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Post-conflict reintegration: the long-term effects of abduction and displacement on the Acholi population of northern Uganda

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Abstract

This thesis explores the lives of those who were abducted and displaced by the 1986-2006 conflict in northern Uganda. It does so by comparing and contrasting the lived experiences of twenty formerly abducted persons and twenty who were not abducted but were displaced by the conflict. It indicates that although many abductees faced unique challenges in short-term reintegration, the long-run challenges identified by recent ethnographic research are commonly, but not always, experienced by those who were displaced. It therefore highlights the need for a longer-term approach to the process of reintegration for both abductees and formerly displaced persons.

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Abbreviations

DDR	Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration
FAP	Formerly Abducted Person
GUSCO	Gulu Support the Children Organisation
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
JSRP	Justice and Security Research Programme
LC	Local councillor
LRA	Lord's Resistance Army
SWAY	Survey of War-Affected Youth
UN	United Nations
UPDF	Uganda People's Defence Force

Glossary of Acholi words and phrases

Bedo keken	To isolate oneself
Cen	Vengeful evil spirits
Cimo tok	Finger pointing/stigma
Kanyo	Perseverance
Leje Leje	Petty jobs
Piny maber	Good surroundings

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Figures

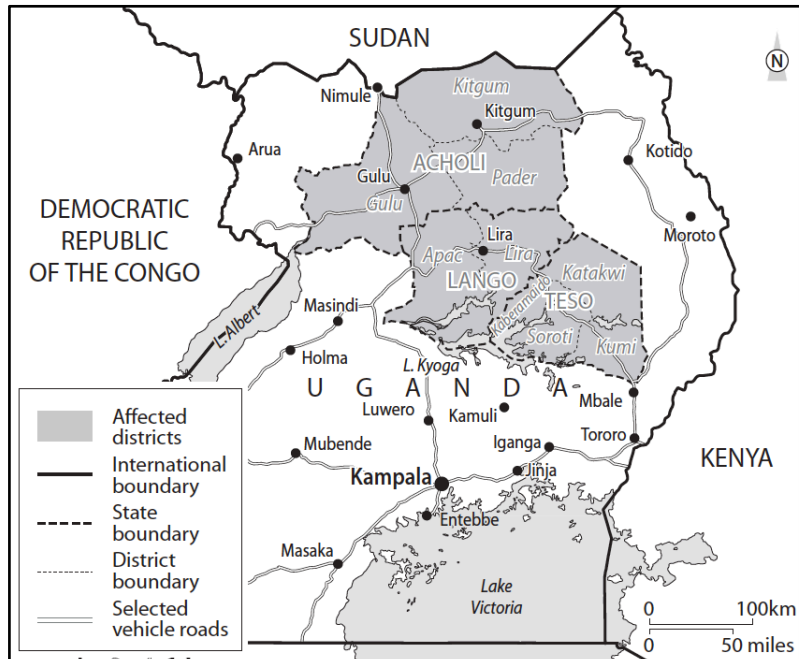


Figure 1 - Map of Districts of Northern Uganda affected by the LRA up to 2005 (Allen and Vlassenroot 2010:viii).

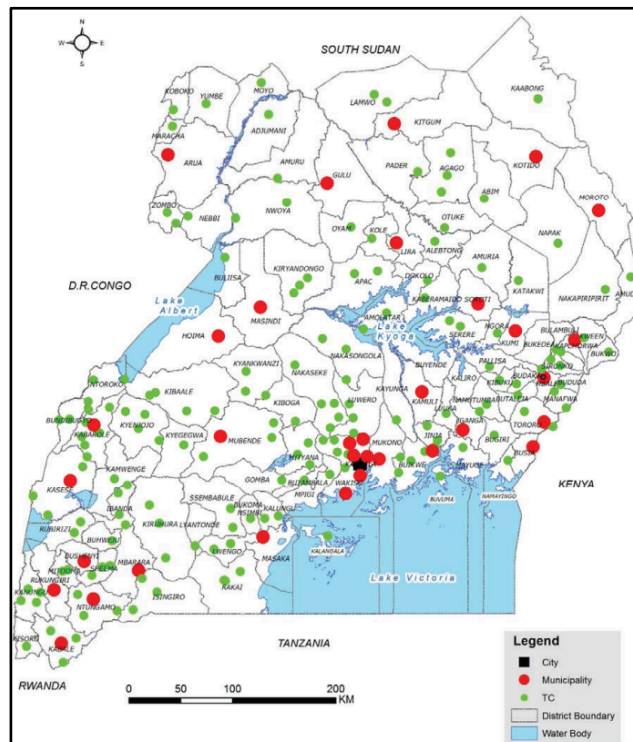


Figure 2 – Map of Uganda showing districts and urban centres as of March 2016 (National Population and Housing Census 2014:3).

Introduction

The reintegration of combatants and civilians following civil conflict may be crucial to establishing a lasting peace (UNDP 2000; Collier et al. 2003; Özerdem 2012). Peace agreements often include social reintegration programmes, which aim to promote stability and social harmony in order to prevent conflict reemerging. However, social reintegration is a complex process and it is not clear what holds the key to success. In order to support the durability of peace and to prevent the sorts of peacetime violence which make conflict more likely, it is necessary to consider what might determine the success of social reintegration programs. This thesis seeks to address the question of the success of reintegration by considering both the reintegration of former combatants who were abducted by the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) and also the reintegration and resettlement of those who were displaced by the 1986-2006 conflict in northern Uganda.

Grounding analysis of the trajectories of formerly abducted persons (FAPs) in a broader understanding of the challenges facing those who were not abducted is an essential step to take if we are to understand what is unique about the experience of abductees. This is particularly important in the context of striking divergences in reporting over the lived experiences of FAPs.

Earlier works on 'reintegration', the majority of which were conducted whilst the conflict was ongoing or in the immediate post-conflict period, argue that reintegration was a success, that FAPs are generally received well, with "relatively few former abductees report[ing] any difficulties" (Annan et al. 2006:vii). However, recent ethnographic research conducted through the Justice and Security Research Programme (JSRP) since 2013 indicates that those who were abducted and reintegrated are instead "marginalised and often abused" (Parker et al. 2018:21). Such research therefore raises questions around earlier findings. However, whilst there is growing evidence that reintegration might not have been so successful, it is not clear the extent to which the problems faced by FAPs are uniquely tied to their time in captivity. It is indeed likely that many of the problems faced by FAPs are shared by the broader population who have also had to face many challenges of reintegration and resettlement.

Closely related to this is the fact that although the conditions of the wartime internally displaced person (IDP) camps generated extensive criticism, 'stayees' have largely been marginalised in terms of scholarly interest (Tegenbos and Vlassenroot 2018:12). The failure to consider the trajectories of those who were not abducted continues to hamper our

understanding of post-conflict development and peace-building. Particularly as many ‘stayees’ were likely exposed to comparative levels of violence and disruption as many who were abducted. By considering the experiences of non-abductees this thesis seeks to address the neglected majority in northern Uganda and provide much needed perspective on debates over the relative success of FAP reintegration programmes.

