka' (spirit medium) to help aid their recovery. When someone bought a new car, it was expected that the vehicle should be first taken to the village for blessing to ward off any bad spirits and ensure that the owner of the new car was protected. During some 'spitting blessing' ceremonies the rituals would be conducted while Christian hymns were being sang at the same time.

⁷⁵³ RCA: 5 Year Report on the Diocese of Gulu, 1970-1975. Report by Dr Cipriano Kihangie. Bishop's House, Gulu. 1 May 1976.

cash whilst rural areas it was more common to offer cattle as payment. Bridewealth prices vary according to the financial situation of the husband to be. In his book *Lak Tar* (White Teeth) Okot p'Bitek makes a satirical commentary on the changing prices of bridewealth in Acholi and wider implications for Acholi men. p'Bitek noted that in the early colonial period bridewealth was reasonably priced and affordable to the common man. However, as Acholi became incorporated into the colonial political economy, bridewealth became extortionate, with families sometimes asking for thousands of shillings.⁷⁵⁴ The economic implications of the payment of bride wealth were remarked upon when it became apparent that the governmental policy of encouraging progressive farming was being hindered because families were rearing cattle not for wholesale but to secure payment for marriages within the clan.⁷⁵⁵ The financial restraints on Acholi households, and the continued adherence to traditional religious practices meant that between 1970 and 1975 marriages in Churches were steadily decreasing compared to the overall increase of the Christian population.⁷⁵⁶ Thus while Acholi Catholics and Protestants continued to politicise their Christian faith as a means to access material resources, indigenous religious practices still continued to provide the social guidelines within Acholi villages. The increased number of infant baptisms in the 1970s indicates that although financial restrictions may have impeded participation in Christian marriage ceremonies, Acholi parents were still motivated to have their children baptised into the Christian faith. By doing so they provided the next generation with a denominational identity, and access to the social and educational resources which being a Catholic or Protestant in Acholi would provide.

⁷⁵⁴ O. p'Bitek, *Artist, the Ruler: Essays on Art, Culture, and Values* (Nairobi: East African Literature Bureau, 1986), 4; p'Bitek, *Lak tar* (East African Literature Bureau, 1969)

⁷⁵⁵ Paotto, *A study of Constraints on Greater Groundnut Production in West Acholi*, 36.

⁷⁵⁶ RCA: 5 Year Report on the Diocese of Gulu 1970-1975. Report By Dr Cipriano Kihangie, 1 May 1976.

5.6. Moving Closer to the Source of Power: Individual versus Collective Agency

Whilst the rule of fear drove the political economy in Acholi, it did not paralyze daily life. The Acholi who remained in Southern and Northern Uganda during Amin's regime, and who avoided being identified as a potential enemy of the state, often found that after the initial turmoil following the coup, they were generally left to their own devices, carrying on much as they did before. As one student in the 1970s remarked:

Actually during my graduation [in Makerere] Amin was the one who conferred me. Many students ran away when the killings started in Kampala, but otherwise being an Acholi was ok. The civilians were very sympathetic towards us. A Southerner hid me when it started because I was fearful. I decided to stay and finish my degree. The students from the West Nile were really good. They were the ones helping us. The people who were not involved in politics were good.⁷⁵⁷

Others claimed that while they were aware of the killings going on in Kampala, they themselves had not been affected and had simply carried on working on their farms as they had always done. By concentrating on just the violent aspects of Amin's rule scholars have ignored the quotidian realities of many Ugandans who simply got on with their lives as best as they could, despite the political situation. This section of the population made up the 'silent majority' who generally kept their political views to themselves unless a policy affected them or their families personally.⁷⁵⁸

I was in the village when Amin took over and I heard that he had suspended the constitution and banned political parties, but this did not really mean anything to me. I had my children and my wives and we continued what we were doing.⁷⁵⁹

Another common remark among interviewees was the assessment that after by 1977, when most of the publicised massacres by Amin's forces had taken

⁷⁵⁷ (F/M) AU: Interview with civil servant Gulu, 9 May 2012

⁷⁵⁸ C.C. Gibbs, *The Great Silent Majority: Missouri's Resistance to World War 1* (Missouri: University of Missouri Press, 1988).

⁷⁵⁹ (F/M) AU: Interview with subsistence farmer, Omoro county, 2 July 2012

place, the country fell into an uneasy routine whereby everybody knew what was expected of them and how to keep within the periphery of the authorities.⁷⁶⁰ Within this demographic were those who were completely disinterested in politics or simply avoided any political engagements. These were the people whose only concern centred on maintaining a job and feeding their families. However, regardless of their formal political 'inactivity' the connection between the 'silent majority' and central and local political institutions was fundamental to the survival of Uganda as a nation state. This is primarily because local and national politicians were reliant on this demographic to provide the foundation for their political base. In turn the 'silent majority' left it to these political actors to take their grievances to the centre. In this way they were never completely dislocated from high politics.

A year after Amin's coup, there was confusion within this demographic regarding what exactly had gone on and what was expected of them. Central government had to send a memorandum to local chiefs commanding them to inform the people that they were still obligated to pay their taxes as false news had reached the districts that Amin no longer expected them to do so.⁷⁶¹ This point is not to underplay the brutality of Amin's rule, but to indicate that rather than simply being based on formal lines of communication, the relationship between the 'silent majority' and central government was characterised by rumour and gossip. More widely this point reiterates the importance of local politicians as the mediums of political dialogue between the locality and the centre. With the exile and political displacement of this demographic in the 1970s, this line of communication was gradually diminished. More generally the power of rumour and gossip is indicative of the exclusive nature of high politics, which reinforces the positions of those in the 'inner circle' by keeping those in the periphery 'ignorant', thus making them easier to control. Rumour can also be used by those outside the periphery of formal political power to

⁷⁶⁰ Formal and informal interviews, Gulu, Kitgum June-August 2012.

⁷⁶¹ GDA Box 541: Monthly District Intelligence Reports, 12 March 1974- November 1977.

construct their own political reality by validating or indeed delegitimizing the authority of those in the 'inner circle' of high politics.⁷⁶²

Azarya and Chazan argue that in weakened states there is a disengagement of social forces from the public sphere, and 'as the state withers, new arrangements and interactions (both state-society and society-society) move into the political void that is left in its wake.'⁷⁶³ With the lack of a functioning effective local government, political discourses in Acholi became more of an individual endeavour as the dangers of being affiliated to particular groups, institutions, or organisations became too great. When the avenue for political engagement via the politically minded *Oco/s* was diminished under Amin, individual actors took on an 'each to their own' mentality. The obligations governing 'moral ethnicity' that defined people's rights, responsibilities and that protected people when they were most vulnerable and alone were challenged as individuals were forced to adapt to the rapidly changing political environment.⁷⁶⁴ This scenario, as Chabal argues, is one of the benefits of dismantling the often-ambiguous concept of 'agency', particularly when assessing how Africans have dealt with post-colonial political changes at a local, regional and national level. Chabal states that the idea that the individual in modern or 'Western societies' is deemed subjectively to be more of a free agent than in so called 'traditional societies' does little to reveal how Africans have adapted rapidly to changes in their environment, and fails to highlight the potential for grass roots movements to influence high politics.⁷⁶⁵

The breakdown of local political institutions in Acholi meant that responsibility fell increasingly on the individual to prosecute their own political

⁷⁶² N. Kastfelt, 'Rumours of Maitatsine: A Note on Political Culture in Northern Nigeria' *African Affairs*, Vol. 88, No. 350 (January, 1989), 83-90; S. Ellis, 'Source, Rumour and Power in Togo', *Journal of the International African Institute*, Vol. 63, No. 4 (1993), 462- 476.

⁷⁶³ V. Azarya and N. Chazan, 'Disengagement From the State in Africa: Reflection on the Experiences of Ghana and Guinea,' *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 29 (January, 1987), 106-31, cited in J. W. Harbeson, N. Chazan, D. Rothchild (eds.) *Civil Society and the State in Africa*, (Boulder, Colorado: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1994), 270

⁷⁶⁴ Lonsdale, 'Political Tribalism and Moral Ethnicity.'

⁷⁶⁵ Chabal, *Africa: The Politics of Smiling and Suffering*, 10-12.

grievances. As a result, the district archives showed an increase in letters and statements of support being sent directly to heads of local and central government and sometimes directly to the President himself. These correspondences align with the previous argument that in Acholi, the fear of Amin's regime was immediate. For some individual actors the need for self-preservation forced them to open a direct line of communication to the President, distancing themselves from Obote and in some respects the 'Northern identity'. The increased levels of surveillance and the fear of being informed upon by political, clan or economic opponents meant that individuals became proactive in their engagement with the state. Whilst fear motivated these interactions, they also served to indirectly legitimise the authority of Amin's regime. However, the archives show that although these letters were circulated amongst local government officials, the intended recipients rarely received or responded them, indicating that even in this endeavour one could never gain direct access to the source of power. Despite this, there was a need to formally put one's case across before some else did. Three months after the coup, a superintendent of the Tobacco Co-operative Unit and former member of the town council sent a letter expressing his personal support for the military government while reassuring the administration that he had always been a loyal citizen of Uganda:

I have never worked against the colonial government, Dr Obote Regime and now I am fully behind the military government. I have been carrying out my duty as normal since the military government took over, and I have never spoken a bad name about the government and I will never do. Sir as there other people who are against me for this personal hatred would like you as you know me personally to make it clear to the head of government General Idi Amin Dada that I am a man who is fully behind him and working in support of him.⁷⁶⁶

But in the same vein the superintendent wanted to make it clear that while he carried out his work under Obote, he was never privy to any high profile political activities nor was he an active member of the UPC, and as such he was not a danger to the regime. In a similar appeal, a retired policeman from

⁷⁶⁶ GDA Box: 541: Letter from the Superintendent of Works Tobacco Co-operative Union Ltd to DC West Acholi 16 May 1971.

West Acholi penned an appeal for compensation for his house, which the former DC had instructed him to destroy to make space for a local government project. 'Your Excellency the life president of Uganda and you is the father of everybody in Uganda and therefore I kneel down before you and humble beg to allow me to present my appeal before you for consideration' [sic].⁷⁶⁷ Individuals who had previously relied on politicians and local institutions to bargain on their behalf now had to contend with the political vacuum that had been left behind. The disruptions in the hierarchy of power meant that non-political actors in the region started to feel that the only way that they could get things done would be to speak directly to 'the big man.' In this way they moved closer to the source of power. As Lonsdale asserts, the low politics of survival quickly replaced the high politics of patronage, 'in such situations ordinary people who cannot act in their own cause may find that they have no option but to fend for themselves, being unable any longer to trust in the powerful to protect their lives and livelihood.'⁷⁶⁸ However, in Acholi it was not simply lack of trust of the patrons within high politics, it was that local elites had through Amin's economic and political policies seen their power greatly diminished. They could no longer control the patron-client network. Consequently, Amin's regime indirectly emphasised individual agency primarily because the government had diminished the means by which collective agency could be channelled. Furthermore, the nature of these appeals was unique to the 1970s, primarily because there was mortal danger in making yourself politically visible. Yet these men officially bypassed their chiefs, local administrators addressing their letters specifically for the President's attention. Undoubtedly they were motivated by the fear of being informed upon or implicated in any subversive activities. However, much like the chiefs who informed on their rivals, there was also an element of opportunism; a chance to redress the political and social nepotism that had kept the 'Ocols' in a position of power for so long. Amin's leadership style held little regard for the social hierarchies that had previously dictated the relationship between high and low politics in Obote's Uganda. In Amin's

⁷⁶⁷ GDA Box 532: Letter from Ezekeri Abwoch to President Idi Amin, 6 February 1979.

⁷⁶⁸ J. Lonsdale, 'Political Tribalism and Moral ethnicity', 76-77.

Uganda power and leadership in the locality was no longer constituted by a network of *Ocols*: it was linear, coalescing in the hands of a single ruler. In certain ways this presented more opportunities for a direct dialogue with the *Lawinos*.

Even after Amin was overthrown the damage to the national and local administrative bodies remained extensive. This was partly due to the disorganisation and damage that was caused in the region during the liberation war. Months after Amin was deposed, the economic and security situation in many of the Acholi districts, particular in East Acholi, was still in complete disarray. As one interviewee noted, 'it took nearly three months for the liberating soldiers to reach Gulu and even longer to reach Kitgum. Many of us did not even know what was going on.'⁷⁶⁹ In the meantime, goods were not getting through to the districts and those that were on route from the South were often looted by remnants of Amin's soldiers escaping on their way to Sudan. In August 1979, the District Security officer in Kitgum sent a heartfelt plea to the Commander-in-Chief of the Uganda National Liberation Army (UNLA) to provide armed escorts for essential commodities that were being sent to the area as they were either being looted or sold before they reached the district by opportunistic drivers.⁷⁷⁰ In addition, there were frequent reports of shootings, rapes and robberies being committed by remnants of Amin's units who were still hiding in the region.⁷⁷¹ It would be fair to say that during the eight to twelve months after Amin was deposed there was no effective system of government in Acholi. Thus the politics of individual survival continued with direct appeals and correspondences being made to the DC's office and the members of the interim government of the NCC (National Consultative Council (NCC) bypassing local administrative hierarchies.⁷⁷² The

⁷⁶⁹ (F/F) NAU: Interview with subsistence farmer, Lamwo District, 2 August 2012

⁷⁷⁰ KDA: Letter from the Commander in Chief UNLA Kitgum to DC, Kitgum. 23 August 1979.

⁷⁷¹ GDA Box: 541: Letter from A.O. Opobo, Chairman of ACA to DC, Gulu. 7 September 1979.

⁷⁷² GDA Box 532: Staff Records, June 1980-November 1989; GDA Box 533: 'Letter from Sub-county Chief returning from exile to Permanent Secretary, Kampala, 6 May 1980; GDA Box: 533: File; Staff Salaried and Complaints, 1972-1980. From 1975 onwards there was marked

letters being written by individuals generally related to requesting financial assistance. They would emphasise the personal toll that the Amin regime and the liberation war had taken on their livelihoods, families and future prospects and late payment of salaries.⁷⁷³

However, these letters should not be viewed as overly audacious as this was a brief time in Ugandan history when there existed a general sense of national unity and a belief that everyone, regardless of their ethnicity was 'in it together.' This collective anger towards the previous regime briefly ignited a belief that the liberating Tanzanian and Ugandan forces and the interim government that followed would provide more than they actually did. The empowerment of the individual is reflected in the hundreds of application forms that were sent by Acholi men from all walks of life applying for jobs within the newly installed NCC in 1979. The NCC announced that they would be expanding the council by sixty-one new members and were looking for candidates from all the various districts in Uganda to fill the posts. This was an attempt by the new government to encourage the 'silent majority' to engage directly with state structures. The Entebbe District Archives holds some of the applications sent from Gulu district by Acholi men to the NCC, with one folder containing fifty-four separate applications. Similarly the Kitgum district archives hold all the applications from East Acholi. A large number of the applicants were teachers, local businessmen and former political party activists whose main stated aims were 'to teach the populace about the policies of the new government.'⁷⁷⁴ However, there were also a notable number of applications from the *Lawinos*, with uneducated rural farmers and menial labourers also seeking to work for the NCC. The applicants varied in

disintegration of Acholi Local Administration. Lack of finances, staff indifference and corruption meant that the local councils could no longer operate effectively.

⁷⁷³ GDA Box 532: 'Problem for Government Assistance' Letter from corporal G.O. Anying addressed to DC Gulu, 23 November 1979; KDA: File: ADM/44 'UNCC Correspondences' 11 October 1979-August 1980; GDA Box: 532 File: C.MISS.12: Petitions and complaints, 20 October 1980; UNA/E Box 3 Ref 8: U.N.C.C Kitgum District, Expansion of UNCC 1st Passes Only, 1979; UNA/E: Box 5 Ref 8: U.N.C.C Gulu District, Expansion of UNCC 1st Elimination Failures. 1979; KDA: Letter from A.K Ocayo to DC, Kitgum. 3 July 1980.

⁷⁷⁴ UNA/E Box 3 Ref 8: U.N.C.C Kitgum District, Expansion of UNCC 1st Passes Only, 1979; UNA/E: Box 5 Ref 8: U.N.C.C Gulu District, Expansion of UNCC 1st Elimination/Failures. 1979.

age from an eighteen-year male student at secondary school to a seventy-year-old uneducated subsistence farmer. The education and literacy levels varied dramatically with applications being sent in from Makerere University graduates and civil servants quoting Winston Churchill and J.F Kennedy, to uneducated labourers who could barely write their own name. Several applicants listed their occupation as 'villagers' and 'peasants.' However, even among this demographic, there was still an attempt to appropriate much of the political jargon used by the politically minded *Ocol/s* in the previous regime: 'I want to join the NCC to fight against tribalism in local villages and to help my neighbours who had a lack of proper treatment from the former government.'⁷⁷⁵ Others expressed the need for national unity and the creation of a Ugandan government that would treat all ethnicities equally, creating a true democracy that would allow all voices in Uganda to be heard. The adoption of the language used by local and national politicians by some of the applicants shows that whilst *Lawinos* wanted to engage in a dialogue with the political elite, they were aware that if they were to be taken seriously they needed to adopt the same expression and political rhetoric as those at the top. Consequently, they rehashed many of the political slogans and sentiments that had been used to mobilise them by national and local politicians used during the height of political activity in the late 1950s and early 1960s. Yet despite references to eradicating tribalism, nepotism and religious rivalries, many of the applicants inevitably conveyed the reality of Ugandan politics, which had been and continues to be driven by localised and ethnic allegiances. Whilst on one hand paying lip service to the wider national debates regarding democratisation, the applicants placed emphasis on advocating for resources for their specific villages and districts. Even within this however there was a sense of collectivity among the applications written by Acholi peasant farmers. Through the applications they were able to condemn the historic and continued marginalisation of the peasant farmers and rural dwellers who had been continually neglected by central government's economic policies. The principal sentiment in the applications was that the masses should have more of a say in all political affairs. Although

⁷⁷⁵ Ibid.

the applications were an individual endeavour, we are able to conclude that among the Acholi peasant farmers potentially unifying political and economic grievances existed. Although Acholi progressive farmers faced some resistance from peasant farmers from the late 1950s to the 1980s, the attacks were sporadic unorganised and were driven by individual rather than any centralised agrarian movement. Even the Koro Anywali Society, which had targeted progressive farming institutions, was mobilised by chiefs, and politicians defending their political and economic territories. Consequently for Acholi peasant farmers, class, education, nepotism, clan debates combined with *Oco/s* political and economic ambitions placed limits on any collectivised movement in the locality.

Despite the inflow of applications to the NCC, many of the applicants still expressed apprehension towards the new government. Two decades of failed economic policies, broken promises, oppression and regional marginalisation meant that as much as the Acholi hoped for a different political system to emerge, history dictated that this might not transpire. As one applicant wrote, ‘the NCC can only improve the county by not just preaching the doctrine of unity but also practicing it. The people will only accept things they can see. They will not accept the NCC if they cannot see the aid which the government says that it will provide [sic].’⁷⁷⁶ The applications show clearly the mind of the individual Acholi man who made up the ‘silent majority.’ While their motivations for applying to the NCC may have been skewed towards economic considerations such as acquiring waged employment, they were still aware of the politics that dictated the land, even if they generally remained inactive in formal politics. The nature of governance in colonial and post-colonial Uganda, which directly and indirectly emphasised ethnopolitical identities at the centre, meant that this demographic remained largely contained within the structures of localised politics.

Whilst central government’s rhetoric permeated political discourses in Acholi, little effort was made to boost state investment in the region’s

⁷⁷⁶ UNA/E Box 3 Ref 8: U.N.C.C Kitgum District, Expansion of UNCC 1st Passes Only, 1979; UNA/E: Box 5 Ref 8, U.N.C.C Gulu District, Expansion of UNCC 1st Elimination/Failures, 1979.

economy. By continuing colonial patterns of underinvestment in Acholi, the rural masses soon realised that they could not rely on state resources and institutions. In this regard, it could be argued that the Ugandan nation state politically and economically needed the rural masses more than the rural masses needed or were reliant on the state. However, to reinforce their political position, the local and national politicians continued to propagate the potential capabilities of the state, primarily because their relationship with central government validated their claims to power in the locality. In his work on democratisation in Uganda, Amii Omara-Otunno discusses more generally the relationship between African political elites and the civil society which they 'advocate' for:

The gap between the rhetoric of democratic rights by the political elite and their enjoyment by the citizenry has rendered problematic the substantive meaning of any participatory system of government, and its realisation in many countries. It is a tragic irony of African nationalism that the potent weapon of democracy, which indigenous politicians wielded so effectively to dislodge European colonialism from the continent, has been misused and perverted in the independence era despite its continuing historical and moral appeal. Although many leaders passionately expressed commitment to the achievement of democracy before attaining state power, their actions thereafter have for the most part proved that they had appropriated this popular concept mainly for its instrumental value; namely, in order to mobilise mass support in the contest for power with the aid of an ideological slogan. Many of the most regrettable acts by African leaders may be attributed either to opportunism and cynicism or to a genuine incomprehension of the principles of democracy, because their implementation ought to have enhanced the human dignity and quality of life of all concerned.⁷⁷⁷

In Acholi, belief in the 'possibilities' of the state meant that although the 'silent majority' continued to be let down by local and national politicians, they still strived to remain a part of a national identity. Even with the exile of high profile local political patrons in the 1970s, they continued to turn to the 'big man' in their time of need, yet they had become accustomed to receiving very little in return. Had the optimism and national unity that immediately followed the

⁷⁷⁷ A. Omara-Otunnu, 'The Struggle for Democracy in Uganda.' *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, Vol. 30 No.2 (1992) (Abstract), 443-463.

overthrow of Amin been harnessed, promises not broken, and strong central government with a functioning district administration created, perhaps the 'silent majority' could have seen these possibilities materialise into tangible economic and political policies. But as it was to transpire, the years following Amin's rule were to place Uganda and the Acholi into a continued cycle of political instability and violence

Conclusion

The eradication of political parties and the weakening of the local councils and administrations meant that debates regarding 'moral ethnicity' came to the forefront within the Acholi polity in the 1970s. The fear of the state, and its monopoly of the mechanisms of inflicting violence and death, drove Acholi either back to their ancestral homes or out of the country in search of safety. Migration back to the homestead, combined with increased competition for jobs in the district contributed to the social, political and economic tensions in the locality. Furthermore, the emphasis on chiefs as political and cultural leaders contributed to the sharpening of clan identities. As a result, even within the Acholi ethnic identity, the social stratifications of 'moral ethnicity' were internally fragmented, reinforcing traditional structures of clan groupings.

In religious terms, the increase in baptism and conversion to Christianity with the decrease of church marriages and the continued disregard for Christian teachings back in the villages, was a reinforcement of indigenous cultural norms and values. Yet it was also an acknowledgement of the growing attachment the Acholi had for their post-colonial Christian identity as well as the resources that could be obtained by affiliating with a particular denomination. The flight to the villages by migrants and the exile of the *Ocols* served to weaken the connection between Acholi and the rest of Uganda politically, isolating the peoples of the region while emphasising their connection to their ancestral land. *The Ocols*, marginalised once again to the locality, used their intellectual and material resources to acquire scarce

economic commodities at the expense of the *Lawinos*.⁷⁷⁸ Yet this did not translate into a breakdown of relations between the two groups. There were no mass uprisings by the peasant farmers, urban and rural labourers or housewives aimed at the Acholi middle class, nor were there reports regarding major clashes stemming from the unequal distribution of wealth. Although the *Lawinos* were not being 'protected' or 'rewarded' by those who held power, they continued to maintain the status quo through their silence and indifference to formal political and social structures in the locality. Undeniably, even if the *Lawinos* were inclined to change their socio-economic status, they lacked the means and resources to compete with the *Ocols* at this level. However, even if one were to somehow acquire the resources to do so, one automatically entered the domain of the patrons whose primary role would be to reinforce the social, political and economic structures that kept the 'haves' on top and the 'have nots' below.

Thus a cycle becomes self-perpetuating, where the *Ocols* strive to gain more power, while the *Lawinos* push to enter the world of the *Ocols*. As high politics moved from the centre to the locality, the *Lawinos* were displaced to a lower level of political negotiation. This was only allowed to happen because of how each of the two groups viewed their positions within Acholi. The *Ocols* expected to be placed within a higher pecking order because they had the political and economic resources. In turn, by placing education, money and cultural capital as the pinnacle of achievement and as a means to alleviate one from poverty, the *Lawinos* inadvertently confirmed the *Ocols* positioning within this pecking order.⁷⁷⁹ The two groups thus understood their roles as symbiotic; the existence of one validated the other. However, this process of validation could only take place within the enclave of an Acholi moral economy where kinship, clans, ancestral ties, language and cultural customs provided the umbilical cord connecting the various hierarchies. This can be observed in

⁷⁷⁸ Berman and Kymlicka (eds.), *Ethnicity & Democracy in Historical and Comparative Perspective*, 7

⁷⁷⁹ P. Bourdieu, 'The Forms of Capital' in J. Richardson (ed.) *Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1986), 241-258.

how those with 'the big bellies', rather than being abandoned when they were in trouble, were actually sheltered and protected by the *Lawinos* and allowed to resume their positions after the liberation war. Rather than dismantling Acholi ethnic identity at a time when it was dangerous to be an Acholi, the overall effect in this shift of political dynamics in region, actually served to strengthen it. The repressiveness of Ugandan politics in the 1970s and the lack of political parties to channel grievances through the lens of 'political tribalism', meant that when Idi Amin was overthrown, Acholi politicians who returned to the region found that tools within the 'cultural tool kit' had not rusted or eroded with time, but had in fact been sharpened considerably.

