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**The Rationale of Land Tension between Refugee
Host Community**

**A case of South Sudanese refugees in Palabek Settlement Camp,
Lamwo District in Northern Uganda**

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Disclaimer:

This document represents part of the author's study programme while at the International Institute of Social Studies. The views stated therein are those of the author and not necessarily those of the Institute.

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List of Acronyms

CBOs	Community Based Organizations
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
EHAP	Emergency Humanitarian Action Plan
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HSMF	Holy Spirit Movement Front
IDP	Internally Displaced Persons Camp
LRA	Lord's Resistance Movement
LWF	Lutheran World Federation
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
NFIs	Non-Food Items
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NURP	Northern Uganda Reconstruction Programme
NUSAF	Northern Uganda Social Action Fund
OHCHR	Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
OPM	Office of the Prime Minister
ReHoPE	Refugee and Host Population Empowerment
UBOS	Uganda Bureau of Statistics
UN	United Nations
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
URN	Uganda Radio Network
VSLA	Voluntary Saving and Loan Association
WFP	World Food Programme

Dedication

The paper is dedicated to anyone who has experienced displacement either due to natural hazards, political instability or had to leave the comfort of their homes to start life in a totally new environment.

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Abstract

Land is considered a central asset and a major source of livelihood among the rural community. As the population increases, there is too much pressure exerted on land and other natural resources. Also, the form of land tenure sometimes can generate tension among the inhabitant. With over 41, 000 people seeking refuge as refugees at Palabek settlement camp in Lamwo district, Northern Uganda as a result of civil war in South Sudan, disputes are bound to happen which is understandable in instances where there is a huge influx of new people. The situation usually worsens as most refugees opt for community hosting compared to living in the camps. This implies that they would need land for settlement, farming, firewood and other sources of livelihood. Tension usually creep in as both refugees and the host begin to struggle for the limited resources straining their relationship and affecting their survival strategies. This paper focuses on how the unclear government refugee land policy has brought disgruntlement among land owners which is steadily escalating into a bigger dispute between refugees and the members of the local community in Palabek settlement camp, straining the relationship between the two and other impact arising as a result of the integration.

Relevance to development studies

Currently there is an estimated 70.8million people forced to leave their original homes to seek refuge world over, sub-Saharan Africa hosting over 18 million refugees and Uganda hosting over 1.3 million refugees and considered the leading country hosting the highest number of refugees in Africa because of its progressive policy. Such huge influx considered a disaster is intrinsically linked to development. While humanitarian assistance can be a major boost to the development of the host economy, tension and violence that arose from the influx can be so detrimental to individuals as it affects their livelihood and hinders them from peaceful coexistence. The study is just a small highlight of how loopholes in Uganda's refugee land policy is becoming a night mare for land owners in Palabek settlement camp who gave their land to government to host the refugees and now the tension is being speculated to escalate into a full-blown conflict if nothing is done to resolve the disgruntlement. This negatively affects growth and development as any government undertaking is received with some form of biasness and not fully embraced.

Key words

Land, Tension, livelihood, integration, refugees & host community

Chapter 1: Introduction

The thesis put focus on land tension arising from the government refugee land policy as a major issue straining the relationship between refugee and host community. This came as a result of the local integration, a case of Palabek settlement camp in Lamwo district, Northern Uganda that is currently hosting over 41,000 refugees mainly from South Sudan. Land in rural part of Northern Uganda is mainly owned under customary system of tenure and is considered the central asset since majority of the population derive their livelihood from land related activities. The research tends to unveil the reality on the ground regarding the 2006 refugee policy and its 2010 regulations especially on access to land by refugees and the concern of the host community. Chapter one of the research focuses on the back ground of the topic looking at the problem statement, land tenure system, research question and objective of the study, background of the study area and the status of refugees in general.

1.1 Problem statement

“Land is not a mere commodity, but an essential element for the realization of many human rights. For many people, land is a source of livelihood, and is central to economic rights, and is also often linked to peoples’ identities, and so is tied to social and cultural rights.” UN OHCHR.

Land is the key asset among Uganda’s rural population considering that over 80% of the population depend on farming as a major determinant of livelihood and wellbeing making agriculture the back bone of the economy (Rugadya, 2009). Even before the South Sudanese refugees arrived in Uganda, a 2008 house hold survey conducted for ministry of justice in 20 districts rank land dispute as the biggest cause of conflict and the influencer of other disputes like assault, domestic violence and murder among others (Rugadya et al., 2009).

The burden of hosting refugees has often been felt by the poor communities whose livelihoods are derived from the available natural resources like land and forest among others. However, the influx of refugees most time has a negative impact on such resources due to much pressure exerted on them (Chambers, 1986). The relationship between host community and refugees in most cases is seen in their social ties and often positive but it can also turn sour in instances where resources are limited or strained and increases the cost for the host (Rohwerder 2013:2). Besides there is always a likelihood of tension arising when outsiders are admitted into the traditional social structure of a community while some government perceive refugees as potential security threat (Loescher G.,1996). Meanwhile, it has also been found that the host community usually benefit economically from the refugees through trade and increase in sale (Rohwerder, 2013:7).

The arrival of South Sudanese refugees in Uganda has even fueled more land tension according to the research findings despites the government policy on land allocation to refugees. Customary land owners in Lamwo were asked by the government to give part of their land for allocation to refugees with promise of being given some form of compensation. However, after waiting in vain for what they termed ‘empty promises’ by the government and without a clear consent of how long the refugee would occupy the land, the land owners have started disgruntling and being negative towards refugees occupying their land which is fueling tension and affecting the livelihood of both refugees and the members of the host

community. Part XI of the 2010 refugee regulations clearly states access to land use by refugees as indicated;

- (1) *“A refugee who is residing in a designated refugee settlement or a refugee area shall have free access to use land for the purposes of cultivation or pasturing, except that they shall have no right to sell, lease or otherwise alienate the land that has been allocated to them strictly for their individual or family utilization”.*
- (2) *“A refugee shall not acquire or hold freehold interest in land in Uganda”.*
- (3) *“A refugee who resides outside a designated refugee camp as a tenant may legally acquire or dispose of his or her occupancy or leasehold interests in land, as the law permits resident aliens generally to do” (Refugee Regulations 2010).*

Also, a household survey conducted in 2007 by world bank in 6 districts in the north indicates that there was 12.6% increase in land dispute at the time when the people of the North were displaced due to atrocities committed by LRA to 15.5% during the displacement. However, the figure went up to 16.4% when people started returning with expectation of a serious increase in the percentage as the return hit the peak (Rugadya, 2009). The rise in land dispute was mainly attributed to destruction of land boundaries, rampant sale of land due to its high demand for various investment and creation of new districts and administrative units.

Much as the focus of the study will be on land as the major contributing factor of tension between refugee- host community relations, other factors also need not to be left out;

Job/ employment conflicts between refugees and members of host community since the refugee policy allows them to seek for job opportunities just like the local people. The locals have always accused government of siding with refugees at their expense. Some of them have resorted to disguising as refugees to get benefits like food ratios distributed while others have taken it upon themselves to express their dissatisfaction (Daily monitor, April 26,2017).

Limited access to education due to the few schools, inadequate facilities like classrooms and furniture, limited human resource, destruction of natural resources like trees due to rampant charcoal burning and fire wood which has become the main source of fuel for cooking and livelihood , limited access to health services due to drug stock out, limited human resources for health , poor referral systems for patients including standby ambulances for emergency referrals (UNHCR, 2018). Adolescent 15-24 years account for 33% of the refugee population in Uganda whereas 57% of the school age going children are out of school (UNHCR, 2018). Several factors are responsible for this trend ranging from poverty, child labor, early marriage and few schools with limited facilities to accommodate the large number of learners.

The refugee regulations 2010 part XI of the Uganda Refugee Act 2006 clearly states how refugees are to be integrated in the host community after their sensitization to enhance peaceful co-existence (Uganda refugee regulations 2010:18). Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) consults with the local community to give part of their land to be allocated to refugee and they are promised 30% of all services given to refugees which is documented though it lacks some element like duration of occupancy of the land and others. Although the refugee policy and regulations encourage peaceful coexistence, there is often tension in the relationship especially in instances where refugees are allegedly given priority by both the government and humanitarian agencies. The host communities already had challenges arising from the historical context in the post conflict area and the refugee situation only exacerbated the magnitude of the challenges.

1.2 Contextual background

Uganda's economy is based on agriculture contributing 43%, industry 18% and services 39% of the national Gross Domestic Product (GDP). This therefore means that land is central and a major asset and source of livelihood among most of the country's rural population most especially those living in post conflict affected regions (Mabikke, 2014:1). The country experiences dry and wet season which in some cases result to drought or flooding in some parts of the country.

In the 1980's, Northern Uganda had a devastating experience battling the insecurity caused by the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) and cattle rustling majorly by armed Karimojong warriors and the Turkana. The insecurity made a great section of the Northern people to abandon their farm land as they seek refuge in Internally Displaced Persons Camps (IDPS) which were mainly in big towns and trading centres. However, after a rigorous peace talks between the Government of Uganda and the LRA to end the over 23-year conflict, the people started returning to their original homes to rebuild their lives (Mabikke, 2011).

