'KUC' (PEACE): ITS IMPLICATIONS AND APPLICATION AMONG THE ACHOLI COMMUNITIES OF PALARO AND ATIAK CLANS

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DECLARATION

I, Christopher ORINGA, do hereby declare that this dissertation is my original work, and that it has neither been submitted nor is being submitted in any other University or higher institute of learning for the award of any Diploma, Degree or any other qualifications.

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APPROVAL

This dissertation has been submitted for examination with the approval of the supervisor.

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my little angel - . Emmanuel Gary MOGI

LIST OF ABBREVATIONS

FGD	Focus Group Discussion
HSMF	Holy Spirit Mobile Force
ICC	International Criminal Court
IDP	Internally Displaced People's
LRA	The Lord's Resistance Army
MAP	Medical Assistance Programs
NGOs	Non Governmental Organisations
NRA	National Resistance Army
NUTI	Northern Uganda Transition Initiative
PSC	Protracted Social Conflict
UGX	Uganda Shillings
UNITA	National Union for the Total Independence of Angola
UNLA	Uganda National Liberation Army
UPDA	Uganda People Defence Army
UPDF	Uganda People Defence Force
USAID	United State Agency for International Development
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Scientists

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation investigates the concept of '*Kuc*' (Peace), its implications and application for Acholi communities of Palaro and Atiak in northern Uganda. While other studies have focused on the distinctive and highly visible aspects of the conflict in northern Uganda for example loss of lives, destruction of properties, a broader definition of the conflicts and peace amongst the Acholi communities of Atiak and Palaro entailing relationship, peace and structural conflicts have been the main target of this study. The study proposes strategies of traditional conflict resolution mechanisms among the Acholi communities in northern Uganda which should be enhanced and sustained by transformational development.

The key questions to this study were: What is the 'indigenous' knowledge and understanding of '*Kuc*' among the Acholi. What are the implications and application of '*Kuc*' among the two Acholi communities of Palaro and Atiak? What are the potential factors that disrupt peace?

The dissertation highlights the Acholi history, concept of '*Kuc*', conflict theories, traditional rituals that trigger and support conflicts, traditional mediation ceremonies and contemporary elements of peace. The researcher largely used qualitative and quantitative research methods in the data collection and analysis. Questionnaires, observation, interview guide, and Focus Group Discussion (FGD) guides were the research tools that were used in data collection. Data analysis was done with the help of the Statistical Package for Social Scientists (SPSS) version 10.0 using descriptive statistics and percentage.

The findings indicate that most respondents from these communities receive more information about '*Kuc*' through the media. Furthermore, the notion of '*Kuc*' (peace), its implications and application are rooted in the culture; and informal education plays a role in imparting knowledge of '*Kuc*', and most Acholi traditional rituals that are used in the management of small-scale conflicts are effective.

CHAPTER ONE

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction to the study

This study analyses specific issues like traditional rituals that trigger and support conflicts, traditional mediation ceremonies and describes the concept of '*Kuc*' (peace), its implications and application among the two Acholi communities of Palaro and Atiak clans in northern Uganda. In particular, it examines how the two Acholi communities understand the notion of peace, and what the implications and application of peace are for them. The two communities have a rich distinct cultural belief in the spirit world. These beliefs shape their perception of "*Kuc*", truth, justice, forgiveness and reconciliation.

The Traditional cultural practice and the role of elders and chiefs remain important and play a cardinal role in understanding '*Kuc*' and finding conflict resolution mechanisms.

1.1 Background of the Study

The long history of political violence in post colonial Uganda, poses a challenge in social, economic and ethnic divisions. (Gersony 1987: 95) "Divisions among different ethnic groups are based on fear for their survival, victimization, divisive political rhetoric, and myths of differences and boundaries among groups. These have compromised the peaceful coexistence among different tribes in Uganda since independence in 1962" (Behrend 1999: 176) This is significant in the study since it described the Uganda conflict history to which this study of notion of '*Kuc*' in northern Uganda finds direction.

Initially, the rebellion against the NRA (National Resistance Army) which begun in 1986 had massive support with some Acholi elders giving their support to the rebellion through performing war rituals, blessing the combatants using a ritual tree (*Olwedo)* After the defeat of the UPDA by the government forces, Acholi resistance became less universal and well organized. Nevertheless, Alice Auma, who formed the Holy Spirit Mobile Forces (HSMF), in late-1986/end-1987 continued with the rebellion. (Lucima, 2002: 12)

The Holy Spirit Mobile Force (HSMF) combined both

> Christian and Acholi beliefs, notion of peace, conflicts and rituals. Alice, who claimed the 'holy' spirits possessed her, performed many traditional rituals that played a role in sustaining the HSMF war against the National Resistance Army (NRA) for over a year from 1986 to the end of 1987. (Gersony 1987: 87)

Because the researcher grew up in northern Uganda, and witnessed the conflicts in that region, he was able to recollect the traditional rituals that characterized the conflicts in the Acholi sub-region. "The HSMF used 'holy' water for cleansing military recruits, healing, and blessings, and for 'cooling' the power of the enemy's arms". (Gersony 1987: 95)

Attempts have been made to end the war between the LRA and government of Uganda by Acholi traditional leaders, International Non-governmental Organizations, local initiatives among others, but none has found a lasting solution. Several LRA fighters and commanders, including many responsible for grave human rights abuses, are among the people who have received amnesties under the Amnesty Act of 2000. This was enacted to encourage rebels to lay down their arms and surrender. The Uganda government has provided the LRA ex-fighters 'amnesty packages' of cash and supplies such as mattresses, basins, cooking utensils, soaps, to help them resettle. Although this has helped demobilise the LRA soldiers, it has also created mixed feelings and resentment among the impoverished civilian population in the north who suffered many abuses in the hand of the rebels.

The Acholi are a Luo Nilotic people, who moved to present day northern Uganda from the area of Bahr el Ghazal in the Sudan. From the late seventeenth century, a new socio-political order emerged among the Luo of northern Uganda, mainly characterized by the formation of chiefdoms headed by *Rwodi* (single. *Rwot*, 'ruler') "By the mid-nineteenth century, about sixty small chiefdoms existed in eastern Acholiland. During the second half of the nineteenth century Arabic-speaking traders from the north started to call them *Shooli*, a term which transformed into 'Acholi'". (Atkinson, 1999: 58)

1.2 Statement of the Research Problem

A series of diplomatic and military initiatives failed to resolve the conflict between the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) and Uganda Government, especially since Kony's negotiating position remained uncertain.

Some researchers, in an effort to understand the complexities of achieving a lasting peace in Northern Uganda, have conducted qualitative and quantitative researches, consisting primarily of interviews with Government, humanitarian workers, religious leaders, former LRA, Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) and victims especially women and children. However, these efforts did not critically investigate the concept of '*Kuc*', or even possible factors that could disrupt '*Kuc*' among the Acholi communities, its implications and application.

1.3 Scope of the Study

The study was limited to identifying, describing and analyzing the concept of 'Kuc' its implications and some application in Acholi community of Palaro and Atiak clans. The study was carried out in Gulu and Amure districts as samples districts in the Acholi region because the characteristics of the study are more or less similar and therefore portrayed representative results.

The contextual scope of the study was the concept of 'Kuc' among the Acholi community of Northern Uganda. The time scope was four months.

1.4 Definition of key Terms

(i) '*Kuc*': In Acholi culture, 'Kuc' is equated with 'freshness', health, well being, harmony, calm and tranquillity.

(ii) Acholi: Ethnic group in northern Uganda occupying area commonly referred to as Acholiland

(iii) Conflict: A state of tension between two or more parties with perceived incompatible goals or values.

(iv) Community: A group of people living in the same locality and under the same government

(v) Conflict prevention: The act of inhibiting the occurrence of conflicts as well as mitigating conflicts.

(vi) Conflict management: A measure aimed at reducing the intensity of any conflict.

(vii) Ritual: Prescribed, established, or ceremonial acts or features collectively

1.5 Objectives of the Study

The following are the objectives of the study:-

- To identify, describe and analyze indigenous implications and application of *'Kuc'* (peace*)* among the two Acholi communities of Palaro and Atiak clans
- To examine contemporary perception regarding postcolonial Uganda effectiveness of traditional notion of "*Kuc*" for resolving conflicts among the two Acholi communities of Palaro and Atiak clans
- To identify and analyze factors that can potentially disrupt "*Kuc*" among two Acholi communities of Palaro and Atiak

1.6 Research Questions

The main research questions addressed are:

1. What is the 'indigenous' knowledge and understanding of '*Kuc*' among the Acholi and how does it help to manage conflicts among the Acholi?
2. What are the implications and application of '*Kuc*' among the two Acholi communities of Palaro and Atiak clans?
3. What are the potential factors that disrupt peace?

1.7 Significance of the Study

The duration and intensity of the conflict between the LRA and Uganda government, in Acholiland examined against the background of the costs (human, materials and otherwise) and the efforts to resolve this particular conflict presents a gap in so far as resolution is concerned. In addition, the fact that this community has lagged behind the rest of the country in term of development due largely to the conflict calls for efforts to explore the notion of peace in Acholi context.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This section explored in a broad way the available literature as relevant to the study and the major variables. The literature review also revolve around the major conceptual and contectual issues in the topic namely: the concept of 'Kuc' its implications and application and portential factors that could disrupt 'Kuc' were given special attntion. Following this literatures on the concept of 'Kuc' (peace) among the Acholi community were reviewed and subsequently, the gaps in current literature available identified and served as the focus of the study, with a special emphasis on the concept of 'Kuc' its implications and application.

2.1 Concepts of Peace

At the outset we face definitional challenges and the need to differentiate among different terms and concepts. What exactly do we mean by peace? The term is highly emotive, historian Michael Howard wrote, and is often abused as a" tool of political propaganda". (Howard, 1971: 225)

When peace is defined narrowly without putting it into context, it can imply passivity and the acceptance of injustice. During the cold war the word had subversive implications and was often associated with communism. Moscow sponsored ersatz "peace councils," which gave the word a negative connotation. (Charles, 1992: 23) Hesitancy about the meaning of peace existed long before the cold war. In the years before World War I, Andrew Carnegie lavishly funded programs to prevent war and advance international cooperation, but he was uncomfortable with the word peace and wanted to leave it out of the title of the international endowment he left as his legacy. (Charles, 1992: 23)

"Peace is more than the absence of war. It is also "the maintenance of an orderly and just society," Howard 1971 wrote that "orderly in being protected against the violence or extortion of aggressors, and just in being defended against exploitation and abuse by the more powerful". (Ibid, 1971: 226) Many writers

distinguish between negative peace, which is simply the absence of war, and positive which is the presence of justice.

Johan Galtung developed the concept of "structural violence" to describe situations of negative peace that have violent and unjust consequences. (Galtung, 1969: 167–97). Violence, in Galtung's expansive definition is any condition that prevents a human being from achieving her or his full potential. Leonardo Boff, a Brazilian priest and theologian, employed the term "originating violence," which he defined as an "oppressive social condition that preserves the interests of the elite over the needs of dispossessed and marginalized populations". (Leonardo, 1991: 543). Originating or structural violence can include impoverishment, deprivation, humiliation, political repression, a lack of human rights, and the denial of self-determination. Positive peace means transcending the conditions that limit human potential and assuring opportunities for self-realization.

Gandhi's comment of non-violence rather than peace and emphasized the necessity of overcoming injustice. Gandhi's meaning was deftly summarized by Jonathan Schell: "Violence is a method by which the ruthless few can subdue the passive many. Non-violence is a means by which the active many can overcome the ruthless few." (Galtung, 1969: 198)

The basic point is that peace is a relation, between two or more parties. The parties may be inside a person, a state or nation, a region or civilization, pulling in different directions. Peace is not a property of one party alone, but relation between parties. Saying that in no sense belittles the significance of the party's intent and capability to build peaceful relations. There are three types of relations human being can have, these are;

1. Negative: Disharmonious: what is bad for one is good for the other.
2. Indifferent: a   non-relation,   they   do   not   care   about   the   other.
3. Positive: Harmonious: what is bad-good for one is bad-good for other.

In the world relations may be mixes of all three, when the negative relation is brought about with intent, the party is an actor, we talk about direct violence, or harm, and about war if the actor is collective. If the violence to a party is not intended (but watch out for acts of commission, more or less intended!), it may be referred to as indirect, often caused by inequitable structures producing harm

- structural violence. And then the role of culture legitimizing either or both types of violence: cultural violence, from this follow two concepts of peace:

Negative Peace: the absence of violence, like a cease-fire, like keeping them apart, not negative but indifferent relations.
Positive Peace: the presence of harmony, intended or not. They are as different as negative health, the absence of (symptoms of) illness and positive health, the feeling of wellness and the capacity to handle some illness. (Galtung, 1969: 198)

Peace, however conceived, as a "characteristic of some 'system': intrapersonal, interpersonal, intra-societal, and inter-societal". (Galtung, 1969: 198) It is a concept applied by a particular community to a contextual and social situation and system; hence it will necessarily be highlighted by the traditions governing concept-formation and system-creation in that community. Community in the sense that there may be said to be more similarity within than between these vast categories, then this should be reflected in the peace concepts.

There are groups of communities, and as they refer to infinite, ephemeral and deep states or processes, close to or identical with the final goal, the community reflected in them will have to be even more infinite, ephemeral, and deep. The 'Cosmology' or deep 'ideology' of the community may be such a concept, and in the Western case this would lead to two immediate predictions about peace concepts: they will tend to make a very clear distinction between 'in-group' and 'out-group', 'centre' and 'periphery'; or one might refer to a distinction between 'us' and 'them'. They will tend to be universal and encompassing the whole (known) universe. (Galtung, 1969: 169)

The Galtung distinction between 'Binnenmoral' and 'Aussenmoral' would be reflected, seeing 'peace' as something pertaining to relations within the in-group and war as something referring to relations between in-group and out-group, as well as (but this is less significant insofar as it does not concern 'us') relations within the out-group. Thus, one would accept Western peace concepts to deal with the world as a whole, one way or the other - either by planning 'peace' for us in the centre as a state of affairs regulating internal relations at the same time as external relations based on defensive or even offensive activities are pre-pared, or by extending the peace concept to the whole world, universal peace, but in that case according to

Western concepts, or even administered from the West, one way or the other. Obviously, these two can be combined in the idea of a *justum* bellum against the 'out-group', the 'periphery', a war for peace, a final war, with a view to extend 'in-group', Western peace to the whole world, by westernizing the world one way or the other. (Galtung, 1981: 94)

2.2 Elements of the Concept of Peace

In all historical periods, war and peace have played essential part in the thinking and acting of mankind. (Galtung, 1981: 96) The disastrous effects of war to health and existence have forced individuals and peoples to take preventive and adaptive measures, and have in all times made scholars and politicians state or proclaim the ideal of a harmonious and peaceful social order, without being able to explain exactly what peace is and how it could be gained. These considerations reflect the desire of most people to live in peace, and furthermore, they express the understanding that social progress and personal happiness are only possible under peaceful conditions. Peace was not only understood as a contrast to war, as a state of non-war, but also identified with material well-being and socio-economical progress. (Galtung, 1981: 96) Greek philosophers characterized peace as 'the greatest good'. (Galtung, 1981: 96) That means that the concept of 'positive peace', this Greek characterization of peace is greatly similar with Acholi concept of *'Kuc'*, as having plenty of food, happiness, and harmonious living with the community and Spirits.