6.0. A State in Turmoil: 1979-1980.

‘ . . . After Amin, we understood politics better.’⁷⁸⁰

Rather than providing a return to some sort of normality in Uganda after Amin, Obote’s re-election under controversial circumstances in 1980 obliterated any hope of political cohesion, sending opposing political figures to the bush to fight against the new regime. Government resources were spent fighting the rebels at the expense of reconstructing state and local institutions. The country was once again left with an ineffective central government, riddled with ethnic rivalries, governed by military force and crippled economically.

Adam Branch argues that, following Obote’s election in 1980, the political and economic vacuum left by Amin’s rule meant there could be ‘no return to the massive patronage machine of the Obote I regime. Consequently, there was no ‘wide-scale revival of the Acholi middle class’, as there was not ‘much to redistribute’ through the patron-client network.’⁷⁸¹ Whilst Amin had utilised chiefly authority to maintain some political and administrative connection to the Acholi locality, Obote’s increasing fear of political challenges from Acholi politicians and high-ranking military personnel, meant that, rather than attempting harness political support from his northern counterparts, he became reliant on political and military support from members of his own tribal group. This meant that once again, Acholi politicians lost their position as the centralising force between local and central government.

Within Acholi, the failure to establish an effective administrative, economic and political connection between the locality and the centre meant that during the five years of Obote’s rule, the political cataclysm at the centre was reflected back into the locality. The economic and political collapse of the state, and consequent weakening of the patronage machine, opened an avenue for political pluralism, giving multiple ‘power contenders’ the opportunity to engage outside of their previously established political domains.

⁷⁸⁰ (F/M) NAU: Interview with retired civil servant, Gulu Town Centre, 15 July 2012

⁷⁸¹ Branch, *Displacing Human Rights*, 58.

Furthermore, the return of the Acholi political elite from exile and the resumption of party politics reignited old political rivalries with each faction now willing to infringe on the others previously established political territories. For the local population, the failure of central government to re-establish law and order cumulated in violent civil disorder as some members of the populace sought to acquire basic goods, often at the expense of ethnic 'outsiders' living in the region by redefining the cultural boundaries of 'Acholiness'. Thus, political activity in Acholi during this period therefore became primarily centred on the locality, as formal negotiations for economic and political resources could no longer take place within the national arena.

6.1. 'Coup d'état Politics'

Amin's dictatorial rule and economic policies, whilst detrimental to the administrative function of the state, were able to utilise unilateral violence and fear to keep internal political disobedience in check and stifle any opposition to his authority. However, from the moment Amin was ousted, the Ugandan state faced challenges of monumental proportions: primarily how to go about reconstructing a civilian political order that would replace the former military regime. The military coup immediately negated the political, economic and judicial structures that had been installed by the former administration, all of which ceased to function as Amin's troops fled the capital in 1979, leaving what Gertzel describes as a 'broken-backed state' [with] a serious institutional and political vacuum.⁷⁸² There was no functioning police force, army, judiciary or civil service, and those who did remain in their posts were left in limbo unsure whom they were to serve. The National Consultative Council (NCC) was essentially left with the task of building a civilian government from nothing. Several senior appointments were made in quick succession, including the installation of a Chief Justice and Inspector-General of the Police.⁷⁸³ The political vacuum left by Amin generated a destructive dialogue

⁷⁸² C. Gertzel, 'Uganda after Amin: The Continuing Search for Leadership and Control' *African Affairs*, Vol. 79 No. 317 (1980), 461-489.

⁷⁸³ Karugire, *The Roots of instability in Uganda*, 85-87.

between national and local political actors who were all vying to gain control of Uganda:

Within a matter of weeks the new rulers were submerged in a political debate that produced a 'total paralysis of administration' and a struggle for power within their ranks, which severely constrained decision-making at the centre. The attempt to re-establish legal and normative rules were inhibited by the fact that no single group proved able to impose its ideas and interpretations upon the others. The inability to achieve a new consensus gave greater encouragement to old political divisions. Hence those who sought to restore order to Uganda in 1979 had to engage in the same quest for legitimacy and control that had posed the fundamental dilemma for the former civilian regime before 1971.⁷⁸⁴

The liberation war had been years in the planning and prior to the Tanzanian and Ugandan troops entering the Kampala, Julius Nyerere, the Tanzanian President, had hosted in March 1979 a gathering of all the would-be-liberators to discuss what sort of government would be formed after Amin's deposal. Attendees were comprised of more than 100 Ugandans from over twenty separate exile groups with a wide spectrum of political views and loyalties represented, all stating their claims for political representation in a post-Amin government. UPC politicians made a request for special recognition for their members on the grounds of being one of the oldest parties in Uganda, while a request by The Front for National Salvation (FRONASA)-an anti-Amin rebel group formed around 1972 and headed by future President Yoweri Museveni-that exiles with a military base should play a central role within any government, was swiftly rejected.⁷⁸⁵

Added to this, Obote was still regarded as 'the president in exile' by his loyal supporters from the UPC caucus.⁷⁸⁶ Nyerere had remained a constant advocate for the former president, even providing him safe exile in Dar-es-Salaam. Among Obote's old and new political opponents, there was a real fear that the Tanzanian president was clandestinely orchestrating his friend's return to the Ugandan presidency, yet they remained reliant on Nyerere's

⁷⁸⁴ Gertzel, 'Uganda after Amin', 461-489.

⁷⁸⁵ R. Posnett, 'Uganda after Amin' *The World Today*, Vol. 36 No. 4 (1980), 147-153; Karugire, *The Roots of instability in Uganda*, 85-87.

⁷⁸⁶ Gertzel, 'Uganda after Amin', 461-489.

political and military support for any successful coup. Following heated debates in Moshi it was agreed by the Ugandan groups and Nyerere that an umbrella governing body named the Uganda National liberation Front would be formed, comprised of a National Consultative Council which would act as an interim legislature and a National Executive Committee of which the chairman would act as an ex-officio President. Yusuf Lule, a Muganda, was installed as the chairman and became acting President of the NCC immediately after Amin was overthrown. However, as Samwiri Karugire observes, the problem was that many of the debates that had taken place in Moshi a month earlier had not been resolved and this 'disparate collection' of individuals were tasked with reinstalling civilian rule in Uganda.⁷⁸⁷

Amin was eventually overthrown a year after he unsuccessfully tried to invade Tanzania in October 1978. The invading Tanzanian and Ugandan rebel resistance quickly overpowered any resistance, taking Kampala on the 10 April 1979. By this time Amin had already escaped to Libya where he remained in exile until 1980. Despite the national euphoria that followed liberation and support from the civilian population, the UNLF and the NCC faced the same problems of legitimacy that had thwarted Amin and Obote. Internal divisions within the interim government, its largely military composition, and inability to centralise political control, meant that within a few weeks of the coup not even the national cries of post-liberation joy carry the new government past its political stagnation. Furthermore, the predominately Northern composition of the old army cadre still posed many of the same problems that had challenged Obote and Amin. The installation of Yusuf Lule as President of the NCC meant that army personnel who had remained loyal to Obote and still considered him as the legitimate president of Uganda were inherently hostile to Lule's government.⁷⁸⁸ There were accusations against Lule by pro-Buganda groups that the President's cabinet was disproportionately weighted with pro-Obote elements. The installation of Oyite Ojok, a Lango, as Chief-of-Staff was viewed by the Baganda as an attempt to fill the administration with pro-Obote Northerners. The Baganda still had little

⁷⁸⁷ Karugire, *The Roots of instability in Uganda*, 85-87.

⁷⁸⁸ Ibid.

regard for Obote, blaming him for many of the political and economic hardships that had befallen the Kingdom since the 1960s. Despite protestations by Obote that he had no intention of returning to reclaim the presidency, the situation was tenuous given that the former president still continued to play a prominent role in political affairs across the border.⁷⁸⁹ Unsurprisingly, considering such tensions, after only two months there was a change of leadership within the NCC as another Muganda, Godfrey Binaisa was appointed as President, replacing Yusuf Lule in June 1979. When Binaisa fired the military Chief of Staff Brigadier David Oyite Ojok, Paulo Muwanga, a close associate of Obote, staged another coup ending Binaisa's presidency in May 1980. Muwanga ruled for just a few days until the establishment of the Presidential Commission of Uganda under the chairmanship of Muwanga and deputy chairmanship of Yoweri Museveni, with Oyite Ojok and General Tito Okello acting as heads of the army. On 27 May 1980, Baganda fears were realised when the Presidential Commission announced that Obote would be returning to Uganda and that in December of the same year, the country would hold its first multi-party elections since independence in 1962.⁷⁹⁰

In response to the political divisions within the NCC and across the country, new political parties were quickly formed while old established ones such as the UPC and DP started to harness their support base. To prevent a return to the status quo of a two-party state, rebel military leaders such as Yoweri Museveni formed political wings of their military groups to challenge DP and UPC political dominance. On 4 June 1980, the Uganda Patriotic Movement (UPM) was formed creating a political wing of FRONASA. In the same month the Uganda Labour Party (ULP) and the Uganda Nationalist Movement (UNM) were formed, with members drawn from the NCC and several cabinet ministers. The general consensus among these new parties was that the UPC and the DP had had the opportunity but had failed to

⁷⁸⁹ Gertzel, 'Uganda after Amin', 481.

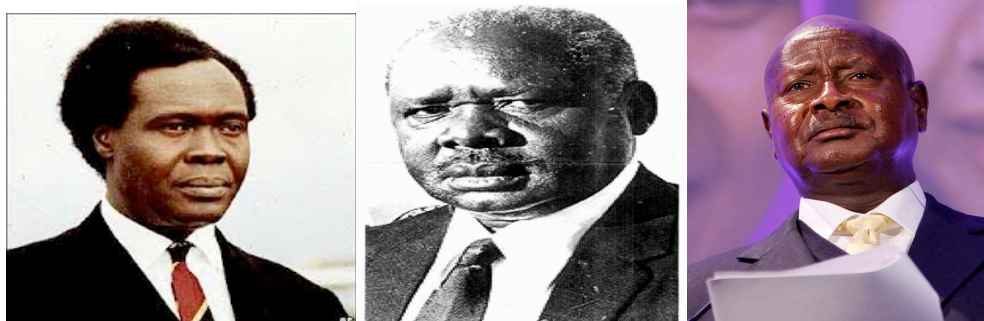
⁷⁹⁰ G. Mwakikagile, *Obote to Museveni: Political Transformation in Uganda Since Independence* (Da-es-Salaam: New Africa Press), 112

address the country's problems.⁷⁹¹ These new political parties provided the means for a new generation of politicians and army personnel to challenge the old cadre of political actors.

Image 2: Ugandan Presidents 1979-1986



Yusuf Lule: 13 April-20 June 1979 **Godfrey Binaisa:** June 1979 -May 1980 **Paulo Muwanga:** 12-22 May 1980



Milton Obote: 17 Dec. 1980-27 July 1985 **Tito Okello:** 29 July 1985-26 Jan. 1986 **Yoweri Museveni:** 29 Jan 1986-

The main political problem was that the various rebel groups which had come together under the UNLA/F, had all operated as separate political and military entities while they were in exile prior to the Moshi conference. Trying to join these various military wings into one national army proved problematic given their diverse political allegiances to their leaders. The situation was clearly causing great concern among the populace, prompting Museveni to reassure Ugandans that contrary to appearances there was 'no single Ugandan with his private army' and that all army personnel were completely devoted to the UNLA: 'We can afford to have more political parties but not

⁷⁹¹ 'A new political Party formed' *The Uganda Times*, 5 June 1980. The Military Commission was set up as a branch of the UNLA.

more than one army.⁷⁹² Yet, within a few months, this statement would prove untrue. As soon as it was announced that Obote had won the general elections in December 1980, several rebel groups including Museveni's quickly mobilised their armed forces and retreated to the bush to wage a guerrilla war against the new government. This was despite the promise made by David Oyite Ojok in 1980 that once the elections were over, 'the soldiers would return to their barracks.'⁷⁹³

The announcement that Obote was returning to Uganda to run for President had a favourable impact on UPC's support base in Acholi. Amin's rule of fear only served to remind the Acholi how of good they had had it under Obote's first administration.⁷⁹⁴ It was no wonder that even hardened DP supporters often resorted to looking back at Obote's first presidency with the retrospective hue of rose-tinted glasses. Some voters who had been loyal to the DP changed allegiance as they bought into the party rhetoric that the UPC was the only party that cared about development in the North. The re-election of Obote in 1980 has proven controversial among political activists inside and outside of Acholi, particularly regarding the question of whether or not elections were rigged in Obote's favour. Academic and political observers generally agree 'that the 1980 elections were rigged to give power to the UPC can now not be doubted.'⁷⁹⁵ Karugire offers documentary evidence supporting the claim that prior to the election, the UPC, with the backing of the Military Commission had laid down plans to ensure that the outcome of the elections would be favourable to the party and its leader. As such it became a regular occurrence that the army systematically dispersed rallies by political opponents.⁷⁹⁶ Of the Acholi interviewees who were consulted in Uganda and the Diaspora in the United Kingdom for this project however, the vast majority disputed the claim that there was any corruption during the elections. As one informant said, 'even if the election had been stolen, was that a good enough

⁷⁹² 'No private Army Museveni declares' *The Uganda Times*, 11 June 1980.

⁷⁹³ 'Soldiers will return to the barracks' *The Uganda Times*, 11 June 1980.

⁷⁹⁴ Formal and informal interviews, Gulu and Kitgum, June - August 2012.

⁷⁹⁵ Karugire, *The Roots of Instability in Uganda*, 88.

⁷⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

reason to go the bush and shed all that blood?’⁷⁹⁷ Whilst the emphasis of this thesis is not to try and argue whether or not Obote rigged the elections in 1980, it is however important to understand why so many Acholi dispute this claim. Primarily, any concession that the 1980 elections were rigged would somehow justify Museveni taking up arms against Obote and paving the path for a brutal civil war, which some prominent Acholi politicians now call a ‘genocide against the Acholi people by the Ugandan government.’⁷⁹⁸ In many ways, the animosity towards the current regime has favourably shaped understandings of the second Obote administration, reinforcing yet again the political divide between North and South. Furthermore, the idea of a self-interested rebel leader who had run to the bush because he was defeated was a valuable political tool that Obote used at any given opportunity. The ‘bush war’ absolved him of responsibilities for his failing regime. Any hardships being faced by Ugandans could be attributed to the activities of the rebels.⁷⁹⁹ Consequently, Museveni and his rebel fighters provided the government with the ideal scapegoat for all its failings. This was a rhetorical device that a vast majority of the Acholi bought into, and to some extent still do.

6.2. Civil Disobedience and the Continued Militarisation of Acholi

If this brief narrative of Ugandan political history following Amin’s ousting reads like a convoluted political nightmare, it is precisely because it was. Unfortunately, this coincided with a crucial time when Ugandans needed coherency from their political leaders the most. Amin’s regime had all but crippled the economy. Furthermore, the liberation war had proved to be costly, both economically and socially. Remnants of Amin’s armies who were trying to escape the capital looted, raped and killed as they made their way to Sudan. Members of the UNLA, many of whom had volunteered to fight

⁷⁹⁷ (F/M) NAU: interview with civil servant, Entebbe, 4 January 2012.

⁷⁹⁸ Olara. A. Otunno. ‘The Secret Genocide.’ *Foreign Policy*.

http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2006/06/09/the_secret_genocide [Accessed 20 October 2013].

⁷⁹⁹ ‘Luwero School Reopens’ *The Uganda Times*, 14 April 1983.

alongside the Tanzanian army with minimal training and knowledge of military conduct, returned to their villages riding the wave of liberation euphoria and wanting to stake their claim to the spoils of war. Very soon the liberating army became synonymous with corruption, the highjacking of vehicles carrying basic goods to rural villages, robberies of individual persons, and the illegal acquisition of property: 'They thought because they had freed us that they deserved everything.'⁸⁰⁰ 'Very soon "liberation" became a nightmare for the people of Uganda as lawlessness mounted and the government seemed powerless to contain it.'⁸⁰¹

Returning soldiers entered Acholi in glory only to find that their financial rewards would not be found through official salaries, but through other avenues steeped in corruption and the manipulation of the symbolic power of their uniform. Local administrators and police officers quickly lost any hope of central government coming to the rescue and found other ways to manipulate the system. A lack of political cohesion, functioning administrative hierarchy, or economic funds ensured that adherence to administrative bureaucracy was almost non-existent. Under Amin, local chiefs and military personnel had been installed as replacements of the exiled or murdered local political elite, reinforcing the connection between the centre and the locality. Consequently, there had been a semblance of administrative bureaucracy whereby local leaders knew what was expected of them and the consequences of not following the established chain of command. In attempt to fill the administrative vacuum, the NCC initiated a heavy recruitment drive into the police force to counter increased incidents of civil disorder. This was born out of the realisation that unless the fragile NCC was seen to be taking control of the country, the government would lose the little legitimacy it still held among the populace. In Acholi, the recruitment drive translated into a free for all whereby men and women who were deemed physically capable were given the opportunity to join the local police force.⁸⁰² Protocols of vetting and

⁸⁰⁰ (F/M) NAU: Interview with retired civil servant, Gulu, 9 June 2012.

⁸⁰¹ Quoted from Karugire, *The Roots of instability in Uganda*, 85-87; Gertzel, 'Uganda after Amin: The Continuing Search for Leadership and Control', 481.

⁸⁰² District staff records indicate that the vast majority of the recruits were Acholi men. Only two appraisal records for female officers were found, one of which was illiterate.

training were bypassed, resulting in the recruitment of under-qualified and often ill-disciplined recruits. The staff records indicated that a vast majority of low-ranking police officers recruited in the 1980s had little or no experience prior to their post. The majority had at best only received a primary level education with little or no understanding of English. Staff discipline within the police force became an immediate problem. Disciplinary actions were taken against frequent lateness, rudeness and disregard to superiors and cases of excessive alcohol consumption during shifts.⁸⁰³

Because of Acholi's close proximity to the Sudan, the region had to contend with a serious security crisis immediately after liberation. The West Nile, being Amin's birthplace and benefiting from his patronage, had provided the former president with a considerable support base.⁸⁰⁴ After his overthrow Amin's men used the border between Uganda and Sudan as an escape route out of the country, while some soldiers still loyal to the former President were making the exodus back to their villages in the West Nile. Consequently, the UNLA concentrated most of their efforts in West Nile region in an attempt to flush out remnants of Amin's soldiers and civilians who were still considered loyal to him. Amin's persecution and massacres of Acholi soldiers and civilians inevitably meant that questions of recriminations were immediately raised. Almost immediately some Acholi soldiers and civilians took the opportunity to avenge the wrongs that they felt had been inflicted on them by 'Amin's soldiers.'⁸⁰⁵ The situation became more fraught when it was announced that Obote had won the general elections, resulting in the creation of the Uganda National Rescue Front (UNRF), a rebel group based in the West Nile and led by Amin's former Minister of Finance, Moses Ali. The UNRF was comprised of those who politically opposed Obote and the UPC as well

⁸⁰³ KDA: Report from G. Pibo, Senior Internal Auditor sent to Treasurer Kitgum District Administration Kitgum, 22 January 1985; GDA Box 532 'Staff Records', June 1980-November 1989.

⁸⁰⁴ M. Leopold, *Inside West Nile: violence, history and representation on an African Frontier* (Durham, NC: Duke University, 2005).

⁸⁰⁵ GDA Box 541: Letter from the DC of Gulu to the Military Commission, 17 October 1980; GDA Box 541: Letter from the Vicar General of the Gulu Diocese to DC Gulu, 15 October 1980.

as some members that were still loyal to Amin.⁸⁰⁶ This placed Acholi in a precarious position, bordering as they did a region harbouring the UNRF, a group that was completely hostile to a President whom they had overwhelmingly voted for.

In Gulu, lawlessness rapidly spread across the municipality allowing civilians to openly satisfy personal vendettas against 'outsiders', in particular people from the West Nile, Arua, Sudan and Zaïre living in the region.⁸⁰⁷ Reports of murders of non-Acholi in the district became more frequent. In 1982, a Madi man who had lived in Gulu for over fifty years was killed in the town trading centre simply because he originated from the West Nile. Those living in the district but designated as non-Acholi because of their natal ethnic identities were often targeted for lootings and their properties attacked. In 1982 a public meeting was organised by the local council advising people 'not to kill in cold blood any non-Acholi without a proper investigation' as many of those being targeted had lived in the district for decades and were innocent of the war or any wrong doing.⁸⁰⁸

By the end of the 1980 the attacks had become so frequent that the Vicar-General of the Gulu Diocese felt compelled to write an open letter describing the violence that he had witnessed, including brutal killings by men, women and youth, and the forcible removal of individual property:

It is well known to all the people around Gulu that of late some Ugandans from the surrounding districts have been innocently victimised as a result of tribal hatred planted by the former dictator Amin. The situation has not changed for the better but has worsened. The Church is the champion of peace, justice and brotherly love, the defender of the poor and the oppressed besides being impartial towards any political parties and anyone in particular, this needs no added emphasis, it is an axiom. We are not doing anything wrong by

⁸⁰⁶ Will Ross, Uganda signs peace deal with rebels. BCC World News. Africa. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/africa/2607683.stm> [Accessed 18 July 2013]

⁸⁰⁷ GDA Box 541: Report, Security Meeting for West Acholi held 25 October 1982, 29 October 1982; GDA Box 541: Letter from the Vicar General of the Gulu Diocese to DC Gulu, 15 October 1980; GDA Box 541: Letter from DC Gulu to the Ministry of Internal Affairs, Kampala, 22 February 1980.

⁸⁰⁸ GDA Box: 541: Report, Security Meeting for West Acholi held 25 October 1982, 29 October 1982:

saving the life of innocent people threatened by some citizens who, in so doing, are working against the real good of our country. We would like to see civil authority openly support our stand.⁸⁰⁹

Attacks against 'outsiders' continued long after Amin's soldiers had left. Whilst initially the civilian attacks were arguably derived from a genuine fear of the presence of Amin's soldiers, they became quickly opportunistic: a means to acquire goods, food, documents and sometimes property. Thus, civil disorder in Acholi became more prevalent primarily because of the government's economic policies, or lack thereof. Against the backdrop of the on-going war between the government and the rebels in Luwero, the government's economic and military resources were primarily being utilised to fight the rebels. There was very little money going into Acholi and much of Uganda, and essential services such as road maintenance, hospitals and schools were neglected. The condition of the roads in Gulu, the main town in the Acholi was so bad that in 1983 the DC in Gulu requested that since the government could not repair them because of other priorities, the chiefs should mobilise the people to go and do the work themselves, resorting to the colonial system of mobilising 'labour gangs.'⁸¹⁰ The DC stated that it was up to the people to get themselves 'out of this acute situation.'⁸¹¹ Community development programmes operated in name only and many of the organisations could do little developmental work because there were simply no resources available to facilitate the any activities. Institutions such as the Federation of Development, which was tasked with promoting club and scout membership among women and youth, conducting adult literacy programmes and rural farm training, could not even afford the materials to attract new members. The only heavily attended programme initiated by the Federation was a youth development course held in 1983 indicating the high level of

⁸⁰⁹ Appeal for Justice and Security for Law Abiding Citizens: Diocese of Gulu. Letter to DC Gulu from the Vicar General of the Gulu Diocese. 15 October 1980.

⁸¹⁰ In colonial Uganda labour obligations began in 1912 whereby was forced to provide labour to the government in exchange for paying tax. 'From 1924 certain groups could exchange the *luwalo* (labour) by paying cash, but initially very few people had the cash to do so.' Quote in G. Carswell, *Cultivating Success in Uganda: Kigezi Farmers & Colonial Policies*, 15.

⁸¹¹ GDA Box 527: Letter from Acting DC, Gulu to all county chiefs, 14 November 1983.

youth employment in the region and lack of investment among this demographic.⁸¹²

In annual reports detailing the economic situation of youth in Kitgum district, the local council made a plea to the government to provide axes, hoes, bicycles and footballs so that the young in the region could have facilities to farm and participate in recreational sports to keep them occupied.⁸¹³ In fact, annual district reports from 1983 to 1984 all make for grim reading as the district administrators appealed for funds to buy bricks to build schools and help alleviate the price hike of essential goods as a result of high inflation.⁸¹⁴ The disappointment with the government's perceived nonchalance towards the continued welfare of the people prompted the Community Development Officer to write to the DC in Gulu outlining the complaints that were streaming into his office written by civilians.

Some clubs in the district have made numerous complaints especially from the women's clubs [sic]. The Women are hard-working and have managed to increase production of various cash and food crops. It is however sad to note that they live a miserable life. It has become very difficult for me to convince them that the government is committed to them.⁸¹⁵

Consequently, the failure of central government to re-establish law and order, invest money in Acholi, or reconstruct local institutions allowed for civil disorder to continue as some members of the populace sought to simply help themselves to the resources that the government was not providing. Moreover, the central government's withering grasp on power meant that as opposed to abating civil disorder and demilitarising the population, the state actually utilised civilians in its fight against the 'enemy' in the bush.⁸¹⁶

⁸¹² GDA Box 527: Department for Community Development Annual Report for Gulu District Year Ending 1983.