Land being the central source of livelihood and the only mean of getting out of poverty by the local population, has been a major centre of tension as people tend to act violently in attempting to protect their land in case of any incitement. A case in point is an incident that happened on the 11th/August 2017 when the residence of Amuru held a demonstration blocking the government team who had gone to carry a land survey for a multi-billion shillings sugar plant project. Scores of elderly women undressed exposing their naked bodies and rolling before the government team in an awkward situation where local politicians were accused of inciting the residents (New vision 11th/08/2017). Residents and their local leaders have always accused government of wanting to grab their land and give to foreign investors without any clear for of compensation. This has made them to guard their only asset and source of livelihood zealously to the point of willing to die in protecting it. The above-mentioned example is just one incident of the numerous relating to land dispute and it clearly shows how vital land is considered in the country and region at large.

In December 2013, South Sudan, the world's youngest nation was plunged into civil war when president Kiir accused his vice president Riek Machar of attempted coup against his government. This conflict culminated into a largely ethnic war that led to the displacement of thousands of south Sudanese who crossed to Uganda to seek refuge.

However, Northern Uganda which is still recovering from the over two decades of war orchestrated by the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) under the leadership of Joseph Kony has become the host destination of thousands of refugees living both in the designated settlement camps and host community. The conflict that started in 1980s up to late 2000 took many forms with some people terming it civil conflict, civil war, Northern problem and liberation war among others (Westbrook, 2000). About 1.8million people of Northern Uganda were displaced by the insurgency (Corbin, 2018:919).

The northern Uganda conflict had devastating effects on the livelihood and services like health, education, infrastructure and security arising from the displacement of over 1.8 million people into internally displaced persons camp and return to normalcy only materialized around 2008 following series of peace talks between government and the rebel leaders. The arrival of refugees is therefore viewed as an added burden to the already volatile situation especially in the wake of numerous land disputes. Northern Uganda region is currently hosting the largest population of refugees mainly from South Sudan in various camps like Bidibidi with the highest number of 224736, Adjumani 203556, Palorinya 119318, Rhino camp 102504, Invempi 57452 and Palabek 40900 (Office of the Prime Minister, 2019). The region shares a

close border with South Sudan which make it easier for people to take refuge due to its proximity.

Meanwhile, Uganda is currently hosting close to two million refugees with the highest number from South Sudan which constitute 68%, others are from Democratic Republic of Congo, Somalia, Kenya and Rwanda (UNHCR, 2019) these are spread over fifteen refugee settlement camps and reception centres spread across different regions in the country as shown below;

Table 1: Population summary by refugee status/settlement as of 31-March 2019

Settlement	Asylum seeker	Refugee	Total
Adjumani	115	203556	203671
Bidibidi	14	224736	224750
Imvepi	11	57452	57452
Kampala	19461	41938	62399
Kiryandongo	54	56842	56896
Kyaka II	3291	87219	90510
Kyangwali	11941	91852	93046
Lobule	10	5209	5219
Nakivale	4514	102761	107275
Oruchinga	86	7261	7347
Palabek	268	40900	41168
Palorinya	15	119318	119333
Reception centres	188	1766	1954
Rhino camp	73	102504	102577
Rwamwanja	1142	66162	67304
Total	30436	1209476	1239912

Source: Government of Uganda office of the Prime Minister (2019)pp.1

1.3 Land tenure and laws in Uganda

Land tenure in Uganda has undergone different stages of transition right from the nineteenth century during the British colonial era to date. However, the most outstanding land reforms came about as a result of the 1995 constitution together with its 1998 Land Act which clearly stipulates that land in Uganda belongs to the citizens of Uganda. Land is bestowed to the citizens through four land tenure systems of customary, mailo, freehold and leasehold system (Mwebaza, 2014). The constitution further establishes the Uganda Land Commission with a function “to hold and manage any land in Uganda vested in or acquired by the Government of Uganda in accordance with the constitution and any other function as may be prescribed by parliament” (Mwebaza, 2014:4). The constitution further states that a land board shall be instituted in every district with a function of;

1. To hold and allocate land in the district which is not owned by any person or authority.
2. To facilitate the registration and transfer of interests in land; and
3. To deal with all other matters connected with land in the district in accordance with laws made by parliament.

“Articles 237 and 242 enable the state to take charge of the land and enforce its planning and development although it might give leeway for mismanagement in corrupt and poorly governed state” (Mwebaza, 2014:5). Much as people have started to process land titles for their land, there are serious issues especially attempt to evict those living on land that was given to them as gift or normal kind gestures by ancestors who have long gone without any clear agreement on how long one should stay on the land. “In 2010, a new amendment came into existence allowing tenants who have lived unchallenged on an existing piece of registered land for over 12 years or more or who are settled on the land by government cannot be evicted for any reason unless they failed to pay the ground rent” (Mwebaza, 2014:5). Policy direction and land related concerns in Uganda falls under the ministry of Lands, Housing and Urban Development which is led by both cabinet and state ministers with different commissions and land boards under their docket. Customary is kind of a communal form of land ownership where there is no registered owner or land title for anybody to claim full ownership of the land. Most lands under customary ownership are either headed by individual head of household or a chosen clan head. Freehold is a form of tenure where one is registered as the bonafide owner and has full right over a piece of land. Leasehold involves leasing out land to individuals, company or organization for a specified period stating clearly the lease conditions. Mailo land mainly practiced in the central region has its root to the colonial era during 1900 Buganda Agreement between the British and Buganda. Huge chunks of land in Buganda are still owned by the king and clan heads where other people with interest only get to own them through purchasing from the original occupants or their descendants (Tripp, 2004:5). Most district land boards are now tasked with the duty of handling land related matters in every district where landowners and those intending to buy land are always advised to acquire authentic land titles before they start developing any piece of land to avoid conflict that may arise due to lack of evidence to show ownership. Uganda has been faced by numerous cases of land grabbing with compliant involving government officials, business proprietors and other individuals both in urban and rural areas which has caused public outcry, numerous evictions and sometimes death resulting from clashes. As a result, government in 2017 instituted a commission of inquiry headed by a top judge to traverse the country with hope of resolving the disputes (New vision, 24/07/2017).

In most rural communities in the North where settlement camps are located, the common form of land ownership is customary tenure system and land is considered as the central asset since majority use it for both cultivation and grazing hence their main source of livelihood is derived from land. However, with the increase in population, creation of new administrative units and need to offer land to investors for development projects by government, tension is brewing as community fear that their land could easily be taken away from them. So, the unclear refugee land policy by the government has just worsen the situation putting the refugees at the forefront instead of being protected.

1.4 Background of the study area

Uganda also considered the “pearl pf Africa” is one of the countries in East Africa blessed with fertile soil and good weather as farming is considered the backbone of the economy despite the growth in industry and food processing. It attained her independence in 1962 under the leadership of the prime minister, the late Dr. Apollo Milton Obote after being under the British rule for 68 years (Sejjaaka, 2004). According to Uganda Bureau of Statistics (UBOS) as of 2019, the total population is estimated at 44, 269,594 people.

Northern Uganda is one of the regions in the country with a projected population of 8,346,600 people of which 6,258,765 people live in rural areas whereas 929, 367 people are urban dwellers as of 1st/July/ 2019 according to UBOS. The region has a total area of 85,392 kilo meter square. The region that suffered the brutal atrocities committed by LRA has also been considered as one of the most marginalized in the country lacking most basic services. The government with support from donor funding overtime have designed special tailored programs for the region since 2000 with the hope of eradicating poverty, creating self-reliance and providing better services. Some of the programmes include among others; Northern Uganda Reconstruction Programme (NURP), Emergency Humanitarian Action Plan (EHAP) and Northern Uganda Social Action Fund (NUSAF) (Esuruku, 2012). Several peace building projects and income generating activities have also been initiated by both local government, humanitarian agencies and Community Based Organizations (CBOs) in most rural areas of Northern Uganda to help the community derive a mean of survival. Voluntary Saving and Loan Association (VSLA) is one such initiative which has been applauded by most community members for coming handy during financial crisis.

Lamwo district is in Northern Uganda, a region considered the most marginalized in the country. The district is bordered by South Sudan to the north, Kitgum district to the east and south east, Pader district to the south, Gulu district to the south west and Amuru district to the west. The district was established by the act of parliament and became operational on the 1st/ July 2009. Before that, it was part of Kitgum district (Uganda Bureau of Statistics, 2014). Lamwo district is part of the larger Acholi- sub region. The district with a total area of 5,595.8km² (2, 160.6sq mi) had a population of 171,300 according to the last census carried out in 2012. The new district predominantly consists of rural setting with few trading centres cropping up with return of the people after spending over two decades in IDP camps as a result of the LRA civil war that left over 1.8 million people of the Northern population displaced. The arrival of refugees and government strict measure of having civil servants live within the district rather than commuting from the neighboring mother district of Kitgum steering up fast growth of the area as trade is flourishing at the border of South Sudan. As agriculture remain the back bone of Uganda’s economy with over 80% of the rural population involved in farming, the people of Lamwo and Northern Uganda at large derive their

livelihood from farming. The major food crops are sorghum, beans, peas, cassava, soya bean and millet among others. Land ownership in the area is primarily on customary basis though there is great transition of having land marked and processing of land titles especially in urban areas as a result of rampant sale of land. Lamwo is currently hosting over 41,000 refugees from South Sudan (UNHCR,2019). This is after a serious war broke on 15th/December 2013, where president Salva Kiir accused the then vice president Riek Machar of attempted coup (Pinaud, 2014:192).