Peace worked above all as a desirable social ideal and meant prevention of disasters and destruction, maintenance and development of human achievements. It regularized and inspired in many ways the activities of social subjects and individuals, and at a very early point took the character of a superior value with normative properties. Even the anticipated ideal of a peace-preserving social order, conceived above all by utopian thinkers, often became a stimulating factor, because it made the people oppose the existing relations and give their lives for a just society and a better future. In connection to this the Acholi communities of Palaro and Atiak clans also observed that '*Kuc*' work is greater than other activities as a social need, and they worked hard to prevent any disasters and destruction both naturally and artificially, to maintain and develop human society. (Galtung, 1981: 96)

"The progressive social theories from past and present also emphasize the ideal of harmonious relations between human beings and nature without conflicts. This ideal was connected with ideas about the nature and structure of society". (Ferguson, 1977: 38) In this context, '*Kuc*' in Acholi is often understood as a means to implement other societal and individual goals. In many respects, peace was, and is still seen, in a very abstract way as an aim' as such', as a certain state of society. This is surely an unrealistic point of departure.

> In the late feudal period, dealing with war and peace was given a considerable momentum. The interests of the bourgeoisie as a progressive class at that time found their expression in humanism and Enlightenment, Bourgeois thinkers, such as Sismondi and Kant, opposed the apparent social evils, serfdom and wars starting from the existing social relations. Their idealized anticipation of historical processes resulted from ignorance about how the laws of capitalism would develop. Practice defeated those ideas developed in all the different variants and modifications of the 'social contract'. (Galtung, 1979: 235)

The development of the bourgeois social order, people were very intensively seeking for an explanation of peace and made numerous considerations indicating the respective levels of cognition and progress in understanding the problem. Despite their mostly idealistic orientation, these considerations form a basis for further discussions about the definition of peace.

In the 1960s and '70s, scholars from many countries - especially in the context of the development of peace research - have produced many ideas on how to define peace. There is a wide range of views - from the denial of any possibility for the definition of peace, via those definitions made by Johan Galtung, and up to the determination of peace by the 'critical peace research'. Peace research as such is increasingly characterized as an applied science which has to analyze those conditions that enable, endanger, or prevent peace. In the mid-seventies, Lopez, (1989: 504) wrote in a critical manner on the existing situation:

> The science of war has reached its culmination. But there exists no science of peace ... On the one hand it has to be realistically stated that till now, peace research has had no conceptions to offer which will be taken culturally, economically, socially and politically seriously. On the other hand, it is just as clear that such concepts - if there were any - would find no political support. The established powers and institutions are interested in the maintenance of the status quo. The perpetuation of the status quo in today's world is bound to lead to war. Those who want to create peace have to change the world and seek a new order. Any new order will destroy existing structures, and its undoubted content of reality depends on that. But the science of peace is moving inflammation of power. Military science is in accordance with existing political structures, and its undoubted content of reality depends on that. But the science of peace is moving within a political vacuum; no

wonder that it has so far been unable to gain a foothold in reality. (Lopez, 1989: 504)

2.3 Understanding Conflict

Folger (1997: 128) defined conflict as "the interaction of interdependent people who perceive incompatible goals and interference from each other in achieving those goals". Pruitt & Rubin (1986: 35) agree with this definition and add that conflict is a "perceived divergence of interest, or a belief that the parties' current aspirations cannot be achieved simultaneously". Conflict, as described, can take place at various levels - between two or more people, communities, tribes or nations.

Nicholson (1992: 11) posits that conflict exists when "two people wish to carry out acts, which are mutually inconsistent". They may both want to do the same thing, or they may want to do different things where the different things are mutually incompatible. A conflict is resolved when some mutually compatible set of actions are worked out. The definition of conflict can be extended from individuals to groups such as states or nations, and more than two parties can be involved in the conflict.

Nicholson's and Folger's definitions suggest that conflicts may only be experienced between humans and groups of humans. His definition does not encompass the conflicts which may exist between or within the spiritual world or between the spirits and humans. Although this level of conflict is virtually never discussed in contemporary conflict resolution literature, it is not a foreign concept to the Judeo-Christian, Western world. Spiritual conflict and spiritual warfare has had a long history in Western literature and thinking up to the present day. Its absence from conflict resolution literature is not reflective of its place in contemporary society and this study may help explore this neglected realm of conflict.

2.4 Peace from a Socio-Cultural Perspective

In Acholi culture, '*Kuc*' (peace) is equated with 'freshness', health, well being, harmony, calm and tranquillity. (Individual interview with an elder from Palaro, 26th September 2009) The absence of such qualities was seen as the sign of conflicts, which could be either latent or overt. It was that harmony and freshness which provided farmers with good crops, fishermen with abundant catches and hunters with game. When there was enough food for everyone, peace would reign in homes and families, clans and tribes. As nobody had any reason to be envious of anybody

else, neighbouring communities could live in peace, visit one another during the off-seasons and attend marriages and funerals.

2.5 Theories of Conflict

This section explores the schools of thoughts of conflict theories in order to offer an understanding of what causes conflicts in society. It also aims at defining and exploring the scope and variety of conflicts so that the conflicts in Acholi can be put into perspective. A review of conflict theories will reveal a number of observations.

An overview of conflict theories reveals that large volumes of literature have been written about the nature and theory of conflict, with emphasis on violent conflicts. The debate on conflict theories are far from over since a number of scholars present different explanations as to why conflicts occur among humans at intra-personal and inter-personal levels. A look at theoretical conflict frameworks is essential because theoretical perspectives on conflict guide conflict intervention approaches.

The assumptions of some small-scale conflict theories are that the root causes of war lie in human nature, motivation, and behaviour and that an important relationship exists between the intra-personal conflicts that a person experiences and the inter-personal conflicts. Among the proponents of small-scale conflict theories is Konrad Lorenz with his theory on human aggression.

Lorenz, (1966) in his theory of aggression, posits that aggressive human behaviour reflects survival-enhancing instinct. Lorenz's main assumption is that "the root causes of conflict lies in human nature and human behaviour". Lorenz gives a vivid description of behaviour patterns observed in a wide variety of animals. In his argument, Lorenz explains that humans, like all other animal, are endowed with fixed patterns of behaviour oriented towards self-preservation, which makes them instinctively aggressive. In the context of civil wars that have been experienced in northern Uganda, the rebels groups that were formed by Acholi, the Uganda People's Defence Army (UPDA), the Holy Spirit Mobile Force (HSMF) and the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) forces, fought against the National Resistance Army (NRA) led by Yoweri Museveni as a means of self-preservation. The Acholi had fears that the NRA would seek retribution for the brutal actions of the national army, the Uganda National Liberation Army (UNLA) that they had dominated in the previous regime.

Similarly, the LRA rebel's aggression fits in Lorenz's theory. The LRA rebels have displayed their aggression in several ways. Gina L. Bramucci (2001: 92) reports:

….Captives were forced to serve as porters, soldiers and, in the case of girls, sex slaves. Within the LRA ranks, around 90 percent of "soldiers" are estimated to be abducted children. They are often forced to murder family members and neighbours, and then placed on the frontlines against the government army…

The brutal abduction and conscription of people, including children, into LRA ranks shows how aggressive the rebel groups have been. In addition, the use of children as human shield as quoted from Gina's article showed that the LRA was acting towards self-preservation so that they are not victims of the violence during combat.

Konrad's view is shared by the behaviourist school that seeks to establish that humans possess either biological or psychological characteristics that would predispose them towards aggression and conflict. The Conflict Baseline Study conducted in Karamoja cluster of Kenya and Uganda in 2005 by United State Agency for International Development (USAID) reveals that aggression can be induced through socialization and response to stimulus. The report notes that in Karamoja:

Livestock possession is not only a source of wealth, but it is also a source of power, status, heroism, and recognition in society. This provides a basis for pastoralists to believe that in as much as it is their right to own livestock, it is also absolutely right for them to graze and water their livestock anywhere and to forcefully dispossess others of herds.

The USAID report of (1994: 11) on aggression shows that aggression in humans may not necessarily be instinctive but is a result of responses to social pressure. If peers and elders meet aggressive responses to the environmental stimuli with approval, as is the case of Karamojong, then aggression is reinforced whereas aggression will be reduced it is met with rejection, reprimands and lack of approval. In such a way, it is arguable that people learn violence from their environment and culture rather than manifest is as a result of inherent drives.

The view that aggression is not inborn is supported by Henri Tajfel (1981: 320) who posits in his theory of social identity that, "conflicts in the developing

countries are a manifestation of a people's quest for self-identity that they have been denied by those in power, but not aggression". According to Tajfel, as humans we create our social identities in order to simplify our external relations. There is a human need for positive self-esteem and self-worth, which we transfer to our own groups through ordering our environment by social comparison between groups. The theory analyzes the importance of the concept of 'in-groups' and 'out-groups.' "Identity boundaries between in-groups and out-groups are established by a subjective group consciousness," Tajfel asserts.

Group relations are of course, at the root of conflict in northern Uganda, whereas resource-based conflicts characterize the relationship between Karamojong tribe and its neighbours, including the Acholi. However, identity can be used instrumentally to promote individual or collective interests and not only to cause conflict. It is when people competing for power use ethnicity and group identity as a tool to mobilize popular support for their own ends that identity can contribute to conflict. This was the case in Rwanda and Burundi between Hutu and Tutsi ethnic groups. It is worth noting here that ethnic differences are not in themselves causes of conflict in any society, but the salience of group identity is awakened by socially derived group inequalities.

Abraham Maslow posits that, "failure to meet basic human needs can cause conflicts". Such needs include the need for personal fulfilment in all areas of life, need for identity in relation to the outside world, and cultural security. While identity and cultural needs are sources of conflicts, they are also important components in conflict resolution. Burton affirms that culture is important because it influences our thoughts and behaviours especially our experiences with conflict. Since culture prescribes strategies for conflict intervention, it is a "satisfier". Traditional societies are more inclined towards traditional rituals that lead to cooperative problem solving than the type of confrontation and power bargaining which has become dominant in addressing contemporary conflicts. Scholars who are advocates of cultural and indigenous approaches to conflict resolutions believe that incorporating various traditional theories and practices into the contemporary general mechanism of conflict resolution would lead to durable peace.

Augsburger (2000: 149) argues that in traditional culture, there exist pathways in the ethnic wisdom for managing conflicts and understanding the notion

of peace. This important component of culture may be lost to westernization. Taking northern Uganda as an example, some rebel groups manipulated the Acholi ethnic wisdom to support conflict. The Holy Spirit Movement Force (HSMF) and Lord Resistance Army (LRA) used several traditional rituals to support their wars against the Uganda government forces, the UPDF. Because traditional rituals were used to start the conflict, it is in this "pathway" of the tradition that the solution to the ongoing conflict may be found. A better insight on how conflicts can be addressed among indigenous societies using rituals could provide a clue on how a ritually supported conflict can be resolved. Indigenous societies use rituals to promote initiation of people into society, redress, healing, reconciliation and restoration of hope in indigenous communities as well as triggering and supporting conflict. It is thus necessary to have a better understanding of how traditional rituals and ceremonies relate to conflicts.

2.6 The nexus between 'Kuc' (peace), traditional rituals and small-scale conflict

Indigenous societies either use rituals directly or indirectly to trigger, or transform conflicts. A closer look at this aspect provides more details about the relationship between '*Kuc*', rituals and conflict. Some traditional rituals that can be used directly or indirectly to trigger or support conflict within Acholi society include witchcraft, ritual blessing, and ritual curses.

2.7 Traditional Rituals that Trigger Conflicts

Witchcraft rituals are among traditional rituals that trigger conflicts. (Martin Karimi, 2004: 135), who worked for the Intermediate Technology Development Group, Eastern Africa describes *Muma* as a Pokot indigenous witchcraft ritual that is culturally acceptable by the community because it is done in broad daylight. It is performed when there is a crime that is committed in the community and no one wants to admit guilt. The *Muma* ritual targets only the evil doers for the good of the Pokot society. The ritual is not intended to harm innocent individuals. According to Karimi, "the complainant is asked to provide a steer, preferably not white in colour and traditional beer (*pketiis*) for the ritual." (Kumar, 1997: 53)

In the ritual, a red-hot spear is used to kill the steer by piercing it around the chest to the heart then it is pointed towards the sun while elders cast a spell, condemning the criminals who in most cases are thieves (*onyot*), to death including

members of his or her family and clan. Afterward, the meat is roasted and eaten and its bones and skin is burnt to ashes and buried or thrown into a river. Whoever interferes with the steer's remains is also cursed to death.

Karimi contends that *Muma* has the capacity to "wipe out members of the whole clan if not reversed" starting with the members of the family responsible for the theft or any particular crime.

The affliction affects only male members of the family. When the victim's family starts dying, the afflicted family or clan members convene a *Kokwo* and plead to pay back what was reported stolen to stop more deaths. The elders convene and a steer is slaughtered, eaten and the affected family members are cleansed with traditional beer, milk and honey. The elders reverse the curse and further deaths cease. *Muma* acts as prevention to theft and other crimes in Pokot society. Given that the process of conducting the ritual is scaring and its effects dreadful, *Muma* is an effective preventive measure to prevent internal conflicts among the Pokot.

However, innocent people may die because of one person's crime if the ritual is not reversed and this can cause more conflicts within the community or clans of the afflicted people. Similar ritual curses are performed by indigenous Acholi societies but the way they are performed differs from one clan to the other. An important question that requires more investigation is whether all witchcraft rituals or curses can be undone by doing another ritual like the Pokot people do. This is particularly important to consider in northern Uganda where rituals are perceived to have been undertaken to start the war. It is important to know if they can be ritually reversed for the sake of peace.