The official definition of ‘reintegration’ describes a long-term process through which “ex-combatants acquire civilian status and gain sustainable employment and income” (UN 2014:157). However, in the context of a failing economy - as of 2013, 43.7% of the entire population of northern Uganda was in severe poverty (World Bank 2016:5) - the ‘reintegration’ of all IDPs, not just of ex-combatants, could be considered a failure. Emphasis must also be placed on the social aspects of reintegration. In the context of Acholi return, the ability to restore *piny maber* (good surroundings), as highlighted by Finnström (2008), plays a key role in the restoration of what Porter describes as social harmony (2016). Moreover, where many have discussed reintegration policies, the reality is that in the context of ongoing conflict, many ‘reintegration’ efforts were limited to ‘reinsertion’ programmes. As a result, many programmes and analyses have failed to consider the ‘open-ended’ time frame of reintegration. This thesis seeks to offer a corrective to this by taking a holistic, long-term approach to lived experiences of ‘reintegration’.

The contribution of this thesis is therefore two-fold. Firstly, it takes an ethnographic approach to exploring the lives of twenty FAPs and twenty ‘stayees’ and in doing so places the return and ‘reintegration’ trajectories of those who were abducted alongside those who were displaced. By comparing and contrasting the challenges faced by those who were and were not abducted by the LRA, it nuances the academic debates over the relative success of ‘reintegration’ programmes for FAPs. Secondly, by presenting new ethnographic data on the long-term lived experiences of reintegration of those who were displaced by the conflict, it draws much needed attention to the trajectories of ‘stayees’ and/or IDPs. The research findings indicate that many of the challenges faced by the FAPs are shared by those who were not abducted. It therefore contends that the failings of reintegration in northern Uganda must be considered in the context of the long-term effects of displacement. The experiences of FAPs often change substantially over time and their ability to navigate their social surroundings is highly contingent on their access to social and material resources.

This thesis is structured into seven parts. The following chapter provides an overview of the historical context of the conflict and the backdrop against which these experiences have played out. The third and fourth chapters present the literature on the conflict and the

methodology of this paper respectively. The fifth and sixth will present and discuss the main findings, situating the results within the broader literature. The paper then concludes and points to areas for further study.

Context

The conflict in northern Uganda dates to the period immediately after Yoweri Museveni seized the Presidency. A number of rebel groups formed in response to the change. Although the emergence of the Holy Spirit Mobile Force, led by spirit medium Alice Lakwena, marks the beginning of the period commonly associated with the LRA, the LRA itself did not emerge until 1988. Emerging as a small group led by Joseph Kony, the LRA soon gained international notoriety for the abductions, murder and violence it targeted on tens of thousands of civilians across northern Uganda. It targeted attacks on the predominantly rural Acholi population and on government troops. The group proved remarkably resilient and effectively terrorised a large region of the country. Its main areas of operation until June 2003 were the districts of Gulu, Kitgum and Pader as well as across the border in what is now South Sudan.¹ However, as the LRA grew in numbers and in force following the failure of Operation Iron Fist it expanded its attacks against Lango and Teso communities.²

Abduction and reintegration

Over the course of the conflict, it is estimated that 54,000 to 75,000 people, including 25,000 to 38,000 children, were abducted by and recruited into the LRA (Pham et al. 2007:410). Adults who were recruited during the late 1980s and early 1990s are also likely to have volunteered for the rebel group (Blattman and Annan 2010:135). Abduction, however, was not a uniform experience. While tens of thousands of children and young people were forcibly abducted and trained as soldiers, thousands more were used as porters for days or weeks to transport resources over long distances by foot. Both boys and girls were abducted for use in combat, and many of the girls were abducted for the purpose of bearing the children of commanders. Those who were recruited as soldiers were often forced to beat family members and/or neighbours to death. Although many abductions were extremely violent, the average level of brutality during abduction is believed to be much less severe than previously thought (Annan et al. 2006:10).

¹ New districts have since been created, please refer to Figure 2 for the current district map.

² For complete histories of the conflict refer to Allen, T (2005), Heike Behrend (1999), Dolan (2005), Finnström (2003).

Many of those who were abducted died in captivity, however tens of thousands were able to escape and some were freed. Those who returned via the officially recognised path, were registered with one of ten reception centres established across the region to provide a safe space for rehabilitation of former combatants. Records from eight of those reception centres indicate that 26,958 passed through upon return.³ The centres tended to be walled compounds in the main towns which were managed by international humanitarian agencies (Parker et al. 2018:3). The length of stay in any one of the centres varied from a few days to a few months. The operating assumption of ‘reintegration’, in accordance with international child protection standards (UNICEF 1997; International Committee of the Red Cross 2004), was that the best (and most operational) strategy would be to reunite children with their family members as soon as possible. For the vast majority, this meant being reinserted into a context of displacement and ongoing conflict.

Those who were abducted from their village often found that their family had since relocated to a neighbouring IDP camp. Meanwhile, others who had been abducted from one camp might find their family had since relocated to another. From October 1996, ‘protected villages’ had become an integral part of the Ugandan government’s anti-insurgency policy (Dolan 2009:107), such that by 2003 there were over 200 IDP camps in operation across northern Uganda (Allen and Schomerus 2006:70). Rising levels of insecurity and forcible movement of entire villages meant that by 2005 90% of the population of former Acholiland were in IDP camps (World Health Organization 2005:ii). The camps were infamous for their ‘concentration camp’ like conditions and have been widely critiqued as a tool of social control (Dolan 2009:6). Thus, the conditions that FAPs returned to were often severe and many lived in fear of being re-recruited by the LRA.

Once returned to their families few of these children were subsequently visited. At best, they were sent home to their immediate family with a few material goods, the advice to forget everything that happened in the bush and some degree of vocational training (Parker et al. 2018:9). However, in reality, not all received material goods or training and not all of their immediate family members could be located, as a result many were returned to extended family members. Moreover, training often proved ineffective or defunct in a context where few had the ability to pay for goods or services.

³ These centers were however, only in operation from 1995 (Parker et al. 2018:7). For a full list of the reception centers in operation during the conflict refer to Appendix 2 in Allen and Schomerus 2014:74.

Displacement and reintegration

Those who were not abducted, and indeed many of those who were, spent the majority of the conflict in displacement. At its peak, the conflict led to the displacement of 90% of the population of the Acholi region indicated in Figure 1 (Dolan 2009:1). The process of displacement was often violent. Many of the IDP camps were established at least nominally as a way to provide protection for civilians from the rebel forces. However, the camps remained extremely insecure and civilians were subject to attacks by both rebel forces and by government soldiers (Ibid. 61-62). As a result, those who were not abducted were also exposed to extremely high levels of violence not substantially less severe than what was experienced by many FAPs (Blattman 2009:234).