⁸¹³ KDA: Memorandum by Parabongo Division to Central Government, 26 March 1984.

⁸¹⁴ KDA: Kitgum Town Council Annual Report 1984.

⁸¹⁵ GDA Box 540: Letter from the Community Development Officer to the DC of Gulu, 24 March 1983 (quotation paraphrased)

⁸¹⁶ GDA Box 541: Letter from District Police Commander to Gulu Municipal Council: The Town Clerk, 12 April 198; Interviews Gulu and Kitgum, June August 2012.

Ugandan soldiers and Acholi exiles who had fled the region in the 1970s were now returning home via Sudan and Tanzania as the slow process of repatriation began. A centre was opened in Gulu to temporarily house up to 200 returnees, many of whom had no homes to go back to.⁸¹⁷ Within this climate of fear and suspicion of 'outsiders', some of the returnees found that their reception was less than welcoming. In February 1980 around twenty-five returnees were reported to have crossed the border via Nimule in southern Sudan and clashed with Acholi villagers as they tried to re-enter the country. The Ministry of Internal Affairs commented that in some instances people were wary of these individuals, unsure as to who was connected to Amin, and who was a genuine returnee. People were being refused entry in Acholi and those who managed to get through the border faced being molested and robbed of their property.⁸¹⁸ Some members of the local population actively participated in this civil disorder sweeping the region, seizing the opportunities that a weak state presented. District security reports detailed increased incidents of cattle raiding among the Acholi, house raids, lootings and robberies. In January 1985 a report detailing prison statistics in Gulu municipality showed a sharp increase in the number of individuals being detained for matters pertaining to civil disobedience and robberies.⁸¹⁹ Those designated as 'outsiders' bore the brunt of the attacks instigated by government propaganda that rebels were trying to infiltrate the districts. The government had advised civilians to arm themselves with machetes and sticks so that they could defend themselves against potential rebels.⁸²⁰ This in many ways validated violence against 'outsiders.' However, the realisation that the state could no longer control the populace resulted in a last ditch attempt from

⁸¹⁷ GDA Box 533: File: 'Intelligence Refugees', 1964-1983.

⁸¹⁸ GDA Box 541: Letter from DC Gulu to the Ministry of Internal Affairs, Kampala, 22 February 1980.

⁸¹⁹ KDA: District Intelligence report, 20 March 1985; GDA BOX 529 File: PR1/2. 'Prisons Uganda Government' 'Gulu Prison' Departmental Brief for Report from Uganda Government Prison Gulu (author unknown) sent to DC Gulu, received 28 January 1985.

GDA Box 529: Gulu Prison Departmental Brief for January, 1985

⁸²⁰ GDA Box 541: Letter from District Police Commander to Gulu Municipal Council: The Town Clerk, 12 April 1984.

1984 to disarm civilians as those with firearms were instructed to hand them in to the police force. In a region characterised by insecurity and violence it is not surprising that this message was not heeded as Acholi civilians, like their counterparts in Lamogi over seventy years earlier, defiantly kept their arms and ammunitions.⁸²¹

This was in many ways a continuation of the rule of fear and violence utilised by Amin during the 1970s. However, under Amin the state had control over the tools of violence. In the 1980s, the civil population was able to take ownership of these tools largely because of the political weakness of central government and its inability to completely subjugate the populace through military force. Consequently, lawlessness permeated the locality as reports of robberies, murders, and public disorders associated with excessive drinking of home-brewed spirits and prostitution increased.⁸²² Frequent incidents of night-time shootings were reported as the local police lost the ability to control the steady flow of illegal arms into the region. Combat uniforms and ammunition were even being stolen from the police and sold in the black market and used to stage armed robberies.⁸²³ Within Gulu municipality the situation had escalated to the point that the DC suggested the only way to combat lawlessness would be if the Ministry of Internal Affairs could send the Special Security Forces to the district.⁸²⁴ Had the government had the resources to adhere to the DC's request, the security forces sent would have found that a vast majority of the incidents that they would have had to deal with would have involved other military personnel. Complaints against soldiers stationed in the region by civilians reached an all-time peak in 1984.⁸²⁵ Of the civil complaints made to the police the majority were against men in uniform, although at this point it was becoming harder to ascertain who was a

⁸²¹ GDA BOX 545 File ARM.1: Arms and Ammunition Policy' Correspondences for Gulu, May-July 1985.

⁸²² GDA Box 541: District Security Report, 22 February 1980.

⁸²³ GDA Box 541: Letter from DC Gulu to Ministry of Local Ordinance, 5 Aug 1982; GDA Box: 532 File: C.MISS.12: Petitions and complaints, 20 October 1980.

⁸²⁴ GDA Box 541: Letter from District Police Commander to DC Gulu, 11 May 1984.

⁸²⁵ KDA: Letter from District Cooperative Officer to DC Kitgum, 16 March 1984; GDA Box 541: 'Amin's Soldier's' Letter from Acting County Chief of Kilak to DC Gulu, 6 May 1980.

legitimate soldier and who was using a uniform to commit robberies. However, the fear of the state which allowed Amin to control the locality was no longer all-encompassing and civilians now felt able to report and challenge government representatives and soldiers.

I was on a bus waiting to depart to Kampala and this soldier entered the bus and tried to grab a girl who was sitting near me. We knew he was taking her to rape her so we surrounded him and chased him away. We were not scared because there were many of us and only one of him.⁸²⁶

In 1980 staff members of the Uganda prison farm in Patiko sent a letter of complaint to the DC in Gulu expressing their growing fear of Tanzanian soldiers who had been stationed nearby. Their wives and children were fearful of travelling to the market to buy food on their own as they were either propositioned or molested by wayward soldiers who saw no problem in taking another man's wife or his daughters. The staff warned the DC that if something was not done soon, there was bound to be a violent clash between the two groups.⁸²⁷

In this regard, Acholi and Tanzanian soldiers stationed in the locality were simply taking advantage of the disorderly political situation within central government. As the state had little control over their activities in the locality, they were left largely to their own devices and could dictate the rules of their own engagement. Individual motivations superseded any attempts of establishing a centralised military force, as soldiers placed unofficial curfews while illegally acquiring commodities through violence and intimidation. 'They would go to bars, drink as much as they wanted, then refuse to pay.' Some even took control of local businesses by force, using marker pens to write 'this is my property' in front of the shops and force the owners out.⁸²⁸ Rather than assisting the government in supplying a region starved of essential commodities, soldiers were instead accused of stealing and smuggling food

⁸²⁶ (IF/M) NAU: Interview with local business owner, Gulu, 18 June 2012

⁸²⁷ GDA Box 532: Letter from Prison Administrator to DC Gulu, 2 January 1980.

⁸²⁸ *Ibid.*

from their units and civilians transporting goods to Sudan where they could sell them on the black market.⁸²⁹

They were very excited that they had won and they expected us to immediately respect them and give them what they wanted even if they were being unfair. Most of them were not even properly trained soldiers, but they came back and started to think that they were really somebody because they a gun.⁸³⁰

The vast majority who deserted from the army still kept their arms and uniforms and continued to use both to terrorise civilians. In 1985 alone the district security reports stated that 757 soldiers had been arrested for desertion, and it was suspected that many more had joined some of the rebel groups in the bush. Clashes between reinforcements from outside the district and Acholi recruits arose as members from each division competed for the material bounties of internal disorder.⁸³¹ The inconsistencies of the salary payments, confusion in the chain of command within the army corps and uncertainty in the authority of central government meant lower ranking army personnel felt it was within their rights to acquire resources by any means possible since the government was not fulfilling its obligations to them:

It has on a number of occasions been reported to this office that soldiers from 13 Battalion are threatening the lives of civilians in this district. The above issue has been reported to the commanding officer 13 battalion but the response was not only negative but it was worsened the situation since the army men have ordered residents of Mr Tito Kidega's house to leave and said that it now belongs to the army. People are very bitter unless the situation is resolved and they may stage a strike or demonstrations. This office is requesting that you send the police to manage the situation.⁸³²

As large numbers of the complaints made against soldiers in the region involved the illegal acquisition of property, and robberies, it stands to reason that the primary motivations were drawn from economic motivations. Attacks

⁸²⁹ GDA Box 532: Letter from County Chief of Atyak to the Commanding Officer 12th Battalion Gulu, 23 March 1983.

⁸³⁰ (F/M) NAU: Interview with Civil servant, Entebbe, 4 January 2012.

⁸³¹ KDA: Monthly Intelligence Reports, 20 March 1985.

⁸³² KDA: Letter from DC Kitgum to District Police Commander, 23 May 1984.

on civilians were not carried out because of a particular disdain for the populace but were a means to acquire resources during time where access to commodities were severely limited. What transpired is that the individuals targeted by the soldiers were generally the *Oco/s*, consisting of cooperative leaders, businessmen, teachers, civil servants and local politicians. The breakdown of state control opened the avenue for lower ranking soldiers, many of who had been happy to simply carry out their tasks and collect their wages, to challenge the confines of their economic and social status. In this way, they became in Charles Anderson's term, credible 'contenders for power' in the locality.⁸³³

Neither Acholi chiefs nor the police knew how to handle the situation, what channels to follow to report the incidents, or how they could acquire the resources to do so. Civilians were left to defend themselves and their property and those who were driven to ask for help often bypassed chiefs and local senior administrative staff, instead appealing directly to the DC or to officials within central government. Staff who had held personal grudges against superiors took the opportunity to undermine the bureaucratic hierarchy at any given opportunity, whilst chiefs and the DC in Gulu and Kitgum could only appeal for co-operation.⁸³⁴ The disorganisation of the security and police forces in the region contributed to a large extent to the continued civil unrest and lawlessness. During a security meeting for West Acholi in 1982 attended by the DC, Minister of Power and Communications, and several police personnel, accusations were made against the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) who had failed to maintain law and order in the various districts. In Amuru and Alero, civil disorder had been particularly prevalent and members of the Police Special Branch were accused of being directly involved in either causing the unrest or allowing it to continue because of their incompetence and practices of corruption.⁸³⁵ After surveying the issues being presented during the meeting, the minister in attendance was forced to conclude that as far as he was concerned the system was so broken that at

⁸³³ Anderson, 'Towards a Theory of Latin American Politics', 2.

⁸³⁴ GDA Box 532: Staff Records, June 1980-November 1989.

⁸³⁵ GDA Box 541: District Security Report, 29 October 1982.

the present time 'there was no real Special Branch unit in Gulu district.'⁸³⁶ The levels of corruption and ineptitude among the police force were further exacerbated because of the financial constraints faced by the local administration. Officers complained about the lack of transport and money to purchase fuel that was making their jobs even harder. They were unable to effectively investigate criminal offences or even arrive at call outs in a reasonable time.⁸³⁷

Added to this was the historical pattern of disproportionately employing those who were natives to the district. By staffing a large number of indigenous officers in their home districts, it was becoming increasingly difficult for these officers to arrest and prosecute 'their own people or arrest their relatives.'⁸³⁸ Most of the officers favoured staying close to their villages and relatives and were reluctant to be stationed far away from their homes. In this way they could maintain their clan connections and would find it easier to manipulate the administrative structure within a locality that they were familiar with, as opposed to trying to compete for power elsewhere. The districts provided an opportunity to create micro-fiefdoms for officers willing to take advantage of the weakening control of central authority allowing agents at the local level to effectively manipulate the political and administrative cataclysm in the locality.

Corruption among Acholi police and army officers in Acholi was not only a wider reflection of what was going on within the central and local administration, but an indication of the struggle for political and economic power in the locality. The failure of central government to affectively administer and control the locality actually allowed for the reinforcement of a decentralised political 'system', which inevitably opened a space for Acholi cultural identities and indigenous religious practices within formal political and administrative discourses. Consequently, among the perfectly written letters in flawless English dealing with mundane subjects such as road works and council meetings, one comes across a letter to a DC from an army official

⁸³⁶ Ibid.

⁸³⁷ Ibid.

⁸³⁸ Ibid.

asking for time off for one of his soldiers because he has been bewitched. 'This is to report to you that the above soldier has been bewitched at home and had been undergoing local treatment. We request that you sympathise with his case as the matter is genuine.'⁸³⁹ Other correspondences follow a similar pattern requesting time off for employees and officers that 'had gone mad' and were unable to attend work because they were undergoing traditional treatment in the village.⁸⁴⁰ Even high-profile politicians were not above declaring their participation in traditional ceremonies as they explained their absence from their constituencies by claiming that they 'they had to return to the village to undergo a traditional ceremony.'⁸⁴¹ The archives and oral interviews suggest that requests through official channels for access to 'traditional' cultural-medical resources would not have ordinarily been made. However, now they were not only being received but also entertained by the formally educated Acholi middle who had meticulously presented themselves as a progressive demographic contemptuous of the 'backward' and uneducated ways of the rural masses.

In his assessment on the origins of the HSM and the LRA Tim Allen argues that Acholi adherence to spirit mediums, was a mechanism for establishing 'social accountability in a world where the state had largely lost credibility and had collapsed . . .'.⁸⁴² Similarly, Lawrence Cline's work on religiously-based mass violence in Northern Uganda focuses on the importance of Acholi traditional religious identities in creating a world where spirits were heavily relied upon, regarding 'laws concerning morality and codes of conduct.'⁸⁴³ Heike Behrend further reinforces this narrative on the use of indigenous religious practices, breakdown of the state and outbreak of violence in Acholi, attributing it to the failed assimilation Acholi former soldiers

⁸³⁹ KDA: Letter from Acting DC of Kitgum to the Adjutant school of infantry Jinja, 15 July 1983.

⁸⁴⁰ KDA: Letter from DC Kitgum to Police Commander, Kitgum, 8 August 1983.

⁸⁴¹ GDA Box 541: Letter from Saverino Lanek to Inspector General of the Police, Kampala, 19 October 1983.

⁸⁴² T. Allen, 'Understanding Alice, Uganda's Holy Spirit Movement in Context', *Africa: Journal of the International African Institute*, Vol.16 No.3 (1991), 399.

⁸⁴³ L. E. Cline, 'Spirits and the Cross: Religiously Based Violent Movements in Uganda', *Small Wars and Insurgencies*, Vol.14, No.2 (2003), 115.

back to their villages after the NRA victory in 1986.⁸⁴⁴ All three analyses emphasise 1985-6 as crucial turning point within the Acholi polity, whereby the link between the state and locality was broken, with Acholi becoming a politically dissociated region hostile to the central government apparatus. As a consequence, other mechanisms of governance centred on traditional cultural standards and religious practices took the place of state sanctioned political institutions. However, what the archives show is that from 1980, rather than the peoples of Acholi protesting against an unpopular government by emphasising localised cultural standards above the national identity, it was actually a two-way process whereby the state invested in Acholi cultural institutions as a means to maintain the link with the locality, without economically and politically overburdening itself. In an attempt to disperse any potential rebellious voices among the Acholi, Obote's administration continued to emphasise cultural institutions as space for formal political engagement.⁸⁴⁵ In this way the government could provide politically minded local actors with an avenue to satisfy their political ambitions, whilst keeping the populace politically confined within the locality. This in itself was not new; this decentralised system of governing was initiated during the colonial period with the Native Authority and continued through to the early 1960s. Furthermore, Obote's attempt to centralise control and diminish the power of traditional leaders in the late 1960s resulted in widespread political protests against his administration, illustrating once again the political importance of localised authority. Coupled with his government's rule of fear which instigated the physical 'return to the village' even Amin was forced to utilise chiefly authority as a means to contend with the institutional weaknesses within his government following the exile of the local political elite. Thus the emphasis of the 'village'/locality should not be seen as a rejection of the state, but simply a continuation of the historic pattern of utilising localised cultural institutions as a mechanism to maintain the political connection between the centre and locality.

⁸⁴⁴ Behrend, *Alice Lakwena and the Holy Spirit Movement*, 24.

⁸⁴⁵ GDA Box 540 File: Gulu District Executive Cultural Committee. Minutes of meeting held at District Council Hall, Gulu, 18 December 1981.

From 1980 the government made a deliberate attempt to engage the population in cultural activities as means of contending with the economic demands being made the populace. The formation of the Gulu District Executive Cultural Committee in January 1982 was an attempt to install 'pride and strong unity.'⁸⁴⁶ The task of the committee was to reinforce the importance of Ugandan culture, which the Chairman stated was the only way of distinctly identifying one society from another.'⁸⁴⁷ Similar organisations were established across the country each urging the rejection of European cultures that were eroding 'authentic' African traditions. Whilst on paper the premise of the committee appeared to be centred on emphasising a unified Ugandan cultural identity, in reality the committees only served to emphasise regional ethnic identities in much the same way that local governments in Uganda had been divided. The committee in Gulu was tasked with guiding the Acholi to the 'desired cultural standards' by streamlining cultural activities particularly among clubs in the district including dancing, language and traditional ceremonies.⁸⁴⁸ The Cultural Committees were divided by districts and headed by leaders drawn from the locality. Consequently, they could only ever encourage the cultural practices of their specific ethnic group. As such any premise to develop 'Ugandan' culture, would inevitably come second to the various ethnically divided cultural identities and practices within each district.

Among the Acholi populace central governments increased emphasis on localised cultural practices and institutions was embraced whole-heartedly, even by local politicians and educated youth who had historically viewed indigenous cultural practices as an endeavour of uneducated villagers, indicative of that demographics' lack of social progression in post-colonial Uganda. Externally the 'Ocols' had continued to blame traditional ceremonies concerning marriage, funerals and indigenous religious practices for stifling

⁸⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁴⁸ GDA Box 540: Gulu District Executive Cultural Committee. Minutes of meeting held at District Council Hall, Gulu, 18 December 1981; GDA Box 542: Letter to County Chief of Omoro to DC Gulu, 16 June 1983.

Acholi progression into modern society.⁸⁴⁹ And whilst they participated in these ceremonies in the villages, their adherence to these customs was generally kept outside of the periphery of the more 'progressive' circle of educated Acholi elite. In a study conducted in 1983 regarding attitudes of educated Acholi towards traditional marriage ceremonies, around fifty-two per cent of the respondents were still not participating in church weddings and preferred the traditional ceremonies. The respondents were recorded anonymously and as such were free to express their preference for polygamous marriages.⁸⁵⁰ Tellingly, the author of the study, an Acholi student at Makerere University, whilst being sympathetic to local cultural practices, remarked that the popularity of traditional marriages was an indication of the lack of progression among the participants. Similar reports including, research on the extent of practices and belief in witchcraft among the Acholi, convey a society actively participating and engaged in these traditional practices.⁸⁵¹

In Acholi, education has no affect at all on witchcraft. Witchcraft practiced in secret is an impeding factor in development. Unless serious steps are taken, witchcraft I believe will continue to be a stumbling block on the path of progress in our land.⁸⁵²

However, the researchers still acknowledged the importance of preserving the past while at the same time not letting 'rural backward practices', impede Acholi modernisation.⁸⁵³ This attitude among the Acholi students had been consistent up until the 1980s. However, from 1980 onwards some researchers began to take a more defensive view of Acholi traditional cultural practices and identities, particularly when compared to Western-derived identities.

⁸⁴⁹ A.O, p'Amari, *Attitudes of Educated Acholi towards traditional marriage ceremonies in Gulu District* (MA Thesis. Makerere University, 1983).

⁸⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 13.

⁸⁵¹ M. Bernard, *The Extent and Practices of Witchcraft Among the Acholi: An Exploratory Study* (BA Thesis, Makerere University, 1983).

⁸⁵² *Ibid.*, 14-17.

⁸⁵³ S. Baker, *Attitudes of Acholi Men towards Family Planning in Gulu District* (BA Thesis, Makerere University 1981), 71.

The Acholi with the coming of Christianity and education have come to hate their customs. Many illiterate Acholi [still] observe these customs. Those who have gone to school do not mind whether the traditional ways die or not. This is because they have taken up the modern way of looking at things instead of preserving our customs.⁸⁵⁴

As organised cultural activities increased, an opportunity presented itself to some Acholi politicians to politicise cultural activities in the locality as they attempted to reassert their relevance within the locality. In 1983 the minister for Gulu West constituency sent a letter to the Administrative Secretary raising concerns about the growing number of traditional dance activities being conducted in the municipality. As a member of the UPC the minister was particularly concerned that youths participating in these dances were using them as a disguise to conduct unlawful political meetings.

I have written regarding this matter to members of the district council and religious leaders. The district has power to pass by-laws governing and regulating certain intricate and local matters such as marriages and dances, particularly the frequency of youth dances could be regulated. Organisers of dances could be taxed, for instance. A specific by-law on this subject can go a long way to give a clear directive to your chiefs as to know what to do. At this moment it is not clear what your chiefs would do in this matter, and what they may do may be unlawful.⁸⁵⁵

This correspondence indicates growing participation in cultural activities in the district as well as the increasing need to control them by local and central government. This was born out of political insecurity on the government's part, but consequently it served to provide local politicians a political space to further assert their authority. More importantly, it provided the populace the opportunity to engage as a cultural collective reaffirming clan and ethnic ties and establishing social order in a region contending with economic, social and political decay.

⁸⁵⁴ C. Achieng, *Birth Customs Among the Acholi: 1980-81* (BA Thesis, Makerere University Library, 1981).

⁸⁵⁵ GDA Box 540: Letter from Akena p'Jok, (MP) UPC Chairman to Charles Alai, Administrative Secretary Gulu District, 20 June 1983.

The attempt to politicise and institutionalise Acholi cultural identities saw an increase in various groups lobbying the government to fund and facilitate individual organisations focused on promoting Acholi culture in the locality. The endeavour was particularly inclusive, especially for Acholi women. Acholi cultural norms had always served as an institution for governing the homestead. This was a domain where women were could take centre stage as they reared children and inoculated cultural norms and practices to the next generation. As such, cultural politics provided a platform for political engagement that was not wholly dominated by men. In 1983 members of a women's group calling themselves '*Won Ngom Odwogo*', (the father/owner of the land has given back), petitioned the District Community Development Officer in Gulu asking for assistance in building a 'cultural village'. Their aim was to build and furnish a village in 'the real Acholi manner' with the houses showing cultural utensils, tools and implements. Entrants to the huts would pay a fee and all others could enter the village free if they simply wanted to purchase traditional Acholi food and crafts. The target market would have been international visitors as at this time Uganda was receiving a substantial amount of the international monetary aid, and organisations such as UNICEF and the Red Cross who were actively monitoring the human cost of the on going 'bush war'. As well as small number of international tourists and well-to-do visitors from outside the region, the women would have certainly had a small local market for their cultural village.⁸⁵⁶ Since the Cultural Committee was tasked with promoting culture in all its various forms, the women requested they should be allocated land and given advice on how to start the project.⁸⁵⁷ Yet even within this request it is evident that Acholi women still remained on the periphery of formal politics. The name of the group alone is an ode to the patriarchal social order of Acholi society with man held up as the owner of the land, village and all its

⁸⁵⁶ 'Uganda gets 95 million dollars from world bank', *The Uganda Times*, 17 July 1983; 'UNICEF signs 25 million dollar pact' *The Uganda Times*, July 9 1983; 'Red cross Luwero Report' *The Uganda Times*, August 1983.

⁸⁵⁷ GDA Box 540: Letter from Mrs Ochora Women's leader Gulu East, to the District Cultural Officer 29 March 1982.

occupants. Furthermore, the contents of the request itself show that even within a domain as plural as cultural identity, their political engagement was still limited to specific gender roles the centred on the household. The cultural village would simply serve as an extension of that. The fact that the women felt encouraged to seek funding for their cultural village, is still indicative however of central government's directive to control the connection between the centre and the locality, by entertaining funding cultural institutions, at a time when it could not feasibly maintain strong political or economic ones.

6.3. Culture and Party Politics: The *Ocols* versus the 'Elders'

Economic mismanagement, the inability to invest in social and economic and social services, coupled with constant internal insecurity meant that Obote lost much of his immediate post-liberation support from the peoples of Acholi. Things took a dramatic turn in 1984, the last year of the President's rule when it became clear that he was not only losing the battle against the rebels, but had seemingly lost command of his own administration. The President's growing weakness encouraged some high-ranking Acholi politicians within central government to begin challenging his authority. In much the same way that Obote's earlier presidency had been smeared by accusations of nepotism and tribalism, the same debates that had contested the idea of a unified 'Northern identity' emerged once again. In an attempt to distance themselves from the ailing presidency, Acholi politicians returned to defining Obote not as a president from the North but a president from Lango. These accusations were not without foundation. Obote's promotions for high-ranking military positions became increasingly skewed towards candidates from Lango. The final straw came when, following the death of Chief of Staff Major General Oyite Ojok in a plane crash, Obote filled Oyite Ojok's position with a relatively inexperienced junior officer from Lango.⁸⁵⁸ This, 'profoundly displeased the Acholi who felt that they were being sacrificed in a war they could not win to promote Lango interests.'⁸⁵⁹ Accusations that Obote favoured promoting

⁸⁵⁸ Karugire, *Roots of Instability in Uganda*, 94.