2.8 Traditional Rituals that Support Conflicts
2.8.1 Initiation Rites

During the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) rebel activities in Angola, child soldiers were initiated into the army and hardened through ritual drinking of human blood. According to Alcinda Honwana (1998: 89), one former soldier reported that, "I used to drink the blood of the people I killed ... today I cannot look at red wine because I feel like killing and sucking blood again" (Alcinda, 1998: 24) From the child soldier's confession, some rituals play a big role in supporting conflict. Similarly, Honwana reports ritual hero naming of combatants

by UNITA rebels made the soldiers fight hard to maintain their hero status. Although it is questionable whether the ritual drinking of blood has any medicinal effect in the body, just like ritual naming, it may have psychological implications for the people who perform the rituals. The traditional means of providing therapy to the victims of such rituals needs to be known so that a remedy can be provided.

2.8.2 *"Goyo Laa"* Ceremony

The Liu Institute for Global Issues (2005) in their study on *"Roco Wat I Acholi,"* indicated that the Acholi elders play a big role in providing ritual blessing, which is referred to as *Goyo Laa* in Acholi vernacular. The report states that, "Before any sacrifice is offered to gods, elders first ask ancestral spirits to grace the occasion" (Kumar, 1997: 78)

The *Goyo Laa* ritual involves the spitting of saliva or water on the chest or palm of a person to ask god to bless an individual when he or she wants to achieve something in life. *Goyo laa,* a socially acceptable ritual within the Acholi community, is perceived to support conflict because it empowers an individual who receives the blessing. However, when a ritual blessing is abused or misused, it can cause interpersonal conflicts. For instance, a perceived ritually supported conflict in northern Uganda that affects the people who offered the blessing shows how *Goyo Laa* can play a dual role for and against those who offer the blessings. Unlike the *muma* traditional ritual practiced by the Pokot community of Kenya that can be undone, little is known about the possibility of undoing the *Goyo Laa* (ritual blessings) in Acholi.

2.8.3 Rituals of Reconciliation

Reconciliation is a theme with deep psychological, sociological, theological, philosophical, cultural and profoundly human roots with multiple meanings. Microsoft Encarta Dictionary defines reconciliation as "the ending of conflict or renewing of a friendly relationship between disputing people or groups" (Kumar, 1997: 35). This definition views reconciliation as process of mending the relationship which existed between belligerents before the outbreak of the conflict.

Scholars and practitioners do not have a standard definition of reconciliation that they all use. However, almost everyone acknowledges that it includes at least four critical components identified by John Paul Lederach (1997: 29) "truth, justice, mercy, and peace." These concepts are frequently seen to be in opposition to each

other. However, they must come together for reconciliation to occur.

Reconciliation may occur within or between individuals, families, tribes, nations or governments. In order to be reconciled, both groups must acknowledge the injuries and suffering that occurred, must redress injustices, must acknowledge the humanity of those who inflicted injury and must look forward to shared security and well-being. Reconciliation may be one-sided or symmetrical. When groups are unequal, the dominant group may be able to simply ignore the injuries done to the other group. Kriesberg notes, "Coexistence and reconciliation are most likely to be equitable when there is no clear victor and each side must attend to the concerns of their adversaries." Kriesberg (1992: 186). The degree of reconciliation may vary as these aspects differ. However, some degree of mutual acknowledgement is essential.

Indigenous societies adopted traditional rituals for reconciliation in addressing strained relationship caused by conflicts within or between communities. Traditional rituals of reconciliation are performed when there are interpersonal conflicts that threaten co-existence of people in a community. The prerequisite for traditional ritual reconciliatory ceremonies is to have elders play a neutral role as mediators during the conflict. After cessation of hostilities, public confessions, forgiveness reconciliation and payments of reparation are done. This is then sealed by performing traditional rituals.

2.9 Traditional Mediation Ceremonies
2.9.1 "*Gomo Tong*" Ritual

This is a symbolic ritual of cessation of hostilities. *Gomo Tong* is a Luo word meaning the "Bending of Spears." It is a vow between two belligerents (clans or tribes) engaged in violent conflict to end hostilities. Depending on the nature of the conflict, *Gomo tong* is done together with *Mato Oput*. Elders from conflicting clans or tribes meet to discuss the source of conflict, develop prevention strategies and to warn the population to discontinue fighting. The mediator bends the spear to signify that the conflict is over. In the act of bending the spear, the spirits of both sides are invoked and promises are made that killings would stop. If, without good cause, conflict starts again, it is believed that the tip of the spear would turn back against the aggressor.

2.9.2 "*Mato Oput*" Ceremony

Whenever peace is threatened in their community by a killing, the elders of Acholi tribe from northern Uganda come together and perform a cleansing ceremony called *Mato Oput* (drinking from the bitter roots of "*Oput*" tree). The *Mato Oput* ceremony is performed with the aim of resolving the bitterness and ill will that follows the killing. Thus, the process of *Mato Oput* also addresses a 'spiritual dimension', as it was believed that the spirit of the dead remained restless with bitterness and consequently brought misfortune to both the perpetrators and offenders as well as disunity amongst clans. The *Mato Oput* ceremony involves an elaborate series of symbolic acts to restore unity between the injured parties.

It is argued that the whole process of *Mato Oput* is not formally completed until the life lost is replaced with a new one. Traditionally, a young girl from the offending clan is given as compensation to the victim's clan for marriage. The first-born child as the result of that marriage is given the name of the person killed. However, this practice is being replaced by giving cows or money for the exclusive purpose of bride price. The person receiving bride price can marry a woman of his choice, although he is still required to give the name of the deceased to the first born. Once the new family was well established, the bride price is returned to the original clan members, and *Mato Oput* is complete.

The *Mato Oput* ceremony fosters reconciliation between the two clans. While the process leading to the ceremony is similar across different clans, the ceremony itself varies widely. Before drinking the two parties to be reconciled *yoko wic* (literally 'knocking heads') to symbolize that where "heads have been separated before, they are now united." At the climax of the "*Mato Oput*" rite, both the guilty party and the wronged party drink a brew made from the herb of the *Oput* herb or roots of the '*Oput*' tree to show that they accept the bitterness of the past and promise never to taste that bitterness again.

Finally, they rejoin their communities without cruelty or victimization of each other. A party is organized in which beer and eating of the liver is done. In the process of the ceremony, the *acwiny* (liver) of the sheep or goat is cooked and eaten by both parties. According to the Acholi, the liver is thought to be the place where all bitterness is stored, or variously it is the source of life, where all 'blood' is stored.

This is similar to Burundi traditional society, where women are central in resolving inter-personal conflicts within the framework of pacts. A pact operates in the resolution of a conflict caused by the murder of a clan member. Miriam Agatha, a lecturer at Kenyatta University, Nairobi Kenya states that, "Within the framework of passive peacemaking by women, a girl is offered to the family of the victim as reparation in a blood pact" (Agatha 1996: 31). This 'blood pact' not only puts an end to the conflict in question but also diffuses any future conflict between the descendants of the two clans, with the two being thenceforth intimately linked for life.

Josiah Osamba states in his article entitled "Peace-building and Transformation from Below" that the Turkana pastoral tribe of Kenya holds a traditional "Peace Conference" ceremony when there is violent conflict that threatens the peace of the community. In the ritual ceremony, everybody in the community is mandated to attend with one objective of restoring the broken relationship and invigorating the process of healing. The ritual involves slaughtering a bull and having its blood collected and sprinkled into the air as a way of binding the community to the peace covenant. Osamba writes that, "After the reconciliation has been sealed, feasting, singing, dancing and celebration continue for several days. The reconciliation ceremony involves everybody implying that taking care of the peace agreement is a collective responsibility of the society". (Osamba 2001: 1).

Osamba adds that the Masaai tribal group in Kenya performs a "Blood Brotherhood" ceremony when there is a bloody conflict between them and any other tribe. The Masaai region normally experiences the conflict emanating from the struggle over scarce resources. When such a conflict erupts, elders organize negotiation and reconciliation at a common border where rituals are performed to solemnize the occasion. A makeshift obstacle consisting of tree branches is constructed along the border and the warriors place their spears over it. During the ritual, a dog is slain and cut into two and its blood sprinkled along the border, mothers exchange babies with the "enemy" group and suckle them while the warriors exchange spears. The elders then offer prayers and pronounce a profound curse on anyone who attempts to cross the border and create havoc to either side. Augsberger refers to this type of ceremony as a form of creating a blood brotherhood. Because the whole community is involved in the peace process

formally and informally, the peace message is incorporated in the people's oral tradition.

The above rituals show that there is communal involvement in the reconciliation ceremonies. However, new conflicts have been experienced within or between indigenous communities despite the "peace pact" that are "signed". The literature did not explain how sustainable the rituals of reconciliation are within the indigenous settings, or how indigenous communities handle the issues of trauma resulting from violent conflicts.

2.9.3 "*Stepping on an Egg and Pogo*" Cleansing Ceremony

This is a cleansing ceremony which Acholi perform on someone when he/she has been away from home or his/her clan for a long time in an unknown place or assumed dead and returned. Some people leave home because of anguish, or doing an abominable act to the community. A council of elders conduct a ritual at the entrance to the home on his or her return by officially welcoming him/her home with the stepping on the egg and *pogo* (ritual tree branch) ceremony.

Alcinda Honwana (1998: 36) writes about cleansing ceremony in Angola and states that stepping on an egg -*elembui* (the first egg of a chicken) cleansing ceremony was also practiced in Angola on former UNITA soldiers in Huambo province. Honwana states that, "the breaking of an egg at the entrance to a home symbolizes a break from the past and the expulsion of the spirits of the war that may haunt the soldier". A ritual procedure for a returning soldier involves killing of a chicken and having him jump over it before it dies then he is showered with water before entering the family house. This ritual is sometimes concluded by throwing and breaking a pot full of water between the soldier's legs.

The literature review revealed that conflicts are part of any society, though; theorists differ on whether the causes of small-scale conflict are inborn or learnt through human interactions within the society. Contemporary conflict resolution perspectives, however, may not be sufficient to address the conflict experienced among the Acholi since many small-scale conflicts are perceived to have spiritual dimensions.

The literature further shared that some traditional rituals are perceived as being responsible for causing, supporting or resolving conflicts in indigenous societies. However, the actual efficacy of these traditional rituals in either starting or

resolving these conflicts remains an unanswered question. Furthermore, the rituals identified as involved in conflict management did not seem to be designed to deal with large-scale conflicts such as the civil war in northern Uganda. The gap that the literature left unfilled is whether there are traditional rituals that can be adapted to effectively deal with this type of large-scale conflict.

2.10 The Concept of Conflict Management

This section introduces the three most common concepts of the "management" of conflicts: Conflict Management, Conflict Resolution, and Conflict Transformation. Conflict management theorists see conflicts as an inevitable fact of life born out of different values und interests between and within communities. Conflict has both a positive and a negative side. It can be a catalyst for social change and development. (Bloomfield 1998: 52)

Conflict management encompasses two approaches: The first is the art of appropriate intervention to achieve political settlement of conflicts by working with those actors that have power and resources to pressure the conflicting parties into settlement; the second is the art of designing appropriate institutions that structure and guide the existing conflicts in such a way that all conflict parties can be accommodated.

> Conflict management is the positive and constructive handling of difference and divergence. Rather than advocating methods for removing conflict, [it] addresses the more realistic question of managing conflict: how to deal with it in a constructive way, how to bring opposing sides together in a cooperative process, how to design a practical, achievable, cooperative system for the constructive management of difference. (Bloomfield 1998: 86)

Conflict resolution theorists like Azar argue that "people have fundamental needs on which they cannot compromise, especially when their sense of identity is at stake. There are points that are simply not negotiable. It is however possible to help the parties to explore, analyze, question and reframe" (Azar 1986: 1) interests and positions to transcend conflicts. Conflict resolution theorists suggest that a skilled but powerless third-party works with the conflict parties with the aim of identifying conflicts roots and possible solutions.

Parties should be given a new outlook on the situation that enables them to find solutions previously not thought of. The aim of Azar's Protracted Social Conflict Analysis is to develop processes of conflict resolution that appears to be acceptable to parties in dispute and effective in resolving conflict. (Azar, 1986: 5)

Conflict resolution includes both the idea to end a conflict through a workable compromise or a balance of opposing interests and the idea to find concrete measures to help resolve certain points and consequences of the conflict. Conflict transformation recognizes that the roots of conflict can lie in the relationships among conflict parties as well as in the unequal and suppressive social and political structures of the society. (Kumar, 1997: 9) The Acholi cultural structures and conflict management mechanisms are not adequately explored to resolve the ongoing conflict between the LRA and Uganda government.

Conflict transformation is a process of bettering all those structures (relationships, interests, discourses and if necessary even the constitution of society) that support the continuation of violent conflict. The approach to peace-building is wide-ranging and comprehensive; it relies both on the parties of the conflict and on outsiders with human and material resources, and it emphasizes the support for conflict parties rather than mediation by outsiders. It has a long-term horizon, recognizing that the transformation of conflicts can only be gradual and step by step.

> Conflict transformation must actively envision, include, respect, and promote the human and cultural resources from within a given setting. This involves a new set of lenses through which we do not primarily 'see' the setting and the people in it as the 'problem' and the outsider as the 'answer'. Rather, we understand the long-term goal of transformation as validating and building on people and resources within the setting. (Lederach 1995: 4])

Conflict resolution first of all suggests that it is possible to end or remove conflict. This appears to be very ambitious. In many instances it does not seem possible to completely solve a conflict, especially since conflicts are an integral part of social interaction. Also, conflict resolution focuses more on the process than on the means of coping with conflict. Conflict management and the processes of conflict resolution concentrate on structures that need to be changed starting at grass-roots level. However, for the purpose of this study, specific or particular concept of peace, conflict Management and conflict transformation are critical.

2.11 Traditional Ritual Approaches to Conflict Management

In order to understand the workings of Acholi traditions in relation to conflict management, it is important to highlight indigenous systems of governance under which this tradition operated. In pre-colonial times, and before the people of

Acholiland were forcibly split up and moved from their homesteads in 1987, practically all conflicts in Acholiland were settled amicably through a well developed mechanisms for the prompt resolution of conflicts as soon as they arose. Prior to the formation of the state of Uganda which replaced the British colonial administration, the Acholi practiced a traditional government that was rooted firmly in their religious beliefs, norms and customs, which demanded peace and stability in Acholiland at all times, based on their philosophy of life. This structure was maintained by the real anointed chiefs of the Acholi people, known as the *Rwodi Moo*. (Crazzolara, 1938: 93)

In the Acholi society, traditional religion was the source of the principles of governance. The *Rwodi,* or chiefs, who headed the Acholi traditional government, were believed to have been chosen by the supernatural powers, and were enthroned and specifically anointed with fat preserved from carcasses of lions in solemn religious ceremonies. After these ceremonies they were believed to have been initiated into an esoteric relationship with the world of invisible deities and spirits of ancestors. They were thus held in high esteem, adored and respected by their people.