The camps offered very limited access to land, services and income generating activities. Primary schools were underfunded and overcrowded and, as of 2002, it was estimated by the Gulu District Education Officer that only 5,000 were enrolled in secondary schools (Dolan 2009:136). The mortality rate was among the highest of emergency situations globally (World Health Organization 2005:iv). Nearly all residents were dependent on food relief and the majority attempted to supplement this by leaving the ‘security’ of the camps to farm their land during the day. The state of the camps was such that they have been described in academic literature as a tool of ‘mass torture’ whereby the ‘ultimate function [was] the subordinate inclusion of the population in northern Uganda’ (Dolan 2009:1).

Camp life threw the spatial, spiritual and gender-based notion of the home into complete disarray (Porter 2016). The combined inability to access alternative sources of income and the consequences of cattle rustling by both rebels and government soldiers meant that bride payments could not be exchanged (Tapscott 2018:S128). As a result, partnerships remained informal and fragile with important consequences for men, women and the children they produced. The camps were a stark departure from the patterns of life for the population which undermined social norms (Branch 2013). Understanding of this context and the reality that “life did not return to pre-war conditions” after the conflict ended (Tapscott 2018:S128-S129), is essential for understanding the long-term ramifications of camp life which abductees and non-abductees alike have reckoned with.

Post-conflict and peacetime violence

Since the return to ‘peace’ which saw the majority leave IDP camps over three years from 2006 to 2009 (Whyte et al. 2012 and 2014), little has been offered in terms of material

support for those displaced by or abducted as a result of the conflict. Initiatives to manage stigma have been facilitated locally, with local councillors and radio programmes playing a key role in ‘sensitizing’ the community. Many communities have also implemented local by-laws against stigma which are widely regarded as having been effective in decreasing the frequency and severity of stigma. The author, however, was unable to identify any cases where such by-laws had been put into active use. Land dispossession, perpetual poverty and rising inequality continue to mark daily life in the region (Branch 2014:609). Meanwhile, international support and funding has long since dried up.

Literature review

The conflict between the LRA and the government of Uganda is generally perceived to have been widely covered, however, there remain a number of divergent positions and a significant number of unanswered questions. This chapter will highlight some of the key academic debates and methodological challenges facing research on FAPs. This will be followed by a summary of the implications for this thesis.

‘Reintegration’

The official definition of ‘reintegration’ describes a long-term process through which “ex-combatants acquire civilian status and gain sustainable employment and income” (UN 2014:157). However, in the context of a failing economy - as of 2013, 43.7% of the entire population of northern Uganda was in severe poverty (World Bank 2016:5) - the ‘reintegration’ of all IDPs, not just of ex-combatants, could be considered a failure. Emphasis must also be placed on the social aspects of reintegration. In the context of Acholi return, the ability to restore *piny maber* (good surroundings), as highlighted by Finnström (2008), plays a key role in the restoration of what Porter describes as social harmony (2016). Moreover, where many have discussed reintegration policies, the reality is that in the context of ongoing conflict, many ‘reintegration’ efforts were limited to ‘reinsertion’ programmes. Reinsertion, by contrast to reintegration, involves “short-term, targeted stabilisation and “stop-gap” measures” of up to a year in length relating to returnee combatants. By contrast, reintegration involves “long-term and inclusive economic, social/psychological and political assistance” (UN 2014:159). As a result, many programmes and analyses have failed to consider the ‘open-ended’ time frame of reintegration. As Parker et al. highlight, “far too little is known about the long-term social impacts of humanitarian assistance” (2018:3).

The result is that the available literature on the long-term effects of conflict is surprisingly narrow and fails to acknowledge the long-term challenges of return. This thesis seeks to offer a corrective to this by taking a holistic, long-term approach to lived experiences of ‘reintegration’.

Failing to address the displaced

Although the state of the IDP camps was one of abject poverty, since the conflict ended, very little has been written to address the long-term trajectories of the conflict on ‘stayees’ or IDPs. As highlighted by Tegenbos and Vlassenroot this problem is not unique to coverage of the conflict in northern Uganda:

“The return and reintegration of refugees, IDPs, and former combatants is also widely presented as being crucial to peacebuilding and national reconciliation; to the promotion of state stability and legitimacy; and to the triggering of post-conflict economic development...[yet] very little is known about the lived experiences of those who returned and/or stayed behind, the longer-term dynamics of return, and about the position of returnees in (re)constituting societies.” (2018:3).

As Branch argued “the focus on LRA child soldiers as hapless victims has a number of detrimental consequences... [including distracting] from the violence experienced everyday by the displaced – including displaced children” (2011:134). Given that those who resided in the camps were also exposed to extreme levels of violence, there are strong grounds for arguing that those who were displaced might face similar long-term challenges to those who were abducted. Such singular focus on the circumstances of those who were abducted therefore both perpetuates the neglect of the displaced majority of the Acholi population and prevents us from being able to understand which, if any, of the challenges currently being faced by FAPs are unique.

Placing the experiences of abductees in context

Towards the end of the conflict, there were some attempts to address this gap. SWAY, for example, addressed questions such as “Do orphans and the formerly abducted face more deprivation than other youth?” (Annan et al. 2006 and 2008). Such efforts to place the challenges faced by abductees in broader context are crucial, particularly in contexts of such widespread deprivation and poverty. Indeed, the findings of SWAY indicated that although many young people had difficulties upon return from captivity, they were able to overcome these challenges and displayed substantial resilience (2006:12). The results of the survey

suggested that the evidence for social rejection of FAPs was minimal. Blattman later argued that past violent experiences had led to “increased political engagement among ex-combatants”. He suggested that there was a “27% increase in the likelihood of voting and a doubling of the likelihood of being a community leader among former abductees” (2009:231).

The findings of this earlier work are particularly striking when compared to the results of longer-term ethnographic research and raise the question of whether FAPs faced particularly more difficult circumstances than the broader Acholi population. Indeed, given the circumstances of the camps, it is reasonable to ask which challenges might be unique to those who spent time in captivity, particularly given that the language of trauma is commonplace, and experiences of violence and abject poverty are not unique to FAPs. This dissertation therefore seeks to clarify some aspects of these discussions and to understand the longer-term dynamics of return and how the dual process of reintegration affected FAPs and ‘stayees’.

However, the empirical basis of these early surveys remains limited in scope, in large part because they were conducted while the conflict was ongoing. This is significant for a number of reasons. Such surveys were often conducted on the basis of self-reporting which is problematic as at the time reporting an abduction experience was widely recognised as a route to accessing support (Parker et al. 2018:20-21). Additionally, the short-time span of these reports severely limits their ability to provide insights into the long-term challenges of reintegration and resettlement. For example, they are unable to address the implications of abduction and displacement for key issues such as access to land.

