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Authorities in Transition: Agency, Power and Social Cohesion in Relationships of Dependency: Thoughts from Nakivale Refugee Settlement and Orom Sub-County Uganda

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Background on Location and Geographic, Social and Political Context:

Nakivale:

Life in Nakivale is extraordinary. Nakivale refugee settlement lies in Southern Uganda. Consisting of close to 50 square kilometers, Nakivale is home to displaced persons from throughout East and Central Africa. Congolese, Rwandese and Somali comprise the largest contingents but many hail from Kenya, Southern Sudan, Ethiopia, Eritrea, and Burundi.

It is a rural settlement; rolling hills and extensive farmland surround Nakivale Lake, the camps primary source of water. Opposite the lake, the border with Tanzania is only a short bike ride away.

It is a busy place, a crossroads for those headed for medical care at Nakivale hospital, a well-worn path leads from the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) and base camp, to New Kigali, Old Congo, Somali Town, and Nakivale Lake. The Headquarters operated by the OPM lies central among other administrative buildings: massive World Food Programme tents, United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) headquarters and dozens of cabins belonging to less renowned NGOs.

Much of the farmland is allotted to incoming refugees to supplement their monthly rations. Often the land provided is far from their homes and on soil that in not conducive to prosperous production. Newly arriving refugees receive a monthly ration of 15kl of maize and 2kl of beans, after living in Nakivale for 6 years one is considered an Old Case, life and livelihood are supposed to be sustainable on the provided land and a family's rations are cut in half per capita.

While many of the nationalities residing in Nakivale exploit that availability of land, some groups have little experience in farming and come from histories of cattle herding or more

formal occupation. The Rwandese have been removed of much of their land after a mandate was issued that they repatriate, those who remain in Nakivale, a largely Hutu population, simply refused to return. Somalis typically do not work the land to the same capacity as other groups—they are often sponsored monetarily from outside the camp and consider their energies to be more productively spent in small business and food shops.

Nakivale is truly diverse settlement. Persons of various socioeconomic levels live together in refuge from the political turmoil and violent conflict in their respective homelands. People of different ages, nationalities, ethnicities, and religious ideologies cooperate to supplement the insufficient aid from UNHCR and WFP, and to find solutions to the myriad problems that plague their fellow displaced persons.

It is a place unique in its diversity and that serves as a fascinating manifestation of the social forces that form in reaction to poverty and without political or economic mobility.

In Nakivale certain conditions underlie the social reactions of poverty. Those who reside in Nakivale are refugees, they therefore have no political representation or participation in Uganda, access to employment is limited to the educated and the skilled, and their lives and freedoms are closely regulated by a bureaucratic structure limited in its manpower, resources, and funding. It is fitting therefore that in reaction to such circumstance, individuals seek to justify and overcome such limitations, and the processes in which they do this are remarkably telling.

Orom Sub-County

Seventy-two kilometers North-East of Kitgum Town appears a crossroads at the center of Orom's primary trading post. To the North the road leads to the border with Sudan, and South-

East is Karamoja district home of the Karamajong, a historical rival of the Acholi in Kitgum district.

The soundscape of Orom's vast savannah brings, especially in the evenings, the clamor of cattle herds, a primary source of income for many of its citizens. In every direction, the savannah encounters towering mountains that complete the horizon and mark the boundaries with surrounding territories. In the East, an especially large mountain range marks a border that, during the twenty years of conflict in Acholiland, the Lord's Resistance Army was unable to penetrate. Today, as men tell their stories, many point to the Eastern ridge as they relay the tales of hiding during the nights of village raids.

The majority of Orom's small population is Acholi, having migrated from Southern Sudan, Orom was one of the first locations in Uganda the Acholi people began to habitat. It would take years however, before the Acholi would settle permanently in Orom.

Today the majority of Orom's economic livelihood is derived from agriculture and livestock. During the height of the LRA insurgency however, Orom Center served as a camp for Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs). Until last year, WFP provided food aid to residents within the camp.

Many NGOs continue to work in Orom during this transitional period. Northern Uganda Social Action Fund (NUSAF) and National Agricultural Advisory Department (NAAD) deal with primarily agricultural issues including providing loans for cooperative farming groups. The Red Cross and CARITAS work in a variety of other sectors.

Orom is experiencing dynamic change. According to many residents the post-insurgency era will bring a prosperity Orom has never experienced. And yet the course of development remains still to be charted.

Assumptions behind Research:

1. Impoverished individuals and families seek a less impoverished condition
2. "Social arrangements are important in securing and expanding the freedom of the individual."[1]
3. Most individuals are interdependent with other individuals in society

Introduction:

The relationship between individual agency and external authority is a variable of paramount importance in a transitional, post-conflict era of society. As individuals, families, and communities endeavoring to sustain a prosperous economic condition, we require a source of authority to guide our energies into productive channels and yet we must also retain the autonomy to use the histories, wisdoms, and technologies provided by society to pursue our own respective individual interests—to develop into a society shaped around our collective aspirations. Thus a balance must be achieved between individual empowerment and adherence to external authorities to chart the course of a shifting social and economic realm. The power and will to direct change, societal development, and the process of economic empowerment occur on a multitude of levels and yet the presence of real freedom for the individual—of a personal agency is both a means and the end of social change.[2] It is only, I submit, in the presence of

[1] Amartya Sen, *Development as Freedom,* First Anchor Books Edition, August 2000, p. 4.
[2] Sen, p. 4. Amarya Sen's work entitled, *Development as Freedom,* was a major source of inspiration and 'authority' for this research topic. And while I will quote him extensively, the fundamental assertion of his argument is that individual freedom must be seen as both the ends and means of development.

widespread personal agency to affect one's own economic condition that effective external authority can compliment the requirements of a changing society.

In Nakivale refugee settlement and Orom Sub-county, the endeavor to gain traction toward a less impoverished condition has proven an undertaking both unprecedented and dependent on external support. And yet for those struggling for change in a post-conflict scenario, development is the social process of securing individual freedoms. It is a process that requires momentum and a catalyst. It is a process reliant on social interdependency.

The following is not a study of poverty. Rather the cycles and networks of oppressive systems that prevent masses of individuals from exercising their rights as humans, the individual freedoms through which development is both contingent and necessary, and the conditions of conflict and political insecurity that perpetuate impoverished populations provide the context in which this research examines a single relationship.

This is a study of the link between the individual and the social components of poverty alleviation. It is a study of individual agency toward economic betterment and the mechanisms of authority that guide individual value-judgments and that in doing so foster social cohesion between persons of similar obedience.

I submit that when individuals have the agency to instrumentally pursue economic betterment, (and subsequent political participation and other social freedoms when conditions transcend abject poverty) within a dependency structure that allows them to do so, that individuals will appeal to external authorities different from those who lack this agency; furthermore, this difference will lead to different patterns of social cohesion that become consequential and reinforcing in their perpetuation.

Briefly however, before exploring the mechanisms of authority and personal agency in Nakivale and Orom, let us begin with a biological foundation:

A Biological Perspective:

As individuals living in modernity we depend on society for our survival: food, access to water and shelter, real and imagined security, social and intellectual stimulation, and the protection of our rights and individual freedoms are only the very basic components of the livelihood we derive from being a social and interdependent species. And yet, in the immediate sense our individual survival is at odds with that of other individuals in society. We all must belong to society to maintain our subsistence but we also must be in competition with other individuals for access to necessary resources—indeed it is this scarcity that defines the human condition. Sources of external authority exist as mechanisms of social cohesion between individuals in society that attempt render individual prosperity in accordance with that of the collective.

Authority, whether in the form of a religion, a working social contract, a collective ideology, nationalism, a common identity, or any combination of common norms, unities people through their similar adherence. Individually, we appeal to authority for guidance, for a value-system on which to base our behavior. Collectively, through common adherence, it serves to dictate the parameters by which we can live together and the freedoms we all must limit in order to ensure the survival of our society (or group, or world, or family). It is what keeps us together; it is a source of social cohesion.

Indeed, by deduction, this definition proclaims that authority unities persons through their common need to participate in the societal sphere, their common insecurities, anxieties, aspirations, and visions for the future. Yet empirically, we can all relate to the notion that we feel

close with those who are similar to ourselves, when we initiate new social bonds, we look for the norms and ideologies we have in common, and once the collective consciousness of a social relationship can coalesce around these similar forces, they take on a power of their own—a power to define individuals in relationship to others, and a power to divide groups that define themselves around different or opposing ideologies. This synthesis of individual consciousness with that of the family, clan, or members of the same religious group or political persuasion—a force on which we are all dependent, is what I call 'authority.'

And yet, instrumental power, the influence over the allocation of resources, lies within authority and authority legitimizes the exercise of power. But while authority can exist in common ideologies, social norms, or in collective adherence to a social contract, power is only held in individuals and institutions. And, if we retain the legitimate ability to exercise power in our own lives, in my vocabulary, we have agency.

On Relationships of Dependency

If we apply this very abstract train of thought to just the economic realm, an interesting question arises. Does the individual ownership of agency toward economic betterment affect to which authorities we appeal? And subsequently: which mechanisms of social cohesion are necessary to instill solidarity within a group? Both necessary I submit, to instill in a transitional post-conflict society.