The instability led to huge influx of refugee in Uganda especially in the North and west Nile region with its peak in 2016 where it was estimated that over 3,000 registered refugees were crossing to Uganda daily according to information from the Office of the prime Minister (OPM) which handles refugee issues.

Palabek settlement camp located in Palabek Ogili, Lamwo district, Northern Uganda was officially opened on the 22th/04/2017 with a standard capacity of 40,000 people (Lutheran World Federation, 2017). However, as of 31st/March/ 2019, the settlement camp was hosting over 41,000 refugees (OPM, 2019). The refugees and the host community share some cultural traits and understand each other in terms of language spoken.

1.5 State of refugees

According to data from UNHCR, “by end of 2016, 65.5 million people were forcibly displaced because of conflict, persecution, generalized violence or human rights abuses. Out of 65.5 million, 22.5 million were refugees, 40.3 million Internally Displaced Persons and 2.8 million asylum seekers” (UNHCR, 2016a:2 as cited in Ahimbisibwe, 2018:7). Developing regions hosted 84% of world’s refugees under UNHCR mandate (UNHCR, 2016a). There has been a global crisis in international refugee policy as high number of refugees and asylum seekers try to find their way to Europe amidst reluctant tendency of the countries to host them sometimes making them live illegally and prone to deportation. The crisis has been seen as a conflict of interest involving the rights of refugees advocated by different international bodies and the interest of the host country in circumstances where there is huge influx of refugees (Singer et al., 2010). Host destinations are coming up with more stringent measures to reduce the number coupled with increase in cases of human trafficking. It is believed that taking in large volume of refugees and asylum seeker has serious financial implication since most of them are economically dependent on the host nation. Also, there is a growing fear of a possible security threat as a result of the inflow of immigrants. In Africa, the issue of refugee dates to the colonial era and early days of independence. Some best minds especially from countries like Ghana, Nigeria and other French speaking countries willingly left their countries because they were not ready to accept the style of governance of specific regime that were characterized by brutality and political assassination whereas there has also been large scale migration of people of people in such of better lives or green pastures with many seeking for asylum in much better countries (Hugo et al., 1970). According to UNHCR by end of 2017, sub-Saharan Africa was currently hosting the largest number of refugees estimated at 24.2 million people, an upsurge of 4.6 million people since 2016. However, the number is even growing higher due to the current political unrest in Sudan, South Sudan, Nigeria, Mali and Somalia among others (UNHCR, 2018).

The issue of conflict in East Africa can be traced back decades ago which led to influx of people especially from Somali, Congo and Rwanda among others seeking refuge in Kenya and Uganda (Rutinwa, 2017). The recent outbreak of violence in South Sudan considered the world’s newest nation further led to the arrival of over 2.5 million South Sudanese in the

neighboring countries (UNHCR, 2018). “Somali remains one of the most protracted refugee situations in the world, with more than 2.65million people internally displaced and some 820,000 Somali refugees in the Horn of Africa and Yemen as of mid-2018” (UNHCR, 2018:2). Meanwhile other people are leaving their countries to seek for better living conditions within East Africa which also compounds to the refugee issue. Uganda whose progressive refugee policy has been considered as one of the best in the world is currently hosting the largest number of refugees both in Africa and East Africa. The UNHCR’s Annual Global Trends report indicates that by the end of 2016, Uganda was hosting 940,800 refugees and asylum -seekers, the highest number in the country’s history. Uganda then was the 5th largest refugee hosting country in the world and the largest in Africa (UNHCR, 2016a:15). Given the history of forced migrations globally and specifically for Uganda that is prone to the refugee crisis from the Sudan, it appears that the problems are far from over due to the deep rooted causes of conflicts that occur in cycles, refugees poses unique challenges to the cultural systems and strain to social services and resource in the host communities, this study will contribute to understanding the intricacies and effects of the refugee on the host communities and will contribute to better planning and managing the integration process.

1.6 Objective of the study

Main objective

To investigate the reason for land tension despite the refugee land policy and its impact on the livelihood of refugees and the host community in Palabek refugee settlement in Lamwo district, Northern Uganda.

Specific objectives

1. To examine the process of land allocation to refugees in line with the refugee land policy.
2. To explore the effects of land tension on the livelihood of both refugees and the host community members.
3. To find out the coping mechanisms to the challenges experienced during integration and in accessing services in Palabek refugee settlement

Research question

1.5 Main question

What is the major land concern arising as a result of refugee land policy in Palabek refugee settlement camp in Lamwo district, northern Uganda?

Specific research questions

1. How do refugees access land under the refugee land policy?
2. What are the perspectives of the host community on the settlement and its impact on the livelihood of both refugees and host members?
3. What are the government policies and programme to ensure peaceful integration and coexistence?

1.7 Justification and relevance of the study

The issue of refugees is one of the current global concern among world leaders, activists and development partners. UNCHR, states, and NGO's are spending most of their time and resources to develop, adopt and implement global refugee policy (Milner, J 2014:1). Since there is an increase in the number of refugees and asylum seekers world over, better policies need to be put in place to protect the refugees from any form of harsh treatment and discrimination based on their vulnerable state. Displacement usually come with the burden of sharing the scarce resources and threat to the security of the hosting state. Milner, J., (2000:2) argues that a comprehensive response to security burden must address both 'direct security burden' putting more focus on the spill over of conflict from the country of origin to where they seek refuge and the 'indirect security burden', that might arise from the pre-existing internal tension in the host state. While refugee policies are made and discussed at global, regional and national level, its full implementation is something that is far from the reality.

Most times when people are faced with forced displacement, they are left to make a choice of either staying in the camps or in the host community and often people prefer choosing the host community since they are the first people they make contact with when they arrived in an area especially their first meal and shelter are provided by their host (Rohwerder, 2013:3). This makes the refugee-host community relations an interesting topic to be researched especially how they maneuver their ways of survival despite the limited resources and at a time host community are so protective of land considered as their only central asset.

The costs of hosting refugees to host-communities are adequately discussed in literature (Whitaker1999; Kibreab 2003; Martin 2005; Agblorti 2011). The presence of refugees in all part of the world has brought a lot of cost to the host nations, and Uganda is not exclusive.

In Uganda, the case study conducted by Orach and de Brouwere (2006) on the refugee's integration and impacts of health care in West Nile region, finds that the implementation of self-reliance and integration of refugees has led to restructuring of healthcare services into a unitary system. This has led to a tremendous improvement in accessibility to health services for both refugees and host communities, and good relationship among refugees and host-communities.

More so, Ahimbisibwe (2018) research on refugee protection challenges confronting Uganda revealed that, there is a threat to the economy, environment and security to the host communities which need to tackle with effective policies. The author argued that the high numbers of refugee's infiltration from neighbouring countries to Uganda, scarce resources and little support from the international community could jeopardise the hospitality of Uganda.

While most of the research into refugee situation in Uganda focus on their general livelihoods, healthcare services, and benefits to the host-communities, surprisingly, there is none of them which focuses on how the integration of the refugees affect the socio-cultural norms, beliefs and livelihood of both refugees and the host-communities. Against this backdrop that the study seeks to contribute to literature to fill this gap in question. Besides there is weak evidence of academic work especially on this subject. The few write up on refugee-host relations are mainly done by NGOs and newspapers with few academic sources (Rohwerder 2013:2). Hence this study will be help to both government, NGOs and cultural leaders among others to take keen interest in addressing concerns and challenges resulting from the integration including adding a piece to the existing literatures to help other scholars and researchers who would love to explore more on the topic.

The fact that the people of Northern Uganda and the host community themselves spent decades as refugees in various IDPs within the country due to war by LRA makes it more interesting to study as it gives a new perspective of how former refugees can reciprocate their experience in the way they react to the integration.

Chapter 2: Context and theory of land tension

This chapter is divided into two, literatures written about the topic and selected concepts used in analyzing the study or rather the theoretical framework.

2.1 Land disputes in Uganda

Several literatures have been written about land in Uganda especially issues surrounding land tenure system but with little attention given to land related conflicts especially in the wake of large influx of refugees and asylum seekers coupled with the government refugee land policy. Land in Uganda is considered as one of the most valuable assets especially among the rural population who derive their livelihood from the utilization of natural resources like farming, charcoal burning and livestock rearing among others. As population increases, the size of land however remains the same sometimes leading to struggle as a result of high demand. Rugadya (2009) in her report “escalating land conflicts in Uganda” stated that most land disputes are a result of pressure exerted on the limited resources and considering that the traditional forms of tenure are no longer efficient to accommodate the demand of land users and owners. The insecurity associated with tenure system usually keep people away from investing in the land and putting up permanent structure for fear of wasting their hard-earned money in case a dispute erupts and the structures are destroyed. The kind of inequality in land distribution evidenced by powerful groups and individuals oppressing the weak and vulnerable through eviction and land grabbing has a potential of escalating to bigger conflict if nothing is done to contain the aggrieved locals. Government initiatives and legal changes geared toward reducing land disputes have not been successful due to lack of implementation (Deininger, 2006).