Growing evidence in support of reintegration failures

Moreover, while earlier research indicated that abduction “does not generally affect non-political forms of social activity” (Blattman 2009:231), recent long-term ethnographic studies indicate that many face substantial ‘reintegration’ challenges (Akello 2013; Victor and Porter 2017; Parker et al. 2018). They find that “the vast majority... feel rejected by relatives, friends and/or neighbours” (Parker et al. 2018:1). The JSRP programme in particular manages to avoid a number of the problems associated with the earlier survey work by relying on the records of the reception centres and tracking what has happened to those who have passed through. It is, however, likely that many did not pass through one of the reception centres. The findings of SWAY suggest that as many as half of those who reported abduction indicated that they had returned informally (2006:6). However, whilst

there are undoubtedly many who avoided the reception centres, it is also worth noting that many of those who were able to return informally seem to have had brief encounters with the LRA. They often report being used as porters rather than as active combatants (ibid. 54). While they may have witnessed a great deal of violence, their experiences are likely to be more comparable with someone who was never abducted but was displaced.

Other works have focused on the problems faced by returnee mothers and the intergenerational effects of wartime sexual violence, particularly for children born to women whilst in captivity (McKay 2004; McKay et al. 2006; Owacgiu 2008; Otuko 2016; Denov and Lakor 2017). These papers highlight a number of complex social issues including the ongoing social exclusion of children ‘born in the bush’ and draw attention to the need for longer-term reintegration support programmes.

The two main hypotheses of this research are therefore that firstly, the long-term experiences of ‘stayees’, in the context of mass displacement, need to be addressed as the legacies of conflict are much more persistent than currently implied by the literature. Secondly, that we cannot judge the ‘success’ of the ‘reintegration’ of former abductees without understanding the broader context for ‘stayees’. Without a more comprehensive understanding of processes and legacies of displacement and resettlement we cannot distinguish which of the challenges facing FAPs are unique.

Methodology

The data collection for this thesis took place between June and August 2018. I was the primary researcher and was supported in translation and interviews by Atingo Jaqueline Owacgiu, Atim Dorothy Bongomin and Ocitti James Kilara. We conducted forty-two semi-structured in-depth interviews, forty of which are included in the results and analysis. I also attended one focus group on the topic of stigma in a rural community.⁴ The experiences discussed in that focus group informed some of the questions asked in the interviews.

Terminology

The term FAP masks a great deal of variation in the experiences of those who spent some time in captivity. As noted previously, it is not the case that all who were ‘abducted’ were used in active combat. In fact, it is likely that the majority were not. Yet, upon return, efforts to distinguish between different abduction experiences are minimal, such that those

⁴ The focus group discussion was organised and facilitated by Kerali Raphael and Anna MacDonald (July 2018), Paloro district.

who stayed for one day are often labelled the same way as those who stayed for thirteen years. This is particularly important as in the early years it was possible, or believed to be so, that abduction experiences carried with them the potential for access to much needed resources. By contrast, at present most would rather conceal their abduction experience as far as possible (Parker et al. 2018:21).

The term ‘FAP’ also suggests a lack of agency on the part of the ‘abductee’ whereas the term ex-combatant faces the reverse challenge. For many former abductees, the experience of being in the bush, as it is commonly referred to, was complex and not always straightforwardly despised. However, in this thesis I will rely on the term FAP to refer specifically to those who were active combatants all of whom were abducted by the LRA.

Interviewee selection

The interviewee selection process was conducted through a combination of semi-random sampling and purposive pairing. The FAPs were drawn from a random sample of GUSCO files which was initially taken for the JSRP research project conducted from 2013-16.⁵ Taking this original data set as a starting point has a number of important advantages. Firstly, this provides a guarantee that those interviewed as FAPs were abducted. This avoids the problems associated with self-reporting surveys, particularly those that were conducted during or shortly after the conflict. Secondly, GUSCO served as the central referral point for three of nine other reception centres which covered a large section of the region (KICWA in Kitgum, CCF in Pader and Rachele Centre in Lira). Thirdly, GUSCO received males under the age of eighteen and women of all ages, including child mothers. The second and third factor therefore enhance the scope and coverage of this research.

The team working on that project conducted interviews with 234 of the 304 originally sampled. Where possible they interviewed the individual themselves and failing that, a close family member. Often both were interviewed. I was given access to the interviews for my research and have therefore been able to develop a fuller picture of the lives of the selected interviewees.

To generate my own sample from the 234, further restrictions were applied. The interviewees had to have spent at least six months with the LRA and to have been abducted.⁶ As this research seeks to address specifically the experiences of those who took part in active

⁵ For a full explanation of the sampling process refer to Victor and Porter 2017:604.

⁶ Children born in captivity were therefore excluded from this sample; the duration of abduction was identified through the original GUSCO registration files.

combat with the LRA, not simply those who were used as porters, the six-month minimum abduction time is very important to the outcome of this research. Moreover, this research sought to consider whether those who spent time in captivity display greater leadership skills than those who did not (Blattman 2009). It seems reasonable to assume that an individual who had spent more time in the bush might have been more likely to acquire the associated skills than someone who spent only a week.

We identified and began to contact the ninety-seven potential interviewees from the original JSRP sample, fifty-nine men and thirty-eight women. Where it was not possible to contact someone directly - for example, if they did not have a mobile number at the point of the last interview - we made every effort to contact a relative or to go in person to contact them. Some indicated that they would not be available having since moved away for work or as a result of marriage. A further few had passed away as a result of sicknesses, not directly related to their time spent in the bush. Others were not traceable. Three indicated that they did not wish to participate in the interview process any further. Those who declined participation indicated that they feared forcible recruitment by the army.

This combination of purposive and random sampling enabled us to develop a more representative sample of the post-conflict landscape. It has also allowed us to trace people who live in isolation from their communities which was the case for a number of our interviewees. Such individuals might have been missed had we have relied on snowball sampling.

Considering the average basic statistics of abduction experiences from the original data set, we believe that our interviewees are broadly representative of the wider sample. The twenty FAP interviewees had each been interviewed at least once as part of JSRP and four had been interviewed three times. The first and second interviews were conducted in 2013 and 2014, the third interview was conducted in 2016 or 2017 where applicable. To allow for a closer comparison, particularly for those who had been interviewed once in 2013, we decided to re-interview each of the twenty.

Interview pairing process

Each FAP was asked to bring a childhood friend who had never been abducted. We indicated that we would interview both and that the friend should not be someone who was a close relative or clan mate. The initial intention was to interview someone they had shared early experiences with. For the men, the vast majority continue to live in the same area as a result of paternal land rights and so it was relatively easy for them to contact such a friend;

although in some cases they had been separated for over ten years as a result of the conflict. Nine of the pairs were primary school friends, and the remaining pair met during a vocational training course upon return from captivity.