If so, if the relationship between individual agency and external authority is causal or even correlational, implications arise with different economic dependency structures. Indeed, if social cohesion depends on economic structure, a variety of ramifications arise for a society in the process of reconstructing the economic sphere. Might individuals in a horizontal dependency structure (group subsistence farming for example) appeal to less divisive sources of authority

than individuals in a vertical dependency scenario (an aid-dependant refugee camp for example) where groups must seek social cohesion in order to fight for the resources that otherwise would be given to others? Or might scenarios in which individuals do not have a political voice or economic freedom produce more informal but equally cohesive relationships of interdependency? In other words, might we appeal to the sources of authority that, in turn, legitimize the limited ways have to exercise our power?

I contend, when power (as defined above) is dispersed horizontally, it relies on social cohesion that leads to positive-sum (ie cooperation, mutually advantageous) community participation, when it is vertical, social cohesion stems for the common need to win resources at the expense of other groups. In this way it becomes zero-sum and divisive.

Understanding the nature of economic interdependencies and the relationship with authority may provide insight on the way society may enter a sustainable peace in a post-conflict era.

On Authority in a Globalizing Economy

As humans living in a complex and globalizing society, we lack the inherent capacity to consistently and unilaterally pursue our own economic betterment. In a world of scarce conditions where resources and the processes of their allocation are limited we must as individuals, families, and societies appeal to an external force to champion and justify our needs.

If evolutionarily individual prosperity depended on group membership and group superiority relative to other forces contending for the same access to resources, in a globalizing world, resource acquisition is progressively more estranged from our biological capacities: our natural reactions to scarcity are expired, communication and social bonds no longer accompany economic relationships, massive populations lack the freedoms to seek alternative opportunities,

and economic power is housed in the back corridors of bureaucratic institutions in which no individuals holds the sovereign right to exercise that power.

Indeed by definition economic globalization corresponds to a depersonalization of economics. And yet we cannot escape from our biological circumstance, the social relations of exchange and communal effort, the common sources of livelihood, and the interdependencies between neighbors. Today authority and the collective adherences to external value-systems add the 'morally permissible' label to action, the legitimacy to existential belief, and the catalyst to change. In whatever form, authority provides the base justification for individuals to act.

This sequence of thought is a rough outline of the themes at the foundation of my research. Now, as we will soon turn to empirical findings and the experiences and opinions of individuals in Nakivale and Orom, the conclusions we reach will be most meaningful in comparison to this evolutionary perspective.

Societies in Transition:

In Nakivale and Orom sub-county authority is shifting. And yet in neither scenario has a decidedly productive and liberating balance between individual economic agency and prescriptions of society's authority structures been achieved. But what are the forces that will bring this relationship to a fruitful equilibrium? How do the different dependency structures of Nakivale and Orom and subsequently differing social dynamics of economies influence the equation? Is the structure of dependency a particularly salient variable at all in the pursuit of a flexible and situationally capable authority?

In the endeavor to ascertain a meaningful perspective on such queries, it is important to bear in mind the vast differences between the two populations. Nakivale and Orom remain in a post-conflict stage of economic construction and individuals in both locations are seeking new

directions for their productive energies. And because of the differences in population diversity, historical longevity, rights to political participation, permanence of residence, and access to social opportunities common reactions to changing circumstances of poverty will be particularly telling. That said, and while it is impossible to control other variables, certain attention must be paid to authority, the ways it concedes to personal agency and social cohesion in a more aggregate sense to arrive at the true consequences of economic dependency.

Justification and Objectives:

Justification: Original Inspiration and a Search for a Pragmatic Application

While living and studying in Gulu, my thoughts on post-conflict society and much of the discussion I encountered both in the classroom and in social circles centered on the notion that in the pursuit of an accountable and effective participatory democracy in Uganda, a foundation of internal legitimacy must first be established. In other words, to equip Uganda's juridical sovereignty with an increasing empirical capacity, several social requirements must be present and sustainable.

On September 23, Norbert Mao, the district leader of Gulu, presented a lecture entitled, "The Challenges of State Building." "How can we live together?" Mao asked. What systems are necessary for government to be fair and effective? We arrived at five fundamental conditions for a participatory democracy to function: accountable and reliable political institutions including free and fair elections, political education for the masses, internationally recognized juridical sovereignty, widespread exposure of the population to the political realm, and a venue for public political discourse and debate.

I left the classroom feeling that while our discussion had been enlightening it was somehow insufficient. All these factors, it seemed, were interconnected and each relied on the functioning of the latter. Were there any forces that could catalyze the awaiting cascade of democratic political development? I began to think of the notion on a more individual and psychological manner, specifically the relationship between authority and personal agency.

Clearly my research questions have evolved beyond themes of political sovereignty and democratic legitimacy in Uganda. And while I hope to provide perspective on the social process of poverty alleviation and our human tendencies to struggle collectively, I strongly believe that understanding our reactions to authority and adaptation to circumstance hold a major pragmatic value even in the more quantitative and visible realms of society.

A Further Justification: The Value of a Social Perspective on Authority:

Understanding the social dynamics of authority, agency and power can contribute to resisting group schisms and add perspective to mechanisms behind inter-group conflict.

In my mind and according to my own value judgments, to understand (and potentially reduce) the use of political and systemic violence, it is imperative to appreciate the variety of factors behind dependency and solidarity structures. Also in the pursuit of governmental accountability and participatory government (if this is indeed a pursuit) where/how individuals look for legitimate authority can translate to the success of a popular political realm.

In social psychological terms, exploring if and how impoverished groups are increasingly susceptible to groupthink or are more likely to derive authority from a unilateral, absolute or sovereign source can provide insight into which social norms are most influential to those who are impoverished. A preliminary example might be if a community derives cohesion from a

collective adherence to Born-Again Christian ideology, what does that convey about the needs of the community?

Personal Goals:[3]

After living in East Africa for the past months, studying the histories of ethnic factions in Uganda, reading *The Social Origins of Violence in Uganda*, and witnessing the strong current of societal change taking place especially in Acholiland, I feel as though there exists such a complex network of problems, partial successes, and tremendous potentials that it is exceedingly difficult to capture a holistic perspective on change in contemporary life in Uganda. I decided to select a single relationship in Uganda's post-conflict society, one that I felt was both meaningful and underestimated.

My ambition in conducting this research is to bring to the table, a compelling new perspective on a timeless and potentially irresolvable problem. I am fascinated by our group behaviors and the aggregation of individual insecurities into exceedingly consequential authorities. My objective is to explore the weight of our natural tendencies in the course of change in Nakivale, Orom, Uganda, and our globalizing world.

My principle goal however, was to take this opportunity to converse, debate, and share with individuals in locations where I have no experience. To take the risks in asking hard questions, to experiment with my own capacity to synthesize new ideas with individuals who have a vastly different value-system and patterns of authority adherence than I do, and to listen. Listen to what others have to say and share; listen to environments in which I am completely foreign; and to listen to how struggles that might seem distant and unrelated are all confronted by our capacity to be social.

[3] My Identity as researcher is considered in the Methodology section.

Academic Objectives:

I seek to investigate the relationship between authority and personal agency in Nakivale and Orom, to ascertain how dependency and interdependency changes where individuals appeal for authority, and to relate these themes to a larger narrative of transitioning societies.

Literature Review:

Primary and secondary sources, written work relevant to my research on authority and economic agency in Uganda exist in two categories. First a theoretical grounding of the existing social theories on authority and social behavior are imperative to contextualize this research into patterns of previously observed social behavior. This research project does not seek to test or explore any particular social theory; rather awareness on the part of the reader of the arguments and contentions of previous thinkers might provide an illustrative vocabulary and opportunity for further work. Second, and perhaps more importantly, secondary sources address the post-conflict social circumstances of Uganda, development theory, refugee issues, and other subjects particular to Uganda and variables that calibrate authority and personal agency.

A Philosophical Framework: Social Contract Theory

In 1651 Thomas Hobbes, troubled by the seemingly endless civil war in England, published *Leviathan*. Hobbes argued in this seminal work, that unless the absolute sovereign authority of the state (preferably a monarch he contends) has complete jurisdiction over the actions of individuals, that the laws of nature and man's instinct will make it impossible for social groups to live together peacefully. Hobbes argued that originally we are all free but vulnerable beings and that in order to restrain man's instinctual reactions to scarcity, the defining

force of the universe for Hobbes, we must allot our rights to power into a single sovereign authority. Hence of the notion of a social contract was created.

Since the times of Hobbes the idea of a social contract and the role of the state has developed in many directions. One pattern however has remained; individuals must make sacrifices to give an external authority influence and power. Generally past thinkers have fallen into two schools of thought regarding how to bond individuals to authority: some require a sacrifice of agency (Hobbes is the extreme example), others however call for a sacrifice of resources. Both however are necessary for power, but does livelihood of the individual change between the two scenarios?