2.2 Refugee integration

The issue of refugees is not something new both on local and global scene. According to Jabri, (2006:47), “war in late modern politics is a technology of control”. Displacement and forced migration have become a common trend as a result of power struggle and need for resource control. This has sparked discussions among world leaders, international bodies and other humanitarian agencies on how to mobilize resources to help the affected people. A lot has therefore been written and discussed about the subject which has become a global concern. For the purpose of this study, I will rely on selected academic and non-academic publications like text books, journals articles, reports especially UN, UNHCR, Government reports and news publications among others. This will help me draw from a vast wealth of knowledge about the topic to come out with more credible research paper. Northern Uganda was once a war zone of different rebel groups like the Holy Spirit Movement headed by Alice Lakwena in 1986 and later the Lord’s Resistance Army war headed by Joseph Kony that dragged on till late 2000s (Westbrook, 2000). Westbrook in his journal, the torment of Northern Uganda: A legacy of missed opportunities gives a detailed events of what transpired right from the start of the war, intervention by both government and other international bodies like US state department, United Nations and Organization of African Union among others in their effort in trying to bring to an end the war that displaced nearly two million people and over 10,000 people massacred. This will help in justifying some reactions of the host community since they are still trying to recover and resettled back to their communities after

spending decades in the IDPs. Uganda is a developing country with a fast-growing population currently standing at 40, 308,000 people (UBOS, 2019).

The country does not have enough resources to provide adequate services to her citizens not to talk of millions of refugees flocking the country. Most times temporary health services are put in place to cater for the health needs of the refugees but due to poor services and drug shortage in government health facilities, the temporary health facilities meant for refugees end up being the only reliable option for both refugees and host community (Orach and De Brouwere (2006). The issue of equity and accessibility of health services is crucial in this study as similar situation is being experienced which calls for peaceful coexistence by both refugees and the host community. Security and environment threat are a great matter of concern. As refugees flock in, the pressure on the limited resources increases as both refugees and host community resort to activities like charcoal burning and clearing the forest for fire woods which is hazardous and believed to be the current cause of unreliable rain pattern. Direct security threat is believed to be a result of armed refugee warriors carrying rebel activities within the host region (Milner, 2000). Allowing refugees in a country can either cause development for the hosting state through humanitarian aid and increase in labor force and technical expertise or act as a security threat through infiltration of illegal firearms which might cause hostility and create fear among the community. Cases of theft and armed robberies has been reported to be on the rise in Lamwo resulting from the influx of the refugees. Such incidence sometime jeopardizes the cordial relationship between refugee and host community threatening their chances of survival. It is also believed that humanitarian assistance given to refugees if it is perceived to be more than the average of what the host community survives on could lead to tension. Agblorti, (2011:76) concludes that whatever assistance given should also take into consideration the needs of the local population in order to create a friendly atmosphere for peaceful coexistence. The ground for this argument is that when the local population is satisfied, there is a likelihood that they will be more accommodative as relevant stake holders sought for a more durable solution to the problem (Agblorti, (2011:75). The sustainability of any cordial relationship depends on the first reception of the refugees by the host community, it is always believed that refugees are poor compared to the members of the host community because of their volatile situation and any change in their life styles beyond the standard of the host community is often met with resentment which could jeopardize the once good relationship they shared. More over Dryden-Peterson, S. and Hovil, L., (2004:26) argues that with the increase in terrorism and global security threat, most host government are reluctant to carry on with the local integration process as it comes along with security threat and increase in illegal fire arms that could be used to terrorize the local community and the country at large.

The hope for achieving good integration and improvement in quality of life in the host communities is presented by various donor organizations and humanitarian agencies working in the settlement camp like the World Food Programme, Oxfam, Lutheran World Federation, UNHCR, World vision, AVSI who have been involved in activities that ensure the rights of both refugees and host community are respected, enhancing access to quality health care, education and livelihoods. These organizations have signed a memorandum of understanding with the district to ensure a cordial working relations (URN, 16TH/04/2019) An example is Avsi's initiative of establishing a motorized water supply system, building capacity of refugees and host community in income generating activities among other developmental projects. Such initiatives have not only help both refugees and host community access skills for survival leading to improve standard of living but has also triggered development in the area.

2.3 Theoretical framework

Several concepts related to livelihood shall be used to analyze the study. The choice of concepts stem from the contextual background of the study which literally look at the daily struggle of both refugees and host community to derive possible means of survival amidst harsh condition. More so, the concept of 'sustainable rural livelihood' is becoming increasingly central to the debate about rural development, poverty reduction and environmental management (Scoones,1998:3). In development prose, 'sustainable' has replaced 'integrated' as a versatile synonym for 'good' (Chambers and Conway, 1992:4). In simple term it means using the available resources sparingly without compromising the needs of the future generation.

Whereas "livelihood in its simplest form is a means of gaining a living. It comprises of capabilities, assets (stores, resources, claims, access) and activities required for a mean of living" (Chambers and Conway, 1992). A livelihood is further considered sustainable 'when it can cope with and recover from stresses and shocks, maintain or enhance its capabilities and assets, while not undermining the natural resource base' (Scoones, 1998:5). Livelihood is a state where there is constant flow of resources like food and cash required to meet the essential basic needs. Scoones further highlight the five key elements of the definition with the first three focusing on livelihoods, linking concern over work and employment and poverty reduction with broader issue of adequacy, security, wellbeing and capability. Whereas the last two elements add the sustainability dimension, looking, in turn at the resilience of livelihoods and natural resource bases on which they depend.

Most times when people are faced with shocks like the refugees are facing the dilemma of displacement, their means of survival are also threatened. Their livelihood and survival either depend on humanitarian aid and other emergency relief assistance provided by NGOs or they maneuver their way by struggling to find possible means of survival. Such means of livelihood depends on the policy of the host community and Uganda's refugee policy has created a fair environment for refugees to survive amidst other challenges. This is because Uganda has decided to pick inclusion rather than marginalising the refugees, they are given freedom to work, access land, go to school and much more. Such conducive environment nurtures self-reliance of both refugees and the nationals. It is believed that "refugee community that is nationally and transitionally integrated, contributes in positive ways to the national economy, is economically diverse, uses and creates technology, and is far from uniformly dependent on international assistance" (Clements, et al. 2016:50). Much as the policy provides a conducive environment, refugees integrated in the community are often faced with challenges like the ongoing land tension which threatens their survival with limited resources and opportunities compared to their counterparts in camps supported by humanitarian assistance. Majority of the refugees often find it hard to adjust and cope up with the situation which render them unable to achieve sustainable livelihood. Scoones, (1998:7) argues that the ability to pursue different livelihood strategies is dependent on the basic materials and social, tangible and intangible assets that people have in their possession. Such resources may act as a capital base that can be used for any productive activity hence deriving livelihood from them. Thousands of refugees often opt to settle in the community due to restrictions and hardship they sometimes experience in the camps and this implies that they are not eligible for any sort of assistance inform of food relief normally distributed by World Food Programme (WFP) and other humanitarian agencies. So, the only alternative would be to engage in any productive activity like providing their labour, charcoal burning and running small businesses to fend for their families.

Insecurity

In this context, the insecurity will involve both physical arising from clashes over land which could result to injury or even death and economic insecurity that impacts on the livelihood of the affected people. Land conflict and insecurity arising from it is not something new in Uganda especially the Northern part that has experienced decades of wars and displacement. Most land related conflicts are a result of land grabbing, eviction, boundary demarcation between neighbours, inheritance struggle and lately the high demand for land which has led to rise of scrupulous land dealers (Mwesigye, 2016). The government has lately also been in running battles with the community over land for investment and other government development programmes. According to the 1995 constitution, it states that 'parliament shall make laws to enable urban authorities to enforce and implement planning and development'. With the creation of new administrative units for instance Lamwo being carved out of Kitgum district, means land is needed to construct public facilities like hospitals, schools and road network among others which has often brought contention with the local population especially on issues of compensation. All these with the arrival of refugees and other immigrants are possible causes of land tension.

The impact of hosting refugees on the host members have long overdue been associated with increased vulnerability, over exhaustion and sometimes depletion of the available resources, insecurity both physical and food among others (Rohwerder, 2013). The ongoing land tension between refugees and the host members in Palabek settlement is becoming a major security concern as it has most times escalated into physical attacks especially on refugees leading to retaliation which is threatening their coexistence. Other form of insecurity as results from the rebels who come as refugees and carry on with their rebel activities in the host state posing a big threat to the host population (Milner, 2000). As the number of refugees opting for hosting as opposed to living in the camps increases, there is a likelihood of more tension as the land owners demand for the evacuation of refugees from their land. More so, land under contention are usually not fully utilized as both sides shun planting for fear of their crops being destroyed leading to food insecurity which has often caused struggle over the relief food distributed by the humanitarian agencies like WFP. This can also contribute to other social problems and petty crimes in the community like theft of food items and other essentials. This increases vulnerability on both sides as the ability to cope is minimised by the tension. It therefore calls for government to come up with better ways of amending the loopholes in the refugee land policy to avoid the conflict which could result to full blown land clashes.