⁸⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 94.

members of his own tribe, led to internal wrangling within the government and the high-ranking army corps. Fearing a coup, Obote started to target Acholi army officials whom he believed were a credible threat to his authority. By turning on members of his own administration Obote set forth a chain of events that would lead to a complete breakdown of Lango-Acholi relations and the eventual overthrow of his regime in 1985 by Tito Okello, an Acholi Army General.

The power struggle within central government translated into open political warfare in Acholi. Much like the Moshi liberators who had returned to stake their claim to power, in Acholi it was the return of the 'Ocols' from 'exile' that would pose a political challenge to the President. As discussed in the previous chapter, a good number of those who 'self-exiled' during Amin's rule had fled abroad but some removed themselves back to their home villages in Acholi. They included civil servants, politicians and a large number of the Acholi middle class. After liberation, the Acholi local administration was faced with the task of absorbing these returnees back into their respective districts. In 1980, Yusuf Lule and his successor Godfrey Binaisa announced that any citizen who had been dismissed under Amin would be able to return to their jobs with full support from the government.⁸⁶⁰ The directive affected both the internal and external returnees. Internally, those who had remained in the district during the previous eight years felt that they had a legitimate right to claim their old jobs back. Externally, those in exile now had more of an incentive to return as they had now been promised that they could seamlessly reclaim their old lives. Applications for reinstatement started to flow into the local administration, from chiefs, clerical officers and administrators who had either been in exile or had been dismissed by the previous regime, placing a huge financial and human resources strain on the local administration. Those already working in the civil service were already contending with irregular wage payments, administrative nepotism, corruption and bureaucratic inconsistencies.⁸⁶¹ However, central government could not address these concerns because it simply did not have the resources or the infrastructure in

⁸⁶⁰ 'I did not create Amin' *The Uganda Times*, June 4 1980.

⁸⁶¹ GDA Box 553: File: staff discrimination/Corruption', 1972-1980.

place to do so. The financial situation of some administrative personnel was so dire that in one instance a clerical officer in Atyak wrote a letter to his superiors explaining that due to lack of transport money and a bicycle he was unable to attend a mandatory consultative meeting.⁸⁶² Local chiefs, much like police personnel and Acholi soldiers resorted to other means of securing power, engaging in debates concerning tax boundaries, clan affiliations and personnel vendettas. There were seventy documented incidents of land and clan disputes in Gulu municipality between August and November 1982 alone extant in the archives.⁸⁶³

I was appointed in 1979 and since that date the county chief of Nwoya has started to show lack of cooperation and hatred for me and I think that the reason is tribalistic as he is a man from Kal and he wants only his tribesmen to work in this area as their old county chief was responsible in this area of Kal. He confiscated my appointment letter that you gave to me. He has refused to pay my salary and plans to demote more and place his brother in my place.⁸⁶⁴

This particular complaint was sent to the DC in Gulu and is indicative of the administrative limbo among the county and parish chiefs in Acholi. While the contents of the complaint may have had some truth to them, the accusation that that county chief was in the process of installing his brother as a parish chief was rebutted by the DC who explained that only his office had the power to appoint chiefs. The lack of awareness or disregard for administrative hierarchy was reflection of the disarray that had now befallen the Acholi District Administration. Nobody knew who to complain to and staff felt that they could do as they pleased.⁸⁶⁵

Although incidents of staff corruption and ineptitude were being frequently documented, these complaints and investigations did not result in anything other than a stern reprimand, with the 'culprits' generally allowed to keep their jobs.⁸⁶⁶ Nepotism within the local councils and administrations

⁸⁶² GDA Box 541: Letter from Mr Oyoo, Assistant Clerical Officer in Atyak, 2 March 1981.

⁸⁶³ Ibid.

⁸⁶⁴ GDA Box 553: Letter from Parish Chief of Koich Kal to DC Gulu, 20 February 1980.

⁸⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶⁶ GDA Box 532: 'Staff Records', June 1980-November 1989.

reinforced a structure whereby once power had been acquired it was very hard to remove. Even though wrangling persisted within the administration each person could draw upon a certain level of support either from clan members, fathers or local politicians. As such it became increasingly difficult to remove employees from office regardless of their individual shortcomings. The situation was further compounded by the inability of the local and central administration to deal effectively with these human resources complaints. Central government could ill-afford to embark on a firing spree and waste money training new personnel. As a result staff that had little interest in carrying out their task effectively were retained rather than fired, and those that actually had an interest in doing the job were left out in the cold.⁸⁶⁷

A further burden was placed on district finances as in some cases applications were made by the returnees for back payments to cover the period that they were in exiled or the period that they had had been unemployed due to unfair dismissal.⁸⁶⁸ This government directive, born out of the euphoria of liberation and political naivety would have serious ramifications in Acholi. Firstly, it emphasised the role of the returnees at the expense of those who had remained behind. Secondly, it failed to deal with the needs of a growing demographic of Acholi youth who had grown up under Amin, remained in education and were now ready to take their place within Acholi adult society. This new generation would reach the age of employment only to find that they were not only competing against members of their generation, but also the established cadre of politicians and administrators who were returning home or to public office.

The UPC and the DP political machines were quick to utilise the political freedom that followed the liberation war. Acholi politicians returned to the locality determined to reassert their control after an eight-year hiatus. This set the stage for a political confrontation between returning politicians and local chiefs who had controlled the region during Amin's presidency. During a consultative meeting in 1981 administrative staff members in Gulu were

⁸⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁶⁸ Ibid; GDA Box 533: 'Letter of Reinstatement from sub-County Chief to Permanent Secretary, Kampala, 6 May 1980.

invited to discuss several complaints that had been reoccurring concerning the role of local chiefs. Amid the younger staff there was a consensus that chiefs in the region were ineffective as many were unable to carry out their tasks because of old age. Chiefs were accused of acting arrogantly because many believed that they could not be removed from their posts, making them highly contemptuous of local government authority.⁸⁶⁹ The attacks on the chiefs seemed to be coming from all corners, often instigated by politicians and the more progressive civil servants. During a rally in Kalongo Kitgum, the Minister of Animal Industries and Fisheries, Dr Joseph Otim, made a scathing attack on 'lazy' and ineffective chiefs in the area that were 'hindering development in the constituency.' He articulated that chiefs were failing in their task to maintain roads and increase food and cotton production. The minister appealed to political parties in the region to 'join hands' and help to develop the region and eradicate the ineffective local authority system.⁸⁷⁰

As chiefly and gerontocratic roles continued to be challenged, some Acholi clan elders unsurprisingly seized the opportunity to extend their traditional political authority outside of their clan groups. In 1985, Acholi elders from various districts convened to discuss the potential for creating an Elders' Association that would be tasked with promoting peace and solidarity within the region. Acholi clans had always emphasised the social importance of the 'elder.' Outside of chiefly authority, these groups of men would traditionally gather to discuss and resolve issues affecting the clan, be it marriage, death, drought or interactions with other groups. The Luo word for elder 'ladit' (the big man/person) conveys age as well as social ranking within an Acholi community. With the post-colonial growth of educated middle class however, the title was internally adopted by the *Ocols* and the *Lawinos* to encompass an individual's education level, economic and/or political standing. The creation of the Elders Association followed the trend of politicising cultural institutions in the 1980s, and it was as much about re-imagining traditions as it was about the elders trying to extend their political authority outside of the homestead.

⁸⁶⁹ GDA Box 541: Staff Consultative Meeting held in Gulu, March 1981.

⁸⁷⁰ 'Lazy chiefs warned' *The Uganda Times*, 11 June 1981.

The association was to have branches in every division and would incorporate around two hundred elders from all around the Northern regions including Lango, Madi, Alur and Karamojong.⁸⁷¹ By doing so the elders hoped that members would aid in strengthening and ‘preserving the fraternal and brotherly co-operation with all the neighbouring tribes.’ Other tasks would include assisting the government in educating the youth to prepare them for ‘total peaceful democratic living and respect for human rights.’ During the first meeting of the Gulu division, the DC was invited to open the proceedings at the district council hall and remained to preside over the processions.⁸⁷² Initially the association seemed to undergo a seamless formation as elders in Kitgum and Gulu organised themselves by electing members to the committee. Fifteen elders were elected to the Kitgum branch and a further fifteen in Gulu. The two groups organised meetings to introduce their respective representatives and to layout the committee’s plans of action. From its formation in Gulu, the Elders Association started to amass attention from the local council and politicians. After the announcement was made that the elders from Gulu and Kitgum would be meeting, the DC sent a memorandum to all the county chiefs in Gulu instructing them to attend the ‘meeting without fail alongside their parish chiefs.’⁸⁷³ The DC’s involvement with the group not only validated the Elders Association but it gave it a specific political credence. The Elders themselves had made sure that the organisation’s structure was mirrored on that of a political party. Candidates were nominated for committee positions, a manifesto was drawn out, public meetings were organised and delegations were sent to the President to lobby for resources and social amenities. By seeking legitimisation from local government officials, the Elders were able to develop the association from a simple cultural organisation to a legitimate political mobilising force.

This of course did not go unnoticed by some of the *Oco/s*, and soon conflicts between political actors within the local councils and the Elders emerged. Rather than viewing the organisation as a valuable addition to local

⁸⁷¹ GDA Box 572: File: ‘Elders’ Association’, July 1985-December 1985.

⁸⁷² Ibid.

⁸⁷³ GDA Box 572: File: ‘Elders’ Association’, July 1985-December 1985; KDA: Letter from J. Okello, Secretary of Acholi Elders’ Association to DC Kitgum, 5 December 1985.

institutions, some Acholi district administrators and politicians saw it as an opportunity to manipulate the situation in an attempt to further their own interests. Within months of the association's formation there was an attempt by local administrators and politicians to form a rival organisation that would challenge the positions of the elected Elders. To further legitimise the original committee, the Elders in return requested that the DC in Gulu send an official letter listing all the elected members of the committee to ensure that everyone was aware of who the official members of the Association were. The Elders started to adopt the rhetoric of national politics, accusing their opponents of trying to organise a 'coup against committee' while at the same time calling them 'unpatriotic elements working against national unity'.⁸⁷⁴ Following the military coup of Tito Okello in July 1985, the elders took it upon themselves to send a letter of support and a delegation to Kampala stressing their allegiance to the new president, whilst denouncing the previous regime:

We welcome this historic change, and hope that it will eradicate dictatorship forever. Obote brought a bad name to the Luo and the Acholis. We call upon your government to respect human rights and humanity of which Ugandans have been deprived of since independence. We would like to make the following proposals to help the government. We ask that you form a national government comprising of selected members of the armed forces and civilian personnel of respectful personality and dignity. The government should have a national outlook and promote the interest of nation rather than tribe by allowing open participation in the national government.⁸⁷⁵

The installation of the first Acholi president of Uganda boosted the Elder's confidence regarding the relationship between the organisation and central government. The rhetoric changed from wanting to promote tribal unity with neighbouring ethnic groups to promoting national unity, and even going as far as instructing the government on how to do this. There was an element of ethnic solidarity and the premise that an Acholi president would be more

⁸⁷⁴ GDA Box 572: Minutes: Meeting of the Elders Committee Gulu District on 16 November 1985.

⁸⁷⁵ GDA Box 572: Letter from the Chairman of the Elders to the DC's office, 27 July 1985 (Quotation paraphrased).

approachable and sympathetic to regional concerns. By taking this step, the Elders hoped to expand from a localised cultural institution to a full-blown political organisation that could formally engage with national affairs.

6.4. Party Politics the *Oco/s* and Obote II

It was not a coincidence that the political challenge against chiefs and elders coincided with the resumption of formal political activity in Acholi, which brought back many of the political hostilities which had ensued under the first Obote regime. Coupled with increased internal competition for political and economic commodities, this created an atmosphere of political opportunism, driven by individual rather than collective interests. Immediately after Amin was ousted, new political parties such as the UMP and Conservative Party (CP) tried their luck in Acholi as they attempted to expand their support base. However, their impact was negligible in the face of the established powers of the UPC and DP. The two older parties offered staunch resistance against political opponents, hindering any attempts by the new comers to arrange political meetings and public rallies. In some instances politicians outside the UPC and DP faced arbitrary arrests from overzealous chiefs keen to ensure that their own parties held the political monopoly in their respective districts.⁸⁷⁶ The fact that post-liberation political parties other than the DP and UPC were unable to make tangible gains in Acholi can be explained through historical patterns of party politics from as early as the 1950s. The Acholi had a long established relationship with the UPC and DP creating strong political allegiances. Although Amin's regime had stipulated that all party politics should cease, party political allegiances were not destroyed. If anything they were kept alive by the Acholi in exile and those who had remained behind, hoping that liberation would come sooner rather than later. Thus after liberation the UPC and DP were able to seamlessly resume political mobilisation, rehashing the same rivalries that had made party politics in Acholi so contentious.

⁸⁷⁶ KDA: Letter to the Political and Diplomatic Committee in Kampala signed UNLP watch Dogs, Kitgum Division, 19 March 1980.

The UPC's main point of attack was to associate DP supporters with the various rebel groups that had dispersed across the country following Obote's re-election. Catholic churches carrying out their pastoral duties were accused of housing rebel members in hospitals and mission institutions. By associating the rebels with the Catholics the UPC were linking them with the DP, painting the party as anti-liberation and anti-Ugandan.⁸⁷⁷ Parishes were marked out as DP or UPC territories, and confrontations ensued if an opponent encroached on the area. Once again it was East Acholi that bore the brunt of hostilities. In Akworo Parish, DP supporters threatened to boycott companies and businesses of known UPC supporters and confronted anyone walking around with a UPC shirt bearing the image of the President. Those identified as the ringleaders included teachers, businessmen and priests, all notable members of the community.⁸⁷⁸ However, the biggest advantage that the UPC had was that it was able to utilise a vast majority of state resources during the campaign trail, sending large convoys to rural areas and urging supporters to 'use persuasive means to win the election', with the use of the term 'persuasive means' being left open for interpretation.⁸⁷⁹

It is not surprising that one of the first steps taken by the politically minded *Ocols* was to usurp the local chiefs from their positions as they attempted to regain control of the locality. But even among themselves the local politicians were not a unified political force and their attentions turned to competing against each other. Returning to the tactics utilised during the 1950s and the 1960s, Acholi politicians used personal and political vendettas to tarnish their opponent's name, disrupt meetings and made defamatory, often unfounded, accusations to eliminate political competition.⁸⁸⁰ Within the UPC, members disregarded party directives, challenging election results and establishing micro-opposition groups. In 1981 a dispute arose regarding the official UPC appointment for the candidacy of the Gulu South constituency. A politician claiming to be the official 'elected' MP for the constituency wrote a

⁸⁷⁷ GDA Box 541: Letter from the Vicar General of the Gulu Diocese to DC Gulu, 15 October 1980.

⁸⁷⁸ KDA: District Intelligence Committee Meeting Summary, 28 July 1983.

⁸⁷⁹ 'Akena p'Jok backs UPC' *The Uganda Times*, 25 June 1980.

⁸⁸⁰ GDA Box 541: Letter from DC Gulu to the Military Commission, 17 October 1980

letter of complaint to the UPC Secretary-General claiming that another high-ranking UPC politician had started a campaign to remove him from office.

I am the popularly elected MP of the constituency and a UPC and that there is no confusion among the people although there are some sowing the seeds of hatred [sic]. High-ranking government ministers have since declared that another politician is the official chairman of the Gulu South constituency. They repeated this claim on the UPC anniversary celebrations to the public and then again on radio Uganda. He is now being introduced everywhere as the chairman and he is now touring the parishes making these claims. Even now the police are even involved in this confusion and if this is allowed to continue it will have a deeper impact on the long-term stability of the constituency.⁸⁸¹

The dispute resulted in a political stalemate as each candidate continued to lay claim to the chairmanship. The UPC headquarters in Kampala was made aware of the situation, and soon after the police in Gulu South were instructed to prevent any meetings by the MP challenging the official candidate 'by any means possible.'⁸⁸² UPC supporters who were identified as 'undesirable' or potential troublemakers faced constant harassment by the police. This generally followed if a more senior and trusted member made a complaint against an individual to the Party Secretary. The accused would often find that private gatherings in their homes were raided and they faced arbitrary arrests and questioning.⁸⁸³ There were also a growing number of individuals posing as card-carrying UPC members canvassing districts under the guise of collecting money for the party retaining the funds for their own personal use. This became a worrying trend that prompted the UPC party officials to issue a warning to administrators to be vigilant against fraudulent membership. The police were asked to distribute an up-to-date list of all official UPC representatives in the various districts and the chiefs were instructed to arrest

⁸⁸¹ GDA Box 542: Letter from Gulu MP Y.Y Ongweng (MP) Gulu South Constituency to the UPC Secretary General, Kampala, 17 July 1981.

⁸⁸² GDA Box 542: Letter from UPC Secretary of Gulu South Constituency to the Police Headquarters, Gulu, 10 May 1981.

⁸⁸³ GDA Box 541: Letter from Saverino Lanek to Inspector General of the Police, Kampala, 19 October 1983; GDA Box 540: Letter from Akena p'Jok, MP UPC Chairman Gulu District to Charles Alai, Administrative Secretary, Gulu, 20 June 1983. GDA

anybody they suspected of fraudulently identifying themselves as representatives of the UPC.⁸⁸⁴

When it was announced that the UPC had won the elections in 1980, there were immediate reprisals against DP supporters. In Bobi, the parish chief complained in his monthly security report that a group of UPC supporters had gathered around the division headquarters, insulting all the staff members within the headquarters who were known to be DP supporters. 'A UPC councillor was leading the mob instigating them to throw stones at the building and insulting me because I had allowed a DP politician to campaign in the division.' Within two days of the elections four similar incidents had been reported in Bobi alone.⁸⁸⁵ The internal insecurity faced by the government meant that Obote was forced to use many of the old tactics of military intimidation utilised by Amin. Opposition leaders in Acholi were stringently monitored and their political activities continually impeded. Civilians and police officials were once again sent to infiltrate DP party meetings. Individuals that were seen to be behaving belligerently towards the President's administration were accused of being rebel sympathisers.⁸⁸⁶ But even among those targeted there was still air of defiance in their response towards Obote's political oppressiveness. When an administrative officer was accused of spreading anti-government rhetoric and colluding with DP supporters his response to Obote when asked to resign his post was simply to say 'the only one who can remove me from my position is the Commissioner of Veterinary Services and Animal Industry who bestowed on me this position.'⁸⁸⁷

As much as he tried, Obote could not maintain this level of political oppression because most of the government's resources were being depleted fighting the rebels in Luwero. In Acholi, political opposition against the

⁸⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁸⁵ GDA Box 541: Letter from the Jago of Bobi to the County Chief of Omoro to Charles Alai, Administrative Secretary, Gulu District Administration, 19 December 1980.

⁸⁸⁶ GDA Box 545 File: Political Affairs Correspondences. June –October 1984; GDA Box 541: Security Meeting for West Acholi 29 October 1982. Report by Regional Police Commander summarising points raised during the meeting held 25 October 1982.

⁸⁸⁷ GDA Box 542: District Intelligence Report, 27 July 1982.

government persisted. In 1984 a new succession of political parties formed in anticipation of what would have been the general elections in 1985. This translated into open mobilisation of the populace disregarding any repercussions from central government. The National Liberation Party (NLP), formed by Atwoma T. Okeny, a former DP loyalist, and the Conservative Party, started to organise political rallies with frequency, challenging the political monopoly of the UPC.⁸⁸⁸ It became apparent that any restraint against openly criticising Obote was rapidly disappearing. Utilising global as well local discourses of political participation and opposition, the NLP was not afraid to publically hold the government accountable for its failings in the region. NLP party leaders highlighted 'human rights abuses' by soldiers and police officers, tribalism, administrative decay and the government's inability to restore 'peace and unity in Uganda.'⁸⁸⁹ The frequency of political rallies and public meetings placed further strain on the disintegrating police force in Acholi. In some cases, officers became so frustrated with the endless political rallies that in Kitgum an individual police officer took it upon himself to declare, without official sanction, a state of emergency banning all political gatherings.⁸⁹⁰ The continual disregard for central government's authority transcended political party activities, permeating all levels of the local administration, as Acholi civil servants started to take unsanctioned control of the district councils. In August 1984 the Administrative Secretary for Kitgum district council returned after a short trip to the United Kingdom only to find that the old committee of council members had been replaced without permission from the Ministry of Local Government.⁸⁹¹ Civil servants, teachers and community leaders became defiant against UPC administrators and

⁸⁸⁸ GDA Box 545 File: Political Affairs Correspondences, June –October 1984.

⁸⁸⁹ KDA: Nationalist Liberal Party Manifesto, 5 November 1985.

⁸⁹⁰ KDA: Intelligence Report to the DC of Kitgum, 5 January 1984; GDA Box 542: Letter from the District Police Commander to the Police Commander of Northern Uganda, 20 September 1984.

⁸⁹¹ KDA: Letter from the Administration Secretary Kitgum District Administration to the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Local Government, 8 August 1984.

politicians, continually finding ways to undermine their authority.⁸⁹² However, central government did not simply stand by idly as it continued lose control. Attempts were made by the UPC and the local police to suppress any opposition judged to be potentially dangerous for the regime. Individuals who were suspected of acting against the government's interest were questioned, or illegally detained.⁸⁹³ Overzealous UPC supporters took the opportunity to mark out territories to stop political opponents from holding rallies and public meetings in larger towns such as Gulu and Kitgum.

I would like to take this opportunity to bring to your attention that the UPC president Dr Apollo Milton Obote officially opened the above ground in 1980 when he first landed in Uganda from exile. It is known as a UPC political ground. Consequently sir, I on behalf of the entire population of UPC in the district strongly warn you that no other party other than the UPC should hold their rally in the ground without the permission from the current chairman of the UPC Executive Committee. Sir, I hope you will caution those political leaders who want to hold their rally in the ground accordingly.⁸⁹⁴

However, as much as it tried to silence political opponents, Obote could not contain the growing political opposition against his government. Indifference to state authority did little to address the internal security problems in the region as incidents of lawlessness among civilians and the security forces continued to increase.⁸⁹⁵ Among Acholi civilians there was a growing belief that once again it was 'each to their own', as party political hostilities only served to feed civil disobedience. After all, if they government could not manage its own police and army, or stop illegal rallies and demonstrations, why should the populace respect its authority?

⁸⁹² GDA Box 542: Letter from the representatives of the UPC to DC Gulu, 31 December 1984; GDA Box 558: Letter from A. S Adimola, Chairman of PTA to the Lord Bishop Board of Governors at St Joseph School in Layibi, 4 April 1985; GDA Box 541: Letter from Administrative Secretary to the D.C to DC Gulu, 24 July 1984

⁸⁹³ GDA Box: 542: Letter to the Administration Secretary, DC's Office, 22 February 1985.

⁸⁹⁴ KDA: Letter from Chairman of UPC Central, Kampala to Town Clerk Kitgum, 13 November 1984.

⁸⁹⁵ GDA Box 541: Letter from the District Police Commander Gulu to DC Gulu, Regional Police Commander Northern Region and Headmaster Samuel Baker Senior School, 5 August 1985.

To contend with these multiple political challenges, Obote was astute enough to capitalise on the growing demographic of disenfranchised youth in Uganda. One of the first things the President did was to spend money reviving the ailing National Union of Youth Organisation (NUYO) that had been severely suppressed under Amin. This was a political ploy that sought to deal with two major problems facing the administration. Firstly, Obote was finding it difficult to peddle his manifesto of progress and development to the established political cadre who had returned with him from exile. Within this group, each political actor believed that they were the only ones who could solve Uganda's political and economic woes. Rather than trying to convince this demographic, Obote turned his attention to the youth of Uganda whom he believed would be more susceptible to his political rhetoric. Secondly, unemployment among Acholi youth was a major problem among both educated and uneducated youth. Ugandans under the age of eighteen represented an estimated fifty percent of the population. Those between the ages of eighteen and thirty accounted for a further twenty percent of the total population of 12.6 million.⁸⁹⁶ The government needed to carefully utilise this demographic or face angering a large and highly impressionable section of society who could just as quickly turn their sympathies towards the anti-government rebel groups. Consequently, Ugandan youth were touted as the only path to the country's economic and political development.⁸⁹⁷ Of those youth who joined the NUYO branches in Acholi, the vast majority had been educated to a relatively high level with certificates or degrees in teaching, business and communication. The organisation appealed to them primarily because of the lack of job opportunities in the district and the large influx of educated returnees meant that many found themselves marginalised within local politics and local administration. Specifically because of their education, they were less enticed by the idea of returning to the villages to farm or engage in manual labour. This was the new generation of 'Ocols' who had

⁸⁹⁶ 2002 Uganda Population and Housing Census. Analytical Report. Abridged Version. October 2006.

<http://ecastats.uneca.org/aicmd/Portals/0/Abridged%20Version%20Uganda%20Census%2002.pdf>. [Accessed. 4 October 2013].

⁸⁹⁷ 'Youth told their mission' *The Uganda Times*, 4 June 1981.

grown only to find out that the previous generation had not vacated their seats.