Considering the question Norbert Mao presented our class, "How can we live together?"[4] Rousseau arrived at the notion of a 'general will' a force at the foundation of a Rousseauian social contract. The 'general will' as Rousseau articulated, is the net remainder when individual wills of society are canceled out. For the purposes of this research the 'general will' can be viewed as the inclusion of all individuals wills in societal and collective decision making. As rational beings with the capacity to reason, all humans, Rousseau argued, must exercise their will in the collect so that society develops according to the wishes of the population. A final thinker from classical social theory provides a very different notion of the force that unities us as humans and in or decision-making.

Kant was a champion for the maintenance of individual agency. He argued, like Rousseau that man as a rational being holds the ability to exercise his reason and derive solutions from his freedom of activity. Yet Kant also professed the power of a universal authority, but,

[4] Rousseau articulated his own objectives as follows, "To find a form of association that will defend and protect the person and goods of each associate with the full common force and by means of which each, uniting with all, nevertheless obey himself and remain as free as before. This is the fundamental problem to which the social contract provides the solution." (*Social Contract* Book I, Ch. VI, p. 50)

unlike the top-down external prescriptions of Hobbes, Kant envisioned a universal norm, applicable to all rational beings to serve as an objective principle of morality. Kant called this the categorical imperative. In simple and relevant terms, Kant argued for the universalistic notion that all individuals adhere to a common source of morality and therefore behavior is judged against a value-system we all share.

As states, religions, traditional councils of elders, indeed any external body of authority seek to become an effective foundation for the governance of individuals, the nature of the relationships, sacrifices required, the extent of universality are crucial variables. To demonstrate the variety of individual-to-authority relationships even just on the societal level, is the merit of briefly discussing social contract theory for this research endeavor.[5]

A Work of Particular Inspiration

In *Development as Freedom* (1999), Amartya Sen puts forth the contention that the realization of individual freedoms is both the means and ends of development. He submits that in that only presence of "economic opportunities, political liberties, social powers, and the enabling conditions of good health, basic education, and to encouragement and cultivation of initiatives,"[6] will individuals have the capacity to innovate and direct social change. While Sen's analysis delves into the complexities of judicial ideology, alleviating poverty by removing "capability deprivations," and social choice and individual behavior, his most basic assertion is central to

[5] For the reader especially interested in the foundations of social theory behind this research, I suggest reading the following works:

1. On Collective Consciousness behind Authority and Social Cohesion: Emile Durkheim, *The Division of Labor,* 1893
2. On Morality as a Social Variable and a Critique of Religious Authority: Friedrich Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morals* (first published in 1887)
3. On Charismatic Authority and the marriage of Protestantism and the Economic Realm: Max Weber, *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*, Oxford University Press 1958
4. Finally, a brilliant and provocative work on the psychology of individual authority adherence, the retroversion of authority as consciousness and authority as a cultural and social phenomenon: Julian Jaynes, *The Origin of Consciousness and the Breakdown of the Bicameral Mind,* Princeton University Press, 1983

[6] Sen, Amartya, *Development as Freedom,* p. 5.

this research: namely that agency matters. When individuals have the power to direct the course of their lives and communities, the economic realm will be prosper.

The implications of Sen's argument are acutely pertinent to this research project. Nakivale and Orom are both locations in which poverty is rampant and yet in each community individuals experience a very different set of personal freedoms. Residents of Nakivale lack the right to political participation, bureaucratic procedures regarding their futures are not transparent and often remain undisclosed, and many groups feel insecure even within the borders of the camp. In Orom the freedoms limited are most associated with limited social services and opportunities. While Nakivale has a central hospital and primary schools, residents of Orom are sent to Nama-kora for medical treatment and many children do not attend school.

Sen's list of instrumental freedoms include the right to participate politically, "economic facilities, social opportunities, transparency guarantees [free media, open government etc], and protective security."[7] Because individuals in Nakivale and Orom have very different limited freedoms, does this change which to authorities people adhere? If persons appeal to authority to instill the social mechanisms of coexistence—cooperation, assistance etc, when they prove lacking, does not the sources of society's 'unfreedoms,' to borrow Sen's language, affect where we turn to reassert our rights to freedoms.

While this research endeavor is not an empirical experiment of Sen's hypotheses, his assertion that agency on the part on the individual is a constituent part of lasting change has been influential to the development of this topic. More importantly however, a close perusal of *Developments as Freedoms* will expose the reader to numerous implications of individual agency that I have failed to link to patterns of authority adherence in Nakivale and Orom.

[7] Sen, p. 10.

On Uganda:

The secondary sources that informed this research dealt both with refugee issues in Uganda and the history of conflict and social displacement in Acholiland.

Regarding Nakivale, I sought a background on to the relations between refugees and the OPM administration; why Uganda supports such a large refugee population when refugees are unable to contribute to their own wellbeing and Uganda already relies on foreign support and the motivations behind the actions of OPM to which refugees are ignorant. In her article entitled, "Can refugees benefit the state? Refugee resources and African State building," Karen Jacobson argues that countries receive significant and necessary aid from the international community when they house a large population of refugees. In Uganda this is most definitely the case; international money and resources provides the aid upon which individuals in Nakivale are dependent. Understanding this dependency from a highly level provides a perspective onto why refugees have no say in their dependent economic relationships.

. "Exile and Resettlement: Refugee Theory," a remarkable work by Egon F. Kunz, examines the variations of identity and experience in refugee movements. Kunz examines refugee populations as a global phenomenon and explores how such a diversity of peoples converge in an interdependent scenario. Furthermore, and relevant to the relationship between refugees and OPM in Nakivale, Kunz discusses patterns in the relationships between refugees and host populations.

Secondary sources were also vital to contextualize my research in the post-conflict era of Orom sub-county and Northern Uganda. Payam Akhavan in his article on the International Criminal Court indictment of Joseph Kony and the leaders of the LRA: "

The Lord's Resistance Army Case: Uganda's Submission of the First State Referral to the International Criminal Court," gives a short but comprehensive background on the past twenty-three years in Northern Uganda the affects of the atrocities committed by the LRA on rural populations like Orom. Akhavan's central thesis is an argument in favor of the ICC indictment but his background section discusses the Acholi identity, and how the presence of the LRA disrupted agricultural production—both factors relevant to my research.

Finally, I consulted "Forgotten Voices: A Population-Based Survey of Attitudes About Peace and Justice in Northern Uganda," a publication of the Human Rights Center at the University of California at Berkeley to investigate the local perspectives on the conflict with the LRA. This source is particularly meaningful because the study to place in Kitgum district in which Orom sub-county resides. One of the reports primary finding is that in the process of post-conflict reconciliation economic concerns are among the most required. The report concludes, "Immediate needs and concerns include peace and food."[8] While most secondary sources did not address Uganda and authority structure or economic agency simultaneously, I was able to piece together the conclusions from various sources to provide a sufficient background for this research.

Methodology

My primary method of data collection for this research project was personal interviews and small focus group discussions. And while most of my material comes from primary sources, secondary sources were used simultaneously. Intellectually, much of my inspiration has stemmed

[8] Pham, Wierda, Vinck, Stover: Forgotten Voices: A Population-Based Survey of Attitudes About Peace and Justice in Northern Uganda, p. 4.

from my readings of primary sources in social theory particularly on the topics of sovereign authority and social contract theory.

Participants in both Nakivale and Orom were selected for a multitude of reasons. In all cases however, individuals were either part of a social authority structure or had a particularly interesting self-professed pattern of adherence. Participants ranged in socioeconomic condition.[9]

Most interviews lasted between 30 and 90 minutes. I used a tape recorder upon obtaining permission from the research subject and later transcribed the relevant portions of each interview. All subjects read or were explained a 'Consent to Participate' form explaining their rights as research subjects and were subsequently asked to sign upon their agreement.

For the refugee condition I interviewed Congolese, Rwandese, Burundian, and Somali refugees living in Nakivale. Variables such as temporary social structures, different ethnic histories and nationalities made for a particularly comparison to rural Orom where farms are permanent and all participants are Ugandan nationals. All participants in Nakivale theoretically receive the same quantity of aid (15kl of maize, 2kl beans, 1/2liter of oil) each month.

Table 1.1: Brief biographical information of participants from Nakivale

Name	Nationality	App. Age	Occupation/Role in Refugee Settlement	Location of Residence	Date Interviewed
Peter	Congolese	Born in October 1973, Age 38	Public Nurse in Nakivale Hospital	New Congo	11/11/2009
Godfrey	Congolese	18	Primary School Teacher/Football Coach	New Congo	11/13/2009

[9] While informed consent was provided by all participants, names have been changed or abbreviated to ensure confidentiality

Semahoro	Congolese-Binyemalenge	26	Local Pastor for Daystar Pentecostal Church	Old Congo	11/14/2009
Mupepelo	Congolese	45, Born 1964	Chairman of New Congo	New Congo	11/14/2009
Yuusuf	Somali	24	Restaurant Owner	Somali Town	11/15/2009
Etienne	Congolese-Binyemalenge	23	N/A	New Congo	11/16/2009
Oliver	Rwandese	28	Translator for MSF	Kigali	11/16/2009
Allan	Burundian	23	Musician, Church Youth Group Leader	New Congo	11/17/2009
Benjamin	Congolese	22	Musician, Church Youth Group Leader	New Congo	11/17/2009
Jib	Congolese	37	Shop Owner on New Congo Stage	New Congo	11/14/2009

As in Nakivale, participants in Orom were selected for their particular insight into authority structures and economic agency. While every working adult has both these qualities, I attempted to seek out individuals that either played formal authority roles or could articulate the varieties of agency of individuals with difference sources of income. In particular, I spoke with a number of group farmers about the social dynamics of cooperation and a horizontal agency structure.