Refugee economy

The cost and benefit of hosting refugees has been adequately discussed by different scholars (Orach, 2006; Whitaker 1999; Kibreab 2003; Martin 2005; Agblorti 2011). The integration of the health services into a unitary health facility in Arua, west Nile region for both refugees and host community members has been applauded for improving effectiveness in the service delivery. The merger enables different stakeholders to plan well for the smooth operation of the facilities (Orach, 2006:8). In Pakistan, it was reported that several refugees got engaged in various charitable activities especially giving part of their shares of the food relief to the poor members of the host community which helped in creating a great bond between them and preventing any form of antagonism that may arise as a result of hosting refugees (Chambers, 1986:250). Refugees also contribute to the labor force of the host state both manual and technical expertise which helps in filling the gaps created by scarcity in labor force. Besides some have started businesses in the host states creating employment opportunities for both refugees and host members which in turn act as a source of their

livelihood. The increase in the population acts a major boost in trade and rapid urbanization in places once considered remote. Northern Uganda is currently experiencing mushrooming of trading centres as a result of the arrival of the refugees which has made both government and humanitarian organizations to embark on creating facilities like schools, health centres and road network ending the long plight of trekking several distances in search of those services. However, all these benefits could be jeopardized if the land concern is not handled amicably which calls for government and land owners to have sit and resolve the growing stalemate.

Integration and coexistence

The term integration also known as “assimilation” simply means removing all the differences that exist between refugees and host community so that they can all live together as one community. It is a guiding principle especially in the global south for refugee programs. According to the 1951 UN Refugee convention, restoring the human dignity of refugees implies that their rights are respected (Dryden-Peterson, 2004). A good refugee-host relation enhances integration and encourages peaceful coexistence in the community. Any resentment by the host community towards the refugees can be viewed as a huge problem challenging the mandate by UNHCR of providing international protection and the efforts of world leaders in resolving refugee crisis (Aukot, 2003). The members of the host community in Palabek settlement camp believe that refugees are living a more decent life compared to them even though they are entitled to 30% of services provided to refugees by both government and humanitarian agencies. Most organisations are more concerned by the plight of refugees and make them the central focus neglecting the host community that in most cases do have more poor and vulnerable people with limited means of survival (Chambers, 1986). This usually make some members of the host to disguise as refugees in pursuit of getting the same treatment and relief food. Much as refugees are mainly focused on their own individual survival by utilizing all the available options, the preferential treatment towards them leaves the host members disgruntled therefore becoming a stumbling block towards the local integration. As emphasis are made towards resolving refugee crisis and protecting their rights, more attention should also be directed on the host community such that any differences between them are not visibly seen for a peaceful coexistence and promotion of local integration.

Chapter 3. Methodologies

The chapter presents the methodological strategies used in the study with numerous sub sections right from the identification of the study area, research assistant, type of data and sources, limitations, ethical considerations taken during the study process and ends with the positionality of the researcher.

3.1 Study location

The study was conducted in Palabek settlement camp in Lamwo district, northern Uganda. Several factors were responsible for the choice of the study area but notable among them was its geographical location and language. It should be noted that the common language spoken in the area by both refugees and members of the host community is Luo which also happens to be my native language and that of my research assistant. A total of 35 interviews were conducted including 4 FGD. The research that was conducted between 20th/07/2019 to 28/09/2019 made use of mixed method approach where both structured and semi structured interviews were developed. The permission to carry out the study in the area was granted by the office of the Prime Minister and the subcounty leaders after a thorough explanation by the researcher through phone calls and presentation of the introductory letter issued by the Institute

3.2 Identifying a research assistant and tools used in data collection

The decision to use the research assistant was based on ill health that could not allow the researcher to travel in person to collect the data and the process of identifying and training a research assistant took roughly one month. This was to enable the assistant to get acquainted with the topic and its overall objective. A female graduate who is volunteering with CESVI, one of the organizations working with refugees in Palabek settlement camp became the best choice after several considerations were made and she became very instrumental in ensuring the success of the study. The guidance considered part of the training was basically done through phone call and emails where selected reading materials were shared to acquaint the research assistant with the research process, tools and ethical considerations in dealing with refugees who are considered vulnerable. A total of 35 interviews were conducted by both the researcher and the research assistant. The research assistant was involved in non-participant observation, focus group discussion (FGD) and conducted 25 structured interviews with both refugees and members of the host community.

The study used a qualitative method involving the use of structured and semi structured interviews, Focus Group Discussion and non-participant observation. The act of talking and listening helps in creating mutual trust between the interviewer and interviewees which often gives room for people to express themselves freely, giving an in-depth information into the subject matter (O’Leary, 2017). This is also helpful in rephrasing questions for better understanding which allows the interviewees to give their best in trying to answer questions posed to them compared to other tools. However, the main purpose of using FGD was “to draw upon respondents’ attitudes, feelings, beliefs, experiences and reactions in a way which would not be feasible using other methods, for example observation, one-to-one interviewing, or questionnaire surveys” (Gibbs, 1997:2). The researcher is always able to get opinion from different participants and people get to share their ideas and experiences during

FGD. So, the research assistant was basically involved in observation, Focus Group Discussion and interviews with both refugees and local community members since sometimes one needs to see it for themselves as O'Leary clearly stated that "observation invites you to take it all... to see, hear, smell, feel and even taste the environment and get a sense of reality. In the words of Emerson, you become the 'world's eye' (O'Leary, 2017).

3.3 Type of data and sources

The study mainly deals with primary data collected by use of qualitative interview and focus group discussion which gives the researcher the chance to physically interact with the respondents, pave way to dig deeper into the area of interest and get firsthand information as clearly stated in (Laws et al. 2013:29) since it gives the opportunity to the researcher to reframe some questions and get the response he/she is looking for to be able to come out with good research. The data was collected from six of the eight zones in the settlement camp involving refugees, host community and other actors including government officials especially from the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) which directly handles refugees' affairs in the country, local leaders and Non-governmental Organizations both local and international like UNHCR, Red Cross and World Vision among others. Under the secondary data, relevant literatures were engaged especially on refugee law project, journals, online articles and newspapers to find out what has been written about the subject by other scholars and writers. This was important in the study because in a way it helped in finding the gap and comparing similar situations in other areas hence giving insight which the researcher could have missed out to blend the analysis of the findings.

3.4 Data collection

Prior to the study and based on the advice of the research supervisor, the researcher and the assistant planned a mini pilot study involving 5 households and was conducted by the research assistant. Pilot study also termed feasibility study is a mini version of the full study. Much as it does not guarantee a successful research, it increases the possibility and is a crucial element in preparation for a good study since it gives an insight and helps in modifying the questions and know the reaction to expect (Van Teijlingen, 2001). Considering the short period allocated for the study and the meagre resource, purposeful and convenience sampling methods were used in the selection of participants for both household interviews and FGD respectively. A total of four FGD, two each involving between 8-11 members were conducted with both refugees and members of the host community separately in zones 1, 4, 5 & 7 facilitated by the research assistant. The experience of interacting with refugees often during her work as a volunteer with CESVI, one of the humanitarian organizations working in the camp and knowledge of the study area eased the identification of respondents by the research assistant. She mainly looked out for participants believed to have some knowledge of the study subject and willing to give information (Marshall, 1996). Out of the 25 household structured interviews conducted in 6 zones and facilitated by the research assistant, 15 interviewees were women, 5 men, 2 child-headed families and 3 had both partners participating together as respondents. However, the other six key informant interviews involving stakeholders like OPM, UNHCR and other organizations both local and international were conducted by the researcher through both phone call and Skype video call. The respondents were chosen based on their coordination role and knowledge of the study subject. The

interviews were basically conducted at a time when the participants were in their various offices which 5 to 10 kilo meters away from the settlement camp.

3.5 Limitations and ethical consideration

According to Leaning (2001:1432), refugees are considered 'vulnerable' as a subject of study because of their political status and uncertainty of their safety since they are usually targeted by those responsible for their displacement. The already vulnerable situation is even made worse by people who take advantage and collect information for their own selfish gains. This has sparked a debate about the possible guidelines on how research among refugees and IDPs should be conducted (Leaning, 2001:1432). Much as the research assistant was already known in the community and having been granted permission by both OPM and the local leaders, the researcher and the assistant had to discuss a way of establishing informed consent from the selected households to partake in the study not forgetting the guideline in conducting research with children especially for the two child headed households. The interviews were conducted within the household vicinity whereas FGD took place at different locations proposed by the assistant and anonymously supported by all participants. The participants were asked to be as free and comfortable as possible and not to feel obliged narrating their painful ordeal during the displacement process since several them had lost loved ones in the war and talking about it would mean opening the fresh wounds. Also, the participants were asked if there was any objection in directly quoting and using their names in the paper which they gave a green light for the information and their names to be used in the final product of this study.