Gulu district created its own branch of the NUYO in 1984 with the organisation's structure mirroring that of a political party. Parish elections were held to elect delegates into the group and one of the main tasks members had to participate in was to go into the community and mobilise the electorate. Other activities involved community development, building schools and farming.⁸⁹⁸ The UPC also had its own youth wing which it continually mobilised during all of its election campaigns going back to Obote's first administration. While the NUYO and the UPC youth wings were separate functioning organisations, during the early 1980s the two organisations became almost interchangeable, primarily because of the government's bias towards UPC sympathisers. Within Acholi districts youth members were tasked with facilitating elections of chiefs at the parish level as well as mobilising the 'right' constituents to vote. NUYO candidates were encouraged to stand for committee positions in their respective districts as well as to send representatives to meetings concerning district matters. The first youth delegation meeting in Gulu was held in offices of the UPC. Headmasters were also instructed to encourage membership in the organisation and to ensure youths attending these official meetings were dressed appropriately.⁸⁹⁹

Rather than acting as a stepping-stone in the education of Acholi youth regarding community development however, the NUYO in Acholi quickly turned into another arm of the UPC political machine. Members of the NUYO were used to intimidate opposition party members and civilians who were deemed to be unsympathetic to the administration. Despite the fact that NUYO was supposedly apolitical, youth members in fact became micro militias sent out to implement government directives and intimidate political opponents. When it was announced that Obote would be visiting the region in November 1981, instructions were sent to all local shopkeepers instructing

⁸⁹⁸ GDA Box 527: File SCW.8/A 'National Union of Youth Organisation' Gulu District Correspondences, 30 October 1972- 5 May 1983; KDA: Letter from J.J Obolo-Chola (UPC MP) Kitgum North to DC, Kitgum, 21 December 1984.

⁸⁹⁹ GDA Box 527: File SCW.8/A 'National Union of Youth Organisation' Gulu District Correspondences, 30 October 1972- 5 May 1983

them to close their shops during the visit as a sign of respect. When it transpired that some shopkeepers had not heeded the demand, the Executive Secretary of the UPC sent a strongly worded letter to the DC in Gulu to give him permission to send UPC youth to go and 'investigate' the shopkeepers who had refused to keep their shops closed during the President's visit. 'I would ask that drastic action be taken against these defaulters so that others would learn from them, our youths could be able to inform each one of them that they are being followed up.'⁹⁰⁰

Young Acholi men outside of the NUYO and UPC youth wing, particularly between the ages of eighteen and twenty-five, were targeted as potential recruits into the army. However, this was only if they professed their allegiance to the UPC. In 1985, just as Obote's grasp on power was slipping, a private correspondence between the Chairman of Kitgum central constituency and the Chairman of the UPC showed just how far government were willing to go maintain control. During an army recruitment drive all UPC constituent heads in the Acholi districts were asked to mobilise young men in the region to be inspected for potential posts in the army:

I have received a letter from Kampala that all the chairmen from the four constituencies should bring out boys for recruitment into the army. These boys should be members of the UPC only and not belonging to

⁹⁰⁰ GDA Box 532: Letter from H. W. J. Odong, Executive Secretary of UPC East Constituency to UPC Headquarters Kampala, 16 November 1981. It was not just in Acholi that the UPC Youth Wing were being mobilised. In his on-going war with the rebels in central Uganda, Obote was also able to utilise UPC youth to displace around 80,000 Rwandan refugees, some of whom had claimed citizenship in Uganda, back to Rwanda. Obote's political insecurity meant that he viewed the Rwandan refugee population in Uganda political as 'outsiders'. UPC youth wingers were tasked with going to villagers to search for suspected rebels often-utilising force and violence to apprehend targets. In 1982 Obote ordered coordinated attacks on Tutsi refugee camps resulting in the maiming, killing and raping of Rwandan civilians. This persecution was instrumental in mobilising Rwandan Tutsi to join the NRA rebel groups in Luwero: D. K. Gupta, *Path to Collective Madness: A Study in Social Order and Political Pathology* (Westport, Connecticut Praeger Publishers, 2001), 168; Branch, *Displacing Human Rights*, 58; M. Mamdani, *When Victims Become Killers, Colonialism, Nativism and the Genocide in Rwanda*, (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2002).

any other parties with ages between 18-25 and should have least reached the standard of primary school primary seven and above. Strictly speaking they should be teenagers who are not yet married and physically fit. I am forwarding this message to you, as Chairman and you should inform your respective Executive Committee to be present at the selection order and avoid grumbling from other parts. The occasion will take place on the 8 March 1985 at Apollo Ground starting at 10am in the morning. I am requesting to select ten boys from each sub-constituency and bring them on the 7 March 1985. They should come along with their beddings and eating utensils to avoid embarrassment.⁹⁰¹

Obote's political insecurity meant that it was longer enough to make sure that the army corps was predominately Northern, but now the new recruits had to be loyal the governing party. The constituency officials were tasked with personally selecting the men to identify any political imposters. This would have made it even harder for those whose employment considerations superseded their political affiliation, as community members would have readily identified those who were not loyal supporters of the UPC.

Yet given that youth in Acholi and Uganda were a largely disaffected demographic, it is perhaps surprising the NUYO and the UPC Youth Wing did not develop into a stronger political force in its own right, instead of operating as a fragmented paramilitary organisation following instructions at the states behest. Members of NUYO and UPC Youth Wing were undoubtedly motivated by the need to survive by acquiring scarce economic and political resources. They did this by seeking state-sponsored authority, which could be used to elevate their status in the locality and provide the tools to challenge other power contenders. Because of specific historical processes that emphasised the political and cultural importance of the locality, Acholi youths' grievances were localised, fragmented and contained within the districts that they lived in. Much in the same way as the Acholi Elders initially propagated that the Association was to be inclusive incorporating other elders from the various ethnic groups in Uganda, in reality the organisation operated as a specific Acholi group.

⁹⁰¹ KDA: Letter from Ezira Kibwota Chairman of the Kitgum Central Constituency UPC to the office of the Chairman of the UPC from, 21 February 1985.

This trend is symptomatic of the multiple competing political and economic forces in Acholi and Uganda in the 1980s, largely reinforced by the lack of political cohesion in the centre and the locality. Furthermore, ethnic divisions in Uganda would not have allowed for the amalgamation of localised political groups into a centralised political force, as witnessed with the localisation of the UPC and DP party machines in the 1950s and the 1960s. Each local government had its own specific regional grievances that were continually channelled through ethnic discourses within central government. In this sense Obote was able to fully capitalise on the politics of decentralisation, politicising specific groups in the locality, yet ensuring that they did not develop into an actual political force that could effectively challenge his authority nationally. For the Acholi, a weak government presented the opportunity to bypass historically established political and social hierarchies. Much like low ranking army soldiers, police personnel and Acholi civilians, Acholi youth groups exploited the internal insecurity in the region, to acquire material goods and political capital. Ironically, given the multiple power contenders that emerged in Acholi during the 1980s, Obote was to be overthrown by his own military in a repetition of the fate that had befallen his first administration and the regimes that followed. It would seem that in post-colonial Uganda the only effective way to topple a presidency was through a military coup d'état.

In many respects the military coup of Tito Okello and Bazillo Olara-Okello on the 27 July 1985 should have heralded a new era of Acholi political unity and the opportunity to redress the region's historic marginalisation. However, the coup was not the end result of Acholi 'political tribalism' but a specific military takeover that just happened to be largely comprised of Acholi soldiers. The short-lived administration had very little to do with ethno-politics and everything to do with the internal factionalism among the high-ranking cadres of the military corps. In fact, one of the first speeches Tito Okello made after taking power was to follow the common pattern of new Ugandan governments denouncing the previous regime. 'Obote condoned the killings of Ugandans and employed the politics of divisions while he held on to his throne. He triggered tribal conflicts in the army and participated in his own

downfall.⁹⁰² The next step was to initiate peace talks with Museveni. This was a necessary step, as by December 1985 Uganda stood on the cusp of total institutional collapse exacerbated by the ongoing bush war.⁹⁰³ Okello's six-month presidency had very little impact among the populace in Acholi. However, given the fact that since the 1950s Acholi politicians had fought to gain a solid foothold within central government, it is perhaps surprising that the inauguration of an Acholi president was not met by an overflow of euphoria. 'Tito's government came and went. Some of us were not even aware of it. It did not really have any impact here.'⁹⁰⁴ One contributing factor is that prior to the coup there was no unified Acholi political momentum; opposition to the government was factionalised among competing groups. It is unlikely that even if Tito Okello's Presidency had lasted longer, that he would have been able to easily harness political unity among the Acholi let alone nationally. Similarly, by staging a coup against a Lango President, Tito Okello could not even rely on the 'Northern identity' which Obote had utilised so effectively during the 1950s and early 1960s. In the end, even though a peace deal was eventually signed in December 1985 detailing a power sharing agreement between Okello and the NRA, Museveni was shrewd enough to recognise the Okello government had little national support and next to no resources to withstand a military attack.⁹⁰⁵ It was at this point the NRA troops took Kampala on 25 January 1986 and staged the sixth military coup in Uganda's short history since independence.

Conclusion

From 1980, rather than providing a return to some sort of normality in Uganda after Amin, Obote's election win obliterated any hope of political cohesion, sending opposing political figures to the bush and ensuring that Uganda

⁹⁰² 'Tito Okello is forming a military council' *The Equator*, 5 August 1985 (quotation paraphrased); 'Obote toppled by UNLA' *The Equator*, 27 July 1985

⁹⁰³ 'Tito and Museveni having peace talks in Nairobi' *The Equator*, 17 December 1985.

⁹⁰⁴ Interview Gulu, 19 July 2012.

⁹⁰⁵ Mwakikagile, *Obote to Museveni*, 216-27.

remained a distinctly militarised state. Government resources were spent fighting the rebels in Luwero at the expense of reconstructing state and local institutions. Consequently, the cataclysmic politics within central government was reflected back to the locality. In Acholi, the economic and political collapse of the state opened an avenue for political pluralism giving multiple 'power contenders' the opportunity to engage outside of their previously established political and cultural domains. Acholi women, elders, youth, police officers, low ranking military personnel as well as the usual suspects of career soldiers and the *Oco/s*, all vied to gain access an increasingly competitive local and national political market. The inability of central government to maintain law and order in the locality meant that once again the Acholi had to adopt and each to their own mentality as they struggled to acquire basic commodities, cumulating in the increased attack on 'outsiders'. However, as the politics of survival continued, these power contenders pursued personal, rather than collective grievances, once again placing limits on the emergence of a unified Acholi political movement that could transcend the locality.

CONCLUSION

This thesis has sought to look at the politics of identity among the Acholi of northern Uganda from 1950-1985 to ascertain why Acholi ethnic identity remained such a salient political tool in post-colonial Uganda. Drawing on previous works by Mamdani and Gertzel on centre-periphery political engagement in Uganda and Acholi, this research has sought to highlight the relationship between Acholi power brokers and those outside the periphery of formal politics. The focus on the political history of one local population, has allowed for a more in-depth understanding of the intra-group relationships. More specifically, by incorporating Lonsdale's theory on 'political tribalism' and 'moral ethnicity', this research has looked specifically at how Acholi class, gender and social hierarchies, religious and regional identifications and the much-touted 'martial' identity have been negotiated internally within the geographical and political boundary of Acholi, and externally within the political boundary of the Ugandan state. More significantly, this thesis has shown that these particular identity markers created a paradoxical political climate within the Acholi locality that simultaneously confirmed and challenged the notion of a unified and politically coherent Acholi ethnopolitical identity. Consequently, rather than Acholi ethnopolitics simply being an external tool utilised opportunistic elites to manipulate the susceptible masses for personal gain, the cultural tools harnessed within the locality provided strategies of actions through which Acholi agents could engage with, and/or challenge, internal and external political competitors.

By utilising a multifocal approach, this thesis has contributed to the current debates regarding ethnic conflict within the post-colonial African state. Whilst Acholi political history, much like the history of many post-colonial African states is complex, challenging and sometimes paradoxical, recurrent and stable patterns of political engagement can clearly be observed. In Uganda, these recurrent patterns have been shaped and reinforced by the symbiotic relationship between the Acholi locality and central government. Even with strong but relatively politically-inclusive governments, as can be observed in the early 1960s, ethnic identities were still used as a political tool to engage with state structures. This was symptomatic of Uganda's colonial

legacy, which placed emphasis on local rather than national identities. Similarly, the emphasis on local and cultural institutions, which can be seen more clearly in the 1970s and 1980s, was a throwback to the British system of 'indirect rule', highlighting a historical pattern. This pattern can today be observed in the Museveni regime's directive of decentralisation through districticisation.⁹⁰⁶ Ugandan governments, which lack the financial, political and administrative resources to centralise control of their citizens become more reliant on localised institutions. However, whilst institutionalised ethnic pluralism allows these regimes to keep the locality subjugated through the ethos of 'divide and rule', it also presents the conditions for mobilising multiple ethnic political movements which can potentially challenge the overall power of the state. To combat this threat, Ugandan governments since colonialism have sought to maintain control of the locality by funding and retaining strong military forces to suppress any potential political threats.⁹⁰⁷ This can again be observed in the current regime's increasingly repressive policies against political opponents.

This research has also argued that the salience of Acholi ethnopolitics nationally was largely informed by the socio-economic conditions that shaped the politics of identity within the Acholi locality. Whereas Acholi from the late-colonial period to independence remained ethnically homogenous, internal politics was characterised by social, political, economic and religious divisions, which placed limits on the emergence of a politically-coherent ethnopolitical identity. In part, some of these divisions had their roots within the colonial state, while others were cultivated from the political economy of post-colonial Uganda. Whilst it is widely accepted that the colonisation of Acholi resulted in the creation of distinct political tribal identities, colonial rule subsumed much of the socio-political structures that dictated the lives of the various groups occupying what is now Acholi. These politically-decentralised social groupings, living within lineage-based village communities, cultivated cultural tools based on shared ancestry, geographical boundaries, language,

⁹⁰⁶ Green, 'Decentralization and Conflict in Uganda', 427-450.

⁹⁰⁷ A.O. Otunno, *Politics and the Military in Uganda, 1890-1985* (Palgrave MacMillan, 1987); Otunno, 'The Struggle for Democracy in Uganda', 443-463.

symbols, rituals, stories, and established social norms and values which dictated the relationship between elders, youth, men and women. Consequently, the tools used by the British administration to establish an effective Native Authority accommodated the existing structures of power that had governed the moral economy of these pre-colonial social groupings.

With the establishment of colonial Native Authorities and the politicisation of chiefly roles, pre-colonial clan identities became more centralised, emerging as a key political tool to engage with internal competitors and to challenge the authority of colonial-sponsored native chiefs. Moreover, indirect rule in Acholi was only intrusive on a rudimentary level, leaving a large amount of the Acholi population untouched by the colonial market and political economy. This meant that Acholi clan identities were largely unaffected by colonial rule as it did not permeate downwards to dictate the domestic lives of the Acholi rural masses. This demographic continued to live within lineage-based village systems that reinforced pre-colonial clan and chiefly allegiances. However, Christian missionary activity supplemented, to a limited extent, the intrusion of the colonial rule to this peripheral demographic. The pastoral work of missionaries within the remote regions of Acholi provided the means to connect the Acholi rural periphery to the colonial administration in Gulu. For the Acholi who converted to Christianity, the possibility of accessing educational and health facilities through the acquisition of Catholic or Protestant identity facilitated the incorporation of new Western Christian identities into indigenous religious practices. Within the post-colonial state, the politicisation of the Acholi Christian identity came to provide an effective tool to mobilise votes along partisan religious politics by reinforcing a two-party system, led by the predominately Protestant UPC and the Catholic DP, politically connecting the rural masses to the urban towns of Gulu and Kitgum, and all the way to the state house in Entebbe. All these factors placed limits on the creation of a centralised and politically coherent Acholi tribal identity within the locality.

British colonial rule also served to create new tribal stereotypes, which became useful within the Ugandan post-colonial state. The colonial emphasis on the southern Kingdoms as the political and administrative hub of the Protectorate resulted in chronic underdevelopment within the Northern

Provinces. Fewer job opportunities in the North compared to the relatively prosperous South consequently made the region a prime recruiting ground for the army. Moreover, the designation of the Northerners as 'martial tribes' served to create a potentially disruptive concentration of military force- away from the political and administrative hub of Kampala and Entebbe. Consequently, the martial identity, whilst initially a regional designation came to function as an ethnic trait associated with the peoples of Acholi as a result of the Obote regime that continued the colonial trend of recruiting a disproportionate number of Acholi and Lango soldiers into the national army.

The roots of Acholi ethnonational identity can be found within the paradox of the colonial political economy. Missionary education and new economic opportunities created a new generation of educated Acholi men whose economic and political aspirations extended beyond the social obligations of village life. This demographic of educated young men and migrants were shaped by the administration to service the colonial economy. However, familial ties and the colony policy of divide and rule meant that this demographic would remain largely contained within Acholi. This set the stage for a generational conflict between the emerging class of young Acholi men and patriarchal gerontocratic clan and chieftainship systems. More significantly, by containing this emerging educated demographic within demarcated regional and ethnic territories, the British were unwittingly sowing the seeds for the creation a new generation of politically- minded Acholi men whose political consciousness would be deeply rooted within their ethnic boundaries. This demographic, born and brought up in the colonial political economy, would grow up to become the political face of the Acholi in late colonial and post-independence Uganda.

Leading up to independence, the politics of decolonisation became centred on the locality, primarily because of the British ethos of 'divide and rule' which emphasised the locality central forum for political debate. As the different ethnic regions were administered separately, there was little or no pan-ethnic competition for resources, such as land and political office, during the height of colonialism. However, the promise of independence presented the possibility of gaining a share of the national cake. This offered an opportunity for the new generation of educated Acholi men to challenge the

political dominance of the chiefs through elections to the Acholi Local Government. Moreover, for this demographic, their political ambitions extended beyond the locality. In this endeavour they utilised party politics as a means to gain a foothold within national politics. However, the ethnically-demarcated electoral map of Uganda and the colonial emphasis on strong local government institutions meant Acholi politicians were inevitably restricted in where they could run for political office. They would not have the same appeal in Buganda or Busoga, and so there was really only one place in which they could practice their politics: within their various constituent bases in Acholi. As much as this new breed of politicians strove to usurp the authority of local chiefs, they were also reliant on clan and chiefly allegiances to secure votes and legitimise their power within the locality so that they could gain access to the national political stage. Consequently, with both faction unable to effectively diminish the other, each adopted specific tools that would ensure their political positions within an independent Uganda. The chiefs sought to extend their powers within the locality by lobbying for the creation of a paramount Acholi chief who could be placed on par with the monarchical heads of the southern Kingdoms. On the other hand party politics provided the means in which local political elites could rally local constituents to secure votes within the local and national councils along partisan religious and intra-regional lines.

However, the unifying tool adopted by both factions emerged as the 'victim identity'. Utilising the comparative politics of underdevelopment, chiefs and Acholi politicians continued to lobby the colonial government for the development of social, economic and political infrastructures that would bring the peoples of the Northern Provinces to the same standard as their more economically developed southern counterparts. This ensured that that during the late-colonial period, regional rather than tribal identities became the key tool for external political negotiations. After independence, individual rather than collective accumulation of state resources reinforced a patron-client network within Acholi Local Government, which kept the rural masses politically, socially and economically marginalised. Furthermore, chronic post-colonial economic underdevelopment stunted the emergence of any organised labour and agrarian movements that could be channelled externally

through national party political allegiances. Thus the rural peasantry of Acholi were marginalised further after independence as the Ugandan government and local power-brokers continued to utilise colonial structures of governance that placed power in the hands of a select few by reinforcing the client-patron network. This meant that this demographic remained reliant on local patrons to air their grievances nationally. Rather than challenging the established structures of power, instead, this demographic strove to gain access to the world of the patrons. This meant that whilst the state continually failed to invest in the rural masses in Acholi, they nonetheless continued to believe in the possibility of state power to affect positive change in their lives. Moreover, to effectively compete with regional and ethnic competitors on the national stage, Acholi patrons were limited to conveying local grievances through the lens of ethno-politics. Consequently, the Acholi ethnic identity emerged as the most effective tool to make collective political demands against the state. All these factors ensured that national politics in the Ugandan late colonial and post-colonial remained structured along regional and ethnic lines.

The election of Milton Obote, a regional counterpart, instigated the reification of the Acholi ethno-political identity which was subsequently used to challenge regional affiliations in the post-independence years. In an attempt to centralise political control and break down tribal barriers, Obote instead resorted to tribal ties to consolidate his power. Capitalising on the dominance of northerners within the national army, Obote sought to diminish the political challenge from the Buganda Kingdom by embarking on the gradual elimination of the divisive elements, particularly the Kings as symbols of regional autonomy. The military assault by the predominately Northern army personnel on the palace of the Kingdom of Buganda in 1966 resulted in the designation of the national army as a private Northern army loyal only to the President. The support given to the president by the Acholi for his actions against the Kabaka proved short-lived however after Obote's attentions turned to challenging the authority of the Acholi Local Government (ALG). In trying to centralise control of the country through military force, Obote's increasingly authoritarian rule served to alienate him internally in Acholi. As the ALG's political authority was challenged, Obote's Lango identity became a valuable tool used to diminish his credibility, with his depiction as a leader who only

favoured members of his tribe. As a consequence, the 'Northern' identity, presented largely by the Acholi and consumed by external observers as unified and unyielding, had by 1968 become politically fragmented. Consequently, the politics of underdevelopment became specifically channelled through the lens Acholi ethnopolitics, as apposed to more collectivising regional identities.

Whilst Acholi politicians fought to keep control of local government, the military coup of Idi Amin immediately eradicated any gains they had made within the locality. The emigration of prominent Acholi politicians and military personnel following the coup, served to weaken the political connection between the locality and the political centre in absence of local power brokers. This allowed chiefs to regain control of the locality as the government sought to fill the administrative and political gap left in the wake of the Acholi politician's political displacement. The politicisation and militarisation of chiefly roles fragmented communal discourses as clan identities came to the forefront, further emphasising internal allegiances to individual chiefs and clan groups. Consequently, Amin's rule presented a shift in the hierarchy of power contenders in the locality, and the emergence of individual Acholi political agency outside of the patron-client network. During this eight-year period we see the rural masses moving closer to the source of power as they were forced to speak directly to the 'big man'. More significantly, rather than dismantling Acholi ethnic identity at a time when it was dangerous to be an Acholi, the overall effect in this shift of political dynamics actually served to strengthen it as people fell back on pre-existing social and political networks. The repressiveness of Ugandan politics in the 1970s and the lack of political parties to channel grievances through the lens of 'political tribalism', meant that when Idi Amin was overthrown, Acholi politicians who returned to the region found that tools within the 'cultural tool kit' had been sharpened considerably.

However, the military coups that characterised the 1980s and the economic and political collapse of the state meant that there was no immediate return to the patronage machine that had kept the locality administratively and politically connected to the political centre. Instead, government resources were spent fighting the rebels at the expense of

reconstructing state and local institutions. The country was once again left with an ineffective central government, riddled with ethnic rivalries, governed by military force and economically crippled. It quickly became clear among the rural peasantry that they could no longer maintain the belief, however misguided, that the patron-client network was a viable tool to convey their grievances to central government. This meant rather than channelling the cultural tools which had been sharpened during Amin's regime once again through the lens of political tribalism, political activity in Acholi during this period became primarily centred on the locality. This opened an avenue for political pluralism, giving multiple 'power contenders' the opportunity to engage outside of their previously established political domains.

The cataclysmic political climate that followed Amin's regime undoubtedly resulted in the military and political empowerment of some sections of the Acholi rural masses. Indeed the short-term roots of the HSM and LRA can be easily observed during the five years of Obote's second presidency. Whilst it has not been the intention of this thesis to trace the origins of war, it is still useful to draw out the relevance of this research in understanding the long- and short-term roots of the HSM and LRA conflict, particularly because it remains critical in how the Acholi today understand and remember their political past. Utilising the themes discussed in this research it could be argued that the long-term roots of LRA and HSM conflict was directly as a result of the disempowerment of the Acholi rural masses by the structures of power ingrained within the Ugandan state and the militarisation of Acholi men, which both fed into the 'victim' and 'martial' identities.

For the Acholi ethnic group, the most externally visible of their colonial and post-colonial identities has been that of the 'martial race'. This identity was institutionalised by British colonial rule, adapted by the Acholi, and manipulated by successive post-independence regimes. Acholi soldiers joined the army largely as a means to access opportunities for personal advancement and economic security, but in doing so they became representatives of state coercion and violence. However, most Acholi recruits were motivated by their own unique political and economic protests against the state, rather than ethnic considerations or high politics. This can be observed in the 1970s as they joined anti-Amin groups in the bush when

government policies sought to displace and marginalise their economic and political positions in the locality. In this way the 'bush' provided the opportunity to regain power and access to state resources, specifically because access to economic opportunities was scarce within the locality. The politics of regional underdevelopment and 'victimisation' inevitably permeated the local socio-political psyche emerging as the key tool for political engagement within the Ugandan post-colonial state. However, the 'victim identity', is an accumulation of the historical processes that have left the peoples of Acholi feeling economically and politically marginalised. Chronic underdevelopment, institutional corruption and the militarisation of politics within every successive government meant that by the mid-1980s, the underlying grievances that had always been present among the rural peasantry, urban labourers and the lower rank and file of Acholi army personnel, came to the forefront.