Notably, these traditional chiefs had no executive powers to rule the people single-handed, so dictatorship was not possible.

They worked or governed strictly through the intercession of 'masters of ceremonies' or an aide-de-camp known as the *luted-jok* and under the guidance of Council of Clan Elders, called the *Ludito Kaka*. The members who made up this council were chosen democratically by the particular clan to sit on the Grand Council known as the *Gure Madit*. As guardians of the society, the elders, sitting together in the Grand Council, identified the problems and urgent needs of their people and together thought out and charted appropriate solutions to the problems of the society and how to realize its urgent needs. Their principal aim was to eliminate the vast and complex social causes of unhappiness in Acholiland.

According to Acholi elders, Acholi justice mechanisms are based on oral spiritual and cultural laws that correspond to the level and intensity of a crime committed. While ritual practices in Acholi community differ across clans, it is possible to describe the general principles and beliefs of justice commonly shared by Acholi people. These include the voluntary nature of the process, mediation of truth,

acknowledgement of wrongdoing and reconciliation through symbolic acts and spiritual appeasement.

Historically, conflicts or crimes are dealt with by different Councils of Elders, according to the nature of the conflict or crime committed, from the level of the hut to compound, clan, inter-clan or intertribal levels. For instance, conflicts involving domestic affairs (such as domestic violence, quarrels or breaking social taboos) were resolved by elders of that particular compound. Those quarrels that could not be solved at the compound level, or that involved conflicts over land, food or water, were addressed by elders at the clan level.

Conflicts that involve more than one clan, including inter-clan killing, or serious injuries involving compensation, were brought to the Council of Elders that serves the cultural chief. These were resolved according to oral by-laws, and parties were reconciled through corresponding ritual ceremonies.

The institutions and conflict management mechanisms that are considered 'traditional' in this research are those that have been long-established with patterns of behaviour within the two Acholi communities of Palaro and Atiak clans. These are often those mechanisms that have been handed down from generation to generation. However, it is not easy to get a conflict management mechanism which is purely 'traditional'. One wonders how 'traditional' any society is within the complex modern world that has been influenced by globalization.

There is probably no clear–cut boundary between what is 'modern' and what is 'traditional.' But there is some meaning conveyed by the word traditional as it refers to oral wisdom which has been carried unbroken for many generations among the two Acholi communities of Palaro and Atiak clans.

Traditional conflict management mechanism shall be considered as coming close to this ideal in order for this dissertation to elaborate as precisely as possible the specifics of certain approaches that do not belong to the realm of conventional 'modern' institutions.

Traditional ritual approaches to conflict management are always context specific. Traditions vary from one community to the other and are not perceived to be universally applicable. This is in clear opposition to modern conflict resolution mechanisms, which aim at universal applicability. Traditional societies have many different institutions for the management of violence, conflict transformation and

peace-building. For instance, the *Oromo* people in Ethiopia have a system of conflict management enshrined in the *Gadaa*. "The *Gadaa* age-grades are a system of age grade classes that succeed each other every eight years in assuming economic, political and social responsibilities. A complete *Gadaa* cycle consists of five age-grades. The authority held by the elders is derived from their position in the *Gadaa* system". (Desalegn, 2005: 29)

From the above example, there is division of power responsibility among the different age grades that help in conflict management in the Acholi. Like the Acholi, there are several indigenous communities with structured power pyramids starting at the top with chiefs or kings, descending to clans, families, and individuals. This power structure becomes significant in conflict management. Examples of such societies include the kingdoms of Acholi, and Buganda in Uganda.

The aim of the traditional ritual mechanisms for conflict transformation in Acholi is mainly to restore order and harmony within the community. From a traditional point of view, conflicts are viewed as undesirable social problems. It is perceived as an "unwelcome disturbance of the relationships within the community". (Faure, 2000: 163) Hence traditional conflict transformation aims at the restoration of order and harmony in the community through cooperation between conflict parties, in Acholi this is reflected in *Mato Oput ceremony*.

The use of traditional rituals in conflict management in the two Acholi communities of Palaro and Atiak clans is geared towards the future with the aim of having restitution, rather than punishment, as the basis for reconciliation. Reconciliation is necessary for the restoration of social harmony of the community in general and of social relationships between conflicting parties in particular. The aim is "not to punish, an action which would be viewed as harming the group a second time but to help re-establish harmony and reintegrate the deviant person into the community". (Faure, 2000: 164)

The *Gacaca* is a traditional council and tribunal made up of elders to resolve conflicts and administer justice in Rwanda. This provides a good example of how traditional justice mechanisms are helping to handle the perpetuators of the 1994 Rwanda genocide. (Tsimanga, K. 1996: 112-123)

Restitution, reconciliation and restoration of harmony and relationships can only be built on a common understanding of what went wrong in the past. With the

help of the elders, conflicting parties reach a consensus regarding the interpretation of the past where the truth is revealed. After a consensus has been achieved, perpetrators confess their wrongdoings, apologize, ask for forgiveness, and pay reparation. The importance of this exchange lies in the transformation of revenge into reciprocity. The vicious cycle of violence, is replaced by the reciprocity of gifts. Zartman says that in reparation, compensation takes the place of violence:

> Conflicts are settled by compensation of a symbolically equivalent amount, which then is recognized to have restored order to the community. That recognition of the equivalence of the reparation is traditionally determined and agreeable by the two sides. The acceptance by the aggrieved party depends on acceptance – that is, atonement – by the aggressor. (Zartman, 2000: 222)

These specific conflict transformations endeavours' are pursued in accordance with customary law that is the entirety of orally transmitted norms, values and practices that govern the everyday life of the community – and that are legitimized through rituals.

Traditional approaches to conflict management in the two Acholi communities of Palaro and Atiak clans do not segregate people based on their faith or political inclination. They are holistic, comprising of social, economic, cultural and religious-spiritual dimensions. The conflicting parties can directly engage in negotiations on conflict termination and in the search for a solution, or a third party can be invited to mediate. Therefore, the process is public/ transparent, and participation is voluntary. Social groups such as extended families, clans, village communities, tribes, and relatives participate in the mediation, negotiation and arbitration of conflict and chiefs, elders, traditional healers or diviners usually lead them.

Finally, when the solutions have been achieved, they are sealed in ritual forms through ceremonies. Ceremonies are of great symbolic and practical importance. They are a means of conflict transformation in their own right. The whole community participates in them. Wealth exchange, prayers, and sacrifices to the ancestors are part of those ceremonies as well as special rituals such as the bending of the spears, drinking and eating together, singing and dancing together.

Even though traditional approaches to conflict transformation are very vital within the two Acholi communities of Palaro and Atiak clans, they do not provide conflict transformation that can be utilized at all times and in all conflict situations.

Rather, their applicability is perceived to be confined to specific conditions such as a particular group of people and contexts of their operation.

2.12 Theory of Conflict Resolution

This section explores the theory of conflict resolution with the purpose to relate it with traditional Acholi conflict management mechanisms.

Ronald Fisher's contingency model provides a framework for this research; he postulates four stages of conflict and appropriate measures that can be taken at each stage to de-escalate the conflict to a lower stage. Ronald Fisher, in several papers and books, offers a contingency theory of conflict resolution. Building on the work of several other researchers in the field, he offers an analysis of conflict progressing through four stages. Each stage can be characterized and specific measures each appropriate to a specific stage, are proposed for de-escalating the conflict to a stage of lower intensity. Conflict can be seen as comprising a mix of subjective and objective elements that tend to escalate or de-escalate over time. An objective problem of resource sharing may be resolved by an approach oriented towards compromise. A conflict based on subjective elements like misperception or miscommunication can be best addressed using a collaborative approach. The subjective elements usually increase as the conflict escalates.

The dimensions of conflict at each stage (See table 7) are characterized by the nature of communication, the relationships between parties, the types of issues and the possible outcomes perceived by the parties.

At the first stage of conflict, communication is direct, often face to face. Discussions and the interactions between the parties are debates. As a conflict escalates to the second stage, the parties start to avoid direct communication and they start to interact through deeds, such as demonstrations and uncooperative acts, rather than by words. At stage III, there is little direct communication and interactions tend to be threatening. At stage IV, there is practically no communication at all between the parties except for the violent direct attacks that characterize this stage.

Perceptions of conflicting parties tend to be realistic to both parties at the first stage and relationships are typically characterized by trust and respect. At stage II the perceptions of the parties become stereotypical. At Stage III, the conflict becomes one of Good versus Evil, and at Stage IV the other side is seen as bestial

and depraved. The relationship moves through a stage where the other side is still seen as important, to a stage where distrust and disrespect sets in, and finally the fourth stage where the relationship is seen as hopeless.

The issues in the first stage tend to be objective, as communication is direct and often face to face. At Stage II, the relationship between the parties becomes the important issue. At Stage III, the parties usually focus on basic needs. By Stage IV, the issue becomes survival itself, either in the social sense of survival of the group as an entity, or the literal survival of the people exposed to violence.

At first, the parties will be attempting to achieve win-win solutions to their conflict and will tend towards mutual decision as a means of resolving the issues. At the second stage, compromise will be the desired outcome and negotiation the means. By Stage III, the parties are usually embroiled in a win-lose mindset and they are attempting to win the conflict by competitive behaviour. Stage IV is characterized by lose-lose mindset and internecine behaviour. Table 7 summarizes the various stages of theory of conflict and how they are characterized and the relationship with Acholi conflict resolution. These stages of conflict escalation are useful to understand the ongoing conflict in Northern Uganda between the LRA and Uganda government, how this conflict could have been controlled at early stage.

Table 1: Stages of Conflict Escalation

Dimensions of the Conflict				
Stage	*Communication/ interaction*	*Perceptions/ relationship*	*Issues*	*Outcome/ management*
I	Discussion/ debate	Accurate/ trust, respect commitment	Interests	Joint gain/ mutual decision
II	Less direct/ deeds, not words	Stereotypes/ other still important	Relationship	Compromise/ negotiation
III	Little direct/ threats	Good vs. evil/ distrust, lack of respect	Basic needs	Win-lose/ defensive competition
IV	Nonexistent/ direct attacks	Other non-human/ hopeless	Survival	Lose-lose/ destruction

(*Source*: *Ronald Fisher, 1990:235*)

The contingency approach links third party interventions to each of the four stages to de-escalate the conflict back down through these stages. It should be noted that the effectors of de-escalation are not the opposites of the causes of escalation. Some examples of the situations and issues which might cause de-escalation are: a common enemy, fatigue, stalemate, impending disaster, voluntary yielding, a change of goals and conciliatory gestures.

Fisher argues that since Stage I conflicts are about objective interests and that the parties are still able to discuss and debate, a third party can assist by improving communication through a conciliatory approach. The resultant improvement in communication should lead to negotiation that settles the interests in dispute. Considering the case of LRA and Government of Uganda conflict in Northern Uganda third party intervention at that stage was lacking.

At Stage II, the key issue is relationships. A third party can provide consultation with a view to improving the relationships which can lead to either negotiation or mediation to settle the interests at the heart of the dispute. The key point to note is that the Stage II conflict must first be de-escalated to a Stage I situation and then Stage I approaches have a chance of leading to success. Relating this to Northern Uganda situation apparently not much was done by third party in regards to offering consultation and even the LRA and Ugandan Government did not seek assistance from third party.

At Stage III, the parties are segregated and no longer communicating directly. An intervener can use mediation and arbitration to control the relationship and manage the hostility. The third party can mediate between the parties while providing incentives to both sides to de-escalate the conflict. Some coercion or arm-twisting may be required to keep the discussion moving in the right direction. The aim is to de-escalate to a Stage II type of situation, which allows the use of consultation to improve the relationship, building on the successes on the arbitration/mediation in Stage III. The Stage II techniques eventually should lead to a Stage I, setting the stage for resolution.

There is a risk to using mediation with muscle, as suggested by Mitchell and Banks:

> "If the intervening party applies sufficient 'leverage' or power (in the form of either coercion or reward) then it may subdue or suppress the conflicting behaviour of the

original parties, thus ending the violence…this kind of outcome is both unlikely to achieve stability in the long run, *and* is undesirable". (Mitchell 1996: 3)

Peacekeepers are usually called in at Stage IV. At this stage, the parties have already resorted to violence and they are caught in a negative spiral of retaliation.

In summary, there are several stages to conflict. Each conflict requires a distinct approach and the problems at each stage must be dealt with before one can de-escalate to a lower stage. At each lower stage, one must deal with the issues and tasks that are pertinent at that stage. Finally, the key protagonists must be satisfied with the eventual agreements and peace-building initiatives must be undertaken to reduce the underlying tensions and inequities that gave rise to the conflict in the first place.

The field of conflict resolution includes many activities besides military mean. While the change in the character and variety of "peacekeeping" activities in the early 1990's caught some by surprise, they would have come as no surprise for someone familiar with the modern theory of conflict resolution. Education in the theory and application of conflict resolution is essential for the Uganda government, to give them a broader understanding of the use of cultural approach in the spectrum of activities required for the lasting settlement of protracted social conflicts.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter deals with the research methodology adopted for the study. It describes the research design and also explains the background of the respondents. The description of methods and instruments used, and data quality control are provided within this chapter.

3.1 Research Design

This study used quantitative and qualitative approaches to data analysis in order to explore Acholi traditional knowledge and understanding of "*Kuc*" (Peace) in depth. It investigated concept of Peace that exist in Acholi community particularly Palaro and Atiak clans, traditional conception of "*Kuc*", belief systems, points of view or attitudes (application) that are held about "*Kuc*" (Peace) and trends that are developing in using traditional notion of "*Kuc*" (peace) to address contemporary needs. Using both quantitative and qualitative approaches allowed the researcher to gather in depth data about a subject that has not been previously given much attention in the field of contemporary conflict resolution. The data emerging from the study is descriptively and quantitatively presented with the aim of offering a clear detailed picture of what discovered during the research.