Another complex challenge arose when most respondents asked to know if they will stand to benefit from the outcome of the study for instance, they inquired whether the responsible authorities will take their current challenges into consideration and devise means of addressing it or they will get support from any donor funded project for their participation. They were however made to understand when giving their consent that participation in the study does not mean they will stand to gain any benefit whatsoever, but their views would mean a lot and would contribute to academic knowledge which could be used for future reference in a similar study. Just like any challenges experienced in the field, the study happened at a period when refugees were being relocated from the reception center to the settlement camp. This implies that most participants like OPM, UNHCR and refugees were moving up and down with limited time to participate in the study which slowed down the process considering the limited time allocated for the study. Also, the rain made movement quite hard and costly as the roads were in bad shape since the entire country was experiencing large volume of rain.

Poor network connection further hampered smooth communication especially with the stakeholders as most times the phones were off and in other cases it kept breaking affecting the smooth flow of the interview hence causing delay on both sides. Financial constraint also became a huge burden as most respondents had high hopes of being modestly facilitated for their participation. This issue of facilitation is proving to be a huge challenge to both NGOs and government as the locals has made it a habit to demand for facilitation for any kind of participation. This has made passing information or getting their attention without a budget line for lunch and transport refund a night mare.

However, since this was purely academic study with no funding, the participants became reluctant while some were un cooperative and did not want to give any kind of information.

There were also certain restrictions in getting information from the refugees due to their vulnerable state and to avoid mis use of information obtained. Lately, government and the local leaders have put in place strict guidelines in getting any form of information involving refugees. They claim that dubious people have been coming to get information and taking pictures of the vulnerable people for their own benefits. Without mentioning names, the local leader of the refugees said “ well placed people have been taking advantage of our state, they come register us, take pictures with promise of sourcing for help to support us but when they finally succeed, we are left out and the support goes to their relatives and friends who are not refugees which is unfair”. To ensure the study does not meet such obstacle, an introductory letter from the institute came handy and helped in backing up the explanation that the research was purely for academic purpose, and a requirement needed to fulfill the study programme. Finally, the rapport created prior to the study made it a success despite numerous challenges mentioned above. For purposes of confidentiality which is much advocated for in research work, I will use pseudo names to refer to interviewees.

3.6 Positionality

“The identities of both the researcher and participants have the potential to impact the research process” (Bourke, B., 2014). I was born during the time when Northern Uganda was marred by conflicts from rebel groups like the Holy Spirit Movement Front (HSMF) headed by Alice Lakwena and later LRA headed by Joseph Kony (Wesbrook, 2000). The insecurity led to forced displacement where majority of people left their original rural homes to take refuge in urban centre and for my case me and my family relocated to Lira district, some 30 kilometers where I spent most of my childhood and adult life until late 2008 when there were some glimpse of peace and people started returning. Growing in such a difficult vulnerable situation exposed me to the reality of life challenges especially watching the plight of mothers with little children and elderly people struggle to escape the atrocities with no clear mean of survival. More so, I admired how aid workers from different humanitarian agencies at that time worked tirelessly to rescue and provide food relief to the most vulnerable which made me develop a deep passion for humanitarian work. After completing my high school and getting the opportunity to go to the university, I opted to do Development studies specializing in rural development with the hope of working with the local community. This is because my experience of living with the host community in a way exposed me to the reality of some harsh treatment and being labeled a ‘refugee’ in your own country, yet I wanted to have a sense of belong and living a normal life like any other teenager of my age. Some host parents would throw words like ‘you look like a refugee’ whenever their children show up looking shabby which to me was demeaning. The experience has been a strong motivating factor for me in choosing my research topic since I wanted to know and compare my experience as a former refugee in my own country and refugees from other countries. This is because the entire rural Northern population were displaced and spent over two decades in IDPs where they were also labeled refugees. I was particularly interested in their reaction towards refugees except this time from another country and how they would treat and relate with them.

Generally, the chapter has given a clear description of the design and process of the data collection with a clear focus on the role played by the research assistant although there have been few literatures spelling their role in the research process. According to Turner (2010) on research note: The silenced assistant. Reflections of invisible interpreters and research assistants, the use of research assistant gain popularity in the 1930’s where researchers started paying guides to be part of the research team to mainly “gather facts, conduct interviews,

take field notes or facilitate work of professional ethnographers” (Sanjek, 1993:14 as cited in Turner, 2010:2019). Working with an assistant who doubles as a great friend and former colleague made the coordination process much easier as we share a lot in values and similar positionality enabling us to share ideas and opinions on various outcome of the field report. Also, the use of mixed method was helpful in bringing different cultural aspect of the community which a single method could have not been able to do so on their own.

Chapter 4: Analysis and discussion of the findings

This chapter focuses on the analysis and discussion of the findings regarding the main question and objective of the study with a central focus on dissatisfaction of land owners who are accusing government of failure to honor the agreement and the crucial missing clause of how long the refugees are to spend on the land offered to government to host them.

Table 2: Population of refugees at Palabek settlement camp

0-4 years			5-11 years			12-17 years			18-59 years			60 plus			over- all To- tal
M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	Fem	To- tal	
3825	3725	7550	5919	5247	11166	4098	3358	7456	5849	8110	13959	273	764	1037	41168

NB M=Male

SOURCE: FIELD REPORT

F=Female

T=Total

4.1 Registration of the refugees upon arrival

When refugees arrive through known borders, there are officials from OPM mandated to handle registration whereas those who enter through porous borders usually have their first contact with the members of the host community who in most cases offer them accommodation and meals for a night before directing them to the reception centre where officials from OPM are stationed to do registration and offer them temporary shelter(Christopher Omal, local during in an interview, 25/08/2019). At the reception center which is now Lokung for Palabek settlement, depending on the trend of influx they can take between 2weeks to 3months. This is also sometimes dictated by the availability of Non-food Items (NFIs)- which is distributed by UNHCR through its protection partner Lutheran World Federation (LWF). While at the center they are given hot meals comprising of porridge and food for lunch whereas children are supplied with clothes and they sleep in a temporary structure (dormitory) separated by gender. The non-food items are usually given on the day of relocation. After securing land for settlement, the refugees are brought from the reception center to the food distribution point, where officials from LWF and other humanitarian agencies involved give them items including salt, cooking oil and beans and NFIs like plastic sheeting (tarpaulins) mats, basins, blankets, mosquito nets, plates, cups, pangas, solar lamps and pans among others before they are taken to the plots assigned to each household (Belmos Ogwang, UNHCR, interview conducted on the 15th/08/2019 at Zone 2, Palabek settlement camp).

4.2 Land allocation to refugees and concerns of the host community

Uganda became the top hub for refugees especially after war broke out in South Sudan in December 2013 making the country to gain global recognition because of its friendly refugee

policy which is currently considered one of the most progressive in the world. Both refugees and asylum seekers are free to move anywhere in the country, entitled to work, access basic services like health, education and own businesses among other privileges. This has seen refugees from the neighboring DRC, South Sudan, Ethiopia and Somali among others take refuge in the country. The 2006 refugee policy and its 2010 regulation are legal instruments governing the management and operation of refugee related activities in the country. It has been praised by top influential leaders and notable among them is the episcopal head of the catholic church Pope Francis during his visit in November 2015 where he praised the government of Uganda under the leadership of His excellency president Yoweri Kaguta Museveni for the noble act and showing kindness to the millions of displaced people calling upon other leaders to emulate the same (Word Bank Group, 2016). Part XI of the 2010 refugee regulations states that “a refugee shall have free access to land for cultivation and purposes of pasturing though they are not allowed to sell the land”. According to Lamwo policy paper 2013, the settlement was opened in 2017 without inclusive consent of the local community much as the region is known for hosting refugees especially from South Sudan with a long history dating back to the 1960s when South Sudanese fled Sudan’s first civil war.

The most common form of land tenure in Northern districts of Acholi is the customary system where land is collectively owned by clan, sub clan and individually by household head. Landowners especially those who gave their land to host the refugees said they signed what is termed an ‘open’ memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the government but without clearly stating how long the refugees would stay on the land. The refugees are meant to be allocated 30*30 square meters of land per household. In an interview with James Ochola, whose father gave over 50 acres of the family land to refugees, he said less than 60% of refugees have land under the government arrangement and now some community members out of good will are giving their portion of land to refugees for temporary settlement and cultivation. He adds that lately some refugees have started infringing on the land without their consent causing some minor clashes giving an incidence where a woman was seriously beaten and injured in July for venturing into a citizen land to collect firewood. Ochola says considering disputes between land owners and some former IDPs who do not want to leave land they settled in during the insurgency, majority of people who gave their land to the government to settle the refugees are thinking of ways of repossessing their land (James Ochola, host community participant in an interview conducted in zone 5 on the 27th/09/2019). The above is just one incident among the numerous concerns instilling fear among the refugees as they become more uncertain of their fate despite being allocated land under the government agreement. Local leaders have also expressed concern over the inability of the land owners to interpret the document due to the legal dictum used which they believe frustrates them even the more.