Unlike Amin's dictatorial rule, the Obote II regime lacked the resources to effectively control the Acholi population through violence and fear. This, coupled with the continued militarisation of Acholi, the rise of civil disobedience and a lack of basic economic resources, created a climate conducive to the rise local paramilitary groups to mobilise disenfranchised sections of Acholi society. The overthrow of the Okello regime in 1985 instigated the return of Acholi soldiers back to the locality fleeing retaliation from NRA troops. Heike Behrend argues that because of their experiences during the Luwero Bush war, these young Acholi men had become 'contemptuous of peasant existence' upon their return to the locality, further agitating the internal crisis in Acholi in the mid-1980s.⁹⁰⁸ They showed this contempt by terrorising village elders and the general village population, as they attempted to gain economic resources and establish their position within the locality. The new government further heightened these problems when NRA soldiers were stationed in Acholi to fight the emerging rebel factions. Many of the soldiers had fought against the Acholi during the Luwero Bush war, and, perhaps inevitably, acts of revenge and retaliation occurred.⁹⁰⁹

⁹⁰⁸ Behrend, 'The Holy Spirit Movements of Alice Lakwena, Severino Lukoya and Joseph Kony, 108.

⁹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 08.

It was during the assimilation of Acholi ex-soldiers back into the villages that Alice Lakwena and the HSM started to gain a following. Amidst the political turmoil Alice (then known as Auma) claimed to be possessed by the spirit Lakwena, which had instructed her to form the HSM to overthrow the Ugandan government. The movement itself was steeped in Acholi indigenous and Christian religious discourse. HSM recruits had to go through many forms of moral rehabilitation which banned acts such as looting, sex, drinking, and smoking, a reflection of the internal civil disorder and the disintegration of social accountability in Acholi during this period. Through spiritual rituals and reinforced superstition Alice was able to lead up to 10,000 men in 1987 on a march towards Kampala in an unsuccessful attempt to overthrow the new government.⁹¹⁰ Perhaps encouraged by Alice's success, Joseph Kony set about forming the LRA by recruiting former members of the HSM and other rebel factions operating within Acholi. Kony adopted many of the same religious discourses as Alice and was able to control his followers by reinforcing the fear of the consequences of rule-breaking. Soldiers were covered with holy oil and told that they would be bullet proof on the battlefield if their hearts and minds were pure.⁹¹¹ However, unlike Alice, Kony adopted guerrilla tactics which effectively utilised violence as a weapon of fear and control, allowing the LRA to emerge as a transnational organisation capitalising on regional instability.

Given that Alice Lakwena and Joseph Kony were both uneducated villagers who had had no training in formal politics, their ability to amass a following, which in the case of Lakwena very nearly toppled a government, was indicative of the growing discord among the disenfranchised sections of Acholi society during the 1980s. However, rather than being a mechanism to diminish state authority in the locality, the rise of the HSM and the LRA was in many ways an attempt by sections of Acholi society to engage with and access state institutions, as the result of the failure of local patrons to effectively bridge the gap between the centre and periphery. The failure of both Lakwena and Kony to harness any substantial support within Uganda

⁹¹⁰ Ibid., 113.

⁹¹¹ Cline, 'Spirits and the Cross: Religiously Bases Violent Movements in Uganda', 119.

outside Acholi, has led to delineations of the conflict along ethnic lines. However, it is more realistic to conclude that those who joined Lakwena and Kony were, initially at least, motivated by specific class, economic and political grievances, as apposed to any inherent atavistic hatred towards other ethnic groups in Uganda. That being said, ethnopolitics does come into play, not least because the historical processes that emphasised the locality as the nucleus for political engagement meant that, even for the HSM and LRA, the conflict would inevitably remain primarily contained within Acholi. Both group leaders, like their political counterparts in the 1960s, could no more hope to attract a political or military following that would transcend inter-regional and ethnic lines. Consequently, facing the military prowess of NRA, Lakwena was quickly stopped on her march to Kampala, and Kony went on to internalise the conflict by fighting against, rather than for, the peoples of Acholi.

For the peoples of Acholi, nearly thirty-years of conflict has done little to address the region's historic economic and social marginalisation. Consequently, the dominant tool used for political engagement today remains the 'victim identity', which has been further reinforced by the LRA conflict. Indeed as an Acholi informant emphatically stated earlier in this thesis:

Nothing good has happened to the Acholi. Acholi are different because they have been mistreated. They have not been given any opportunities. That is what makes us different.⁹¹²

It will be interesting to observe how this 'difference' will be politically utilised during the upcoming 2016 elections. Given the current land disputes between the Acholi and the government, continued corruption in local and central government finances, the failure of the state to adequately invest in post-war reconstruction and the steady return of Acholi migrants from the Diaspora, it is likely that once again the fight for political power will be channelled, externally at least, through ethnopolitics during the next election campaign.

⁹¹² IF/M) NAU: Interview with private security guard, Gulu, 25 June 2012.

Appendix: Formal and Informal Interviews

Interviews were conducted between October 2011 and December 2013 in, Kampala, Jinja Entebbe, Mukono, Gulu, Kitgum, Lamwo, Pader, Nwoya, and Anaka. The majority of the informants requested that their names be omitted from the written thesis. For the purpose of uniformity the names of those who did not request anonymity will also be omitted. Where informants have been quoted or referenced in the thesis, the day month and location of the interview have been cited.

Key

M: Male participant

F: Female participant

F/M: Formal interview with a male participants

F/F: Formal Interview with a female participant

IF/M: Informal interview with a male participant

IF/F: Informal interview with a female participant

NAU: Non-Audio

AU: Audio Recording

Langol

(F/M) AU: Subsistence farmer, Langol, Nwoya District, 16 May 2012

(F/M) AU: Subsistence farmer, Langol, Nwoya District, 16 July 2012

(M/F) AU: Local youth leader, Langol-Nwoya District, 15 July 2012

Anaka

(F/M) NAU: Subsistence farmer, Anaka, Nwoya District 21 June 2012

(F/M) NAU: Farmer, Anaka-Nwoya District 19 July 2012

Gulu Town and Surrounding Sub-Counties

(F/M) AU: Civil servant Gulu, 9 May 2012

(F/F) AU: Housewife, Omoro county- Gulu District, 30 May 2012

(F/M) NAU: Retired civil servant, Gulu Town Centre, 9 June 2012

(IF/M) NAU: Private security guard, Gulu Town Centre, 9 June 2012

(F/M) NAU: Retired civil servant, Gulu, 9 June 2012

(IF/M) NAU: Local business owner, Gulu, 18 June 2012

(F/M) AU: Small business owner, Gulu, 24 June 2012

(IF/M) NAU: local business owner, Gulu, 25 June 2012

(F/M) AU: Subsistence farmer, Omoro County, 2 July 2012

(F/M) NAU: Retired civil servant, Gulu Town Centre, 15 July 2012

NAU: Group Interview 1 (15 Female Participants) Nwoya District, 4 July 2012

Participant 1: Subsistence farmer.
 Participant 2: Housewife
 Participant 3: Domestic worker
 Participant 4: Small business owner
 Participant 5: Housewife
 Participant 6: Widow
 Participant 7: Domestic worker
 Participant 8: Domestic worker
 Participant 9: Live-in-Housekeeper
 Participant 10: Small business owner
 Participant 11: Domestic worker
 Participant 12: Subsistence farmer
 Participant 13: Domestic worker
 Participant 14: Subsistence farmer
 Participant 15: Subsistence farmer

NAU: Group Interview 1 (10 Participants, 6 women 4 Men), Koro sub-County Gulu District, 8 June 2012

Participant 1: Retired Teacher (M)
 Participant 2: Subsistence Farmer (M)
 Participant 3: Housewife (F)
 Participant 4: Domestic worker (F)
 Participant 5: Subsistence Farmer (F)
 Participant 6: Small Business owner (M)
 Participant 7: Domestic Worker (F)
 Participant 8: Live-in-Domestic worker (F)
 Participant 9: Housewife (F)
 Participant 10: Subsistence Farmer (M)

Entebbe/Kampala/Jinja

(F/M) NAU: Government driver, Entebbe, 23 November 2011
 (F/F) NAU: Retired widow Jinja, 27 December 2011
 (F/M) NAU: Civil servant, Entebbe, 4 January 2012
 (F/M) AU: Civil servant Entebbe 15 January 2012
 IF/M) NAU: Private security guard, Kampala, 18 January 2012
 (IF/F) NAU: Domestic cleaner, Entebbe, 2 February 2012
 (F/F) NAU: Housewife, Kampala, 3 February 2012
 (F/M) AU: UPC politician, Kampala, 4 February 2012

Kitgum Town Centre and Surrounding Sub-Counties

(IF/M) NAU: Private security guard, Kitgum Town centre, 4 June 2012
 (F/F) NAU: Domestic cleaner, Chua Sub-County-Kitgum, 5 June 2012
 (IN/F) NAU: Shop assistant, Kitgum, 5 June 2012.
 (F/M) NAU: Private security guard, Kitgum, 1 August 2012
 (F/F) NAU: Subsistence farmer, Lamwo District, 2 August 2012

Glossary

<i>Abila</i>	Ancestral Shrine (Acholi)
<i>Acholi</i>	The Acholi ethnic group and the geographical boundary which they occupy in Northern Uganda.
<i>Ajwaka</i> (Acholi)	A spirit medium. 'Medicine' man or Woman
<i>Askari</i>	Local Soldier (Acholi: Acikari)
<i>Baganda</i> (Singular: <i>Muganda</i>)	Bantu speaking ethnic group native to the Kingdom of Buganda
<i>Buganda</i>	Largest tradition Kingdom situated in south-central Uganda.
<i>Jadiya</i>	Sudanese soldiers and official representatives of the Egyptian administration stationed in Northern Uganda in the late nineteenth century
<i>Jok</i> (<i>Jogi</i> ; plural)	Spirit/God/Witchcraft (Acholi)
<i>Kabaka</i>	King of Buganda
<i>Katikiro</i>	Secretary-General (Bantu)
<i>Kuturia</i>	Arabic speaking ivory and slave traders
<i>Lagolkop Madit</i>	Acholi Chief Judge
<i>Laloyo Maber</i>	Good Ruler (Acholi Paramount Chief)
<i>Lawino</i>	Character in p'Bitek's book 'Song of Lawino'. The name is used in this thesis in reference to the mostly undereducated section of Acholi society situated outside the periphery of formal politics who constitute the 'silent majority'.
<i>Lawirwodi</i>	Paramount Chief (Acholi)
<i>Luganda</i>	Language spoken by the Baganda

<i>Lukiko</i>	Buganda Parliament
<i>Lusgoa</i>	Language spoken by the Basoga
<i>Mukungu</i> (Bantu)	Parish Chief
<i>Northerner</i>	Luo speaking groups who include, the Acholi Lango, Teso, Karamojong, Alur, Madi occupying the Northern region of Uganda.
<i>Ocols</i>	Character in p'Bitek's book 'Song of Ocol' The name is used in this thesis in reference to members of the Acholi middle class, power brokers and politicians.
<i>Rwodi</i> (Singular: <i>Rwot</i>)	Acholi chief
<i>Rowt kweri</i>	Chief of the hoe (Cultivation team headsman)
<i>Uhuru</i>	Freedom (Swahili)
<i>UGS</i>	Ugandan Shillings
<i>Wang Kweri</i>	Cultivation team
<i>Won Nyaci</i>	Paramount Chief (Lango)

Bibliography

Primary Sources

Gulu District Archive (GDA)

The Gulu District Archives are largely uncatalogued but clearly organised by boxes. Within selected boxes some documents have been archived under one file according to type. I have listed the boxes in ascending numerical order and where file references were present, these have been highlighted in parentheses.

Box 527

(File SCW.8/A) 'National Union of Youth Organisation, 30 October 1972-5 May 1983).

Letter from acting DC, Gulu, to all county chiefs, 14 November 1983.

Box 529

(File: PR1/2, 'Prisons Uganda Government').

'Gulu Prison' Report: Departmental Brief, 24 January 1985.

Box 532

Correspondences: D.K Burner, Ag. Provincial Commissioner, Northern Province and the Chief Secretary in Entebbe, 8 September - 5 November 1949.

Letter from D C of Northern Province to M.J. Bessel, DC of Bunyoro, 14 April 1950.

Letter from DC Northern Province to Rwot Erisa Lakor, 6 May 1958.

Letter from Ezekeri Abwoch to Idi Amin, 6 February 1979.

Letter from Ranch Manager in Aswa District to DC of Kitgum District, 22 November 1979.

Letter from Corporal G.O. Anying to DC Acholi, 23 November 1979.

Letter from Prison Administrator to DC Gulu, 2 January 1980.

(File: C.MISS.12, Petitions and complaints)

Report from DC'S Office Gulu, 20 October 1980.

Letter from H. W. J. Odong, Executive Secretary of UPC East Constituency to UPC Headquarters Kampala, 16 November 1981.

Letter from County Chief of Atyak to the Commanding Officer 12th Battalion Gulu, 23 March 1983.

(File ca10//10563: Staff Records June 1980-November 1989).

Box 533

Replies to Questionnaires on Tribal Composition 4th Ugandan Battalion Appendix 'A' from R.E. Stone, DC of Acholi, January 1950.

Army List 1951 and Mobilisation, 30 March 1951.

Number of Recruits by Tribe, 21 February 1951.

Letter from the DC Acholi to Lawirwodi, 11 November 1958.

(File: S.IMT.9. 'Intelligence Refugees').

'Re: Memorandum of the Health Aspects of the Refugee Problem in Acholi for Presentation at O.A.U Commission', Peter Macmanus District Medical Officer Acholi District, 5 October 1964.

Meeting of O.A.U Commission on Refugees in Gulu 16-21 November 1964.

A special Meeting of the Acholi District Intelligence Committee Held February 16 1965 in Gulu. Meeting Agenda: Congolese Affairs and Congolese Refugees in Acholi.

Letter from Senior Community Development Officer Gulu to Director of Refugees, Kampala 20 September 1966.

Letter from N.O. Letti, Special Branch Officer, Acholi, to Ag. Senior Assistant Commissioner of Police, Kampala 19 February 1969.

Letter from T. Karugaba, Ministry of Internal Affairs, to the Regional Police Commander, Gulu, 14 June 1973.

Report from Ag DC Gulu to Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Local Administrations, 13 August 1979.

Letter from Brigadier Lupembe to DC Gulu, 23 September 1979.

Letter from DC Gulu to T. Banyenzaki, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Culture and Community Development, 3 February 1983.

Letter from L. Ogwang Ugandan Ministry of Wildlife and Tourism to UNHCR Juba Branch, 30 July 1982.

(File Corruption among Staff Loss of Cash File. C.FIN.12.VOL.II.)
Various letters, criminal reports and account audits, Gulu and Kitgum, 1967-1982.

Letter from Mr. Okema Ranch Manager to DC Gulu, 21 November 1979.

Letter from County Chief Aswa to DC Gulu, 25 January 1980.

Letter from former Sub-county Chief of Alero to Permanent Secretary, Kampala (Department unknown) from, 6 May 1980.

Box 540

Letter from Mrs Ochora, Women's Leader Gulu East to the District Cultural Officer, 29 March 1982.

Letter from DC Gulu to All County Chiefs and Sub-county Chiefs, 7 September 1974.

Letter from Community Development Officer to the DC of Gulu, 24 March 1983.

Letter from Akena p'Jok, UPC Chairman Gulu District to Charles Alai, Administrative Secretary, Gulu District Administration, 20 June 1983.

Box 541

Minutes of a Meeting held by A.H. Russell, DC's Office Gulu, 11 August 1952.

(File: Petitions and Complaints Omoro County MIS/12/1 Omoro),
Letter to DC Acholi from the People of Puranga Awere, Omoro County, 9 June 1952.

Correspondence between Provincial Commissioner and DC of Acholi Regarding Religious and Political Tensions in Agago County, 12 December 1958.

Letter from DC in Acholi to Provincial Commissioner, 11 February 1959.

Letter from the Rwot County of Omoro to DC Gulu, 24 November 1959.

Open Letter of Complaint and Prayer by Father Cipriano Kihangie, Bishop of Gulu regarding violent activities by UPC Youth Wingers in Acholi, 3 October 1969.

Letter from Rwot Aswa to Jago of Paicho, 11 February 1971.

Security Report from County Chief Kilak to N. A. Ojan. DC Gulu, 14 December 1971.

Letter from P.W.B. Masolo, Tsetse Officer Spray Unit to Senior Tsetse Officer, Acholi/Karamoja, April 1971.

Letter from the Superintendent of Works Tobacco Co-operative Union Ltd to DC West Acholi, 16 May 1971.

Report to DC West Acholi from Jago of Alero, 20 March 1973.

Letter from Archbishop of Kampala to Gulu Diocese, 18 September 1973.

Letter from Jago of Alero to DC Gulu, 11 November 1973.

Letter from County Chief Alokolum Koich Division to Air Force Military Intelligence, 17 December 1973.

Letter from County Chief of Kilak to DC Gulu 11 February 1974.

Summary of Meeting of Acholi District Council, Gulu, 4 February 1975.

Letter from County Chief of Nwoya to all Jagi, 26 February 1975.

Letter from Rwot of Kilak to DC Gulu, 10 March 1975.

'Complaint from the Christians at Amuru', Letter to the DC Gulu, 8 May 1975.

Letter from County Chief Aswa to DC Gulu 8 December 1976.

(File: 'Acholi District' Monthly District Intelligence Reports, Ministry of Internal Affairs). 12 March 1974- November 1977.

Letter from A.O. Opobo, Chairman of ACA to DC Gulu, 7 September 1979.

Letter from DC Gulu to the Ministry of Internal Affairs, Kampala, 22 February 1980.

Letter from the Vicar General of the Gulu Diocese to DC Gulu, 15 October 1980.

Letter from the DC of Gulu to the Military Commission, 17 October 1980.

(File: Gulu District Executive Cultural Committee).

Programme inauguration/ Revival of District Cultural Executive Committee, Minutes of meeting held at District Council Hall, Gulu, 18 December 1981.

Letter from the Jago of Bobi to the County Chief of Omoro, 19 December 1980.

Letter from DC Gulu to Ministry of Local Ordinance, 5 August 1982.

Report by Regional Police Commander, 29 October 1982.

Letter from Saverino Lanek to Inspector General of the Police, Kampala, 19 October 1983.

Letter from Acting County Chief of Kilak to DC Gulu, 6 May 1980.

Letter from District Police Commander to DC Gulu, 11 May 1984.

Letter from District Police Commander to Town Clerk, Gulu Municipal Council, 12 April 1984.

Letter from S.C. Alai, Administrative Secretary Gulu District Administration to DC Gulu, 24 July 1984.

Letter from the District Police Commander Gulu to DC Gulu, Regional Police Commander, Northern Region and Headmaster Samuel Baker Senior School, 5 August 1985.

Box 542

(File: 'Acholi District' Monthly District Intelligence Reports, January 1960-March 1964).

Memorandum by the President, State House Entebbe, 23 March 1968.

Memorandum from the DP office in Gulu, April 1968.

Minutes: Meeting in Agoro to Discuss Acholi Karamojong Border Conflicts, 21 July 1966.

Letter from the Minister of Provincial Administration to all DCs, 14 November 1973.

Letter from Secretary of Gulu South Constituency to the Police Headquarters Gulu, 10 May 1981.

Letter from Y.Y Ongweng (MP) Gulu South Constituency to the UPC Secretary General, Kampala, 17 July 1981.

(File: ADM/34). Political Parties, Meeting and Rallies and alleged subversive Activities, May 1981- August 1985).

Land Disputes, 27 July 1982.

Letter from County Chief of Omoro to DC Gulu, 16 June 1983.

Box 545

(File: Political Affairs Correspondences)

Letter from DP National Organising Committee to DP Chairman Gulu, 27 June 1984.

Letter from NLP Headquarters in Kampala to Administrative Secretary, Gulu District Council, 5 October 1984.

(File: ARM.1 .Arms and Ammunition Policy).

Letter from District Police Commander Gulu to Parongo District Administration 22 May 1985.

Letter from General Manager of Uganda Livestock Industries Ltd to District Police Commander, 1 July 1985

Box 546

Letter from the Permanent Secretary to all Regional Agriculture Officers, 29 March 1972.

Box 553

(File: Late payment of salary and staff discrimination/Corruption)

Letter from District Education Officer to DC West Acholi, 1 September 1972.

Letter from Mrs Grace Ogal to Gulu District Administration Treasurer, 16 July 1979.

Letter from DC Gulu to County Chief of Nwoya, 6 December 1979

Letter from Parish Chief of Koich Kal, to DC Gulu 20 February 1980.

Box 558

Labour Day Speech by the Representatives of the Employees, Gulu District, 1 May 1982.

Letter from A. S Adimola, Chairman of PTA to the Chairman Board of Governors at St Joseph School in Layibi, 14 April 1985.

Box 572

(File: 'Elders' Association 1984-1986)

'Gulu Elders' Association: Proposed 1985 Programme, c.1984

Letter from the Chairman of the Elders Association to DC Gulu, 27 July 1985.

Minutes of Elders Association Meeting held in Gulu, DC Office, 19 September 1985.

Letter from Chairman of Acholi Elders' Association to DC Gulu, 23 September 1985.

Minutes of the Elders Committee in Gulu District, 16 October 1985.

Letter from Elder's Association Secretary Gulu, to DC Gulu 23 October 1985.

Letter from County Chief Omoro to all sub-county chiefs in Omoro, 4 November 1985.

Letter to the Chairman of the Gulu Elders' Association, Gulu, 29 November 1985.

Letter from S. C. Alai Administrative Secretary Gulu District to F.L. Okot, Chairman of Elder's Association, 11 December 1985.

Letter from F. L. Okot, Elders' Association Chairman to Yona Odida, 8 December 1985.

Kitgum District Archive (KDA)

This archive is almost completely un-catalogued and un-preserved. Files have been listed here by subject/author and in ascending date order. A few documents have been catalogued; these are listed in parentheses.

Police Special Branch and District Intelligence Reports: Kitgum

DP Meeting of 20 January 1960, Agoro Divisional Headquarters. Report from M.M. Savage on behalf of W.B. Peskett Provincial Special Branch Officer to DC Acholi and Commissioner of Police, Northern Province.

DP Meeting of 27 January 1960, Palogo Market Place. Report from M.M. Savage on behalf of W.B. Peskett Provincial Special Branch Officer, Northern Province to DC Acholi and Commissioner of Police.

DP Meeting of 14 March 1960, Madi Opei. Report from G.R. Russell, Provincial Special Branch Officer, Northern Province to DC Acholi and Commissioner of Police.

DP Meeting of 19 March 1960, Agago. Report from G.R. Russell, Provincial Special Branch Officer, Northern Province to DC Acholi and Commissioner of Police,

DP Meeting of 27 March 1960, Ligiligi P.W.D Camp Agago. Report from W.B. Peskett, Provincial Special Branch Officer, Northern Province to DC Acholi and Commissioner of Police.

DP Meeting of 28 March 1960, Kitgum. Report from W.B. Peskett, Provincial Special Branch Officer, Northern Province to DC Acholi and Commissioner of Police.

DP Meeting of 11 June 1960, Madi Opei. Report from W.B. Peskett, Provincial Special Branch Officer, Northern Province to DC Acholi and Commissioner of Police.

DP Meeting of 11 June 1960, Pader Palwo. Report from W.B. Peskett, Provincial Special Branch Officer, Northern Province to DC Acholi and Commissioner of Police.

DP Meeting of 11 June 1960, Ngoro Market Place. Report from W.B. Peskett, Provincial Special Branch Officer, Northern Province to DC Acholi and Commissioner of Police

DP Meeting of 13 June 1960 near Kitgum Town Centre. Report from W.B. Peskett, Provincial Special Branch Officer, Northern Province to DC Acholi.

DP Meeting of 18 June 1960. Report by K. Onek, Special Branch Officer. Patango.

DP Meeting of 30 July 1960. Report by K. Onek Special Branch Officer, Patango.

Letter from DP President to Police Commanding Officer Acholi, 31 December 1960.

Letter from U. Oloya, District Special Branch Officer to Senior District Special Branch Officers East Acholi, 21 January 1965.

Intelligence Committee Minutes, Expulsion of UPC Members from the Party, 30 March 1968.

'Peace Corp Teacher' District Intelligence Report c.1968.

Letter from B. A. Kidega to District Police Commander Kitgum, 13 January 1969.

Minutes of the Kitgum Intelligence Sub-Committee, 10 December 1968,

Minutes of the Kitgum Intelligence Sub-Committee 11 June 1969,

DP Meeting in Patongo, Intelligence report to DC Gulu, 14 August 1969.

'DP Meeting' Intelligence report to DC, Gulu. 30 August 1969.

Letter from A. Sebi Special Branch Officer Kitgum to Commanding Officer Kitgum, 1 September 1969.

Letter from County Chief Patango to DC Gulu, 4 September 1969.

East Acholi District Intelligence Report January 1972.

East Acholi District Intelligence Committee, Report for September 1971.

East Acholi District Intelligence Report, November 1971.

East Acholi District Intelligence Committee Meeting, 23 December 1971.

'Uganda Teacher's Association Activities', East Acholi District Intelligence, 18 February 1972.

'DP Supporters' Acholi District Intelligence Report, 9 June 1972.