Table 1.2: The following individuals participated in my research in Orom Sub-county

Name	Nationality/Ethnicity	App. Age	Occupation	Location of Residence	Date Interview
Okot	Ugandan/Acholi	50	Cooperative Farmer, Catechist	Orom Center	11/23/2009

			for Orom Catholic Church		
Ochaio	Ugandan/Acholi	30	Member of local CGO. Authority of Cooperative Farming, Loan Acquisition	Orom Center	11/24/2009
Obwona	Ugandan/Acholi	18	Local Secondary Student	Orom Center	11/25/2009
Lokol Ericaner, Rwotmo Orom	Ugandan/Acholi	67	Traditional Chief of Orom, Farmer	Orom Sub-County, 7km West of Center	11/27/2009
Father William Ocora Ongom	Ugandan/Acholi	30	Catholic Priest, Nama-Kora Parish	Nama-Kora	11/28/2009
Father Josepth Opoka	Ugandan	28	Catholic Priest, Nama-Kora Parish	Nama-Kora	11/28/2009
Christopher	Ugandan/Acholi	24	Policeman, Authority on Cattle Raiding & Relations with Karamoja, Individual farmer	Orom Center	11/26/2009
Kenneth	Ugandan/Acholi	25	Local Primary School Teacher	Orom Sub-County, 5km East	11/25/2009

All subjects were male and above the age of eighteen. The decision to exclude females from formally participating in this study is justified through the following reasons:

1. The variable of authority varies highly between gender lines. Social cohesion between men and women center around different norms, ideologies, and ways of spending time
2. The cultural process of development for men and women are very different. This would be extremely difficult to control for when looking at authority
3. Looking at the differences between male and female ideology as a product of social legacies, collective stories, varying economic endeavors, different family roles etc is fascinating and vital to understand in a post-conflict era in need of reconciliation and compromise. In this study, I did not have the time to sufficiently research this and I believe that this decision recognizes the gender line as a factor that is of paramount importance, and therefore worthy of much future research
4. Cooperative subsistence farming in Orom is most often performed by men

Reflection on the role of researcher identity

It is impossible for me to even begin to separate my own identity, educational background, and social experience from my research. Many of the trends and human tendencies I hoped to explore in this research, I find manifest in my own actions and in the behaviors of those I am closest to. I entered this project open minded, ready to be proved wrong or my hypotheses unfounded, and yet I cannot escape from the personal biases embedded within every question I ask. Nor do I think with proper acknowledgement such a bias is problematic, rather it directs our interests and ability to connect the experiences of geographically distant peoples whose lives revolve around similar limitations. The most inescapable bias I hold relevant to this research corresponds directly to the thesis of this work: namely, that a balance between authority and

economic agency during periods of transition is favorable to a completely imposed authority or the endless propagation of unchecked individual agency.

In the process of data acquisition my external identity as a white male or 'Mazungu' played an incalculable part in communication with research subjects and other individuals. Nakivale and Orom both have extensive histories of humanitarian aid distribution, religious invasion and other paternalistic imports often transported on the backs of white men. In almost every conversation, I would begin by explaining to a research subject my own history, where I come from, my history as a student and my goals of doing research. In other words, the intricate notion that I am not working for an NGO, nor do I have the 'authority' or 'power' to influence the mechanisms of resource distribution. All but two interviews in Nakivale and most in Orom began with a subject listing his problems and the areas in which his family requires the most assistance. I consider this a privilege; it is a gift to share your most desperate struggles with an outsider. And yet, in all reality, this occurred because I am white, because being white in Nakivale and Orom is associated with having money and because I am there people know that I care. So why not ask? Why not assume?

And so I have taken the stories and experiences of two-dozen people who have a very different set of opportunities that I do. I have not given them money, although most often we shared a meal together. I have not changed their set of opportunities, although I did my best to honestly and realistically answer their questions about America, sponsorships, and developments initiatives. I have not brought lasting change in their lives. I have shared my story with each individual I interviewed, and in an overly intellectual and perhaps removed fashion, I have shared their story with you.

Obstacles and Challenges to Research:

The challenges I encountered during the data collection phases of research were multifaceted both in nature and duration. The logistics of scheduling and carrying out interviews was surprisingly simple but extracting meaningful information on my topic was at times a strenuous pursuit. Asking the question: do you feel that you have agency toward your own economic betterment?—is a question that many individuals who lack a formal education in academic English will have no idea how to answer. Indeed the one time I posed this question to Kenneth in Orom, he answered that CARITAS his favorite economic agency. And yet asking the question: do you have the power to make enough money to feed your family and to do so in a way you find fulfilling? –is a question that begs the answer 'no' and a subsequent list of problems. It was challenging for me, in essence, to pose questions upon which individuals might elaborate on their adherences to authority and ways in which they are agents of their own economic condition.

Logistically, the time I spent traveling consumed a large portion of the time allotted for research, time that otherwise might have been devoted to further investigation. Although, I must admit that in the back window seat of a long nighttime bus ride is an ideal venue for productive thought. In total I spent six full days devoted to travel. In Nakivale, the closest internet was in Mbarara, a two hours taxi ride away, and in Orom the nearest source of solar power was in Nama-Kora, 12km west. Furthermore Nakivale and Orom are at least a two day journey apart, 18 hours of travel by bus, taxi, and cattle lorry. Finally, I elected to return to Kampala for the final week, to draft the written manifestation of this research project at Makerere University Library—another location conducive to creative thought and concentration.

The principle challenge to this research however, was that in no way were my investigations comprehensive. As aforementioned, I submit that agency and authority are

overlooked factors of remarkable consequence in a post-conflict era. In my research I have attempted to demonstrate this linkage with a number of examples and personal experiences. Yet beyond highlighting this relationship, I have only skimmed the surface of the implications that might arise from further scrutiny. I will consider this project a success if I can impact conclusions of sufficient weight to inspire myself and perhaps others to continue explore the social relationships of poverty.

Research Findings, Analysis, and Preliminary Discussion:[10]

The findings and discussion section pertains to specific observations from Nakivale and Orom. The conclusion will then serve to provide an integrative analysis looking at patterns that do and do not apply to both experimental locations. Each chapter is divided into sub-chapters providing the principle findings, individual perspectives, and preliminary implications.

Nakivale: Experiments in Diversity

On a Vertical Dependency Structure:

Every interview I conducted in Nakivale arrived at the resounding conclusion that the humanitarian aid and food distribution from the WFP was constitutionally insufficient. Last month a group of Congolese refugees led a violent food strike against OPM workers after aid distribution was halted for three months. Four Congolese residents had died of starvation. Most families are given plots of land to produce resources that theoretically accompany food distribution and yet much of the land allotted to the latest arrivals is nearly unfertile. Additionally, a large percentage of Nakivale residents are not agriculturally trained.

[10] For a consultation and quotations from written sources, both primary and secondary, please see "Literature Review Section."

The Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) is officially in charge of all refugee issues and employs a rigid 'referral system' to address refugees seeking change in their lives. The World Food Programme (WFP) is mandated to allot 15kl of maize, 1/2liter of cooking oil and 2kl of beans to every family per capita who has lived in Nakivale for less than six years; those in the camp for longer receive half the apportioned amount. United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR), International Medical Corps (IMC), and German Development Agency (GTZ) have a large presence in the camp and work on projects under the jurisdiction of OPM to promote the livelihood of refugees.

Yet within the refugee population many opinions circulate storing the blame for the lack of assistance received with different people and institutions. Oliver, a Rwandese Lawyer seeking refugee in Nakivale, notes regarding this tendency to blame outside sources, "we as refugees do not have a political voice and [our rights are severely limited] what we need is peace and assistance. If we do not receive assistance, for what did we become refugees?"[11] But if formal assistance is inadequate, what occurs if a family is in dire need for additional resources? Is it possible to go to OPM or WFP?

In response to this question, Peter, a public nurse in Nakivale Hospital, emphatically states, "It is very impossible. It's the plan of WFP, when the food is there they start giving. You can not go and ask because when you go to ask they start punishing you…arresting you, police, chasing you badly, they can even beat you." Moreover, as Etienne, an unemployed young man, notes, the arrival of food aid occurs sporadically, sometimes toward the end of the month and at other times in the beginning.

Regarding the aid distributed from the Ugandan government, UNHCR, or NGO authorities, refugees have no influence on the frequency or quantity of resources provided. By

[11] Interview with Sebakara Oliver, 11/16/2009

design, top-down mechanisms of assistance, as Peter proclaims, require relatively few personnel, and therefore are unable to distribute aid according to individual necessity. Any yet as Oliver reiterated time and again, there is a culture of dependency in Nakivale, individuals looking to paternal bodies for a chance to rely on external support.