According to the information obtained during the field work, most land owners were not sensitized during the process and majority rushed to give out their land without understanding the legal implication. The fact that they signed the MoU with the government implies that there is some legal document binding them. Besides, the land owners and local leader lamented on lack of unclear land boundaries and land titles which is hard to get due to the cost and bureaucracy involved. Since most land are owned communally, it was not clearly mapped and recorded the portion of individual land taken as one elder said..... “ we have been keeping count of our land boundary using big trees and ant hill but since the people returned from the camps, the rate of degradation has been alarming due to charcoal burning and huge demand of firewood for sale and home consumption, this has made most land mark features to be destroyed.....one can wake up and just start claiming the land which has always resulted to prolonged court battle due to lack of evidence and witnesses (Siverino Ojok, an elder during an interview in Palabek Ogili, 30/08/2019).

Despite the land tension, both the refugees and the host population are faced with numerous other challenges which put their livelihood at stake.

4.3 Impact of land tension

The tension is gradually straining the once peaceful coexistence as members of the host community are becoming unreceptive to both refugees and government officials. This has been witnessed through reported cases of attacks and assault on refugees who are caught roaming on the land belonging to host members in search of firewood which in some cases are retaliated by relatives of the victim causing constant bickering. Government has also been facing some backlashes from the community who look at them as the perpetrator of the current land tension. This has jeopardize the government initiative of bringing investors to the region especially the much anticipated sugar plantation that was mean to be constructed in Amuru district could not go as planned as the community and their local leaders took up arms to protect their land from being given to the Madivhani group of companies that was meant to start a sugar plant in the region. Such hostility hampers development that could have been realized in the area as a result of the development project and widening of the livelihood base as the locals would get employed and other out growers would potentially benefit from the project hence improving the general standard of living.

Whenever there is dispute, the land in question is rendered dormant as no major development is done. This affects the livelihood of those whose survival depend on farm activities. A refugee in zone 5 in an interview stated that after hearing and witnessing the aftermath of land tension in the neighboring Amuru district, some refugees have shied away from planting on the pieces of land that was apportion to them for fear of their plant being uprooted and leaving it behind in case the situation get out of hand” (Sam Mayol, a refugee during an interview that was conducted on the 18th/08/2019). Some members of the host community also accused the refugees of constant trespass and uprooting crops from the garden of the host members without seeking for their consent as reiterated by one Lucy Akol during a focus group discussion... “some of the refugees came with their culture of roaming in the garden to pick vegetables without the consent of the owners, a number of times have caught some in my garden and reported the case to the local leaders but they seems not to understand which is so frustrating considering that we grow these groups to feed our families and use the proceeds from the sale to help pay our children in school(FGD conducted on the 20th/08/2019 at zone 2). Such incidence discourages both the land owners and the refugees from productively utilizing the land therefore reducing the survival strategy of both sides which calls for quick government intervention.

Challenges to integration process

The refugee hosting communities are in the poorest, most vulnerable and least developed parts of the country. Majority of the people in the Northern districts of Acholi and Lango had spent over two decades in IDPs as a result of war caused by LRA and they had just returned back to their original land to try rebuild their lives with government support of reconstruction by the time the refugees arrived. As settlement exceed their maximum capacity of the land, the size of plots provided to refugees is also reducing. Also, agricultural productively has become low (due to environmental degradation, climatic conditions, and poor soil quality/overuse).

Therefore, as the numbers continue to increase, the challenge is how to sustain Uganda’s progressive and generous out-of-camp refugee approach.

Tension arising from land as discussed above is the biggest current nightmare of most refugees who are self-settled in the community as they live in uncertainty and fear of being evicted by the land owners if government doesn't come to their rescue and settle the land concern which has become a major threat to their survival.

The communal culture is still a prominent trait among the refugees exhibited by the habit of picking crops from the gardens of the host community members without seeking for their permission. This has been one of the major reason of clashes between both parties which is always rampant when the food rations delays.

Social service delivery systems are weak, and economic opportunities are limited due to the remoteness of settlements and limited infrastructure. Most remote communities across the country are faced with poor service delivery and Palabek is not an exception being a newly created district carved from Kitgum district. This implies that both refugees and host members must travel to the neighboring Kitgum district for some services and in search of survival strategies. Also, local authorities have come up with strict measures against tree cutting which had become the major source of livelihood for both refugees and host members through firewood and charcoal for sale.

The host members are disgruntled over the preferential treatment given to refugees; the local leader of the host community in his statement said 'they even want to rule over us in our own land because they think everything here is about them. The UNHCR has not made it any better. They only talk about refugee rights as if we nationals don't have rights; it is so annoying'. Such statements are indication that much as they try to portray that there is peaceful coexistence, there is some resentment towards the refugees due to the special attention and treatment given to them by both the government and humanitarian agencies working to support the refugees.

There was counter accusation between refugees and host community regarding job recruitment. Most refugees interviewed stated that some organizations put out job adverts and even specify that refugees are encouraged to apply but when they apply and even go through the interviews, the jobs are given to the nationals who they claim sometimes don't even have the required qualifications needed besides being arrogant towards them. They said the same applies to training opportunities where nationals for opportunities meant for refugees. However, the nationals on the other hand are blaming NGOs for giving jobs meant for them to the refugees which has seen an increase in unemployment rate among the locals of the host community.

There is also a concern about community members wanting to be treated like refugees for instance they expect that everything refugees get they should get as well like food rations and being exempted from certain fees for services and taxes. Much as they are living with refugees, they are still bonafide citizens expected to fulfill their duties and responsibilities to their government. This has in a way created resentment which is not good for integration.

Issues of gender-based violence (GBV) has been reported to be on the rise among both refugees and members of the host community. Both men and women are engaging in extra marital affairs which has strained their relationship as reiterated by one participant 'my friend's wife left her home and eloped with a refugee man because of the goodies distributed to them by the humanitarian agencies'. Some women also stated that most time their men sell the food rations given to feed the family and spend the money on alcohol in the nearby trading centre fueling fights among them.

Enabling factors to integration

Policies and programmes

Uganda's refugee policy is one of the friendliest in the whole world according protection Associate, UNHCR who was one of the participants interviewed during the study. It allows refugees to seek employment within the country, there is also free entry although there is screening at the boarder points. Refugees live in settlements as opposed to concentration camps and each head of household is allocated a 30*30 plot of land. Free services to both refugees and host community on a 70/30 basis for instance education, health, safe water and shelter among others. The refugees take a greater percentage compared to the host members because it is believed that most of the services were put in place to cater for their needs making them take the lion share as beneficiaries.

The 2006 Refugee Act and 2010 Refugee Regulations allow for integration of refugees within host communities with refugees having access to the same services (education, health, water and sanitation) as nationals. They have freedom of movement and are free to pursue livelihood opportunities, including access to the labor market and to establish businesses. To sustain and expand this progressive and generous out-of-camp refugee approach Uganda seeks to strengthen the resilience and self-reliance of refugees and their host communities.

Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF): implemented by the OPM, CRRF looks at inclusion of refugees in the community from the very beginning because it believes that when refugees are given access to education and labor markets, they can build their skills and become self-reliant, hence contributing to the local economy and fueling its development.

CRRF also thrives on the premise that allowing refugees to benefit from national services and integrating them into national development plans is essential for both communities hosting them and refugees themselves which is also consistent with the SDG 2030 of 'leaving no one behind. This is also expected to help refugees thrive and not just survive hence reducing the risk of protracted stays and lessening their dependence on humanitarian aid.

Development Response to Displacement Impact Project (DRDIP). This is a world bank approved and funded project whose main objective is to improve access to basic social services, expand economic opportunities and enhance environmental management for communities hosting refugees in Uganda; e.g. Classrooms, toilet facilities, tanks for water harvesting, etc. DRDIP covers 11 districts that hosts refugees including Lamwo, to help reduce the disproportionate amount of strain on existing community social services and infrastructure.

Knowledge of the local language of the host community (Acholi/ Luo). Majority of South Sudanese living in the settlement camp speak the same or similar language with the Acholi and they are referred to as 'Acholi of South Sudan' which has helped them to blend so well with the host community

Initiatives to promote peaceful coexistence and better services

The Government-owned framework has been put in place that promotes multi-year, multi-sector and coordinated interventions that involve both refugees and the host communities for instance Refugee and Host Population Empowerment (ReHOPE) whose over all objectives include;

- Building capacity and strengthening ownership of results among community institutions and local governments through a community-driven development approach (including local planning, implementation and monitoring).
- Improving delivery (access, quality, and efficiency) of basic social services
- Expanding economic opportunities and sustainable livelihoods especially for women and youth
- Addressing environmental degradation in refugee-hosting areas.

The local leaders together with the police have been carrying out community policing and encouraging mediation to solve conflict arising from any disputes among the people for a peaceful coexistence. However, they are also encouraged to report cases they are unable to handle to the relevant authority for appropriate action. Most times petty crimes like minor theft, disagreement and domestic violence are settled at the local council one (LC), but in case it is repeated time and again by the same people, the case is usually reported to police.