The study used focus group discussions, one-to-one interview, and open ended questionnaire as key qualitative methods for the research. The researcher also observed "*Wang Oo*" fire place gathering organized by *Ker Kal Kwaro* Acholi supported by Northern Uganda Transitional Initiative (NUTI) at Purongo and Bobi sub-counties. Quantitative data that was collected included personal information such as age, sex, educational level of the respondents, factors that could disrupt peace and sources of information about peace. In data analysis, both quantitative and qualitative analyses were done as a way of triangulating the findings. Triangulation of data collection and analysis was undertaken to compensate for any

methodological limitations and to validate data that emerged from the different research techniques.

3.2 Study Population

The term population, in research, is used in a broader sense than its common meaning as a population of people. Labovitz define the population as "the largest body of individuals being researched or all the individuals of interest to the research" (Labovitz 1981: 27). For the purpose of this study, the study population was the people of Acholi of Northern Uganda specifically Palaro and Atiak clans in Gulu and Amuru Districts respectively. The targeted population, within the general population of Acholi, was traditional chiefs, elders, religious leaders, and youths. The chiefs and elders were particularly important because of their traditional roles in the community as the "living encyclopaedias" of Acholi culture. Church leaders and religious leaders helped to provide balanced views and in-depth knowledge on the relationship between Acholi concept of peace and its implications and application. The youths were selected in order to provide independent views as members of the Acholi community.

3.3 Sampling

Sampling is defined as "the process of selecting units (e.g., people, organizations) from a population of interest so that by studying the sample we may fairly generalize our results back to the population from which they were chosen" (Leedy D, Paul et al 2005: 133)

It implies that the population included in the sample is usually selected to be representative of the population. In this study a total samples of 102 respondents who had similar characteristics with the whole Acholi population were given questionnaire from districts of Gulu and Amuru. Equal representation of both genders was considered important in the sample population although the number of males were more than that of the female respondents by seven. This was because all the selected chiefs are males and traditionally chiefs in Acholi culture are portfolio for men only. The ratio of male to female respondents from each stratum that was targeted in the research was 1:1 except for the chiefs. Seven focus group discussions were held in Amuru and Gulu. Below is the summary of the selected population.

Table 2: The number and categories of respondents selected for the study

Geographical area covered	No of chiefs		Elders/ Clan leaders		Religious leaders		Youths		Total	
Gulu District	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
. Palaro Sub-county	3	-	5	5	2	1	5	5	**15**	**11**
• Lugore IDP camp	2	-	5	5	1	2	5	5	**13**	**12**
Amuru District • Atiak Sub-county	5	-	10	10	3	3	10	10	**28**	**23**
Total	**10**	**00**	**20**	**20**	**06**	**06**	**20**	**20**	**56**	**46**

Source: Field research, 2009

3.4 Sampling Procedure/Techniques

Because this is an exploratory study, and it is difficult or impossible to know or find the total Acholi population, sampling was carried out by interviewing those people the researcher could find who represented the categories he thought would be important. However, the chiefs that were available in the area of study were selected through purposeful sampling. Since the traditional chiefs are considered to be the custodians of Acholi custom the researcher interviewed ten chiefs. A snowball sampling method was used in the selection of the elders, making use of the suggestions from the chiefs, elders and other religious leaders.

3.5 Data Collection Tools

3.5.1 Interview Guides

An interview guide is defined as a research instrument that is used in gathering in-depth information when the subject matter is potentially sensitive and when the issues under investigation would benefit from clarification of issues that are raised. (Kratz C. 1993: 47) asserts that a guide "can be focused on a given set of predetermined questions that are covered in turn." The researcher used interview guides, which served as a useful tool in guiding the discussion and keeping each participant focused on the topic. The order in which the topics were arranged gave the interview a smooth flow, and allowed the interviewees to express additional

ideas about indigenous concept and understanding of "*Kuc*" (peace), its implications and application as the researcher raised various issues. The responses from the interviews were open-ended and this made it more challenging to organize their ideas during data transcription and coding.

3.6 Validity and Reliability of the Instrument
3.6.1 Validity

The research instruments were given to two experts on research and peace for validation of the content. One expert assessed whether the instruments were capturing the knowledge and understanding, implications and application of "*Kuc*" in Acholi. The other expert ascertained whether the set of items accurately represented the concepts under study.

According to Mugenda and Mugenda (1999: 95), the usual process of assessing the content validity of a measure is to use professionals or experts in the particular field. The instrument is given to two individuals of experts; one expert is requested to assess what concept the instrument is trying to measure. The other expert is asked to determine whether the set of items or checklist accurately represent the concept under study.

3.6.2 Pilot Test

Prior to the full administration of the questionnaire, it was pilot-tested with some ten youths and five elders both in Amuru and Gulu. This was necessary to assess the relevance of the items in the study and the ease of filling out the questionnaire. Pilot testing was also necessary to ensure that the content of the instruments was adequate. After the pilot testing, the questionnaire was adjusted accordingly.

3.6.3 Reliability

The Test–Retest procedure outlined in Gay (1996: 112) was used to determine the reliability of the instrument. Five elders of the Acholi community were involved in the test–retest procedure. Each elder was asked to fill the questionnaire and after one week they were asked to fill another copy of the same questionnaire.

The responses of the two tests were correlated and a Pearson Product Moment coefficient of correlation was obtained for each questionnaire set as

illustrated in Table 1.2.The individual coefficients were averaged to assess the overall reliability of the instrument.

According to Kumbizynard and Borich (1993: 97) a reliable instrument should have a correlation coefficient of at least 0.90. A mean correlation coefficient of 0.9066 was obtained for the instrument. This suggests that the questionnaire elicits consistent responses and therefore the researcher made the necessary corrections and adopted it for use in the actual research.

Prior to the study, the instrument was piloted among local experts, randomly selected individuals, and random sample of five (5) participants from non-study site. Necessary revisions to the instruments and the study protocol were made after each pilot stage. The resulting structured questionnaire used closed and open – ended questions format. Response options were given to facilitate the interviewer's note taking of the responses. These options were not read to the respondents. Where the respondents were not sure which responses to check, they were instructed to specify the responses in the "other, specify" categories. Where appropriate, these responses were checked and coded during data analysis. In addition, participants were allowed to provide more than one response to several questions.

Table **3**: Results of Test–Retest procedure

Respondent	*Correlation coefficient*
RESP01	0.977
RESP02	0.966
RESP03	0.958
RESP04	0.897
RESP05	0.735
Total mean	0.9066

Source: Field Research, 2009

3.6.4 Questionnaires

Open ended and closed questions were used to collect information such as personal information, which did not require much in the way of judgment.   The questionnaires were administered by the researcher. The advantages of using the questionnaires were that it was less time consuming to administer them to the

literate respondents and coding the data obtained from them was easier. However, it was not easy to check the validity of the responses. This information obtained from the questionnaires was validated by comparing it with the data obtained from the interviews and focus group discussions the three sources of information supported each other.

3.6.5 Entry into the Field

In many, if not most cases, research requires approval from relevant authorities. Martyn (1999: 119) adds that authorization "will be necessary in any instance of research in the instance where the people selected to participate in the interviews are either accountable to others or protected from potential others." The researcher gained entry into the field by approaching Acholi traditional leadership structures and the current local government leader as an Acholi, who was seeking to understand and document important cultural practices for academic purpose. Permission was obtained with ease and there was genuine enthusiasm for the study.

3.7 Data Collection Procedure

3.7.1 In-depth one-to-one Interviews

Jones (1985: 41) defines an interview as a "social interaction between two people, one of whom wants to get information from the other". The researcher conducted one-to-one interviews with all ten chiefs and fifteen respondents who were not given questionnaires. The interview was useful in the data collection and noting of non-verbal behaviour and communication. The in-depth interview also took the form of a conversation where the researcher used predetermined questions on an interview guide.

Informal conversational interviews were conducted with *Rwot* Otto, and some elders from Atiak sub-county. This interaction was important because the researcher was able to take advantage of the respondents free time to make follow up questions on implications, and application of "*Kuc*" in Acholi. Interesting issues were pursued as they arose. In addition, open-ended interviews that were used provided greater breadth for amassing descriptions of indigenous notion and implications of peace because of its qualitative nature.

This method had some challenges, however, since the researcher had to capture the information and organize it later. Some discussions had no immediate flow or coherence of the information that came out of informal discussions.

3.7.2 Focus Group Interviews

A focus group discussion is defined as a "free discussion among participants around suggested points especially in exploration of non-sensitive, non-controversial topics". (Martyn Denscombe, 1999: 115). The researcher used focus group discussions in Amuru and Gulu Districts, Northern Uganda. The focus group discussions led to insights into what might not otherwise have come from the one-to-one interviews and questionnaire. Some elders were able to describe particular functions and application that they thought are core elements for peace and this led others to give one or two similar cases. Where an interviewee was unable to explain the reason why particular symbols were used in a ritual, the others would interject and substantiate.

This is a qualitative method of data collection that was crucial in analyzing issues of peace, implications and application. They were important in building consensus over issues but also to get a cross-section of views from various segments of the communities. To this end, clustering was undertaken to ensure that the opinions of all grassroots categories were captured. The FGDs were composed of not more than ten people each to allow for discussion and for each person to have a chance to speak.

3.7.3 Triangulation

The use of multiple methods of data collection allows triangulation of data to reduce misleading conclusions based on the variability of the qualitative data. (Robson 1993: 290) defines triangulation as "the use of several methods to explore an issue, verify, or corroborate a conclusion". This research method was used to increase reliability of the study. The multiple methods that were all used in the data collection that included interviews, administration of questionnaires and document reviews were used to complement each other. The researcher also triangulated the different information sources, which include the respondents – traditionalists, church leaders, elders, chiefs and youths and events such as traditional "*Wang-Oo*" (fire place) events. Other information sources, including literature on Acholi traditional justice systems, showed that the findings of the study were consistent with other studies.

3.8 Data Analysis

The data in this study was obtained from transcription of interviews, field notes, and written materials. Data analysis involved the organization of data by searching for patterns and congruence with the ultimate aim of explaining the relationship between variables, which was done after establishing a set of analytical categories. "*Kuc*", implications and application were the variables that were analyzed. In doing this, the researcher drew from the model by Huberman and Miles (1999: 117) that used the grounded theory approach to show themes and key issues that emerge from field notes.

The grounded theory approach helped the researcher to focus on links between variables. The quantitative analysis of the findings depended on the use of Statistical Package for Social Scientists, (SPSS) version 10.0 software in which the variables were coded, analyzed and described. Both quantitative and qualitative analyses were concurrently used in the data presentation and analysis to bridge the gaps that would have otherwise existed if only one method of data analysis was used.

Means and proportional sampling error were calculated by SPSS complex sample analyses. Sampling was conducted proportionate to population size and hence no weighting was performed.

3.9 Ethical Consideration

The informed consent of all participants was obtained through local leaders. A statement stating the aims of the study and the proposed use of the information collected was presented on the preamble of each questionnaire. None of the participants was subjected to fear during both the individual interviews and focus group discussions. All participants have the right to decline their participation in answering the questionnaires, interviews, and focus group discussions. The results of the questionnaires and interviews were kept anonymous and every conversation was kept confidential. The researcher debriefed the respondents to ensure that they psychologically and physically protected. To gain the trust of respondent, the researcher assured them of their being open to express their views in an objective ways and truthfully. The respondents were debriefed of the outcomes of the research; that it was for academic purpose only to enable the researcher fulfills the

requirement for the award of the degree of Masters of Arts in Peace and Conflict Studies of Makerere University. All scholarly works used were acknowledged in a scholarly way.

3.10 Research Limitations

In some cases, the responses may have reflected some level of social desirability and set pattern effect.[1] For example, when directly asked to indicate support for particular potential malpractices, respondents often responded affirmatively, whereas follow-up questions showed a greater ambiguity. The questionnaire was specifically designed to minimize this concern.

Numbers of study questions pertaining to perceptions of peace '*Kuc*' were time – sensitive; the perspectives of Atiak and Palaro on these issues are not static. Consequently, responses could differ in the event of a radical alteration of circumstances on the ground, such as the conclusion of peace agreement and an end to the conflict.

The influences of other cultures acquired while in camps could have affected the responses obtained from the respondents that were interviewed from camps where they are were living. However, there was no evidence of any systematic effect when the responses of these individuals were triangulated with the responses of elders and chiefs.

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[1] Social desirability occurs when a respondent answers in a manner that he or she thinks will please the researcher. Set pattern occurs when a respondent repeatedly provides the same answer (e.g., a series of "agree" responses", indicating that he or she may not be paying full attention to the question.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

4.0 Introduction

Chapter four reports the results obtained from the study. Section one gives the background information on the respondents.

This chapter presents the findings from the field research; it represents various opinions from respondents on the implications and applications of '*Kuc*' in the two Acholi communities of Palaro and Atiak. Defines general components of implications and applications of *Kuc* relate these to the individual actor and the common behaviour of the two clans. These implications and applications are perceived by the two clans understudy.

The respondents were asked to define their perception and understanding of peace. Sixty per cent (60%) and 15 per cent of the women and men asked defined peace as respect of human rights and freedom of expression, while 25 men and women defined peace as a state of no war, adequate security, political stability and living in a state of no fear. Peace was also perceived as unity, friendliness, sharing, and good health and having development, basic needs, good education were also defined as good indicator of peace. Having an easy life with happiness was also defined as facets of peace.

According to FGDs held the following were some of the definition they gave as regard to peace:

> Reverence for life, most precious possession of humanity, peace is more than the end of armed conflict, peace is a mode of behaviour, Peace is deep rooted committed to the principle of liberty, justice, equality and solidarity among all Acholi community, Peace is also a harmonious partnership between the Acholi with environment. (Focus Group Discussion held at Palaro, 2009 19th Saturday)

> Peace is not simply the absence of war. To Acholi community of Palaro and Atiak clans, it means feeling secure, having food to eat, clothing to wear, and a roof to sleep under. It means living without fear of violence. It means being empowered. It is living in communities where women and men participate equally. It means a place where youth voices are heard. (Focus Discussion held at Atiak, 2009)

From the general perspective view, the journey to peace building and co-existence involves a move from theory to practice then to dialogue. Through

dialogue, the two Acholi communities of Palaro and Atiak can attain the necessary understanding of coexistence and to ensure that such increased understanding is broadened, one must ensure that the dialogue is sustained.

In traditional Acholi society, for instance, when someone abandons dialogue for violence, it is an acknowledgement of that person's failure to put forward an acceptable or hard-hitting counter-argument. It is a saying that most conflicts are settled through dialogue at the negotiation table-very few, if any, have been resolved through the use of force. This makes many Acholi people I general wonder why dialogue was not the first instrument used to resolve conflicts at the latent stage.