If we return briefly to the insights of social contract theories a remarkable implication of Nakivale's dependency structure comes to light. In Nakivale there exists a one-directional social contract: individuals receive the means of there survival from an external authority but they have to choice or obligation to adhere, be loyal to, or appreciate that body of authority, and therefore have no capacity to ensure its upkeep or proper function. Refugees rely, granted often only in part, on top-down assistance but have no ability to critique or change the inherence of their survival. Blame replaces constructive agency and individuals resort to violent expression or increased suffering.

Another meaningful implication of a one-directional social contract is that while individuals must sacrifice their agency to OPM and other governing bodies in Nakivale, refugees do not expend their own resources toward the perpetuation an NGO presence or other external economic authorities. As a result, when NGOs do offer channels of economic betterment, refugees are quick to follow opportunities because they entail no personal cost. In my observation this engenders not only a culture in which individuals spend large amounts of time, often fruitlessly, in search of external assistance programs but it also produces a mentality in search of quick-fix and unilateral solutions to economic difficulties.

On a personal note, I found that as I would wonder the camp, often in directions seldom frequented by outsiders, individuals would approach me to inquire into the circumstances of my presence. It seemed that often the men who sat idle in the store fronts were the most inquisitive,

one going as far to say, “Mazungu! Give me my money.” It was assumed I believe, that like most Caucasian visitors to Nakivale, I was a representative of an international agency offering economic opportunities to refugees. And it seemed to me that many were ready to jump at the opportunity.

If refugees indeed do not have a say in their resources acquisitions from the governing bodies of Nakivale and yet such a vacuum exists between the aid provided and the quantities necessary to sustain life, to where do people turn?

Reactions to Scarcity: Competition or Cooperation? Along which Social Lines?

I hypothesized in the preliminary stages of research that individuals under a vertical dependency structure would appeal to more rigid authorities with more exclusive group membership as a result of competition over limited aid. This hypothesis is unfounded. Instead, I witnessed an attitude of cooperation that transcended barriers of nationality, religious ideology, and common history: the popular notion that all refugees are struggling, aid is universally insufficient and only through collective measures will additional resources be procured to ensure economic wellbeing. And yet while a spirit of economic cooperation is not divided along any particular lines of social group identity, certain patterns do appear that exhibit the entanglement between authority and social cohesion.

Allan arrived in Nakivale in 2004 with his family having fled from Burundi. The family had enough funds to build a small home and in the years following, Allan was even able to save enough to build his own home. Three years later Benjamin arrived in Nakivale from Congo. It was Allan’s job as a member of the welcome committee for new refugees at the Nakivale Seventh day Adventist church to formally receive Benjamin and help him adjust to life in the camp. Today Allan shares Benjamin’s home in New Congo, they sing together in the church

choir and at home they take turns singing gospel music with a guitar donated from a visiting Australian pastor. Benjamin and Allan are also youth leaders at their church: we "do our best to occupy the minds of the youth, to teacher morality, and what is right and wrong."[12] When asked about the means that brought Benjamin and Allan together the role of the church is undeniable, but Benjamin added an additional clause as he saw me scramble to note the extraordinary power of religion to bring people together: he remarked, "You cooperative with those who you are close with and those with whom you share ideas."[13]

The case of Benjamin and Allan is not an anomaly. Individuals from different backgrounds often unite around their present condition as refugees and construct social bonds of interdependency as strong as those in families and other imported social groups. Indeed they are bonds of necessity.

Sharing different educational experiences is another manifestation of inter-group cooperation in Nakivale. Yuusuf and Godfrey have been 'best friends' (in Yuusuf's terminology) since Godfrey arrived in Nakivale in 2008. Godfrey and his brother Etienne had the opportunity, until the conflict in North Kivu province worsened, to attend secondary school in Kenya. Their father was a renowned Congolese businessman and according to Etienne, "planned well for the future of his children."[14] This meant learning English. Today Godfrey speaks fluent English, teaches at the Nakivale primary school and has shared much of his educational background with his friends and family—especially his friend Yuusuf. Godfrey is from Congo and adheres strongly to the teachings of Daystar Pentecostalism; Yuusuf is from Somalia and is a devout Muslim. Yet they find time most days between their busy prayer schedules to sit and talk.

[12] Interview with Allan and Benjamin, 11/17/2009
[13] Interview with Allan and Benjamin, 11/17/2009
[14] Interview with Etienne, 11/16/2009

Often Godfrey will come by to loan Yuusef books on English. Yuusef has begun to teach his own English classes to fellow Somalis on there way to resettlement in the United States but still looks to Godfrey for assistance with particularly complex sentence structures. Yuusuf explains, "we meet here every night, we talk, we play…sometimes we watch movies…sometimes I go for Godfrey, Etienne, we talk, we drink soda together, we pretend like we are one person. I am not thinking about is he Muslim or not. I am thinking is he a good friend? Like Godfrey, he comes to my restaurant and when I go there, they welcome me with open arms."[15] And there is an economic dimension to their relationship; Yuusef shares food from his restaurant with Godfrey and there is a general sentiment in their relationship, Godfrey explains, of resources sharing. Last August when Etienne fell particularly sick, another friend of Yuusef and Godfrey's loaned him ninety-thousand shillings to purchase the necessary medicine.

Many barriers do exist impeding the formation of horizontal economic dependency in Nakivale and some are attached to the norms that define collective identity. Oliver expresses that as a Hutu living in Nakivale, some individuals who he has never met assume he is a *genocidaire*, a perpetrator in the Tutsi genocide of 1994 and they refuse to interact with him. He ends up relying most on his fellow Rwandese although, having spent significant time with Oliver, it seems as if he is a man well loved by many. Oliver tells me, "I rely only on Rwandese. People of the same nationality help each other. There is the problem of culture. Somalis for example are Muslim, nationalities have different cultures, you know people from the same country [speak the same language] have the same problems."[16] Furthermore I submit, when people are stereotyped against it causes an appreciation of others who are stereotyped in the same fashion.[17]

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[15] Interview with Yuusuf, 11/15/2009
[16] Interview with Oliver , 11/16/2009
[17] Many stereotypes of different nationalities and ethnic groups circulate in Nakivale. The three I encountered the most often are as follows:

If economic relationships form around common norms—and norms that occur on all levels: the common refugee experience, histories of common struggles, shared language, nationality, and religion, it is authority that exists within these cohesive norms. But the crucial role of authority in Nakivale I submit, is not just to bring individuals into mutually beneficial economic relationships rather it is to retroactively legitimatize horizontal economic interdependency and to justify its perpetuation.

In Pursuit of Legitimacy: Authority as a Mechanism for Social Cohesion

Collective victimization: a similarity of struggle, common animosity against third-parties and history of limited freedoms brings individuals together; is the most salient factor that unifies people under an elective collective authority in Nakivale. This notion is the central link between economic agency and the power to influence the allocation of resources, the formation of authority and social cohesion that I have found in Nakivale.

If Yuusuf and Omar for example, are both from Somalia, each fled potential recruitment by al-Shabaab, and they are both stereotyped in the same manner in Nakivale, it makes sense that they might seek help from similar sources. Horizontally, an intuitive observer might also surmise that given compatible personalities Yuusuf and Omar might share resources given a surplus. Yet crucially, this collective victimization occurs on many levels; certain common denominators apply to all residents of Nakivale: all have refugee status, all have a limited political voice, and all receive insufficient food aid. As the scope of mutual hardships descends nationality, ethnicity,

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1. Somalis are the wealthiest and most selfish with their wealth (many Somalis are sponsored from the United States)
2. That all Rwandese Hutu's living in Nakivale are perpetrators of genocide
3. That the Benyemalenge tribe (of Tutsi origin) for Congo have been sent to Nakivale to spy on the Hutus and to report to the Kagame government in Rwanda.

and family membership typically mark the mileposts. And only fittingly do persons with related problems seek related solutions.

Legitimacy arrives in numbers. In Nakivale, as in most impoverished populations, individuals seek to legitimize their sources of economic gain, to feel proud of their accomplishments, however slight, and to best ensure a sustainability of income. I argue that when a person is proud of their economic achievements and is deserving of small doses of prestige from others, it is accompanied by an internal justification that promotes persistence. And it is an inherently social process, this allocation of prestige, which occurs when groups of collectively victimized persons appeal to parallel authorities for change.

Pastor John belongs to Daystar Pentecostal Church; he lives right across the road and spends much of his days praying with other believers. John comes from the Banyamulenge tribe and is from North Kivu, DRC. Many Banyamulenge residents of Nakivale feel persecuted by the OPM and other refugees, especially Rwandese Hutus. According to John, because of their Tutsi ethnic identity, Banyamulenge individuals are denied the right to a Chairman, and they receive fewer opportunities and more unfair treatment.

John thinks that starting a new church, one that has a membership primarily comprised of other Banyamulenge, will help his community protect its own wellbeing. Asked why starting a new church will lead to economic security, John replies, "church is a family, this church will be the church which will put people together so that the minds which are far away can by brought together. We have orphans, widows, and disabled people. We have to help people love each other. Putting them together and helping them."[18] Currently John and thirty other Banyamulenge families donate 1000 shillings a month to a communal fund through which they purchase and

[18] Interview with Pastor John, 11/14/2009

distribute medicine and foodstuffs to particularly sick Banyamulenge refugees. Solidarity John argues is only formed through people who share experiences of suffering.