For the women this was more difficult. A number of the women had since married or remarried, moved away from their family home and lost contact with their childhood friends. Where this was the case, we asked them to bring the friend who knows them best. Otherwise, we placed no further restrictions on who they brought to the interview. These friends tended to be among the closest confidants of the original sample interviewee, if not the closest. Each brought an individual of their own gender and all were aged within a few years of the original interviewee. An outline of the relationships can be found in the table below:

Table 1 – outline of the relationships of the twenty interview pairs

WOMEN	MEN
<p>4 Neighbour from marital home 3 Primary school 2 Childhood friends 1 Training during the conflict, after abduction</p>	<p>9 primary school 1 Training during the conflict, after abduction</p>

Interview sample

Of the forty-two interviews, one pair had to be excluded from the sample because soon into the interview with the ‘stayee’, it became clear that he too had been abducted for a week. This friend indicated that he had not been forced to participate in any violent acts but that he had been made to move with the rebels and carry heavy luggage. He indicated that he had never passed through a reception centre and that his friend, the FAP interviewee, was not even aware that he too had been abducted. Although this pair of interviews have been excluded from the results they highlight an important point, that many did not return via officially recognised paths.

The resulting sample drew interview participants from urban, semi-urban and rural settings across Amuru, Gulu, Nwoya and Oyam districts. Of those who participated, where possible we interviewed participants away from their homes to improve the anonymity of the process and to ensure that the interviewees felt they were able to talk freely. In order to protect the identities of the participants, I have changed or removed their names and any identifying descriptors.

Limitations

Given the small sample size, the generalisability of this research is limited. Additionally, the final sample of FAPs was largely dependent on those who responded to requests for interview. Due to limited time and resources we were largely dependent on access to mobile phones. Although we extended our contact network to include the phone numbers of close family members, those in worse economic situations are more likely to not have access to a mobile phone. However, as this would support the hypothesis that those who returned from the bush are likely to continue to face more difficult life circumstances than ‘stayees’, the impact of this particular limitation is minimised. Moreover, much of the disruption with phone numbers is likely due to recent changes in the registration process of sim numbers (Balibolla 2018).

Additionally, those who returned as adult men (over the age of eighteen) are not included in this study. The records of a number of the reception centres have been lost due to poor conservation and so it was not possible to expand the sample to include, for example those who passed through the World Vision centre which was also based in Gulu. As a result, this study cannot address the trajectories of men who returned as adults. Further study is therefore needed to identify whether those male abductees who returned as adults face such difficulties and, in particular, how the process of reintegration with families might differ when the question of innocence might not be so clearly regarded. Of the sampled interviewees, none were obviously physically disfigured. It is therefore not clear whether such individuals face additional reintegration challenges.

One further limitation is that this dissertation has focused solely on the Acholi population, yet as indicated in Figure 1, Lango and Teso populations were also affected by abduction by the rebel group. Further study would help to establish whether the fact that the LRA are generally perceived to be an Acholi rebel group and therefore outside enemies, shapes the way those who return from abduction are received.

Results

This chapter begins by providing a brief overview of the wartime and return experiences of the interviewees. It then addresses the main findings of the research regarding the long-term implications of a dual crisis of abduction and displacement. The chapter that follows explores the key themes which emerged from the interviews.

Wartime experiences of the interviewees

The ten FAP women we interviewed spent between twelve months and thirteen years in captivity. The ten FAP men who were abducted spent between seven months and four and a half years. Only one returned following the end of the conflict, the rest were each returned to a family member whilst the conflict was ongoing. Of the twenty, sixteen spent time living in at least one of the IDP camps either before or after abduction. Three others grew up in, were abducted from and were returned to either of the main towns. The final individual was abducted during the early years of the conflict and upon return stayed with his maternal uncle in town. Two of the FAPs relocated to town shortly following their return so that they could live in a place where no one knew them.

By contrast, of the twenty non-abductees, all apart from one spent some time in camps. The remaining one was able to avoid direct impact of the conflict by relocating to Karuma with his family. Karuma is a region outside of northern Uganda which avoided the major disruption of the civil conflict. Eleven of the twenty spent at least some time living in Gulu or Kitgum town, three of those having grown up in one of the main towns. Many of the ‘stayees’ moved a number of times. For example, one lived in three different camps, spent some time in town and spent some further time in Karuma. Three indicated that they had spent a substantial amount of time living without adult supervision.

The forty interviewees all reported disrupted schooling as a result of abduction and/or the lack of money for paying school fees. The educational outcomes for women were on average much worse than those of the men, and the formal educational outcomes for those who were abducted were worse than those of the same gender who were displaced. On average, women who spent time in captivity achieved grades 3.8 years below that of a non-abductee, similarly men achieved 2.6 grades below non-abductee standards.⁷ One male ‘stayee’ had attained a university degree. One female FAP had received no education at all.

All of those interviewed were exposed to substantial amounts of violence. As well as the twenty who had themselves been abducted, twelve of the ‘stayees’ also indicated that at least one member of their close family had been abducted. A further four of the ‘stayees’ had lost their fathers who were UPDF soldiers during the conflict.

Ten of the interviewees, four abductees and six ‘stayees’, were orphaned as children. Five of the ten experienced the death of at least one parent as a result of the conflict – three

⁷ It should be noted that one additional grade worth of schooling is not necessarily completed in a year. The vast majority had repeated years in school.

expressed uncertainty as to whether the parent died as a result of an attack by LRA or government soldiers, one indicated that it was the result of an attack by the LRA and one by government soldiers. The death of parents at an early age for many meant that they were unable to continue with their education. However, the death of parents even as adults, particularly for the men, often has had significant ramifications for the interviewees ability to maintain access to land. This will be addressed in the analysis chapter.

Thirteen of the women were child mothers who gave birth during the conflict. Seven of these were FAPs who had given birth to a child whilst in captivity, one FAP did not have a child whilst in the bush but became pregnant upon return. Of the ‘stayees’ six were underage when they gave birth whilst in displacement. Just five of the thirteen women are still in the same relationships, two from the bush and three from displacement. Three of the FAP women, each of whom had a child whilst in captivity, are now in relationships with men who were also abducted but who were not bush husbands. Only one of the ‘stayees’, the woman, is in a relationship with a FAP. None of the men we interviewed indicated that they had fathered children whilst under the age of eighteen, only one, a former abductee, indicated that their wife was also formerly abducted. Three had children from previous relationships, only one of whom was caring for those children.

Summary of the findings

The table below supplements the findings noted above and allows for easy comparison. Presenting summary findings in this way can mask a great deal of variation in the experiences of interviewees and the severity of individual challenges. For this reason, I will briefly touch on the implications of these broader findings for the literature before moving on to the analysis chapter. The findings are grouped according to gender and to abduction experience:

Table 2 – Summary data from the forty interviews

	Male		Female	
	FAP	Stayee	FAP	Stayee
Ongoing stigma by family	4	3	4	0
Ongoing stigma by community	7	1	4	3
Severe challenges relating to intimate partner relationship(s)	1	2	4	4
Significant health issue that is being managed	1	1	2	1
Significant health issue that is not managed	3	3	6	0
At least one child of school age who is not in school	1	2	7	4

Food insecurity	0	1	1	2
Accessing land through a non-traditional route	1	6	6	3
Participation in at least one community-level group	8	8	10	10
Leadership position	4	5	4	5
Voted in past elections	3	8	6	7

As indicated by Table 2, of the twenty pairs of interviewees, it is not clear that over the long run the trajectories of FAPs are overly worse than those of the ‘stayee’. Of the forty interviewees there are only a few who could be said to be living comfortable and secure lives. The reality for the majority involves struggling to get by with extremely little income and whilst facing a variety of social challenges.