Conflict, whether violent disagreements at the inter-personal level or war at a group or national level, and its attendant human suffering, destruction and dislocation is as old as the human race. On the other hand, the act of resolving conflict in whatever pretext, forms an integral part of human interactions and social development. The decision to use violence to achieve a particular objective, by inciting vulnerable groups, is often a deliberate and calculated one, by those in leadership positions and in some cases by those who have lost out in the leadership struggle.

Many theorist agree that conflict, in itself, is not abnormal, but it is when it becomes violent that there is a problem. Conflict has been categorized as a form of communication. This is based on the fact that you can communicate without conflict but conflict without communication is not possible. This view sees the spiral of action, reaction and retaliation, which escalates conflict as the parties' way of showing their resolve to achieve their objective through unilateral use of force and to enable them bargain from a position of strength.

Because much of human conflict revolves around conflict perceptions and misperception, third parties can contribute to changing the perceptions, attitudes, value and behaviours of the protagonists. One of the most common approaches of such third-party neutral models of interactive conflict resolution is the provision of suitable space or forum within which parties to the conflict can explore options and develop solutions to their conflict, often outside the highly charges environment of a negotiation process.

A total of seven Focus Group Discussions were conducted and one hundred and two questionnaires were administered. And twenty five interviews were conducted from

four geographical areas of Amuru and Gulu districts respectively during the data-collection process.

These were Atiak and Palaro clans, (table 3) summarise some socio-demographic information. By design, the study was administered to the same ratio of female to male respondents; however men were more than female due to male chiefs only as noted in the previous chapter. The mean and median ages were relatively high, at 20 and 50, which may be skewed by the presence of a few elderly people in the sample. Approximately 85 percent of the respondents were between the ages of 20 and 70.

Furthermore, Table 3 shows that 56 and 46 of the total respondents interviewed were males and females respectively. Lugore and Atiak had equal representation of female while Palaro had more males than Atiak, Lugore and Purongo. The study population was selected from different social strata, which consisted of chiefs, elders, religious leaders, and youth. From each stratum, equal numbers of male and female respondents were interviewed except for the stratum of the chiefs where ten male respondents were purposefully selected thereby bringing an imbalance in the number of male and female respondents interviewed.

Table 4: Participants in the interview

Geographical area covered	Gender		Total
Gulu District			
	M	F	Total
Palaro Sub-county	15	11	26
Lugore	13	12	25
Amuru District			
Atiak Sub-county	28	23	51
Total	**56**	**46**	**102**

Source: Field Research, 2009

The researcher choose these study areas based on the mass murder which happened on 22 April 1995, in Atiak Trading Centre in Amuru which was attacked

by LRA rebel group in the early morning hours about 220 people lost their lives. A total of 56 male and 46 female were involved in the study.

Figure 1: Distribution of the respondents by age bracket

Age Bracket

70 and above
22.5%

20 to 30
29.4%

51 to 70
15.7%

31 to 50
32.4%
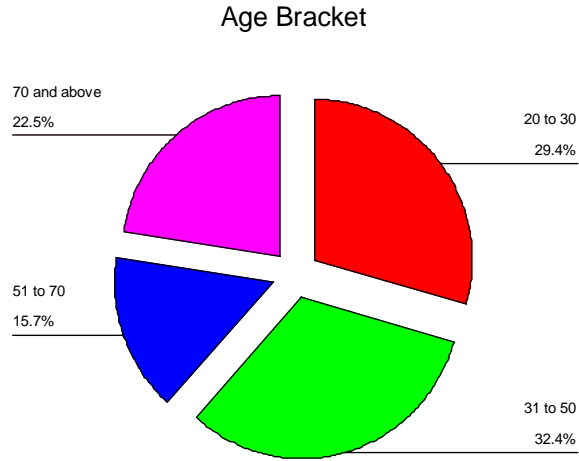
Source: Field Research, 2009

Figure 1 above shows age group. According to data 22% of the respondents were 70 and above, this was so due to their knowledge on the subject being investigated and largely due to their exposure to ongoing LRA conflict. The mean and median ages were relatively high, at 31 to 50. Though the war affected generally people of all age brackets, this age group is the most affected since they were the target for abduction. However, 29 percent of the respondents were between the ages of 20 to 30; these age groups were mostly youth and this is the age group which were mostly abducted by the LRA combatants.

Table 5: Educational background of respondents

Categories	**Frequency**	**Percent**
Secondary	4	3.9
College	32	31.4
University	60	58.8
Others	6	5.9
Total	**102**	**100**

Source: Field Research, 2009

Table 4 above shows the categories of respondents. A total of 102 questionnaires were distributed and collected, the table also summarizes some social-demographic information these categories was significant in the study due to their level of

understanding on the subject being investigated. However, 58 percent of the respondents were people who reached University level, this is a normal percentage since government established Gulu University eight years ago targeting mostly local population, 31% of the respondents were college graduate, this is also a normal percentage because Gulu district has three teachers colleges and 3 percent of the respondents reached secondary level as far as education is concerned, they could not advance due to lack of school fees and some expressed that they were abducted and therefore, their education was interrupted.

4.1. Findings on Sources of the Acholi Knowledge about 'Kuc' (Peace)

The researcher arrived at the finding by critical and careful analyses of focus group discussions scripts, and analysis of questionnaires.

An overview of the findings includes the identification of concept '*Kuc*' (peace) by all the respondents. Peace was classified under intrapersonal, interpersonal, inter-clan, tribal and communal '*Kuc*'. Furthermore, all the respondents reported that traditional early mechanisms and wisdom through which '*Kuc*' was promoted and conflicts can be detected before their occurrences exists among the Acholi community. These mechanisms were particularly interesting in terms of conflict prevention. They included the *informal education at Wang-Oo* or fire place gathering, "peaceful settlement of disputes by elders and Rwodi (Chiefs*).*

Table 6: Some sources of knowledge about 'Kuc' among Acholi

Sources of Knowledge about 'Kuc'								
Sources of information	**A Great Deal**		**Quite a Lot**		**Little**		**Nothing**	
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
Radio	43	42.2	56	54.9	_	_	3	2.9
News Papers	17	16.7	32	31.4	53	52	_	_
Elders	28	27.5	47	46.1	20	19.6	7	6.9
Posters	5	4.9	27	26.5	56	54.9	14	13.7
Rwodi **(Chiefs)**	42	41.2	33	32.4	24	23.5	3	2.9
Others	47	46.1	26	25.5	21	20.6	8	7.8

Source: Field Research,

Table 5 presents the main source of knowledge or major information about '*Kuc*'. The Acholi were media, *Rwodi* (Chiefs), elders and Others which includes NGOs, churches, school and drama. The respondents said they learnt a great deal or quite a lot from Radio (54%), *Rwodi* (41%) and newspaper or print media (31%). The radio was the most significant source of information; from 1995 radio *Freedom* was started with main objective to bring '*Kuc*' in the north through "*Dwog Paco*" (Come back home) programme which still runs to date.

However, the media can be a double-edged sword. It can be a frightful weapon of violence when it propagates messages of intolerance or disinformation that manipulate public sentiment… But there is another aspect to the media. It can be an instrument of conflict resolution, when the information it presents is reliable, respects human rights, and represents diverse views. It's the kind of media that enables a society to make well-informed choices, which is the precursor of democratic governance. It is a media that reduced conflict and fosters human security'.

By early 2000 "Radio Freedom*"* was rebranded into radio '*Mega'* still with the same objective of bring '*Kuc*' and development in northern Uganda though the coverage was not the whole of Northern Uganda even at the time when it was still Radio Freedom, the contribution of this particular radio station and other media houses in the north and outside has been remarkable in shaping the knowledge about '*Kuc*'. Considering what the research is investigating, that is traditional concept, knowledge and understanding of 'Kuc', its implications and application; the researcher can confidently conclude that Acholi notion of '*Kuc*' is not very traditional. Due to over staying in the camps as the result of the civil war in the region, most youth now rely on media as major source of information as opposed to traditional means such as '*Wang-Oo'* which is informal and a place where youth were to learn all aspects concerning life.

The dissemination of a media is crucial in considering its potential to influence communities. Media with low dissemination are significantly restricted from communicating to the wider public and, in that regard, affecting public opinion. Likewise, the accessibility of a media to the public is central in defining its influence. If media is inaccessible (i.e. if a 'media vacuum' exists) either due to low

technical means, prohibitive costs, deliberate obstruction or lack of interest, then its role will be diminished.

In order that the media be assisted to effectively address peace and conflict issues, it is essential that the root causes, patterns of violence and dynamics are clearly understood by all the stakeholders. This process requires a detailed and specialized approach, upon which assessment of thematic issues should ideally be based. Moreover, peace and conflict should be considered as circular rather than linear, with the various stages of pre, mid and post-conflict overlapping one another, without any necessary preset course. In this regard, a conflict may theoretically pass from the overt-conflict stage to either the pre-conflict or post-conflict stages and so forth. (Michael Lund, 2002: 217)

The next important sources of information were elders, others and posters, which was reported by at least 46 percent of the respondents. This suggests the need to increase '*Kuc*' (peace) awareness informally by parents, elders and traditional chiefs at a '*Wang-Oo*' (fire place) as it used to be since people are now returning in their ancestral home. At the time of this research, the researcher observed the efforts being made by traditional chiefs (*Rwodi*) through support from NGOs and particular Northern Uganda Transitional Initiative (NUTI) in all sub-counties in Gulu and Amuru to restore '*Wang-Oo*'; though the way it is being done currently is not very traditional as it used to be before the civil war broke out. At the moment NUTI offers a cow or a bull with bags of maize flour, to the community and dozens of people gather around fire place '*Wang-Oo*' and representative of Paramount Chief together with other chiefs present issues/topics such as marriage, riddles, fork tales, work, *Kuc* and youth ask questions on those issues or topics in the process of learning Acholi culture.

Since about 46 percent of the respondents mentioned that they learnt a great deal or a lot from the elders, it is necessary to set up traditional resource centres, which are well stocked with appropriate information kits on '*Kuc*' including magazines and audio–visual resources.

Peers are a very important source of peace information as about 46 percent of the respondents reported that they learnt a great deal or a lot from other source including their friends. This finding is consistent with Medical Assistance Programs (MAP) International (2003), which observes that the youth find their friends

extremely important to them when it comes to discussing issues which concern their live.

On the contrary, 19 percent and 23 percent of respondents reported that they learnt little or nothing from elders and '*Rwodi*' chiefs respectively. These findings showed that only few youth discussed '*Kuc*' (peace) related topics with their parents and other older relatives. It is not clear why parents, elders, relatives and *Rwodi* contribute little knowledge on '*Kuc*' to their children. It could be that elders and *Rwodi* are not free enough to discuss issues of life with their children.

This could also be due to generational gap effects, lack of '*Kuc*' knowledge among the elders and *Rwodi* (Chiefs) or weakening ties with elders due to urbanization and westernization and the negative effect of the civil war which made people stay in camps for many years and youth had no chance to learn since '*Wang-Oo*' was not there and most young people even do not know the important of '*Wang-Oo*' since they never saw it.

Findings also indicated that some Acholi traditional rituals are perceived to have the capacity to trigger, support, contain or resolve small-scale conflicts. In addition, the traditional rituals that are used in conflict resolution are not used in isolation. Multiple rituals can be used to achieve a single desired result. For instance, the rituals of reconciliation after a violent conflict may consist of *Gomo Tong* (Bending of the Spears), *Mato Oput* (drinking a concoction made out of Oput roots and sheep blood) and cleansing rituals. Such rituals complement other traditional efforts such as arbitration, negotiation or dialogue and reparations.

The research found that lack of '*Kuc*' is ritually induced whereas others are resource-based, spiritually triggered, or a result of interaction within the society. In addition, the researcher found out that the respondents did not express a general confidence that Acholi traditional mechanisms are effective in teaching young generation values of peace after many years of staying in camps, youths have acquired completely different culture. Therefore, the researcher concluded that the first major research question, "What are the indigenous knowledge and understanding of '*Kuc*' among the two Acholi communities of Palaro and Atiak clans?" could not clearly be answered in the affirmative**.**

The researcher concluded that an accurate answer to the question would be, "Acholi traditional meaning of '*Kuc*' is total harmonious living with the community,

harmonious living with the Spirits, absence of calamities (manmade or natural), having plenty of food and other needs. " This leads to the recommendation that the Acholi traditional concept and understanding of '*Kuc*' should be complemented by other Peace concepts and even conflict resolution mechanisms in handling conflicts in Acholi society.

The research found that it is perceived, among the sample, that Acholi indigenous concept for interpersonal '*Kuc*' could, to some extent, be adopted to create large-scale peace. This was found to be especially true for conflicts that are intra-tribal. The traditional rituals are not, generally, perceived to be able to address inter-tribal or large-scale conflicts. Therefore, the second research question, "What are the implications and application of '*Kuc*' in contemporary Acholi society?" was fully supported. It was determined that an accurate answer to this question would be "Acholi traditional implications of '*Kuc*' that are perceived to be prosperity or good relationship, happiness, healthy life and harmony among the communities, and application to this were perceived to be peaceful or cordial conflict resolution, raising happy and families."

Finally, the research found that, it is perceived, among the sample, that in Acholi the following malpractices have the potential to disrupt '*Kuc*' (see Table 6) as respondents were asked the question, "What factors/malpractices have the potential to disrupt '*Kuc*' in the community?"

These malpractices with potential to disrupt *Kuc* are determined or classified by the Acholi community and are the researcher found out that these malpractices affect the entire Acholi population; since difference communities in Acholi shares the same cultural believe.