And by aggregating the economic woes of several families into a single body and struggling with individual scarcity collectively, the methods of economic betterment suddenly acquire substantial legitimacy. Economic wisdom can be shared among the community, common patterns of finding resources can be determined—for the Banyamulenge it is often washing clothes and making bricks for the Somalis, which, in turn, develops into norms that define a social in-group and form an authority that than legitimizes the original economic practice and depending on its success, prescribes its perpetuation.

On Religion as an Illustrative Authority: Relating the Individual to the Collective:

I walked into Daystar Pentecostal for the first time. Godfrey stood on the dusty stage and projected his voice, normally quiet and humble, to a room of 200 children. He read Matthew 5 3-7, *The Sermon on the Mount* to his silent and attentive audience.

"Blessed are the poor in spirit,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
Blessed are they who mourn,
for they will be comforted.
Blessed are the meek,
For they will inherent the land.
Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for righteousness,
For they will be satisfied…"[19]

Nietzsche once argued that the proliferation of religious ideology in conditions of poverty is parasitic because it justifies and deems 'favorable' the condition of the weak and destitute and removes the instinctual will to attain a more prosperous life.[20] Indeed this is an opinion often taken by religious critics concerning the exportation of orthodox ideologies to impoverished

[19] Matthew 5 3-7, *The African Bible*, Paulines Publications Africa, 1999.

[20] Nietzsche, *The Genealogy of Morals,* p. 73

populations—a trend to which Nakivale applies completely. *The Sermon on the Mount*, a critic might contend, categorically removes individual agency by justifying suffering and promising, if one truly sees the goodness in his meekness, that prosperity will one day arrive. But in Daystar Pentecostal on that morning there was not the slightest atmosphere of resignation.

The next morning I arrived an hour after the service began, kids spilled out of the doorway, grappling over the last spots with a view into the church. The standing-room audience quickly parted as I approached giving me a direct path to the entrance. Upon entering the doorway over two-hundred pairs of eyes turned around to stared. I was triaged to the front to observe the ceremony first hand.

First were personal testimonies. A man stood in front of the congregation shouting in Swahili, another man stood at his side translating in Kiyarwanda, Pastor John whispered an English translation in my ear.

"I saw god today," the testimonial began, "because I found the book that I had lost."

Three more followed.

Then there was dancing, almost trance-like people shouted and shook in rapturous movement. The preacher's performance was next. Sweating like a man possessed he ran about the church shouting. He told a story of three Jewish men who pray to the gold idol instead of god and how god saved them from the fire.

Next the new members were given an opportunity to demonstrate their faith to the gathered community. As the keyboard man played, dozens of people came to dance once again. Shouting 'Hallelujah' the congregation in a joyful and impassioned display of sincerity danced until the battery for the keyboard finally ran out.

When the service ended, crowds spilled out into Old Congo as if the church had erupted in positive energy, elderly women gathered to chat, children began a chaotic game of soccer and adults scattered in pairs in all directions many talking in loud and exciting voices.

Religion illustrates the function of all authority in two ways. First, religion provides guidance to the individual; it lays out a strict set of norms to which people may look for value-judgments and justification for action. Second, as I witnessed on that Sunday afternoon in Daystar Pentecostal, religion appeals to our insecurities, our anxieties about the uncertain future, and begins to offer solutions through social solidarity.

When asked about the capacity of religion to bring those with limited freedoms and resources together, Godfrey eloquently remarked, "these people they suffer; they love god. If you suffer for a long time, you have to devote your life to God so he helps you and you come out of the problem. Maybe that is why people here [in Nakivale] love God so much."[21] While the psychological liberation social religion provides in a context of an impoverished population is significant, the economic incentives to join churches must not be underestimated.

If individuals whose economic agency is severely limited by their societal situation can pool a portion of the little resources they do have into a common authority, suddenly, in their respective ownerships of a newfound collective agency, individuals have economic power. In the case of Nakivale, Oliver notes, "People praying in the same church, become like they are from the same country. They help each other even more than people from the same country… they take so much time together, they help day after another. If you find a house of Christian destroyed there will be many Christians there to help." He continues commenting on the economic jurisdiction of the churches in Nakivale, "The church is the very first intervention

[21] Interview with Godfrey, 11/13/2009

[when someone is struggling]…people you pray with will come to help."[22] Moreover, many scholarships for education and international assistance come through churches. As Oliver concludes, people go to church for many reasons; in Nakivale it is the only pragmatic venue to obtain social assistance.

Table 2.1 General Distribution of Religious Belief in Nakivale according to Oliver

Rwandese	Congolese	Southern Sudanese	Somali	Burundian	Ethiopian
Majority: Catholic	Majority: Pentecostal	Many are Catholic	99% Muslim	Majority: Seventh-Day Adventists	Majority: Catholic
Minorities: Protestant/Anglican & Pentecostal	Minorities: Fire Spirit Church			Minorities: Pentecostal	

Concluding Remarks on Nakivale:

In Nakivale, refugees do not have a formal right to agency for their own economic betterment. Instead individuals often participate in communities centered on social norms that provide agency to the collective. Many of these communities are religious. A hierarchical 'referral system' of chairman and OPM commandants exists to deal with disputes and disruptions in the peace, most often however, disagreeing parties will go to the lowest authority adherence they share. (From father to trusted elder to pastor etc). The system of chairmen is severely flawed as Chairman Soniga-Mupepelo-Nyungi of New Congo explains because,

[22] Interview with Oliver

"People cannot have power if they have no food." Unlike pastors, chairmen do not receive monetary assistance from their constituents.

Social cohesion is derived from the authority to which collectively victimized persons appeal. And as those seeking economic betterment form symbiotic relationships around there common authorities, individuals in Nakivale gain agency through there membership in the collective.

Orom: Generations of Authority in Acholiland

Historical Dependency: The Cohesive Power of Traditional Acholi Leadership

While exploring the current authorities at play in the navigation of social change in Orom during this post-conflict era, it is impossible to overlook the extensive network of traditional authorities that governed Orom prior to the conflict with the LRA and that still hold considerable clout in the community. Father Josepth Opoka, a Catholic priest with jurisdiction in Orom, describes a linage of authority in which power descends from the chief of all Acholi, to local chiefs, councils of elders, to fathers within the household.

In times of struggle or conflict, various systems of community decision-making were typically enacted depending on the nature and severity of the situation. *Kal-Kwaro*, Father Joseph explains, is the formation of a council of highly respected elders that forms to mediate inter-clan conflict. When there is a dispute, Father Joseph says, people suspend their aggressions in presence of the body of elders.[23]

Within the clan the establishment of mutually advantageous social norms and the enforcement of such governing value-systems is given to the *Rwot Apoka*—chief of the clan. In addition to a traditional right to land distribution, the *Rwot Apoka* is given responsibility ensure the economic sustainability of the clan; indeed historically families annually contributed small

[23] Interview with Father Joseph

amounts of maize to the *Rwot Apoka's* reserve so that he might assist the most desperate. It is also the duty of the *Rwot Apoka* to correct those who do not conform to the social practices of the clan.

Traditions of Acholi authority structure are passed down through generations patralinially. Lokol Ericaner Rwotmo Orom, the current traditional chief of Orom sub-county, discusses a ceremony in which elders gather under a tree and children, in an official coming of age, each sacrifice a goat to elder's authority.[24] On a familial level *Wango,* a small outside fire pit is where a father will gather his younger dependents and pass on the cultural norms that accompany adulthood. Often lessons of social participation are passed through stories.[25]

In the agricultural sector prior to the LRA insurgency, farming was often done in groups that circulated through their constituent member's fields to share manpower and to instill social bonds through communal work. *Awak*—the Acholi tradition of group farming was normally led by *Rwot Kwera,* an agricultural group leader responsible for organizing and maintaining production.

It is a system as Kenneth, a primary school science and English teacher in Orom notes that is based on the traditional group ownership of the land and a society in which individual economic prosperity was inextricably tied to the wellbeing of the clan. But as western concepts of ownership and individualism take hold in Orom as in most parts of Acholiland, authority must also adapt.

Authority in Flux: Confrontations with a Globalizing Modernity

[24] Interview with Lokol Ericaner, Rwotmo Orom 11/27/2009

[25] For example, to convey the importance of formally proposing to a woman for marriage, exists the story of Awili and Obibi. See Appendix A for a brief rendition as relayed by Bishop Ocola II of Gulu.

As instrumental economic agency shifts from the collective decision-making employed by the clan to the individual families, establishing a cohesive authority is no longer dependent, to the same extent, on the success of the clan. As Kenneth brilliantly conveys, the viability of storing power in elders and councils of older clan members is rooted in the inheritance of similar social circumstances. If an elder has married, started a family and worked in the fields in the past years, it is only natural that he pass on his advices to the next generation in pursuit of a similar life.[26]

In the past twenty years Orom has transformed from a series of small agricultural villages to a central IDP camp and most recently to a developing trading center. The continuity of history has been interrupted by the insurgency leaving large disparities in the social and economic experiences of different generations. And while Kenneth strongly maintains that the elders still have an immense influence in the daily preceding of economic life, Lokol Ericaner describes his position as the Chief of Orom as merely an authority on culture and its preservation. He humbly asserts through translation, "today I am a farmer and the chief of Orom sub-county, my role is purely concerned with cultural matters."[27] And yet by the end of our conversation, it was clear that others did approach him for advice especially on marriage and clan relations with the local government.