The majority depend on subsistence farming and *leje leje* (odd jobs) to support themselves and their families. Where possible, extra produce is sold to pay for school fees and medication. That so few are in sustainable employment is particularly significant given the number who had participated in vocational training programmes. Of the thirteen of the interviewees who received vocational training, nine FAPs and four ‘stayees’, only five are still using this training, a further three used this training for some period of time but have since stopped. The main reason given for not using the training at all is due to a lack of equipment or start-up capital. Those who had stopped using their training have since gone into other businesses because the employment associated with the training did not offer sufficient income opportunities. For interviewees not running their own businesses, employment is often inconsistent, poorly paid and hard to come by. As a result of such constraints on their income, fourteen interviewees reported being unable to consistently afford school fees. An equal number of FAPs and ‘stayees’ also indicated food insecurity.

Regarding the debate over the social reintegration of FAPs, these results indicate that they are far from the only group to face the challenge of stigma, with seven of the twenty ‘stayees’ also indicating significant experiences of *cimo tok* (stigma). However, it was universally agreed by our forty interview participants that FAPs “used” to experience stigma more commonly than any other group. Therefore, while these findings support the suggestion that there is generally little social aggression displayed by abductees (Annan et al. 2006:10), there is little support for the argument that few experience or have experienced social exclusion. Many have had to overcome serious stigma and isolation on their own and being told to forget their bush experience is effective only to the extent that their community and families are also happy to do the same. In many cases they were and are not. These

findings therefore support the argument that whilst there was initial acceptance by communities and family members at the point of return, stigma continues to be a significant problem.

Although sensitisation programmes conducted by both local councillors and over the radio are believed to have been effective in decreasing the frequency and severity of stigmatisation, a number of FAPs indicated that stigma was still a serious issue within the community and indeed within their families. For FAP men, ongoing stigma is commonly experienced in social gatherings and in relation to land wrangles. For women stigma was most commonly cited in relation to their in-laws. However, as noted, stigma is not uniquely directed towards FAPs. For the 'stayees', although stigma is a much less uniform problem it was still commonly experienced, and in a number of cases was causing clear psychological distress. Three 'stayees' were the children of soldiers and were facing land contestation at their maternal homes. A further four 'stayees', living with HIV indicated that they were just as regularly on the receiving end of stigma in the community as FAPs. Therefore, although abduction related insults were certainly the most commonly cited example of stigma, experiencing stigma is not unique to FAPs.

Participation in community groups such as choirs, village loans and savings associations and sports teams can be taken as an indication of integration within the community, it is therefore significant that membership was high on both sides, with about half of each category fulfilling leadership positions. However, FAPs did not display a particular dispensation towards political participation or group membership over and above that of 'stayees'. One female 'stayee', one male 'stayee' and one male FAP displayed particular inclinations towards leadership roles in the community, serving as community health leaders, youth counsellors, and election monitoring officials.

When considered in isolation, the interviews with FAPs confirm a number of the findings of recent ethnographic work. However, when compared to the 'stayee' interviews, it becomes apparent that a much broader section of the interviewees than expected are facing similar social and economic challenges. That FAPs, in general, do not appear to be facing particularly worse life circumstances than the 'stayees' is striking and raises the question of whether their challenges are uniquely tied to their abduction experiences. Given that FAPs and 'stayees' alike continue to face the repercussions of that conflict long after international interest has faded, these findings also support the argument that "return is a ... long-term process (rather than an event) that carries many challenges" (Vlassenroot and Tegenbos 2018:3).

Analysis

This section addresses the four main themes of the findings. The first two subsections address the highly gendered experiences of reintegration which emerged throughout the interviews. The first discusses women's experiences of reintegration. The second explores the nature of contested land claims at the family level, particularly for men, and how the "newly acquired social identity" of FAPs shapes their ability to navigate such challenges (Osborne et al. 2018:117). Although many women also indicated that they were accessing land through a non-traditional route, this was largely related to their husband's ability to claim land. This section will therefore focus mainly on the male interviewees ability to access land. The third considers the two main tools used by FAPs to avoid and/or overcome social challenges. The final subsection of this chapter reflects on the implications of these findings for post-conflict reintegration literature.

Women's experiences of reintegration

Unsurprisingly, stigma emerged as one of the dominant themes from the interviews. This can be partially explained by the prevalence of sensitization programmes conducted across northern Uganda both during and after the conflict which aimed to combat the stigmatization of former abductees. However, for FAPs and 'stayees' alike, stigma shapes social relations and claims over ancestral land in crucial ways. The number and severity of claims of stigmatization have also been used by many as a key marker for judging the success of reintegration. One particular group which has been described as being particularly vulnerable to stigma are returnee child mothers. These are women who were abducted by the LRA and who have since returned to civilian life with the children they bore whilst in captivity. Many have not only highlighted the challenges these women face but also the persistence of the intergenerational legacies of conflict on those children (Atim et al. 2018). Comparing the experiences of a number of these women with a number of 'stayee' women who also gave birth to children whilst underage, however, suggests that these challenges may not necessarily be unique to FAPs. Of four interviewees who had had children in the bush, two had had their child(ren) rejected by their new partner. The result was that child was often left living in the natal home of their mother or, indeed, subject to substantial amounts of abuse in their new home. Three of the 'stayee' women faced similar such challenges:

"There are those girls who came back with children from the bush and they face the same problems as ones who have children... Just the same with me,

because my first child is from a different man and so my current husband cannot accept to take care of my first born because of the responsibility.”

Therefore, whilst these findings support the argument that “women and girls, especially those who were sexually abused or bore children to rebels, are... likely to face family rejection”, it is not clear that those who bore children to rebels fare exceptionally worse than those who bore children to men who soon abandoned them (UNIFEM 2004:39). The same young woman, whose eldest child remains at the home of her mother, explained:

“I got impregnated at 15 years old so from that time I lived with my mother and gave birth from my mother’s place and that man has never given any support.”

That many FAP women face social challenges which are not particularly dissimilar to those reported by the ‘stayees, is not necessarily a reflection of the success of reintegration. It was not the case for any of the interviewees that they were able to share their past experiences and receive open acceptance. Instead, the anonymity afforded to them by the patrilocal and patrilineal nature of Acholi life, carried an important advantage relative to the experiences of men, many of whom, who remain in their natal home.

This anonymity means that women often seem more able to navigate community spaces when compared to men. The stigma they experienced in the community commonly occurred when that anonymity was compromised (for example, by having a known bush husband). Nevertheless, the levels of stigma reported by women in the community were comparable across stayees and FAPs and for the majority it was limited to occasional name calling.