Table 7: Malpractices with potential to disrupt 'Kuc' (peace)

Malpractices with potential to disrupt '*Kuc*'										
Malpractices	**Strongly Agree**		**Agree**		**Strongly Disagree**		**Disagree**		**Not Sure**	
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
Killing a community member	58	56.9	44	43.1	_	_	_	_	_	_
Killing outside the community	58	56.9	44	43.1	_	_	_	_	_	_
Witchcraft	34	33.3	57	55.9	2	2	_	_	9	8.8
Stealing from the community	19	18.6	79	77.5	_	_	2	2	2	2
Stealing from outside the community	22	21.6	75	73.5	_	_	_	_	5	4.9
Wife battering	41	40.8	40	39.2	_	_	9	8.8	12	11.8
Serious fighting with crude weapons	62	60.8	38	37.3	_	_	2	2	_	_
Malicious damage of properties	48	47.1	52	51	_	_	2	2	_	_
Chopping off people's arms	54	52.9	40	39.2	_	_	_	_	8	7.9
Having sex with a relative (Incest)	16	15.7	59	57.8	2	2	16	15.7	9	8.8
Having sex with a step mother	24	23.5	48	47.1	2	2	14	13.7	14	13.7
Rape	49	48	45	44.1	2	2	2	2	4	3.9
Cutting people's lips	48	47.1	41	40.2	_	_	2	2	11	10.8
Abduction	60	58.8	36	35.3	_	_	_	_	6	5.9
Burning houses/huts	60	58.8	40	39.2	2	2	_	_	_	_
Disrespect to elders or parents	33	32.4	63	61.8	_	_	4	3.9	2	2
Disobedience to cultural institutions	27	26.5	60	58.8	_	_	6	5.9	9	8.8

Source: Field Research, 2009

Killing from community and outside community, were all considered by over 56 per cent of the respondents as factors that disrupt *Kuc*. However Acholi had system in place to deal with that kind of disputes or killing, disputes and conflicts between different clans were settled in a community (or tribal) court. Conflicts

involving different tribes were addressed by inter-tribal courts. When bigger tribes clashed, a court was instituted where "The bending of the spears" was done to bring to an end an inter-tribal war and killing.

Killing in Acholi community at large is a major crime and normally when elders came to know about and the offender admits guilt, the ceremony of '*Mato oput*' takes place. Basically, a process of reconciliation that can lead to "*Mato Oput*" is indicated when a premeditated killing had occurred in the community. However, the traditional ritual of "*Mato Oput*" would only be carried out after the two involved parties have agreed on the payment of compensation and the payment is done. Thus the ritual of "*Mato Oput*" marks the peak and successful end of a reconciliation process between two families or clans in case of a premeditated killing.

'*Mato Oput*' was traditionally not applicable for killings that happened in war. The killing of an enemy required a different cleansing ceremony (*Kwero Merok*) while '*Mato Oput*' always applied to killings within a clan or among clans maintaining friendly relationships with each other.

"*Mato Oput*" means literally drinking "*Oput*". *Oput* is a tree and its smashed roots are used to prepare a bitter drink that is shared at the peak of the ceremony. Unlike the modern juridical system which has little provision for restoring relationships, the reconciliation process culminating in the ritual of *Mato Oput* aims at re-establishing good relationships among the parties (families or clans) who had been involved in the killing. Fundamental to the process however is the willingness of the offender's clan (not the offender as a single person) to assume the responsibility for the act committed as well as its readiness and ability to pay compensation.

After a murder has been committed it will be reported to the local representative of the '*Rwot moo*' (anointed chief) by either side: the relatives of the killed person or the relatives of the offender. The representative sits together with his council to examine the circumstances of the killing. In case the offender (the offender's clan) assumes the responsibility, compensation is agreed upon. According to traditional by-laws the compensation is 10 cattle and 3 goats for a premeditated killing. In monetary terms a cattle is seen as equivalent to 50.000, - UGX, a goat to

20.000, UGX. The offender will then sit with his/her relatives to discuss who can contribute which amount.

Everybody is supposed to contribute as the effects of the killing would affect the entire clan. To collect the compensatory fine an elaborate system had been in place to assure that the fine is brought together as soon as possible. When the money has been realized, the bereaved family or clan can consult a diviner to find out who should receive the compensation. Then the representative of the '*Rwot Moo*' will summon the representatives of the two parties to agree on a date for the ceremony and discuss the things required to carry out the ritual.

Serious fighting with crude weapons, wife battering, abduction and burning houses were mentioned by majority of the respondents as obvious factors that disrupt Kuc among the two Acholi communities of Palaro and Atiak clans and even Acholi society as a whole. Though there are by-laws within the communities these factors highlighted are rampant. Traditional Acholi by laws are a key part of traditional jurisdiction. They are many and most of them are still unwritten; according to majority of the respondents 'in former times they varied from clan to clan'. While the by-laws that had been stipulated in a written document up to now applied only to the area of Gulu, the "Acholi Traditional Leaders Council" has recently embarked on a project of compiling a new by-laws document that will be applicable to all the districts of Acholiland.

These bylaws regulate mainly the compensatory fines to be paid in case of killings or causing serious injuries, taking into account various circumstances: for examples: purposely or accidentally committed, clan affiliation of the offender and the offended, other circumstances (e.g. causing harm through neglect, poison, bewitchment, in self-defence, death that occurred during elopement ….) . Most of the stipulated regulations refer to killings, many to causing injuries and disabilities.

Most of the offences that are regulated in the by-laws are also considered "taboo" (*kir*) which can be considered an additional deterrent to antisocial or criminal behaviour and at the same time motivated the offender to accept responsibility and compensate for crimes once they had already been committed.

4.2. Traditional conflict resolution at different levels among the two communities of Palaro and Atiak clans

The traditional court system was organized at different levels. Below is the outline of the vertical dimensions of the traditional juridical system: The head of the family handled petty cases (like the daughter-in-law quarrelling with the aunt) in what could be called a family court, clan leaders (elders) came together and presided over cases to settle disputes between brothers and neighbours in a clan court, disputes and conflicts between different clans were settled in a community (or tribal) court, conflicts involving different tribes were addressed by inter-tribal courts. When bigger tribes clashed, a court was instituted where "The bending of the spears" was done to bring to an end an inter-tribal war.

Most of the disputes could be solved at a lower community level by the head of the family or involving traditional leaders like the "*Atekere*" and the "*Rwot Kweri*". Conflicts that had already led to serious injuries or murder, or conflicts involving many homesteads had to be taken to the chief.

Each chieftaincy (main clan) had a council of elders who met at specific places to discuss, investigate and judge cases. At the highest level, Acholi elders met in the presence of their chiefs and held what was called "*Cobo tal*" (the highest tribunal in Acholi).

4.3. Lessons learnt from Acholi Indigenous concepts and main sources of 'Kuc'

From the above analysis, there are lessons that can be drawn from the nexus between Acholi traditional concepts of '*Kuc*' and conflicts. The Acholi traditional indigenous concepts of '*Kuc*' and rituals function to meet the needs within its society.

Some Acholi traditional rituals are performed as preventive and deterrent measures. This is true of traditional rituals that are used to determine conflict early warning signs. In addition, most of the traditional rituals performed during the conflict management process are horrifying, strenuous and expensive. Therefore, people learn that conflicts are to be avoided as much as possible. Traditional rituals are reinforced by cultural beliefs, taboos, norms and superstitions that further make the mechanisms binding and adhered to. The penalties, fines and compensations imposed by customary courts (*Kal Kwaro*) are very severe and prohibitive making it a good mechanism of preventing intra and inter-ethnic conflicts and crimes. The

collective nature of some of the punishments such as payment of reparation by a clan places the role of preventing conflicts at the family and the clan level thus enlisting the support of everybody in the clan. Oaths administered during cleansing rituals are also very scary and expensive and so are the curses.

The Acholi traditional concepts of '*Kuc*' and rituals that are applied in conflict transformation may be free of corruption and graft related incidences that have marred the integrity of modern judicial system because the rituals are performed in the open and it is communally done. The elders get the required goats animals that are needed for the rituals. The traditional system is also accessible, culturally acceptable and morally binding. The rule of natural justice is observed and nobody is condemned unheard. The system is regarded as community owned as it is backed by and based on customary law, norms and culture.

Acholi traditional concept of '*Kuc*'; knowledge and understanding convey and reinforce personal identity or status, establishing new social ranking or marking social recognition by members of the community. For instance, the cleansing rituals have been used in helping to reintegrate the former rebel abducted persons into the community.

Acholi traditional notion of '*Kuc*' and some rituals may convey societal values through reiteration or exemplary dramas, admonishing the non-conformists to exhibit group values.

Some Acholi traditional rituals provide psychotherapy. Traditional rituals such as the rituals of mediation, healing rituals help relax socially tensed situations by redirecting of the group energies or by providing social roles compensation. Rituals may cloak some special factors such as bad things or malpractices, which the rituals may help to conceal, or expose others by semantic manipulations and condensations. For instance, the trance ritual dance helps to unlock the evil spirits during a healing ceremony.

The indigenous notion of '*Kuc*' and methods of conflict management stress the need of fostering a spirit of peace and mutual respect for both individuals and groups, in times of peace and in times of conflict. This is effectively ensured through the institution of the council of elders. The elders play an important role in defusing conflicts within and between societies using traditional rituals.

Given the above strengths of the Acholi indigenous concept of '*Kuc*' and traditional ritual mechanisms in conflict transformation, they may be effectively adopted for the management of large-scale conflicts alongside the contemporary conflict management mechanisms.

Considering the malpractices that could disrupt '*Kuc*' in Acholiland, majority of the respondents conceded that killing a community member, killing outside the community, serious fighting with crude weapons, abduction and burning houses/huts are elements against '*Kuc*', most of the respondents ticked strongly agree and agree as seen in the table 6 above. The researcher therefore, confidently concluded that malpractices listed in the questionnaire and others are definitely obstacle to '*Kuc*' in Acholi society.

4.4 Understanding Conflict and Violence in Palaro and Atiak clans

Conflict, whether violent disagreements at the inter-personal level or war at a group or national level, and its attendant human suffering, destruction and dislocation is as old as the human race.

The act of resolving conflict in whatever pretext, forms an integral part of human interactions and social development (David, 1997: 27). The decision to use violence to achieve a particular objective, by inciting vulnerable groups, is often a deliberate and calculated one, by those in leadership positions and in some cases by those who have lost out in the leadership struggle.

Many theorists like Edward Azar (1986) in the theory of protracted social conflict which highlights that there are four major characteristics/causes of protracted social conflict namely identity groups, state related power, international linkages, and antagonistic group histories:

Identity groups: These are conflicts between groups of which at least one feels that their basic needs for equality, security and political participation are not properly respected.

State related power: the role of the state is a critical factor in the satisfaction or frustration of individual and identity group need. Most state which experience protracted social conflict tent to be characterised by incompetent parochial, fragile and authoritarian governments that failed to satisfy such basic needs… "The state is an aggregate of individuals entrusted to govern effectively and to act as an impartial

arbiter of conflict among the constituent parts: treating all members of the political community as legal equal citizen."

International linkages: The role of international linkages in particular, political-economic relations of economic dependency within the international economic system and the network of political-military linkages constituting regional and global patterns of clientage and cross-border interest. Morden states, particularly weak states, are porous, to the international forces operating within wider global community; hence making them dependence on aid.

The implications of seeing the conflict between LRA and Uganda government in Northern Uganda as a protracted social conflict is clear and applicable in the context of this study because critically looking at the major causes of conflict between LRA and government of Uganda there are elements of identity groups, state related power and antagonistic group history; all these elements have never been addressed. As a result Acholi has suffered economic dependencies, militarism, and international negligence.

Antagonistic group histories: Protracted social conflicts are often based on deeply rooted divisions and tend to lead to long enduring bloody conflicts which can generate additional cycles of grievances, mistrust and revenge.

Protracted social conflict arise when attempts by disadvantaged group are taken by affected community to combat conditions of perceived discrimination that come from the denial of identity, an absence of security of culture and valued relationship, and an absence of political participation to remedy this victimization. The ongoing conflict between LRA and Uganda government in northern Uganda clearly has taken this direction.

Azar (1986: 1) articulated the implications in his book entitled "*Managing Protracted Social Conflicts in the Third World: Facilitation and Development Diplomacy, in Millennium)* that the most useful unit of analysis in protracted social conflict is the identity group defined in racial, religious, ethnic, cultural, or other terms and not the unit chosen by traditional analyses, that is, the nation-state, most of which are unite-grated, artificially bounded, and incapable of inspiring national loyalty or a common culture.

In many multiethnic societies, identity groups or communities are typically placed in conflictual relationships through both historical rivalries and colonial

policy of divide and rule. Because individuals strive to fulfill their needs through identity group, grievances stemming from need deprivation are expressed collectively. In addition, lack of effective participation and economic imbalances among groups resulting from rapid development strategies leads to the marginalization of particular communities, especially minorities. (Azar 1986: 9)

Azar's theory of Protracted Social Conflicts (PSC) is in line with Abraham Maslow who points out that, "failure to meet basic human needs can cause conflicts". Such needs include: personal fulfillment in all areas of life, need for identity in relation to the outside world, and cultural security. (Azar 1986: 9)

4.5 Malpractices with potential to disrupt 'Kuc' among Palaro and Atiak clans

During the focus group discussions in Palaro and Atiak respondents were asked to explain what they understood by the word conflict, they immediately came up with many words to describe conflict. These included: anger, violence, withdrawal, sickness, unhappiness, evil spirits, and abomination. Analysis of the respondents' views revealed that they perceived conflict as undesired social problems that must be discouraged and managed to maintain harmonious living. Furthermore, the respondents identified the most common types of small-scale conflicts that are commonly experienced within the two Acholi communities of Palaro and Atiak clans.

The findings shown in table 8 bellow indicate that (40%) of the respondents pointed out communal conflicts such as witchcraft, family disputes, theft, adultery, rape and land dispute conflict as the most common conflicts causing death, spread of HIV/AIDS, and social disunity for a long time. Interpersonal conflicts like fighting at drinking places, struggle for wealth inheritance, and bareness/impotent were ranked at (29%), intrapersonal due to trauma, was rated at (16%) and tribal conflicts such as struggle over land, leadership position were ranked (9%), while clans' conflicts over land issues, resource sharing indicated at (8%). The tribal conflicts mentioned during the focus group discussion and one on one interview referred to the conflicts that have been caused by the Acholi neighbouring Karamojong pastoral tribe.

An elder, Olobo Lacobi stated in an interview that, "…the problems that we are facing with Karamojong can be traced back to history….we cannot keep any

livestock now as the situation is being aggravated by the current on-going civil war…" These findings reveal that communal conflicts pose a great challenge to sustainable peace and development. These conflicts are also a major threat to cultural values and norms of the Acholi community and their neighbouring communities.

From the responses given the researcher deduced that, conflict is part of Acholi community just like any other community. The small-scale conflicts that are experienced in the two Acholi communities of Palaro and Atiak clans are categorized into intrapersonal, interpersonal, inter-clan, tribal and communal conflicts. Data gathered from questionnaires, as indicated in table 8 below gives the summary of the number of respondents ranking from the most to the least common types of conflicts that are experienced in the two communities.