During the insurgency when most citizens of Orom resided in IDP camps and received rations from WFP and other NGOs, the popularity of Christianity grew with the populations increasing dependency. Kenneth tells me, "Religions tell people what to be done during the war. People started to join, even the elders who are in charge of preserving traditional said, 'let us join

[26] Interview with Kenneth, 11/25/2009
[27] Interview with Lokol Ericaner, 11/27/2009

for inspiration.'"[28] And even today Lokol Ericaner and many other older individuals retain their strict religious adherence.

When Lokol Ericaner speaks of his membership in the Church of Uganda and his role as the chief, he contends that the two are perfectly compatible. "In the book of Moses," he begins slowly allowing time for translation, "When your cow kills another man's cow, you must give that man a cow. It is the same in Acholi tradition." A system of retributive justice is another parallel Lokol Ericaner makes between Acholi tradition and the Bible: "the sixth commandment of the Bible says that 'thou shall not kill,' others declare it morally impermissible to sleep with another man's wife. These are all common with the Acholi."[29] In fact they are common with most mechanisms of authority—doctrines that sustain social stability.

Currently, in Orom's agriculture based economic realm, new authorities are appearing to compliment existing structures in the endeavor to render economically sustainable a population that has been dependent on aid for the past two decades.

Elders and NGOs: Varieties in Paternalism and Cooperation

Cooperative group farming has existed in Orom since the Acholi first arrived. And while many NGOs, namely National Agricultural Advisory Department and Northern Uganda Social Action Fund have prescribed group farming as a contemporary post-conflict era solution to resource scarcity, an exploration of the respective incentive structures of past and present models illustrates vast differences in nature of social ties.

Okot is the catechist in Orom's Catholic church. He has lived in Orom for the past forty years and today he is exceedingly enthusiastic about his new cooperative farming group: He explains, "People like farming in groups, if someone is lazy, they can be removed. Groups form

[28] Interview with Kenneth
[29] Interview with Lokol Ericaner

their own rules, have meetings each weeks, you can get a loan when your in a group, or start up money, you can find help only when you are in a group."[30] It is true, as Kenneth would later explain that the only way to continue to receive NGO economic assistance in Orom after the IDP camp was dissolved is to appeal for help as a group. Francis and his neighbors named their farming group, *Te Kwaro*, Acholi for "Even if I am in a bad condition, I can do things to make my life better."[31]

Ochaio, the director for a local youth empowerment CGO based in Orom, explained that the idea behind contemporary collective farming is twofold. First with the vast surpluses of land in Orom, it is more productive to farm in groups replicating an Acholi tradition called *Aleya*—a rotation system of farming. Secondly, agency in a cooperative scenario is dispersed horizontally; farming groups are required to hold weekly meetings and to make decisions collectively. Groups deliberate over which norms and regulations in which they will store authority and then each individual is responsible for upholding the integrity of the group. A two-directional social contract is formed, in other words, between each landowner and the cooperative body.

Furthermore, unlike in Nakivale, there is the conviction in Orom that the harder one works, the more economic reward he can receive. And when work and reward are directly proportional, individual agency—the agency to work harder, is a key component. NGOs that previously provided food aid are attempting, as Ochaio suggests, to disperse agency back into the community.[32]

Modern cooperative farming is not universally considered beneficial by citizens of Orom; many who disagree with the practice argue that it functions through an unsustainable incentive structure. "People work harder for themselves," Lokol Ericaner proclaims, "people just join to

[30] Interview with Francis Okot, 11/23/2009
[31] Interview with Francis Okot
[32] Interview with Ceasar

receive a loan, then the divide it between the members."[33] Whereas in the pre-conflict society an individual had to work for the community to receive resources, today individuals have to convince the community to work for them. What has changed, as Kenneth remarked earlier, is the individualism that accompanies land ownership.

Relationships in Contemporary Authority: Priests, Politicians, and Traditional Leaders

Unlike in Nakivale where the only elective external authorities exist in the religious sphere, residents of Orom have access to multiple 'referral systems' to exercise their concerns and aspirations. This allows for individuals to appeal to different sources of authority depending on the nature of the situation. With political rights, citizens can go to the local government when in need of certain social services, they can go to religious leaders when moral guidance is required, and they can go to local elders to resolve disputes.

In Nakivale however, individuals are more limited in which 'referral system' they will use to address their concerns. The religious sphere is the only authority that has both the economic means and the legitimacy to act effectively. Perhaps this is partially the reason individuals in Nakivale adhere to orthodox religion more often.

On a societal level in Orom, this multifaceted authority system requires those with power to communicate. The issue of land is a prime example of how authorities, ideally, might share jurisdiction in Orom. While the *Rwot Apoka* traditionally had the final say over land disputes, the creation of the District Land Boards have compromised the sovereignty of the chief's decision-making. Today however, as Father Joseph Ocora Ongom tells me, authority is distributed. If the *Rwot Apoka* cannot solve a land dispute in the traditional manner then he may refer the case to

[33] Interview with Lokol Ericaner

Uganda's judicial system, if disputing parties want to resolve a conflict traditionally, the District Land Board will employ the mediation of Acholi elders.

This willingness to share authority is imperative in transitioning societies. Why should individuals not have the right seek authority along the channels they find most productive? Will that not ensure that the authorities that retain power function properly?

Implications and Concluding Remarks on Orom:

When asked what realm of society is changing the most in the post-conflict era of Orom, Kenneth answered education. "People are recognizing the importance of secondary education. Now there are three students from our village in the Nama-Kora secondary school. I used to be the only one." Some citizens are moving away and going to Kitgum for commercial opportunities. When they return however, everyone goes to work in the fields together. Kenneth believes, "Communal work brings people together, I have a big garden people come and help, the following day I give people the food we picked. Also it is good because people communicate in the fields, share experiences, family updates, it happens in the fields, sharing wisdoms, child's rights, health info on HIV/AIDS any developments in life." It is something that families have in common. In a time when opportunities are widening and experiences are changing, the act of communal work remains a unifying practice.

The growing value of education in Orom encourages an awareness of the authority structures individuals tacitly adhere to. There is a movement by civil society organizations to sensitize the population of Orom to their role in the overall development endeavors of Uganda as a whole.[34] Last year, LINKAGES, an American NGO, came to Orom to show citizens a copy of the sub-county plan and the proposal for how development resources will be allocated. Kenneth

[34] Interview with Kenneth

remarks, "People are regaining the power to control their on lives when they understand how resources are allocated. This is what NGOs are doing as they prepare to exit for good."

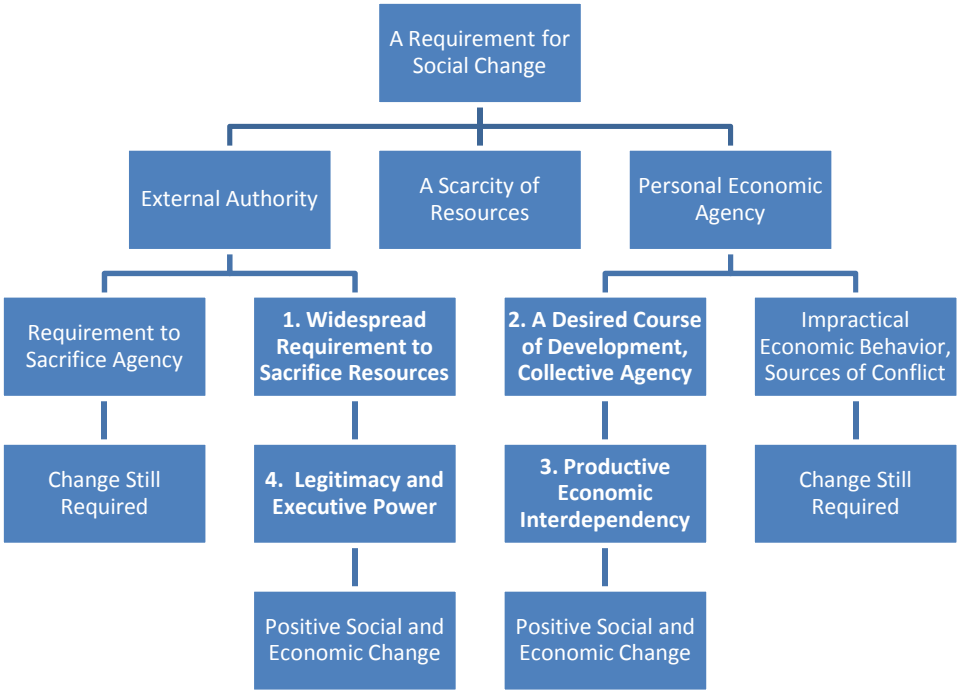
While their action is imperfect, NGOs that support cooperative farming, like Acholi leaders centuries before, recognize the cohesive power of a horizontally dispersed agency. It will be interesting to see after NGOs do depart and the fiscal advantages of group-farming are no longer, if individuals elect to remain part of a larger economic collective, how the influence of the traditional leaders will continue to evolve, and to where Orom turns to for the social stability of authority.