It is certainly the case that such anonymity would be more difficult when accompanied by a child. Women who were able to navigate this reality and keep their children with them without suffering particular abuse or neglect indicated that they had overcome the risk of rejection by a new partner by remaining in a relationship with their bush husband or by beginning a relationship with another FAP who might be more sympathetic to their circumstances. Where this is not possible, it is indeed likely that those with children from the bush may face additional challenges relative to another woman who had a child from a non-bush relationship (Owacgiu 2008; Parker et al. 2018). One FAP indicated that her two elder children who had been born in the bush had suffered many years of verbal and physical assaults by her husband and by his family. However, as illustrated by a number of the interviews with male ‘stayees’, children who are born of previous relationships with no connection to the LRA often face similar challenges when their mother enters into a new relationship. The issue of broken or unknown paternal lineage raised particular difficulties

for five of the male stayees who are, as adults, facing pressure to leave their maternal homes. Richard, whose father was a soldier who was killed in the early years of the conflict, explained:

“Late last year that’s when one of my uncles stopped me and said, “You don’t belong here, you should not continue farming here and your land is on the paternal side where your father comes from.” So that’s the stigma that I face, that I don’t belong here anymore.”

Such challenges are unlikely to decrease overtime as they have been compounded by the legacy of camp life wherein the lack of income disrupted marital norms and therefore social harmony. Many of the ‘stayee’ women spoke of men who had simply “disappeared” after impregnating them or who had denied responsibility completely. The ability of women to manage such circumstances is highly contingent on the presence of a stable and supportive family network. Indeed, in all the cases of family-related land conflict indicated by our interviewees, the absence of one or both parents is seen as a major problem.

Contested land claims

Social reintegration for male FAPs appears, at the surface level, to have been a success. Overall, their economic welfare is similar to those of ‘stayees’, in spite of their lower educational outcomes and of this sample only one was unable to access land through the customary channels. The most commonly occurring problem they face relates to ongoing stigma in the community which leads them to avoid social gatherings, particularly where people are drinking alcohol. However, in spite of this the majority participate in some form of group and are welcomed by their families. Of the ten, only one indicated severe psychological distress and had isolated himself from both his family and the community, preferring *bedo keken* (to sit alone). That nine of the interviewees are able to access customary land is particularly significant as it is believed that FAP men face unique challenges in accessing ancestral land (Parker et al. 2018:11).

However, at the time of interview four of the nine indicated that they had recently been faced with severe contestation, typically by one of their father’s brothers. These land wrangles were closely linked with their recent experiences of stigmatisation. It has been suggested by Parker et al. that the ‘unique’ land-related challenges faced by male FAPs are often in part related to ongoing hatred for the violent actions carried out during the conflict

and/or to fear of *cen* (2018:11).⁸ Yet, comparison of the experiences of FAPs with those of stayees suggests an alternative explanation. Of the six ‘stayees’ who indicated that they had been unable to access customary land, five had been pushed or were in the process of being pushed off their maternal land and had never had access to ancestral land. If, therefore, land access problems are not uniquely tied to abductee-related stigma and are in fact more closely linked to strains on the supply of fertile land which are affecting customary processes of land transfer, it is not likely that there is a residual fear or hatred of abductees or indeed of the vengeful spirits they might possess.

Whereas the stayees were accused of overstaying their welcome on land that was not rightfully theirs, claims against FAPs seem to suggest that those who return from the bush are no longer entitled to customary land as a result of their past actions. It is possible therefore that the abduction experience offers an opportunity to go against the norms of social custom. Instead, this points to a wider phenomenon commonly documented by the interviewees:

“Usually, when [FAPs] quarrel with a person who has not been abducted they begin to talk about your past, you have been killing, you have been doing bad things, so that you don’t continue. Just to shut you up, to make you silent.”

Another said:

“When we quarrel he always mentions what I have and stigmatizes me saying, “you with your bush mentality it seems you are going mental”.”

Indeed, Osborne et al. find that long-term abductees are “at least as often active members of community organisations... [but] other community members are less likely to be cooperative or generous towards them” (2018:117). It seems likely that recourse to the “newly acquired social identi[fier]” – abductee – may be seen as an easy way to dismiss, oppress and contain the reaction of the FAP (ibid.). In the context of land conflict, each of the male FAPs indicated that they were unable to fight back, otherwise they would be called a “killer” and chased off the land completely. Many had resigned themselves to their relatives encroaching on their plot. Others relied on the support of other FAPs and community leaders in calming the situation.

To understand which aspects of reintegration are uniquely challenging for FAPs it is therefore necessary to place their experiences in the context of what is happening to

⁸ *Cen* being the evil vengeful spirits of the departed (Crazzolaro 1938:199) which are now commonly, but not always, associated with abductees.

‘stayees’. For many men, being “from the bush” is a label which carries a heavy weight which leaves them vulnerable even in the long term to social exclusion. That these aspects of social identity evolve over time and circumstances is important and highlights the need to approach reintegration as a more open-ended process. The findings of this research also indicate that we may be underestimating the vulnerabilities of male returnees and overstating any particular dispensations towards political participation. Furthermore, although it is widely recognised that the implications of abduction differ greatly according to gender (Parker et al. 2018:11; Hopwood et al. 2008:7-8; Annan et al. 2011:878), male ex-combatants are more frequently discussed as risk factors for outbreaks of future violence (McMullin 2013:22).

Anonymity and community support networks

In the context of ongoing and highly contingent challenges to their status as ‘normal’ civilians, two tools have proved particularly useful for FAPs. As noted, anonymity has been widely employed by a number of FAPs, particularly women, in avoiding the challenges associated with being a former abductee. This was recognised by many women who preserved their anonymity as they integrated into their new marital homes by “remaining quiet” and “not talking too much”. Male FAPs are much less likely to be able to hide their experiences as many reintegrated into the communities they had been abducted from. Two of the male interviewees had, however, moved away from their home communities for some time to consciously engineer that anonymity.

Secondly, and perhaps more constructively, a number of both male and female FAPs highlighted the existence of informal support groups. Such groups prove particularly useful when confronted with stigmatisation by the community and extended family members. As well as offering solidarity and support in the face of stigma, such networks also provide a space for FAPs to share their experiences without fear of being judged (as indicated by a number of the interviewees). Male and female FAPs alike indicated the importance of such groups in providing a space to share their experiences and to console each other in difficulty.

One case is particularly illustrative of the importance of such networks, however informal, for FAPs. Though it should be noted that community related land wrangles were not commonly cited in the interviews. John’s subsistence level farm was recently destroyed by a number of cattle which had been left on his land by two of his neighbours. When John confronted the two men for the damage the cattle had caused to his sweet potato crop they started abusing him and accused him of being possessed by *cen*. One of the men was injured

as a result of the fight and John was detained in prison. However, shortly after being detained a number of other FAPs from his community took the issue to the Local Councillor (LC) of the area. With his support, John was released and that afternoon the two men were ordered to pay damages.

As illustrated by this case, the promotion of such groups might therefore be one positive step that could be taken to offer longer term support to abductees, particularly given the shifting nature of social identity and terms of community integration. It is also important that such groups have the support of key influencers in order to combat external challenges. In John's case, the support of the LC proved essential to holding the aggressors to account. Not all have had such positive experiences.