East Acholi Monthly District Intelligence Report, 26 October 1972.

Acholi District Intelligence Report, 20 December 1972.

East Acholi District Monthly Intelligence, December 1972.

East Acholi District Intelligence Report, 13 April 1973.

(Folder: MIS/21 Vol. 1. Kitgum District Intelligence 1974-1976).

East Acholi District Intelligence Report sent to A.C.K Oboth-Ofumbi, Ministry of Internal Affairs, 7 May 1975.

District Intelligence Committee Summary from M.B.E Odur, Director of Intelligence (Special Branch) to all Provincial Special Branch Officers 11 May 1978.

District Intelligence Committee Summary, 28 July 1983.

Letter from F.K. Obong DC Kitgum to District Police Commander, 23 May 1984.

'Security in Agoro', Report by Captain O. Okot, Commanding Officer, Kitgum, 20 March 1985.

Letter from DC Kitgum to Commanding Officer Pajimo, 21 March 1985.

Political Affairs

Letter from UPC Leaders Padibe to UPC Headquarters Kampala, 1969.

'Secret meetings by DP and KY 1968-9', Report from the Chief General Service Officer, Kitgum to Mr Akena-Adoko, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Internal Affairs, 8 August 1969.

Letter from Atwoma Tiberio Okeny, National Organiser of the DP to the President of Uganda, 19 February 1969.

Letter from P. Mugoyo DC East Acholi to Permanent Secretary President's Office, 2 September 1972.

Letter from 'UNLP Watch Dogs', Kitgum Division to the Political and Diplomatic Committee in Kampala 19 March 1980.

Letter from T. Okeny, DP Acting President to DC Kitgum, 14 November 1983.

Letter from the Administration Secretary Kitgum District Administration to the Permanent Secretary Ministry of Local Government, Kampala, 8 August 1984.

Letter from Executive Committee NLP to the Administrative Secretary, Kitgum, 31 August 1984.

Letter from Chairman of UPC Kitgum Central to the Town Clerk Kitgum, 13 November 1984.

Letter from B. Okae-Lugina Chairman of UPC Parliamentary Constituency to County Chief of Lamwo from. 5 November 1984.

Letter from Chairman of UPC Kitgum Central Constituency to N.C Ongabe, 15 November 1984.

Letter from J.J Obolo-Chola (UPC MP) Kitgum North to DC Kitgum, 21 December 1984.

Letter from Ezira Kibwota Chairman of the Kitgum Central Constituency UPC to the office of the Chairman of the UPC, 21 February 1985.

Letter from DC Kitgum to Jago Palabek Division, 16 May 1985.

Letter from A.T. Okeny NLP Interim Committee to DC Kitgum, 1 October 1985.

Letter from J. Okello, Secretary of Acholi Elders' Association Kitgum to DC Kitgum, 5 December 1985.

Church Disputes

Resolution by Catholic Christians in the Parishes of Gulu Town, Anaka, Awac, Opit, Pabbo and Atyak passed by a public rally of the Christians held in Gulu on 5 September 1964. Sent to Hon Prime Minister of Uganda, Dr. M.A. Obote From Catholic Christians West Acholi Signed A.L Oloya: President. 7 September 1964.

Local Administration

(File: LAN 5/3 'District Boundaries Acholi-Sudan Border').

Border Meeting Held on 20 July 1954 Biabia, Acholi District.

(File ARM/1: 'Arms and Ammunition Policy').

Letter from Commissioner of Police to Central Arms Registry Office Kitgum 9 September 1959.

Letter from County Chief Agago to DC Gulu, 4 April 1966.

Letter from Jago Agoro, to District Police Commander Gulu, 29 February 1968.

Letter from Assistant DC Kitgum to DC Kitgum, 4 March 1968,

Minutes of Acholi District Team and Planning Committee, 9 March 1971.

'Re: Military Takeover', Compiled by T.Karugaba, Chairman District Team Planning Committee Acholi, 23 March 1971.

Letter from Jago of Padibe, to all Wakungu Chiefs, rwodi kweri in Padibe Division 24 May 1971.

Letter from J.M. Masarenhas, Ministry of Public Administration, to Town Clerk Kitgum, 6 December 1971.

(File: FIN/28 'Accounts East Acholi District').

Report to the treasurer East Acholi District Administration, 17 August 1973.

Estimates 1971 Education Committee East Acholi, 2 July 1971.

'Staff Personal Allowances', 26 April 1973.

(File: DEC/1B 'Applications for Permission to Leave the District')

Request from M. Karim, Granted by DC Kitgum, 17 January 1972.

Request from P.P Vyas, Granted by DC Kitgum, 16 November 1972.

Request from D.K Lomgoya made to DC Kitgum, 6 December 1973.

Letter from County Chief Lamwo to all Jagis 3 May 1975.

Letter from the Ministry of Provincial Administration Kitgum to Treasurer, Kitgum District Administration, 4 October 1976.

Letter from J. Otto, District Police Commander to DC East Acholi, 28 October 1976.

East Acholi District Treasurer with Auditors Comments, 25 October 1977.

Letter from County Chief Chua to Treasurer East Acholi District, 12 July 1977.

Letter from Jago Parabongo to Treasurer, East Acholi District 26 October 1977.

Letter from the Commander in Chief UNLA Kitgum to DC, Kitgum, 23 August 1979.

(File: ADM/44 'UNCC Correspondences').

'Memorandum From the People of Orom', sent to the Ministry of Internal Affairs, 11 October 1979.

Letter from the Ministry of Local Administrations to all DCs, 16 November 1979.

Letter from Secretary of Public Service Commission to the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Local Government, Kampala, 6 November 1981.

'Re: Sgt. David Olum', Letter to 'Whom it may concern' from DC Kitgum 13th Battalion, Jinja. 4 July 1984.

Letter from Acting DC of Kitgum to the Adjutant school of infantry Jinja, 15 July 1983.

Letter from Ag. DC O. Ojok to Commanding Officer 12th Battalion Gulu, 15 August 1983.

Letter from P. Okwera, Commanding Officer 13th Battalion Kitgum to Parish Chief, 20 January 1984.

Letter from District Cooperative Officer to DC of Kitgum, 16 March 1984.

Annual Report of Ag. Senior Compliance Officer Northern Region for the year ending 1983. Compiled by the Ministry of Labour sent to the Director of the Social Security Fund Kampala, 2 April 1984.

Letter from DC Kitgum to All County Chiefs, 22 May 1984.

Letter from M.O. Ecumu, District Education Officer Kitgum District to the Administrative Secretary, Kitgum, 24 December 1984.

Report from G. Pibo, Senior Internal Auditor Kitgum to Treasurer Kitgum District Administration 22 January 1985.

'Elders' of Gulu District, list of elected members', Letter from DC of Gulu to DC Kitgum, 21 November 1985.

Uganda National Archive, Entebbe (UNA/E)

C-Series

C.1329 Box 27: Letter forwarded by the Provincial Commissioner to the Chief Secretary J.W. Steil of the Northern Province, 8 December 1947.

C.20881 Box 19: Letter from the Governor O.E Mitchell to the Secretary of State for the Colonies c.1938.

C.2456 Box 22, 'Mission Schools: Denominational Differences' 1937-38.

C.3824 Box 29: Letter sent by the Acholi Local Government as a Petition to James Griffiths, Secretary of State for the attention of the Governor of Uganda, 11 May 1951.

The Office of the President

Box 3 Ref 8: U.N.C.C Kitgum District, Expansion of UNCC 1st Passes Only, 1979.

Box 5 Ref 8: U.N.C.C Gulu District, Expansion of UNCC 1st Elimination Failures, 1979.

Box 8 Ref 20: Minutes of the Meeting between Ministers and DC's held in the Cabinet Library on the 28 April 1971.

Box 8 Ref 28, Cabinet meetings, 'Uganda's financial situation Budget review 1971/72 (secret) Agenda for cabinet meeting due to be held on Tuesday 5 October 1971.

Provincial Papers

Box 1 No. 0739: Northern Province, Monthly Reports for 1917.

Box 1 No. 2135C: Northern Province Annual Report for 1918-19.
Letter from the Chief Secretary to the Assistant DC in Kampala regarding Labour Supply from Acholi to Bunyoro, 2 June 1919.

Box 1 No. 0982B: Northern Province Quarterly Reports, 1921.

Elections

- Box 1 No. 4: Comments by Amin on Obote's letter written on the name of secret council 777 (No date).
- Box 2 Ref 3: Letter from the DC of Lango to the supervisor of Elections, 24 March 1960.
- Box 2 Ref 3: Letter from the DC of Acholi to R.C. Peagram, 2 September 1961.
- Box 2 No. 11: Report on the National Assembly Elections in April 1962. Acholi District, 30 May 1962.
- Box 2 Ref L.155/02: Supervisor of elections: Candidates: Acholi, 10 February 1961-7 April 1962.
- Box 3 Ref 3/DG C124: Letter from Ag Secretary A.C Badenoch to Permanent Secretary, 11 September 1961.
- Box 7 Ref 27 Ref: CRA/47: Letter from the President's Office to all Permanent Secretaries and all heads of departments, 23 May 1972.
- (Box unknown) Ref d/6/6-8 Acholi District: Political Activities: summary of the Development of the Acholi District (secret) c.1968.

Uganda Christian University: Church Missionary Society (CMS) Archive, Mukono, Kampala.

Uganda Notes and Diocesan Gazette, No.1 Vol.13, January 1913.

- Box 21 Folder 5: Minutes for a meeting of the standing committee held at Ngora, 16 December 1954.
- Box 21 Folder 8: Sermon by the Bishop Usher Wilson to the Upper Nile Diocesan Council, 27 April 1960.
- Box 21 Folder 5: Letter from the Northern Diocese Gulu to the Permanent Secretary Ministry of Social Services, 12 September 1958.
- Box 21 Folder 5: The minutes of a meeting by the Diocesan Council of the Upper Nile held in Ngora regarding marriage law proposals, 10 May 1955, 1955-1969.
- Box 34 Folder 11: CMS Conference Ngora: The People to whom we present Christ, 8 August 1959.
- Box 34 Folder 12: Letter from the Archbishop Brown of Namirembe to the Bishop of the upper Nile, 2 August 1960.
- Box 33 Folder 207: CMS Upper Nile Mission, minutes of the General Council Meeting held in Gulu c.1960.
- Box 70 Folder 2: Statistics of the Uganda Mission Year Ending 1914.
- Box 72 Folder 1, Memorandum: The Women's League of Buganda. Kampala, Uganda, August 1953.
- Box 73 Folder 56: Church Statistics for Upper Nile Diocese, 1955-56.
- Box 73 Folder 8: Church Statistics for Upper Nile Diocese Statistics for 1957-8.
- Box 92 Folder 1: Report from CMS Northern Province to the Bishop of the Upper Nile, 19 August 1945.
- Box 115 Folder 4: African Rifles, 4th Battalion soldiers -Attendance at Service, c. 1928-9.

Rubaga Cathedral Church Archives, Kampala

'5 Year Report on the Diocese of Gulu: 1970-1975' by Dr Cipriano Kihangie. Bishop's House Gulu, 1 May 1976.

Birmingham University CMS Archives (BUL/CMS)

ACC 265-24: Questionnaire and Church Guidelines, J. Taylor, March 1956.

The National Archives, Kew (TNA)

TNA/CO 1018/81, Lord Hailey Papers 1946-1955, J.W Stell to Lord Hailey, Native Administration and the Native Council, (1947).

Makerere University Library (MUL/AS)

Constitutional Commission Wild Report: Report of the Constitutional Committee. 1959.

EAU/A (058)1: J.P Twining, Acholi DC: Annual Report: Acholi District Council 1962.

EAU/A (058) 1: Y.H. Wacha-Olwol, Acholi DC Annual Report: Acholi District 1963.

GEAU/A (088)2: East Acholi District Admin: Approved 1971 Estimates Confirmed 1972. Printed by the Catholic Press Gulu:

GEAU/A (088) 48: Acholi District Admin, 1965, ADA Estimates :1967, 1968, 1969.

GEA U/A8 (058) 59: East Acholi District Admin: Accounts with Report and Opinion from J.A. Maiku Account Auditor 1973.

GEAU/A8 (058) 58: National Curriculum Development Centre Financial Statement year ending 31 Dec 1974-78. Report and Opinion.

Published Sources

Newspapers

The Uganda Argus 1955- 1971 Makerere University Library – Africana Section.

Lobo Mewa 1958-1968: Makerere University Library-Africana Section.

The Voice of Uganda September 1971: Makerere University Library – Africana Section

The Equator 1983-1986: Makerere University Library – Africana Section

The Uganda Times 1980- 1983 Makerere University Library – Africana Section

Unpublished Theses

- Achieng, C., *Birth Customs Among the Acholi: 1980-81* (BA Thesis, Makerere University Library, 1981).
- Acima, J. O., *An Appraisal of the Impact of the Co-op BANK Ltd as a Source of Farm Commercialism in West Acholi District 1978-79*, Special Project Report (Faculty of Agriculture, Makerere University, 1979).
- Baker, S., *Attitudes of Acholi Men towards Family Planning in Gulu District 1981* (BA Thesis, Makerere University 1981).
- Bernard, M., *The extent and practices of witchcraft Among the Acholi: An Exploratory Study* (BA Thesis, Makerere University, 1983).
- Dwyer, J., *The Acholi in Uganda: Adjustment to Imperialism* (Ph.D. Thesis, Columbia University, 1972).
- Ginyera-Pinyewa, A.G., *Some Dimension of pre-Independence Politics in Uganda: A case study based on the Catholic Church and Politics in northern Uganda in the decade, 1952-1962* (Ph.D. Thesis. University of Chicago, 1972).
- Laboke, D.Q.R., *Socio-Economic Aspects of Farm Planning in Acholi District: Northern Uganda* (B.Sc Thesis, Makerere University College, 1968).
- Laruni, E., *The De-politicisation of War. Western Media Representations of the Lord's Resistance Army. 2000-2008* (BA Thesis, Exeter University, 2009).
- Luciyamo, L.L., *The Relationship Between Traditional Farming and Social Structure in Acholi 1969-1970* (Bsc Thesis, Makerere University, 1970)
- Lutaro, W.O., *Agriculture in West Acholi* (Bsc Thesis, Makerere University Library, 1956).
- Paotto, A. O., *A study of Constraints on Greater Groundnut Production in West Acholi, 1974* (Bsc Thesis. Makerere University, 1974).
- p'Amari, A., *Attitudes of Educated Acholi towards traditional marriage ceremonies in Gulu District* (MA Thesis. Makerere University, 1983).
- Ocaya, C.Y.L., *The Other Face of Acholi* (BA fine Arts Thesis, Makerere, 1974).
- Okello, D.S., *The Acholi Ritual Ceremonies* (BA Thesis Makerere University, 1969).
- Opiyo, W.W., *Evaluation of East Acholi District Farm Institute Programme, 1973-1974* (Bsc Special Project: Department of Agriculture, Makerere University 1974).

Government Reports and Working Papers

- Baffoe, J. K., 'Structural Adjustment and Agriculture in Uganda,' International Labour Office, Geneva, March 2000.
- Langlands, B.W. The Population Density of Acholi District, Occasional Paper N.30; Department of Geography. Makerere University (Kampala, 1971).
- Oketcho, P., The retrospective Development of Uganda's Educational language Policy success and Challenges. (National Curriculum Development Centre (Kampala, 2010).
- Ugandan Protectorate, Draft Emergency Legislation (Government Printer Entebbe, 1960).

- The Economic Development of Uganda: Report of a Mission Organised by the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development at the request of the Uganda Government (John Hopkins Press: Baltimore, 1962).
- Yoo Neyo Kwan: Uganda National Literacy Campaign*, East African Literature Bureau Nairobi, Produced by the Ministry of Planning and Community Development (1964).
- Department for Community Development, Annual Report For Gulu District Year Ending 1983 (Entebbe: Government Printer, 1984).
- 2002 Uganda Population and Housing Census. Analytical Report*. Abridged Version. October 2006 (Government of Uganda)

Published Books and Articles

- Adimola, A.B., 'The Lamogi Rebellion 1911-1912', *Uganda Journal*, Vol.18 No. 2, (1954), 170-177.
- Agar, M., *The Professional Stranger: An Informal Introduction to Ethnography* (New York: Academic Press, 1996).
- Akabwai, D. and P.E. Ateyo., *The Scramble for Cattle, Power and Guns in Karamoja* (Medford: Feinstein International Centre, 2007).
- Allen, T., *Trial Justice: The International Criminal Court and the Lord's Resistance Army* (London: Zed Books, 2006).
- Allen, T., 'Review: The Roots of Ethnicity: The Origins of the Acholi of Uganda Before 1800', *Africa: Journal of the International African Institute*, Vol. 66, No. 3 (1996), 472-475.
- Allen, T., 'Understanding Alice, Uganda's Holy Spirit Movement in Context', *Africa: Journal of the International African Institute*, Vol.16 No.3 (1991), 370-399.
- Amaza, O. O., *Museveni's Long March from Guerrilla to Statesman* (Fountain Publishers: Kampala, 1998).
- Anderson, B., *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1991).
- Anderson, C. W., 'Towards a Theory of Latin American Politics' *The Graduate Centre For Latin American Studies*, Vanderbilt University, Occasional Paper No.2. (February 1964).
- Anguwom, E.E., 'Ethnic Conflict and Democracy in Nigeria: The Marginalisation Question' *Journal of Social Development in Africa*, Vol. 15. No.1 (2000), 61-78.
- Apter, D. E., *The Political Kingdom in Uganda: A Study in Bureaucratic Nationalism* (London: Routledge, 1997).
- Asiwaju, A. I., (ed.) *Partitioned Africans: Ethnic Relations Across Africa's International Boundaries, 1884-1894* (London: Hirst and Co, 1985).
- Atkinson, R., *The Roots of Ethnicity: The Origins of the Acholi Before 1800* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania press, 1994).
- Azarya, V and N. Chazan., 'Disengagement From the State in Africa: Reflection on the Experiences of Ghana and Guinea,' *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 29 (1987), 106-31.
- Barongo, Y., 'Ethnic Pluralism and Political Centralisation: The Basis of Political Conflict in Uganda', International Seminar on Internal Conflict,

- Kampala, Paper 4. Kampala: Makerere Institute of Social Research 1987).
- Baber, Z., 'Beyond the Structure/Agency Dualism: An Evaluation of Giddens's Theory of Structuration', *Sociological Inquiry*, Vol. 61 No. 2 (1991).
- Banugire, F., 'Uneven and Un-balanced Development: Development Strategies and Conflict' in K. Rupensinghe (ed.), *Conflict Resolution in Uganda* (London: James Currey, 1989), 45-60.
- Bantebya-Kyomuhendo, G. and McIntosh. M.K., *Women, Work and Domestic Virtue in Uganda, 1900-2003* (Oxford: James Currey, 2006).
- Barth, F., *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries: The Social Organization of Ethnic Differences* (Boston: Little Brown, 1969).
- Bates, D. G. and Plog, F., *Cultural Anthropology* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1990).
- Bayart, J-F., *Africa: The Politics of the Belly*, 2nd edition (Cambridge: Polity, 2009).
- Beachey, R.W., 'The Arms trade in East Africa in the late nineteenth century', *The Journal of African History*, Vol. III, No. 3 (1962), 452-467.
- Behrend, H., 'War in Northern Uganda; The Holy Spirit Movements of Alice Lakwena, Severino Lukoya and Joseph Kony (1986-97)' in C. Clapham, (ed.) *African Guerrillas* (Oxford: James Currey, 1998), 107-118.
- Bere, R.M., 'An outline of Acholi History' *Uganda Journal*, Vol. 11 No.1 March (1947), 1-65.
- Berman, B and Eyoh, D., Kymlicka, W., (eds.) *Ethnicity & Democracy in Africa* (Oxford: James Currey, 2004).
- Berman, B., 'Ethnicity, Patronage and the African State: The Politics of Uncivil Nationalism' *African Affairs*, Vol. 97 No. 388 (1998), 305-341.
- Beswick, D and Jackson, P., *Conflict, Security and Development: An Introduction* (London & New York: Routledge, 2011).
- Boonzaier, E and Sharp, J., (eds.) *South African Key Words: The Uses and Abuses of Political Concepts* (Cape Town: David Philip, 1988).
- Boserup, E., Tan, S. F. and Toulmin, C., *Woman's Role in Economic Development* (London: Routledge, 2007).
- Bourdieu, P., 'The Forms of Capital.' In J. Richardson (ed.) *Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1985).
- Branch, A., *Displacing Human Rights: War and Intervention in Northern Uganda* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).
- Branch, A., 'Neither Peace nor Justice: Political Violence and the Peasantry in Northern Uganda 1986-1998', *African Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 8, Issue 2 (2005), 1-31.
- Brautigam, D. Fjeldstad, O-H and Moore, M., (eds.) *Taxation and State-Building in Developing Countries: Capacity and Consent*, (Cambridge: Cambridge university Press, 2008).
- Burke, F. G., *Local Government and Politics in Uganda* (New York: Syracuse University Press, 1964).
- Carswell, G., *Cultivating Success in Uganda: Kigezi Farmers & Colonial Policies* (Oxford: James Currey, 2009).

- Carter, J., 'Independence for Uganda', *The World Today*, Vol. 18, No. 9 (1962), 373-82.
- Chabal, P., *Africa: The Politics of Suffering and Smiling* (London: Zed Books, 2009).
- Chabal, P., *Power in Africa: An Essay in Political Interpretation* (New York: St Martin's Press, 1992).
- Clapham, C., (ed.) *African Guerrillas* (Oxford: James Currey, 1998).
- Clapham, C., 'The Longue Durée of the African State,' *African Affairs*, Vol. 93, No.372, (1994), 433-439.
- Cline, L. E., 'Spirits and the Cross: Religiously Based Violent Movements in Uganda', *Small Wars and Insurgencies*, Vol.14, No.2 (2003), 113-130.
- Cohen, R., and Toland, J.D., (eds.), *State Formation and Political Legitimacy* (New Jersey: Transaction Publishers, 1988),
- Collingwood, R.G., *The Idea of History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994).
- Comaroff, J., 'Governmentality, Materiality, Legality, Modernity on the Colonial State in Africa' in J.G Deutsch, P. Probst and H. Schmidt., (eds.) *African Modernities: Entangled Meanings in Current Debate* (Portsmouth: Heinemann; Oxford: James Currey, 2002), 107-134.
- Cooper, F., *Colonialism in Question: Theory Knowledge and History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005).
- Cooper, F., *Africa since 1940: Past and Present* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).
- Cooper, F., 'Conflict and Connection: Rethinking Colonial African History,' *American Historical Review*, 99 (1994), 1516-45.
- Crehan, K., 'Tribes' and the People Who Read Books: Managing History in Colonial Zambia', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, Vol. 23, No. 2 (1997), 203-218.
- Darwin, J., *Britain and Decolonisation: The Retreat From the Empire in the Post War World* (London: Macmillan, 1988).
- Davidson, B., *The Black Man's Burden: Africa and the Curse of the Nation-state* (London: James Currey, 1992).
- Davis, K., *Human Society* (New York: Macmillan Co, 1949).
- Derrida, J., *Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression*, trans. Eric Prenowitz (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1995).
- Deutsch, J-G., Probst, P and Schmidt, H., (eds.) *African Modernities: Entangled Meanings in Current Debates* (Portsmouth: Heinemann; Oxford: James Currey, 2002).
- Dolan, C., *Social Torture: The Case of Northern Uganda, 1986-2006* (New York & Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2009).
- Doornbos, M., 'Linking the Future to the Past: Ethnicity and Pluralism', *Review of African Political Economy*, No. 52, Fundamentalism in Africa: Religion and Politics (1991).
- Doornbos, M., *Not all the King's Men: Inequality as a Political Instrument in Ankole, Uganda* (The Hague: Mouton, 1978).
- Dunn, K. C., 'Killing For Christ? The Lord's Resistance Army of Uganda', *Current History*, Vol, 103. No. 683 (2004), 206-214.
- Eichstaedt, P. H., *First Kill Your Family: Child Soldiers of Uganda and the Lord's Resistance Army*, (Chicago: Chicago Review Press, 2009).