Conclusion and Further Discussion: An Integrative Analysis

Nakivale and Orom sub-county pose very different conditions to the process of poverty transcendence and social change; but while the authorities, limitations, and mechanism of change are different there are telling similarities between both scenarios.

The following is a diagram of the relationship between authority and personal agency that I have found, in Nakivale and Orom, to be necessary for change. I have enumerated and bolded the steps in which the two locations differ, and below I have described how the methods of change necessarily diverge:

Figure 1: Authority and Agency in the Processes of Social Change and Economic Development



1: If we look at the effective mechanisms of authority in Nakivale and Orom that give room to personal agency, they typically require a sacrifice in resources rather than a sacrifice in agency. In Nakivale, churches require that members participate monetarily and are much more effective than the hierarchical 'referral system' because they have power in resources. The other authorities in Nakivale that produce economic change are 'community enrichment programs' initiated by NGOs but that require refugees to invest their time and energies.[35] Even Pastor John Banyamulenge community help project requires a monthly monetary donation. In agricultural sector of Orom, economic authority lies in the group regulations that each participant agrees to. Ideally, and granted the faulty incentive structure critique holds significant weight, group members invest their time and manpower on the farms of other members to receive assistance themselves. Historically, community members would donate resources to ensure the survival of

[35] GTZ for example runs a program in which they donate 20 goats to a group of women refugees. The members of the group are then supposed to care for the goats unlike they reproduce at which point the group has the opportunity to sell the baby goats.

the most economically disabled. This pattern of reciprocity functions best, in both Nakivale and Orom, when resources and not agency are the currency of exchange—indeed it enables a two-directional social contract.

2: In Nakivale, because of the diversity of the population and the theoretical temporary nature of the living arrangements, no single direction of development is universally beneficial. Yet even on small social levels, individuals arrange themselves often according to collective victimization to aggregate their wisdoms, resources, and energies to overcome common unfreedoms. By exercising agency collectively, individuals can pursue channels of betterment that address their specific limitations. This is the elementary notion that to achieve a given cause, power exists in numbers.

In Orom, decision-making takes place in groups. Traditionally, elders would to gather to deliberate over the direction of society and today in agricultural groups, weekly meetings are held to discuss crop rotations and other matters of common concern. While no body, except perhaps the ruling government, has the sovereign power over all social change, many mechanisms are in place so that, ideally, individuals have a say in the course of economic development.

3. In Nakivale, productive economic interdependency occurs horizontally. To supplement insufficient rations many refugees find employment with Somali refugees washing clothes, building homes, and making bricks. Many refugees belong to community groups—often with a religious foundation, that assists the desperately needy. A prime example of this is Pastor John's network of Banyamulenge refugees. Yet because individuals have such little economic agency in Nakivale, interdependency is also limited. It is necessary however, for what little social and economic change is attainable.

Economic interdependency is Orom is extensive. As economic wellbeing shifts from a collective to an individual endeavor the ways in which persons are inter-reliant are also changing. Cooperative farming groups are clearly comprised of interdependent individuals and yet interdependency is not confined to the agricultural sector.

4: An essential role of authority whether a religion, a cooperative group, a government or a common ideology is to legitimize sources of economic prosperity and to pursue their perpetration. In Nakivale, where there is a severe lack of individual economic agency there is also little economic legitimacy. What little does exist occurs mainly through churches and NGOs. In Orom NGOs and an active political sphere work to legitimize the imposed structure of cooperative farming but true legitimacy is housed in the ability of groups to work for their collective benefit and to exercise effectively their aggregated agency.

Hypotheses Revisited: In Pursuit of Definitive Conclusions

When I began my research, I made the unfounded assumption that for economic society to develop productively in Nakivale and Orom, effected individuals must have a say in the course of its development. I argued that the authority adherences of individuals would depend on the sources of their unfreedoms and the structure of their dependencies. Finally, I sought to investigate whether a balance could be achieved between external authority and individual agency that could promote a sustainable and productive economic future and how this pursuit would differ in Nakivale and Orom respectively. Above all however, I wanted to find out what residents of Nakivale and Orom thought about authority and their own role in the course of their society and economic livelihood.

After conducting this research, I am left with the distinct feeling that significantly more time is necessary to produce meaningful and informative conclusions. That said I can make a start.

In Nakivale and Orom, individuals become interdependent in the face of a failure to procure one's own economic wellbeing. In familiar language, the structure of dependency determines to where individuals go to for authority. Authority, especially if circumstances require a more universal authority, like religion in Nakivale, serves as a venue for persons of similar circumstances to foster camaraderie and on the aggregate scale to engender social cohesion.

Stereotyping and collective victimization channels individuals into similar authority adherence and creates group solidarity more than any other factor in Nakivale.

Legitimacy in the economic realm is derived from mass participation. Sharing wisdom, working communally, and receiving social validation are non-resource based interdependencies that promote the perpetuation of a collective agency economy.

When fewer 'referral systems' exist for persons to pursue their economic and social aspirations, individuals adhere to rigid authority more strictly. This is often accompanied by the notion that authority adherence will be a unilateral or quick-fix solution to economic problems.

And finally, in the transitional phase of a post-conflict society, there is a tremendous potential for authorities to interact without compromising effectiveness. If authorities on different realms communicate, a 'multi-authority' system does not come at the cost of group-solidarity, rather it might inspire more to join.

Towards a Social Theory

I am left with a shear inability to separate scale. In my mind, the forces of authority that foster solidarity between individuals define our extraordinary capacities as humans. The forces that bring Banyamulenge together in Nakivale by its most abstract definition are the forces that bring farmers together in Orom. But the norms that define us and our relationships become the central foundation for our actions. In the presence of resource scarcity, we require social norms because we require others; and yet these same patterns of value-definition produce war, social isolation, and an absolutely absurd polarization of material wealth. Perhaps this inability to separate scale comes at the expense of merit of this research, but how individuals join together in a similar pursuit is a variable that in my mind cannot be over estimated.

As our problems globalize along with our markets, how can we globalize our solidarity? Is it at all possible? I have not the slightest idea. But if it is possible, I submit that as individuals we require two conditions. First, a guiding authority to which we invest. We invest our time, our energies, and our resources. And second, that we have an instrumental voice in the actions of this common authority and the ability to witness and understand its actions regardless if we agree with them.

We define ourselves in relation to others because historically we needed to cooperate and compete to survive. This is still true. But what if we were to define ourselves by our common aspirations? Is this not just another way of envisioning the same necessity? Is it not a common norm that we all want to live on a sustainable planet? What if we left such a notion define us?

Let us return to the scope of this research without losing sight of its global relevance: transitioning societies like Nakivale and Orom are no longer the anomaly; continuity between generations of local experience is decreasing while continuity in the crises we all share as humans has never been higher.

Recommendations:

For Policy and Social Change

I maintain that a balance between personal agency and external authority must be achieved for productive development to occur. As we continue to globalize and human solidarity coalesces around the issues we care most dearly about, it is important to remember how malleable our authority allegiances are. If individuals are given influence their investment transcends biological necessity and in the form of collective agency, people start to work for causes beyond their own survival.

This conclusion holds weight in most realms of social life but particularly, I contend in politics. While the thesis of this work did not relate to arguments for or against representative democracy, the implications cannot be overlooked. If individuals feel they are more productive when they have a say in the course of their society and they riot when they do not—why not take them seriously? Protecting individual agency then becomes the responsibility of an authority—an authority that by the nature of its responsibility must be housed in an institution.

A shift in our collective consciousness is imperative. I believe that our tendencies to define ourselves by norms that are applicable to few others will be detrimental as the issues facing humanity increase in scale. To face our common problems we need a shift in the balance between agency and authority; and while this will entail a different calibration for every individual, it is necessary to ascertain the commonalities we all share and to find a global spirit of camaraderie to continue as a species.

My Own Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research:

Future research on topics related to this research could take many directions. One of the many limitations I encountered in this project was that while talking and sharing experiences provided me with an interesting perspective on authority and agency, I have no way to quantify my results. I admire the work of Human Rights Focus at the University of California at Berkeley for undertaking a quantitative approach to the local perspectives of the conflict in Northern Uganda—a topic to which I would take a qualitative approach. A quantitative approach to this research topic would solidify the categories of research findings. As it stands, while I consider my results meaningful, they come from my own synthesis of different experiences. In short, this research is in need of standardization.

I only managed to just breach the implications of social psychology in this report and I think significant further research could be conducted on groupthink at different levels of constituent agency. In-group and out-group biases, the psychology of social religion, and the factors behind the formation of social norms are other fruitful directions the psychological implications of this research could take.

In economics the potential is also substantial. Studies of altruism in different socioeconomic levels might shed light on why the social relationships in conditions of poverty are so exceptional and if they vary according to the structure of dependency. Also a behavioral economics approach might lead to interesting conclusions about group versus individual economic decision-making.

A more far-fetched but equally fascinating idea for further research entails a neuroscience approach. The neural and cognitive processes by which external authority is introverted into our consciousness—a location from which we can infer the prescriptions of authority when it is absent.

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