Clan leaders have been encouraging intermarriages as a way of fostering peace in the area.

The government and NGOs have opened roads, health facilities and schools closer to the community. The area used to be bushy with no facilities in place. However, since the settlement was opened, development is clearly visible with both sides engaged in different means of survival like selling their labor, formal employment and trade since markets have been created at the boarder for trade.

The organizations through their programmes have been advocating for peaceful integration. When creating groups for their projects like Voluntary and Saving Loan Association (VSLA) and farming groups, they include both refugees and host members in one group to encourage good work culture and tolerate each other.

Effects of the settlement on the culture and norms the host community

Over 60% of the host members interviewed said most refugees are still deeply rooted in witchcraft because when someone falls sick, they first take to the witch doctor to find what the problem before taking the person to the hospital. The same statement was confirmed by the in charge of zone 3 health centre who said most times, patients are taken to the hospital when the condition gets worse which in most cases, they are unable to handle, and the only way out would be to refer the person to a bigger hospital with better facilities. They also believe that whenever a property is stolen, the witch doctors can help you recover which has made some nationals to slide back to the practice they had long abandoned to embrace a more Christian spiritual life.

The increase in the population has led to the emergence of trading centres and video halls. Most young people end up spending much of their time loitering around without engaging in any productive activities and this has been blamed for the rise in petty theft, prostitution, HIV and teenage pregnancy among other negative effects.

The host members are no longer free to carry on with some cultural rites that were treasured in the past like widow inheritance, rituals for twins and last funeral rites among others because of the mixed reaction they get and also government has partly put a ban on others like last funeral rites which had become a big destruction to education as school children escape to attend it since it is a big feast with nonstop dance for days and considered a breeding ground for immoral acts.

There is also increase in possession of illegal fire arms by both refugees and the host members which was not the culture. Some refugees sneak with guns which are either sold to the locals because of the high price tag or sometimes used to rob and poach animals in the neighboring kidepo national park. Several cases of animal theft involving armed men believed to be illegal refugees have been reported and most members of the host community have lost their cattle which has affected both their livelihood and relationship with the refugees.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

This chapter sums up the whole study by focusing on land tension arising from the Memorandum of Understanding signed between government and the land owners to offer land to host the refugees mainly from South Sudan who were displaced as a result of the war that broke up in December 2013 when the government of Salva Kiir accused the then vice president Riek Macha of attempted coup on his government. The war led to displacement of millions of people who opted to seek refuge in Uganda due to its flourishing and progressing refugee policy. The 2006 refugee policy on land and its 2010 regulations give the refugees freedom to access land, job and own businesses among others. However, when the government was drafting the land agreement regarding and negotiating with the land owners, they failed to include some vital clause like how long the refugees would spend on the land which is currently raising dust among the land owners as the fear of losing their land completely creep in. Chapter one which is basically the background of the study and statement of the problem presents part of the reason why land is considered a central asset among Uganda's rural population, the form of land tenure and what the refugee land policy stipulates which is far from the reality on the ground. This is common of most policies in the country which are well formulated and laid but without clear implementation or lacking substance. In chapter two, I engaged previous written literatures and concept relevant focusing on livelihood of both refugees and host members, development that accrues as a result of hosting refugees not forgetting integration and coexistence which is paramount. The methodological strategies discussed in chapter three was inspired by mixed methods where tools like interviews, participant observation and focus group discussion were employed to give room to in-depth data collection which a single method would not have given the result.

In chapter four of the study, I presented my field findings and analysis through a description of the current atmosphere in the wake of tension arising from land concern involving land owners, refugees and government. From the findings, it is believed that the current state is gradually straining the relationship the refugees had with the host community when they had just arrived. This is mostly because of government failure to honor their part of the bargain, missing crucial clauses which should have been included in the land agreement and not sensitizing the land owners before signing the commitment which seems to be legally binding. However, the land owners also share some part of the blame for their current predicament probably because of their inadequate knowledge which made them consent to the land agreement without critically perusing through to identify missing important clauses which could have guided their action to commit to offer their land for the course. The broad chapter also presents how the growing tension is affecting the livelihood of both refugees and land owners, damaging the peaceful coexistence, looking at other challenges being faced due to the integration and what stakeholders are trying to do to ensure they live well in harmony as a more lasting solution if being sought after. Despite the growing differences, the community members are willing to work things out to ensure they continue to live amicably. This is because the arrival of the refugees has made the district grow from an area mainly used for farm activities with few homesteads into a flourishing business hub with different services being put in places mainly by humanitarian agencies thereby easing the burden of travelling long distances by the residents in search of health facilities, schools and trade among other.

The study also found out that before the refugees came in, members of the host community already had different land issues as a result of unclear land boundary and lack of land title due to the dominant customary land tenure. Also, after spending close to two decades in the IDP camps as a result of the insecurity caused by the LRA rebels in the region, most elders who knew the boundary had passed on and the boundary marks like trees and anthills had

been destroyed by the rebels who had practically taken over the area. This coupled with the high demand for land after the return brought several land complaints and conflict among the community members that are still far from being fully settled. So, the new spark of tension arising from the agreement between government and the land owners is like adding salt to the wound which could turn volatile if immediate solution is not found. The study suggests that in future, government should embark on sensitizing the host member and ensuring that they have some legal representatives to read through any binding agreement before they give their consent to avoid a repeat of what is happening, and refugees should also be made aware of their boundary to reduce minor conflicts like trespass. Besides, any promises made should be fulfilled before the affected people start disgruntling over government failure to honor part of the bargain. The big dilemma remains how long will the refugees remain on the land which cannot be answered now because of the volatile situation in South Sudan despite attempts to ensure the warring faction come to an agreement and cease fire. Some people had in the recent past tried to go back but when fresh attacks broke out, they had to return for their safety.

Appendices

Interview guide for various interviewees

1. Refugees

Biodata

Name:

Age:

Sex:

Education

Marital status

Occupation:

Location:

Language spoken:

Interview questions

1. When did you arrive in Uganda and the settlement camp?
2. Briefly describe the process you went through during integration?
3. What were the challenges you experienced in the first month of integration?
4. How would you compare life back home and here as a refugee?
5. What are the major sources of livelihood?
6. What are the effects of the settlement on culture?
7. How can you describe your relationship with the host community?
8. Where do you access services like health, education and water among others?
9. What are the challenges faced in accessing the above-mentioned services and the coping strategies?
10. What would you like to be done for better coexistence?

2. Government officials.

Name:

Age:

Sex:

Education

Occupation:

Location:

Experiences with migration and refugee-related subjects

1. Policies??
2. Legislations
3. International instruments
4. Programmes
5. Projects
6. Locations
7. Resources
8. What are the land concerns arising as a result of the refugee land policy?
9. What is the latest number of refugees by sex registered in the camp?
10. What are the enabling factors and challenges with the integration?
11. What measures has the government put in place to address challenges arising from the integration?
12. How is the government getting resources to support the refugees and the host community?
13. What plans has government put in place for both the refugees and the host community in the next five years?

3. NGOs (Local and international)

Name:

Age:

Sex:

Education

Occupation:

Location:

Experiences with migration and refugee-related subjects:

1. Policies

2. International instruments
3. Programmes
4. Projects
5. Locations
6. Resources
7. Relation with government, refugees and local community

8. When did your organization start its operation in the settlement camp?
9. What kind of work does your organization do with the refugees?
10. What are your target beneficiaries and what are the criteria used in selecting them?
11. What are the concerns of the refugees and host communities in the settlement camp?
12. What role does your organization play in ensuring coexistence between refugees and host community?
13. What are some of the challenges the organization is facing and the coping mechanism?
14. What sustainable plans does the organization has for both refugees and the host community?

4. Local community leaders

Name:

Age:

Sex:

Education

Occupation:

Location:

Experiences with migration and refugee-related subjects:

1. What can you say about the integration and relationship between refugees and the local community members?
2. What are the effects of the settlement on culture and service delivery?
3. What kind of issues are reported to your office by both refugees and community members?
4. How are the concerns addressed?

5. As leaders, how do you ensure there is peaceful coexistence and rights of both parties are respected?

5. Local community members

Name:

Age:

Sex:

Education

Occupation:

Location:

Experiences with migration and refugee-related subjects:

1. How can you describe your relationship with the refugees?
2. What has the integration brought?
3. What challenges are you facing in accessing services?
4. What was state of services delivery before and after the refugees came?
What are the coping mechanisms to the challenges?
5. What is the government, leaders and NGOs doing to ensure peaceful coexistence?

6. School and hospital

Name:

Age:

Sex:

Education

Occupation:

Location:

Experiences with migration and refugee-related subjects:

1. The number of refugees attending school and accessing health services at the identified health facility.
2. What challenges are the institution facing regarding the settlement?

3. What are the concerns of both refugees and the host communities regarding service delivery?
4. What has the government and relevant stake holders done to address the concerns of the institutions, refugees and host community.
5. What could be the possible way forward (opinion of the concerned parties)

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