- Eisenberg, A and W. Kymlicka., (eds.) *Identity Politics in the Public Realm: Bringing Institutions Back In* (Toronto: UBC Press, 2011).
- Ekeh. P., 'Colonialism and the Two Publics in Africa: A Theoretical Statement,' *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, Vol. 17, No. 1. (1975), 91-112.
- Ellis, S., 'Writing Histories of Contemporary Africa', *The Journal of African History*, Vol. 43, No.1 (2002), 1-26.
- Ellis, S., 'Source, Rumour and Power in Togo', *Journal of the International African Institute*, Vol. 63, No. 4 (1993), 462- 476.
- Eriksen, T.H., *Ethnicity and Nationalism: Anthropological Perspectives*. Second Edition (London: Pluto Press, 2002).
- Falola, T and A. A. Usman., (eds.) *Movements, Borders, and Identities in Africa*. Rochester Studies in African History and the Diaspora, Book 40, University of Rochester Press, 2009).
- Falola, T. and M. Heaton., *A History of Nigeria* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008).
- Fanon, F., *Black Skin, White Mask* (London: Pluto Press, 1986).
- Fanon, F., *The Wretched of the Earth* (London: Penguin Books, 1990).
- Fernandez, J.W., 'African Religious Movements', *Journal of Modern African Studies*, Vol.2, No.4 (1964), 534-42.
- Finnström, S., *Living With Bad Surroundings: War, History, and Everyday Moments in Northern Uganda* (Uppsala: Uppsala University Library, 2003).
- Fjelstad, O-H. and Therkildsen, O., 'Taxation and State-Society Relations in East Africa,' in *Taxation and State-Building in Developing Countries: Capacity and Consent*, in D. Brautigam, O-H Fjeldstad, M. Moore (eds.) (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 235-260.
- Foucault, M., *Power/ Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972-1977*. Edited by C. Gordon (New York, Pantheon Books, 1980).
- Foucault, M., *Discipline and Punishment* (New York: Vintage Books, 1995).
- Foucault, M., *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (London & New York: Routledge, 2002). Trans?
- Frank, A. G., 'Dependence Is Dead, Long Live Dependence and the Class Struggle: An Answer to Critics', *Latin American Perspectives*, Vol. 1, No.1, (Spring, 1974), 87-106.
- Frankema, E.H.P., 'The Origins of Formal Education in sub-Saharan Africa: Was British rule more benign?' *European Review of Economic History*, Vo.16, No. 4 (2012), 335–355.
- Gaitskell, D., 'Housewives, Maids or Mothers: Some Contradictions of Domesticity for Christian Women in Johannesburg, 1903–39', *The Journal of African History* Vol. 24, No. 02 (1983), 241 - 256.
- Gann, L.H. and Duignan, P., *Burden of Empire: An Appraisal of Western Colonialism in Africa South of the Sahara* (New York: Praeger, 1967).
- Gardner, L., *Taxing Colonial Africa: The Political Economy of British Imperialism*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).
- Geertz, C., *The Interpretations of Cultures* (New York: Basic Books, 1973).
- Gertzel, C., 'Uganda after Amin: The Continuing Search for Leadership and Control.' *African Affairs*, Vol. 79, No. 317 (October, 1980), 461-489.

- Gertzel, C., 'Party and Locality in Northern Uganda 1945-1962', Institute of Commonwealth Papers No.1 Vol. 16. (London: The Athlone Press, 1974).
- Gibbs, C.C., *The Great Silent Majority: Missouri's Resistance to World War 1* (Missouri: University of Missouri Press, 1988).
- Giddens, A., *Elements of the theory of structuration*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984).
- Gilligan, C., 'Constant Crisis/Permanent Process: Diminished Agency and Weak Structures in the Northern Ireland Peace Process', *The Global Review of Ethnopolitics*, Vol 3, No.1 (2003), 23-26.
- Ginywera-Pinchaw, A. G., 'Is There A Northern Question?' (Kampala: Makerere Institute of Social Research, 2010).
- Girling, F. K., *The Acholi of Uganda* (London: HMSO, 1960).
- Goodin R. E and Till, C., (eds.) *The Oxford Handbook of Contextual Political Analysis* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006).
- Green. E. D., 'Decentralization and Conflict in Uganda' *Conflict Security and Development*, Vol.8, N.4 (2008), 427-450
- Griffiths, I., 'The Scramble for Africa: Inherited Political Boundaries,' *The Geographical Journal*, Vol. 152, No.2, (1986), 204-216.
- Grinker, R. R., Lubkemann, S.C. Steiner, C.B. (eds.) *Perspectives on Africa: A Reader in Culture, History and Representation* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010).
- Gupta, D. K., *Path to Collective Madness: A Study in Social Order and Political Pathology* (Westport: Connecticut Praeger Publishers, 2001).
- Hailey, M., *An African Survey. A Study of Problems arising in Africa South of the Sahara* (London: Oxford University Press, 1938).
- Hansen, H. B and Twaddle, M., (eds.) *From Chaos to Order: The Politics of Constitution Making in Uganda* (Kampala: Fountain Publishers, 1994).
- Harbeson, J. W. Chazan, N and Rothchild D., (eds.) *Civil Society and the State in Africa* (Boulder, Colorado: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1994).
- Herbst, J., *States and Power in Africa: Comparative Lessons in Authority* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2000).
- Hobsbawm, E., *On History* (London: Weidenfield and Nicolson, 1997).
- Hobsbawm, E. and Ranger, T.O., (eds.), *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983).
- Hodgson, D.L. and McCurdy, S., (eds.) *'Wicked' Women and the Reconfiguration of Gender in Africa* (Oxford: James Currey, 2001).
- Horowitz, D. L., *Ethnic Groups in Conflict*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000).
- Hutchinson, J. and Smith, A. D., (eds.) *Ethnicity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996).
- Hyden, G., *African Politics in Comparative Perspective* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).
- Illiffe, J. A., *Modern History of Tanganyika* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979).
- Ingham, K., *Obote: A Political Biography* (London & New York: Routledge, 1994).
- Jackson, I.C., *The Refugee Concept in Group Situations* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 1999).

- Jørgensen, J., *Uganda: A Modern History* (New York: St Martin's Press, 1981).
- Kaarsholm, P and Hultin, J., (eds.), *Inventions and Boundaries: Historical and Anthropological Approaches to the Study of Ethnicity and Nationalism*, Papers from the Researcher Training Course Held at Sandbjerg Manor 23 To 29 May 1993, *Occasional Paper*, Vol. 11 International Development Studies, Roskilde University Centre.
- Kabwegyere, T.B., *The Politics of State Formation: The Nature and Effect of Colonialism in Uganda* (Nairobi: East African Literature Bureau, 1974).
- Kaldor, M., *New and Old Wars: Organised violence in a Global Era* (Cambridge: Polity, 1999).
- Kalu, O. U., 'Color and Conversion: The White Missionary Factor in the Christianization of Igboland,' 1857 -1967, *Missiology* Vol.18, No.1 (1990), 61-74.
- Kaplan, S., 'The Africanization of Missionary Christianity: History and Typology', *Journal of Religion in Africa*, Vol. 16, No. 3 (1986), 166-186.
- Karugire, S. R., *The Roots of Instability in Uganda*, (Kampala: Fountain Publishers 2003).
- Kastfelt, N., 'Rumours of Maitatsine: A Note on Political Culture in Northern Nigeria', *African Affairs*, Vol. 88, No. 350 (1989), 83-90.
- Kasfir, N., *The Shrinking Political Arena: Participation and Ethnicity in African Politics, with a Case Study of Uganda* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976).
- Kasozi, A.B.K., *The Social Origins of Violence in Uganda* (Kampala: Fountain 1994).
- Kato, W., *Escape from Idi Amin's Slaughterhouse*, (London: Quartet Books, 1989).
- Keen, D., *Conflict and Collusion in Sierra Leone* (Oxford: James Currey, 2005).
- Killingray, D and Omissi, E., *Guardians Of Empire: The Armed Forces Of The Colonial Powers c. 1700- 1964* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999).
- Kipling, R., *The Collected Poems of Rudyard Kipling* (London: Wordsworth Editions, 1994).
- Kopytoff, I., (ed.) *The African Frontier: The Reproduction of Traditional African Societies* (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1989).
- Kroeber, A. L and Kluckhohn, C., *Culture: A Critical Review of Concepts and Definitions* (New York: Vintage Books, 1952).
- Kyemba, H., *State of Blood: The Inside Story of Idi Amin* (New York: Putnam Publishing Group, 1977).
- Leggett, I., *Uganda* (Kampala: Fountain Publishers, 2001).
- Lenski, G. E., *Power and Privilege: A Theory of Social Stratification* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1966)
- Lentz, C., 'Colonial Constructions and African Initiatives: The History of Ethnicity in Northwestern Ghana' *Ethnos*, Vol. 65, No.1 (2000), 107-35.
- Lentz, C and Nugent, P., (eds.) *Ethnicity in Ghana: The Limits of Invention*, (New York, St Martin's Press, 2000).
- Leopold, M., *Inside West Nile: Violence, History and Representation on an African Frontier* (Durham, NC; Duke University Press, 2005).

- Leopold, M., 'Sex, Violence and History in the lives of Idi Amin: Postcolonial Masculinity as masquerade' *Journal of Postcolonial Writing*, Vol. 45, issue 3, (2009), 321-330.
- Leopold, M., *Idi Amin: Africa's Icon of Evil* (New Heaven: Yale University Press, 2013).
- Lerner, G., 'Placing Women in History: Definitions and Challenges' *Feminist Studies*, Vol. 3, No. 1/2 (1975), 5-14.
- Leys, C., *Politicians and Policies: An Essay on Politics in Acholi, Uganda 1962-65*, (Nairobi: East African Publishing House, 1967).
- Lindemann, S., 'The Ethnic Politics of Coup Avoidance: Evidence from Zambia and Uganda', *Africa Spectrum*, Vol. 46 (2011), 3-42.
- Lloyd A. B., *Dayspring in Uganda* (Dodo Press, 2010).
- Lonsdale, J., 'Political Tribalism and Moral Ethnicity' in Berman, D. Eyoh and W. Kymlicka (eds.), *Ethnicity and Democracy in Africa* (Oxford: James Currey, 2004), 73-95.
- Low, D.A., 'Uganda Unhinged' *International Affairs*, Vol. 49, No. 2 (1973), 219-228.
- Low, D.A., *Buganda in Modern History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971).
- Lugard, F. D., *The Dual Mandate in British Tropical Africa* (London: Taylor & Francis Group, 1965).
- Low, A.D., *Political Parties in Uganda 1949-1962*, University of London Institute of Commonwealth Studies (London: Athlone Press, 1962).
- Mamdani, M., *When Victims Become Killers, Colonialism, Nativism and the Genocide in Rwanda*, (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2002).
- Mamdani, M., 'Beyond Settler and Native as Political Identities: Overcoming the Political Legacy of Colonialism,' *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, Vol. 43, No.4, (October, 2001), 651-664.
- Mamdani, M., *Citizen and Subject: Contemporary Africa and the Legacy of Late Colonialism* (London: James Currey, 1996).
- Mamdani, M., *Imperialism and Fascism in Uganda* (Nairobi: Heinemann, 1983).
- Mamdani, M., 'Uganda: Contradictions of the IMF Programme and Perspective,' *Development and Change*, Vol. 21, No. 3, (1990), 427-467.
- Mamdani, M., *Politics and Class Formation in Uganda* (London: Heinemann, 1976).
- Manoff, M., 'Theories from Across the Disciplines; *Libraries and the Academy*. Vol. 4 No.1 (2004), 9-25
- Martin, W and Wes, M., 'The Decline of the Africanists: Africa and the Rise of New Africas', Vol. 23, No. 1, *African Studies* (1995), 24-26.
- Marwick, A., *The New Nature of History: Knowledge, Evidence, Language* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001).
- Mazrui, A. A., 'Shifting African Identities: The Boundaries of Ethnicity and Religion in Africa's Experience' in S. Bekker, M. Dodds, and M. Khosa, (eds.) *Shifting African Identities* (Pretoria: Human Science Research Council, 2001), 153-176.
- Mazrui, A.A., *Political Values and the Educated Class in Africa* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978).

- Mazrui, A. A., 'Religious Strangers in Uganda: From Emin Pasha to Amin Dada', *African Affairs* Vo. 76 No. 302 (1977), 21-38.
- Mazrui, A. A., *Soldiers and Kinsmen in Uganda: The Making of a Military Ethnocracy* (London: Sage Publishers, 1975).
- Mbembe, A., 'Necropolitics' *Public Culture*, Volume 15, No. 1, (2003), 11-40.
- Mbembe, A., *On the Postcolony* (California: University of California Press, 2001).
- McAustin, P., *Bringing the Law Back In: Essays in Land, Law, and Development* (London: Ashgate Publishing Ltd, 2003).
- McCauley, J.F., 'Africa's New Big Man Rule? Pentecostalism in Ghana' *African Affairs*, Vol. 112, No. 446. (January, 2013), 1-21.
- Melady, T.P and Melady, M. B., *Idi Amin Dada: Hitler in Africa* (Kansas City: Sheed Andrews and McMeel, 1977).
- Mugambwa, J., 'A Comparative Analysis of Land Tenure Law Reform in Uganda and Papua New Guinea', *Journal of South Pacific Law*, Vol 11 No.1 (2007), 39-62.
- Mulira, E. M. K., *Troubled Uganda* (London: Fabian Colonial Bureau, 1950).
- Mutibwa, P. M., *Uganda since Independence: A story of Unfulfilled Hopes* (London: Hurst and Company, 1992).
- Mwakikagile. G., *Obote to Museveni: Political Transformation in Uganda Since Independence* (Dar es Salaam: New Africa Press, 2012).
- Nene, M., 'Firearms and political power: The military Decline of the Turkana of Kenya 1900–2000', *Nordic Journal of International Studies*, Vol. 10 No. 2 (2001), 148-162.
- Nzula, A. T. Potekhin, I.I and Zusmanovich, A.Z., *Forced Labour in Colonial Africa* (London: Zed Press, 1979).
- Obi, C., *Youth and the Generational Dimensions to Struggles for Resource Control in the Niger Delta* (Dakar: CODESRIA, 2006), 1-48.
- O'Boyle, B., 'Reproducing the Social Structure: A Marxist Critique of Giddens's Structuaction Methodology', *Cambridge Journal of Economics*, Vo. 37 No. 5 (2013).
- Ocitti, J. Oteka *Okello Mwoka Lengomoi: A Legend Among the Acholi of Uganda* (Nairobi: Sahel Books Inc, 2010).
- Ocitti, J.P., *African Indigenous Education as Practiced by the Acholi of Uganda* (Kampala: East African Literature Bureau, 1973).
- Odongo, O., *A Political History of Uganda: The Origins of Museveni's Referendum*. (Kampala: The Monitor Publications Ltd, 2000).
- O'Donnell, G. A., *Modernization and Bureaucratic-Authoritarianism: Studies in South American Politics* (Institute of International Studies, University of California, 1973).
- Ofuani, O. A., 'Okot p'Bitek: A Checklist of Works and Criticism,' *Research in African Literatures*, Vol. 16, No. 3 (1985), 370-83.
- Okot, p'Bitek., *White Teeth* (Nairobi: East African Literature Bureau, 1989).
- Okot p'Bitek., *Artist, the Ruler: Essays on Art, Culture, and Values* (Nairobi, East African Literature Bureau, 1986).
- Okot p'Bitek., *Song of Lawino and Song of Ocol* (Nairobi: Heinemann, 1984).
- Okuku, J., *Ethnicity, State Power and the Democratisation Process in Uganda* (Uppsala: Nordic African Institute, 2002).
- Olum, Y., *Reality Check: Multiparty Politics in Uganda* (Kampala: Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung KAS, 2011).

- Omara-Otunnu., 'The Struggle for Democracy in Uganda', *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, Vol. 30, No.3 (1992), 443-463.
- Omara-Otunnu., *Politics and the Military in Uganda, 1890-1985* (London: Macmillan Press, 1987).
- Opwa, A., *An East African Chief in England: Chief Antonio Opwa. A Chief of the Acholi People of Uganda* (Kampala: The Eagle Press, 1952).
- Osabu-Kle, D. *Compatible Cultural Democracy: The Key to Development in Africa* (Peterborough, Ontario: Broadview Press, 2000).
- Parsons, T., *The 1964 Army Mutinies and the Making of Modern East Africa* (Wesport Connecticut: Greenwood Publishing Group, 2003).
- Parsons, T., *The African rank-and-file: Social Implications of Colonial Military Service in the King's African Rifles, 1902-1964* (Portsmouth: Heinemann, 1999), 53-54.
- Parsons, T., 'All Askari are Family Men: Sex Domesticity and Discipline in the Kings African Rifles, 1906-1964' in Killingray, D. Omissi, D. (eds.) *Guardians of Empire: The Armed Forces Of The Colonial Powers C. 1700 1964* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999), 157-178.
- Portelli, A., *The Death of Luigi Trastulli and Other Stories. Form and Meaning in Oral History* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1991).
- Posnett, R., 'Uganda after Amin', *The World Today*, Vol. 36, No. 4 (1980), 147-153.
- Postlethwaite, J.R.P., *I look Back* (London: T.V Boardman and Co. Ltd, 1947).
- Ranger, T. O., 'Missionaries, Migrants and the Manyika: The Invention of Ethnicity in Zimbabwe' in L. Vail, (ed.), *The Creation of Tribalism in Southern Africa* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989).
- Ranger, T.O, 'The Invention of Tradition in Colonial Africa.' In E. Hobsbawm, and T.O.Ranger, T. O.(eds.) *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 118-150.
- Ranger, T. O., 'Tradition and Travesty: Chiefs and Administration in Makani District, Zimbabwe, 1960-1980,' *Africa*, 52, Vol. 3, (1982), 20-41.
- Ravenhill, F. J., 'Military Rule in Uganda: The Politics of Survival', *African Studies Review*, Vol. 17, No. 1 (1974), 229-260.
- Reader, J., *Africa: A Biography of the Continent* (New York: Alfred A. Knof, 1998).
- Richards, T., *The Imperial Archive: Knowledge and the Fantasy of Empire* (New York: Verso, 1993).
- Rodney, W., *How Europe Undeveloped Africa* (Dar es Salaam: Tanzanian Publishing House, 1972).
- Rupesinghe, K and Rubio, C. M., (eds.) *The Culture of Violence*, Volume 81, (New York: United Nations University Press, 1994).
- Saetersdal, T., 'Symbols of Cultural Identity: A Case Study from Tanzania,' *The African Archaeological Review*, Vol. 16, No. 2 (1999), 121-135.
- Seaton, J., 'The New Ethnic Wars and the Media' in T. Allen, and J. Seaton (eds.) *The Media of Conflict: War Reporting and Representations of Ethnic Violence* (London: Zed Books, 1999), 43-63.
- Schwartz, J. M and Cook, T., 'Archives, Records, and Power: The Making of Modern Memory', *Archival Science*, Vol. 2 (1-2) (2002), 1-19.
- Sharp, J., 'Ethnic Group and Nation: The Apartheid Vision in South Africa', in E. Boonzaier and J. S.Sharp., (eds.) *South African Key Words: The*

- Uses and Abuses of Political Concepts* (Cape Town: David Philip, 1988), 79-100.
- Smith, A.D., *The Ethnic Origins of Nations* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 1988).
- Southall, A., 'The Illusion of Tribe' in P. Claus, and W. Gutkind., (eds.) *The Passing of Tribal Man in Africa* (Leiden: Brill, 1970).
- Southall, A., 'General Amin and the Coup: A Great Man or Historical Inevitability?', *Journal of Modern African Studies*, Vol. 13, No. 1 (1975), 85-105.
- Streets, H., *Martial Races: The Military, Race and Masculinity in British Imperial Culture, 1857-1914* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004).
- Ssekamwa, J., *History and Development of Education in Uganda* (Kampala: Fountain Publishers, 1997).
- Stoler, A. L., *Along the Archival Grain: Epistemic Anxieties and Colonial Common Sense* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2010).
- Stoler, A. L., 'In Cold Blood: Hierarchies of Credibility and the Politics of Colonial Narratives', *Representations*, Vol. 37 (1992), 151-89.
- Swidler, A., 'Culture in Action: Symbols and Strategies' *American Sociological Review*, Vol. 51, No. 2 (1986), 273-286.
- Tadria, M., 'Uganda's Women's Organization: Their Contribution towards Raising Uganda's Standard of Living', *African Spectrum*, Vol. 8, No. 2 (1973), 217-226.
- Taussig, M., *Shamanism, Colonialism and the Wild Man: A Study in Terror and Healing* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986).
- Taussig, M., 'Culture of Terror, Space of Death. Roger Casement's Putumayo Report and the Explanation of Torture', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, Vol. 26, No. 3 (1984), 467-497.
- Taylor, C., *Sources of the Self. The Making of Modern Identities* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1989).
- Kabwegyere, T., *The Politics of State Formation and Destruction in Uganda* (Kampala: Fountain Publishers, 1995).
- Thompson, G., *Governing Uganda: British Colonial Rule and Its Legacy*. (Kampala: Fountain Publishers, 2003).
- Thompson, G., 'Colonialism in Crisis: The Uganda Disturbances of 1945', *African Affairs*, Vol. 91, No.365 (October, 1992), 605-624.
- Thompson, P., *Voice of the Past: Oral History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988).
- Tiberondwa, A. K. *Missionary Teachers as Agents of Colonialism in Uganda: A Study of their Activities in Uganda, 1877-1925* (Kampala: Fountain Publishers, 1998).
- Tripp, A. M., 'A New Look at Colonial Women: British Teachers and Activists in Uganda, 1898-1962', *Canadian Journal of African Studies*, Vol. 38. No.1 (2004), 1 23-156.
- Tripp, A. M., 'Women's Mobilization in Uganda: Non-Racial Ideologies in European-African Asian Encounters, 1945-1962,' *The International Journal for African Historical Studies*, Vol. 34, No. 3 (2001), 543-564.
- Twaddle, M., *The Expulsion of a Minority: Essays on Ugandan Asians*, (London: Longman, 1975).
- Vail, L., (ed.) *The Creation of Tribalism in Southern Africa* (London : James Currey, 1989).

- Vandervort, B., *Wars of Imperial Conquest in Africa: 1830 – 1914* (Bloomington Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1998)
- Vansina, J. A., *Oral Tradition as History* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1985).
- Vaughan, O., 'Chieftaincy, Politics and Communal Identity in Western Nigeria, 1893-1951', *The Journal of African History*, Vol. 44, No. 2 (2003), 283-302.
- Waller, R., 'Rebellious Youth in Colonial Africa', *The Journal of African History*, Vol.47. No.1 (2006), 77-92.
- Walkerdine, V., *Daddy's Girl: Young Girls and Popular Culture* (London: Macmillan, 1997).
- White, H., *The Content of Form: Narrative Discourse and Historical Representation* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1987).
- White, H., 'The Burden of History', *History and Theory*, Vol. 5 No.2 (1967), 111-34.
- Wiarda, J. and Mott, M. M., (eds.) *Politics and Social Change in Latin America: Still a Distinct Tradition?* (Westport, Connecticut: Praeger Publishers, 2003).
- Wild, J.V., *Early Travellers in Acholi* (Edinburgh: Thomas Nelson and Sons/East African Literature Bureau, 1954).
- Woodward, P., 'Ambiguous Amin', *African Affairs*, Vol. 77, No. 307 (1978), 153-164.
- Wright, D. R., 'What Do You Mean There Were No Tribes in Africa?: Thoughts on Boundaries And Related Matters In Precolonial Africa', *History in Africa*, Vol. 26 (1999), 409-426.
- Young, C., *The African Colonial State in Comparative Perspective* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1994).
- Young, C., *The Politics of Cultural Pluralism* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1977).
- Young, T., *Readings in African Politics* (Oxford: James Currey, 2003).
- Sudan-Uganda Boundary Rectification, *Uganda Journal*, Vols. 26-27 (1962).

Web Sources

- Kiggundu, E., 'Otunnu unveils campaign team.' *The Observer*, 31 January 2010
 2011 http://www.observer.ug/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=7039:otunnu-unveils-campaign-team&catid=34:news&Itemid=59. [Accessed 17 January 2013].
- Mamdani, M., 'What Jason didn't tell Gavin and his army of Invisible Children' *Daily Monitor*. 13. March 2012.
<http://www.monitor.co.ug/artsculture/Reviews/-/691232/1365090/-/c8I08/-/index.html>. [Accessed 17 May 2013].

Olara. A. Otunno., 'The Secret Genocide.' Foreign Policy, 9 June 2006, http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2006/06/09/the_secret_genocide. [Accessed 12 June 2012].

Olara, S., 'The Politics of Acholi Marginalisation is not a Myth' *The Independent*, 25 January 2011. http://www.independent.co.ug/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=3847:politics-of-acholi-marginalisation-is-not-a-myth&catid=112:election-watch&Itemid=370. [Accessed 1 February 2011].

Ssali, M., 'I want a new beginning - Mao on the future, *Daily Monitor*, 17 January 2011. <http://www.monitor.co.ug/SpecialReports/Elections/-/859108/1090628/-/jntf6k/-/index.html>. [Accessed 9 August 2013].

Taub, A., Beyond Kony2012: *Atrocity, Awareness, & Activism in the Internet Age*. <https://leanpub.com/beyondkony2012>. [Accessed 17 May 2013].

Vasagar, J., 'A litany of horrors' *The Guardian*. www.theguardian.co.uk, 2 November 2004. [Accessed 17 May 2013];

-----'She helps Uganda women move up' *The Blade*, Toledo Ohio, Sunday 25 November 1962, <http://news.google.com/newspapers?nid=1350&dat=19621125&id=hP1OAAAAlBAJ&sjid=LAE EA AAAI BA J &pg=4455,2245635>. [Accessed 20 February 2013].

-----Uganda signs peace deal with rebels. BCC World News. Africa. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/africa/2607683.stm>. [Accessed 9 December 2013]

----- 'The Bending of Spears' producing consensus for peace & development in Northern Uganda, commissioned by: International Alert December 1997, www.km-net.org.uk/publications/BendingOfSpear.doc: [Accessed 22 June 2012].

Refugee Law Project, Districts in Uganda. www.beyondjuba.org. [Accessed 7 August 2013].