Perseverance and reintegration

“[For] societies that have undergone civil war... the primary task for many people is one of survival and the navigation of the everyday problems associated with food, shelter, security and caring for children” (Mac Ginty 2012:180).

Whilst improving the ability of FAPs to manage the challenges they come up against should be an important component of reintegration, it is also important that greater efforts are channelled towards ensuring post-conflict development. Many of the interviewees spoke of *kanyo* (perseverance) and their struggle to get by. Successful reintegration often means “reintegration back into the poverty and socio-political marginalisation that preceded... conflict” (McMullin 2013:5). Indeed, although the UN's 2006 Integrated Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration Standards (DDR) stress the importance of social economic reintegration in DDR processes, there is often little to reintegrate into in terms of economic opportunities (ibid. 3).

It is often programmatically convenient to not address the needs of the wider majority, who may also be facing similar long-term challenges of return. This is certainly the case in northern Uganda. This research has indicated that the long-term challenges faced by FAPs are often shared by displaced people and are intimately related to the legacies of conflict. It has argued that the challenges faced by ‘stayees’ have been consistently underestimated. Although the sample size of this research limits the generalisability of these findings, it indicates that future reintegration programmes may need to prioritise ‘community-based’ programming over targeted support.

Conclusion

This thesis has considered the long-term implications of abduction and displacement on the Acholi population of northern Uganda. It has offered an alternative approach to the existing literature which thus far has pursued a singular focus on the experiences of FAPs and has reached divergent conclusions over the success of reintegration. Instead, by comparing and contrasting the experiences of twenty FAPs with twenty of their peers who were not abducted it has complicated the narrative of reintegration and has gone some way in exploring the long-term impact of the conflict on the lives on the neglected majority.

This study has revealed that the effects of conflict and widespread displacement are more persistent and widely felt than currently acknowledged in the academic literature. It has also highlighted that many of the studies of abductees would benefit from a deeper understanding of this wider context. It has illustrated that the ‘success’ of the reintegration of FAPs is best understood when it is considered in the relative context of the challenges that are faced by those who were not abducted but were also affected by the conflict.

Many of these lessons are not unique to the Acholi or even the Ugandan context. This paper therefore contends that a deeper understanding of the long-term consequences of conflict for IDPs or ‘stayees’ is essential for improving the programmatic assumptions of DDR processes. Moreover, given the changing nature of post-conflict social identities illustrated by a number of our interviewees, it is essential that scholars apply a longer-term research agenda to the study of return and to evaluations of reintegration programming.

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Forty-two interviews were conducted from June to August 2018. The interview participants came from four districts across northern Uganda – Amuru, Gulu, Nwoya and Oyam.

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Appendix - Interview information sheet and consent form

This was also translated into Acholi.

PUBLIC AUTHORITY AND INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT INFORMED CONSENT FORM - ENGLISH

Title: THE DAY TO DAY LIVES OF FORMERLY ABDUCTED PEOPLE AND EX-COMBATANTS IN NORTHERN UGANDA (Work stream 4 Project 1)

We would like to invite you to participate in this research project. Before you decide whether you want to take part, we have provided some information below so that you are clear about why the research is being done and what your participation will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. If you cannot read or understand the form you should ask someone you trust to read or explain it to you. Please also ask us if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information.

Purpose: The primary purpose of this study is to follow up on people that spent time with the Lord's Resistance Army and to find out what their lives are like now. Unfortunately, many government officials and NGOs have a limited understanding of the difficulties and challenges people face as a result of the time they spent in the bush. We hope that that the research we do will highlight the crucial issues facing formerly abducted people and ex-combatants and that this will enable more effective interventions to be designed.

Procedures: For former LRA - Your participation in this study will involve responding to, and answering, a series of open-ended and semi-structured questions about your reflections of life during the LRA insurgency as well as the current challenges you face in your day to day life. The interview will last for approximately one hour.

If you are happy for us to record the interview, we shall do so and transcribe the interview at a later date. If you would prefer us not to tape record the interview, we will take notes during our discussion instead.

Who is sponsoring and undertaking the study? This study is being sponsored by The Economic and Social Research Council, the Arts and Humanities Research Council of the United Kingdom and the Rockefeller Foundation, with a goal of improving knowledge about the real lives of people in Uganda and other African Countries, in the hope that this will lead to better policies, better international development aid and more inclusive growth. In Uganda it is being implemented jointly by the London School of Economics and Political Science and Gulu University. The study has been approved by the Gulu University Research Ethics Committee.

Who is the researcher? The principle researcher is ----- of London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE). The co-researchers and interpreters are Jackie Atingo and Dorothy Atim.

Risks/discomforts: There is no foreseeable risk of harm or discomfort that will arise from your participation in this study. The only risk or discomfort will be the inconvenience in terms of time spent during the interview.

Benefits: You will not receive any financial or other direct benefit from participating in the study.

Confidentiality: Your identity will not be revealed to any one as we shall only use codes to identify participants. Information obtained will only be accessible by the research team. Soft copies of the data will be encrypted and protected by password and hard copy files will be kept under lock and key. Confidential information will only be accessed by the principal investigator. The only exceptions to this will be if you are asked and agree to be a key informant. In such cases you may agree to full attribution (name, position, affiliation) or semi-attribution (position, affiliation). Interview recordings / transcriptions / notes and any personal information will be kept on a password protected laptop and files will be encrypted in line with London School of Economics policy. **Alternatives:** You do not have to participate in this study if you are not willing. You will not lose any benefit if you do not participate.

Cost: You will not incur any cost as a result of participating or not participating in this study.

Feedback: If you provide us with contact details (mobile phone number and / or email address) we will contact you to share the findings of the study when these are written up. Should any information emerge during the course of the study that might have personal implications for you we will share these with you at the time.

Questions: If you have any questions related to the study, or your rights as a research participant, you can contact the supervisors of this project, Tim Allen or Melissa Parker on telephone number 0706 666423 or via email on t.allen@lse.ac.uk or Melissa.parker@lshtm.ac.uk.

If you have any issues pertaining to your rights and participation in the study, please contact the Chairperson, Gulu University Research Ethics Committee, Professor Emilio Ovuga, Tel: No., 0712- 220-125; email: Emilio.ovuga@gmail.com; or the Uganda National Council for Science and Technology, on plot 6 Kimera road, Ntinda, Kampala on Tel 0414705500.

Statement of consent

..... has described to me what is going to be done, the risks, the benefits involved and my rights as a participant in this study. I understand that my decision to participate in this study will not affect me in any way. In the use of this information, my identity will be concealed. I am aware that I may withdraw at any time. I understand that by signing this form, I do not waive any of my legal rights but merely indicate that I have been informed about the research study in which I am voluntarily agreeing to participate. A copy of this form will be provided to me.

Name Signature of participant..... Date

Name..... Signature of interviewer..... Date.....