Table 8: The common types of conflicts in Acholi community

Conflict	Frequency	Percent
Communal	40	40
Interpersonal	28	29
Intrapersonal	15	16
Tribal	10	9
Inter-clan	9	8
Total	**102**	**100**

Source: Field research, 2009

From the interviews it was revealed that the indigenous Acholi early warning wisdom for detecting some of the common conflicts before their occurrence was an importance aspect. This is something that has no corresponding existence in formal conflict resolution mechanisms. This is significant in the study since it sought to understand the kinds of conflicts that occur and local conflicts resolutions mechanisms in the community.

4.6 Acholi Traditional "Early Warning" Wisdom

The traditional early warning wisdom for detecting conflicts within the two communities of Palaro and Atiak clans is based on myths/traditional beliefs such as (when one is starting a journey and /she meets a woman, then that journey is

considered by the person as bad omen) . The respondents identified some of the conflict early warnings such as:

Falling of a tree/branch: When a tree or its branch suddenly falls where there are people without any external cause such as wind, it is considered as a bad omen. Some of the elders within Palaro and Atiak clans believe that it signifies a looming misfortune on the person or the family where that incidence happens. In that case, an appropriate action is taken to seek ways of preventing the occurrences of such misfortune.

Casting of skin sandals: Knowledgeable and expert community elders or traditional healers who can foretell an impending calamity on the community usually cast skin sandals that are cut from skins of cattle. The information that is revealed from the cast skin sandals are verified by others elders using other means before it is disseminated to the community members. To foretell an impending problem, such experts often consult intestines of goats or chicken to confirm their suspicion. The informants believe that such information is very accurate and the community members adhere to them.

Neno i Dyel or Gweno: This refers to the "seeing the inside of a goat or chicken". Expert elders and sooth-Sayers who are known in the community usually conduct the "seeing" of the intestines to foretell what is likely to happen. The intestines of a particular type of goats or chicken are carefully examined. The goats or chicken to be used in the rituals are determined by their physical characteristics such as skin colour, fur and sex. The informers added that subsequent looking at other animals' intestines coupled with conducting some rituals is able to prevent the occurrence of the conflict.

Reading the Sky: Some Acholi elders have some skills of studying stars in the sky and foretelling any impeding conflicts, natural or even man-made disasters. After studying the stars, analyzing and verifying such sensitive information, the elders tell the community what calamity is likely to affect the community. A big red star, called *Latwok*, is associated with a calamity especially during particular times of the year. On the other hand, when it rains without any clouds covering bright sunshine, the elders believe that wild beast could be multiplying and people are asked to take precautionary measures.

Akote – Akote: Is an Acholi word that refers to a "prophetic" dream. Respondents reported that there are some individuals within the clans that dream about bad events and they occur. It is believed that the dreamers see in their dream a calamity that is likely to affect an individual or community. However, this power is associated with witchcraft because the dreamers have the powers to transfer the calamity onto something else. (Lucima 2002: 49)

Therefore, the "early warning" may not be meaningful to people who are not part of the community.

Under the obstacles with potential to disrupt '*Kuc*'/peace, the respondent was to tick either (Strongly Agree), (Agree), (Strongly Disagree), (Disagree); (Not sure) as to what could disrupt *Kuc* within the two Acholi communities of Palaro and Atiak clans. The Questions were closed ended.

Tables 9, 10, 11 and figures 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7 below explore the respondents' views on some of the prevailing obstacles that could disrupt *Kuc* within the two Acholi communities of Palaro and Atiak clans. Some have emerged due to the ongoing LRA conflict. Respondents were to express their opinion about various obstacles, one of them killing a community member.

Table 9: Killing a community member

Categories	Frequency	Percent
Agree	44	43.1
Strongly Agree	58	56.9
Total	102	100

Source: Field Research, 2009

Table 9 above indicates respondents' views pertaining to killing a community member; Acholi in general look at life as a gift from God (*Rubanga*). This informal education confirms why 56% in the table above, considered killing as very bad by checking strongly agree, and 43% agreed that killing a community member would surely disrupt *Kuc*. Therefore, nobody has any right to take away life. When a person killed a member of the family, rituals are performed to purify and unite him/her with other family members. Elders normally try to educate young ones not to carry any weapon that can destroy life.

Figure 2: Respondents views on killing outside the community

Killing outside the community

Killing outside the community
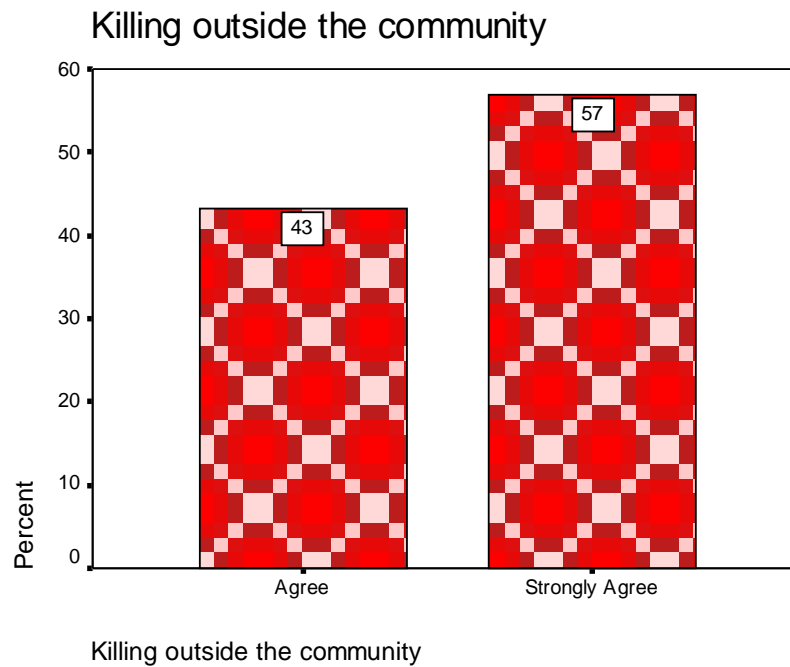
Source: Field research, 2009

Concerning killing outside the Palaro and Atiak communities, the responses were still not significantly at variance with those in Table 9 Killing in general is immoral among the two Acholi communities of Palaro and Atiak, and traditionally young people are urged to respect life and also to give hands to anybody in need of help whether the person is from the family or not. From the figure 2 above, 57% of respondents strongly agreed that killing outside the community has strong potential to disrupt *Kuc* in their clan and in Acholi at large; and 43% of the respondents agreed that killing outside the community is as bad and evil as killing within community and therefore would disrupt *Kuc*.

In Acholi life is valued right from conception and even the expecting mothers are given special care; the kind of food they eat is health promoting and they are not allowed to carry heavy things or do heavy duty. In addition to that; pregnant women normally are strict supervision by their aunts and mothers in-laws since these pregnant mothers carry life as perceived by the Acholi which is to be natured by everybody in the clan.

Acholi society believed firmly that man is a sacred being whose blood ought not to be spilled without just cause. The killing of human beings is forbidden by Acholi religion believes. The community was enjoined to observe this strictly by

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worshipping the same supreme deity, *Nyarubanga*, through an intermediary deity, known as the *jok-ker*, which meant 'the ruling deity'. Within such a community, if one person happened to kill another person(s) from the same or a different clan, the killing would provoke the anger of the deities and ancestral spirits of the victim(s). It was and still is believed that the angered deities and spirits of the ancestors would permit or even invite evil spirits to invade homesteads and harm the inhabitants. Moreover, such killings automatically create a supernatural barrier between the clan of the killer and the clan of the person(s) who has/have been killed. As soon as the killing happens, the members of the two clans immediately stop eating and drinking from the same bowl or vessel, and engaging in social interaction of any form. This supernatural barrier remains in force until the killing is atoned for and a religious rite of reconciliation has been performed, to cleanse the taint.

In the meantime, the killer is ostracized and treated as an outcast or unclean person. The taint of killing that makes the killer an evil man is called *ujabu*. A killer is therefore prohibited from entering any homestead other than his own for fear that he is a companion of the evil spirits which constituted the *ujabu* and will pollute the soil of the homestead with the evil spirits. The *ujabu* can be created or invoked by both deliberate and accidental killings.

In all cases of deliberate or accidental killing, the clan of the killer is required to pay blood money to the clan of the person killed. The Council of Elders appoints a leading man from a different clan to mediate between the two clans. The mediator, who is expected to be completely impartial, coordinates the arrangements for payment of the blood money. It is strictly unacceptable to pay for the killing by killing the killer (there is no death sentence), since it is believed that this will only mean a loss of manpower to the society, without benefiting either side. The payment of blood money is preferable since the money paid to the bereaved family can be used to marry another woman who, in turn, will produce children to replace the dead person a form of reparation.

After the payment of the money (reparation), the elders arrange for the customary rite of reconciliation to take place in order to bring the estranged clans together to resume a normal working relationship. The reconciliation ceremony always takes place in an uncultivated idle which is usually somewhere

between the villages or communal settlements of the two clans, away from any footpath or any place commonly frequented by women and children.

To perform the reconciliation ceremony, the killer provides a ram and a bull (*dyang me dog bur*), while the next of kin of the person killed provides a goat. Unused new vessels are required and a large quantity of beer is brewed for the occasion. On the appointed day, the traditional masters of ceremony, conciliators and elders from both clans assemble at the chosen site and stand facing westwards in solemn silence. An invocation is then performed which sums up the entire spirit and intent of reconciliation. This always runs as explains below with some gestures to appease the supreme deity:

The master of ceremonies*:*

'You our ancestors and the children of the Supreme Deity, I now plead with you and ask you to realize that sin is part of man's life. It was started by those who ever lived before us. This man whose fault brought us here today has merely repeated the perennial SIN which man has hitherto failed to discard since time immemorial. He killed his own brother. But since then he has repented of his evil deed. He has paid blood money which may be used to marry a woman who will produce children who, in turn, will keep the name of his killed brother for our posterity. We now beseech you our ancestors to let the two families resume a brotherly relationship' (Oral interview with Rwot Otto Otinga Yai by researcher 2009, 9th September Wednesday)

All the assembled elders join in and chant together: 'Let a man who will be given the blood money to marry a wife be sharp and pick on a vivacious woman . . . a virgin woman who will produce many and healthy children to grow up well and take over the empty home.' (Oral with Rwot Otto Yai by researcher 2009, 9th September Wednesday)

Another master of ceremonies from the clan of the killed person responds to the solemn invocation in the following terms: 'We are not the first clan to suffer premature death of this kind. The killer has repented his misdeed. He has paid for it. We now supplicate you our ancestors to bless the blood money given to the family to marry a wife to produce a replacement for our killed brother' (Oral interview with Rwot Picho by researcher 2009, 17th September Thursday)

All the assembled elders join the invocation and chant together:

'Let us accept the blood money and wash our hearts clean, and begin to live and work together as we have been doing in the past . . . Our enemies who have heard of this reconciliation and are not happy that it will now bring peace and prosperity to our two clans. . . . Let their ill will be carried away by the sun to the west, and sink

with it down, deep and deep down' (Oral interview with Rwot Ochan by researcher 2009, 17th September Thursday)

In a new vessel, the masters of ceremony mix the pounded extract from the roots of the *Oput* tree with local drink, and then the killer and the next of kin of the person who has been killed kneel down and begin to drink from the same vessel simultaneously while women from both clans make shrill cries and shout the war cries of the two clans.

Members of the two families join in to drink from the same vessel for the first time. Meanwhile the master of ceremonies cuts of the head of the ram brought by the killer and the head of the goat from the next of kin of the dead man. The ram's head is ceremoniously handed over to the next of kin of the dead man and the goat's head given to the killer. The bull is ritually speared to death and skinned and the meat is cooked and eaten together. Other cooked food items from both sides are served to the elders, who are allowed to mingle freely. From now on, the members of the two clans resume their normal social intercourse. In this way, the Acholi people make good the damage caused by the spilling of the sacred blood of human beings. [Source: Focus group discussion Atiak September 2009]

Figure 3: Respondents views on Witchcraft
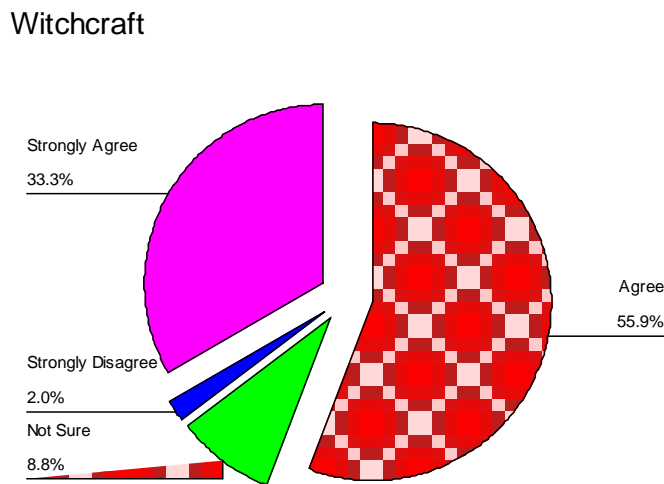
Witchcraft

Source: Field research; 2009

From the data above (figure 3), respondents were asked question to demonstrate their view of witchcraft as a practice. 33% strongly condemned it and 55% lamented that witchcraft was bad and they agreed that it would disrupt *Kuc*.

While 8% of the respondents were indecisive, only 2% minority disagreed. Majority condemned the practice as being anti-life, destructive to human development. Accordingly, Acholi value practices that promote life. This category mostly was burned with firewood, but not to death. They were also sometime ex-communicated from that particular village and clan.

Table 10: Stealing from the community

Categories	Frequency	Percent
Agree	79	78
Disagree	2	2
Not Sure	2	2
Strongly Agree	19	18
Total	**102**	**100**

Source: Field research, 2009

Stealing from the community was also marked by majority (78%) viewed it as bad and would disrupt *Kuc* in the community, 18% percent of the respondents considered it as bad and 2% respondents were not sure. Stealing in Acholi traditional setup is looked at as immoral and degrading act. Therefore, parents normally teach their children to ask for what they need, either from the family or outside family. This teaching clearly calls for respect of other people's property. Thieves were given corporal punishment and later expected to pay for what they had stolen. Above all they were asked to apologize to the owner of the goods. Not so long ago, if one was hungry and happens to be passing near someone's garden, he/she was allowed to pick whatever he/she wished. This was on condition that the pick was just enough for the day and not in excess. He/she would not then be charged of theft. But that is now history. People lived in camps for many years and a new spirit of individualism has crept in.

Figure 4: Serious Fighting with crude weapons

Serious fighting with crude weapons
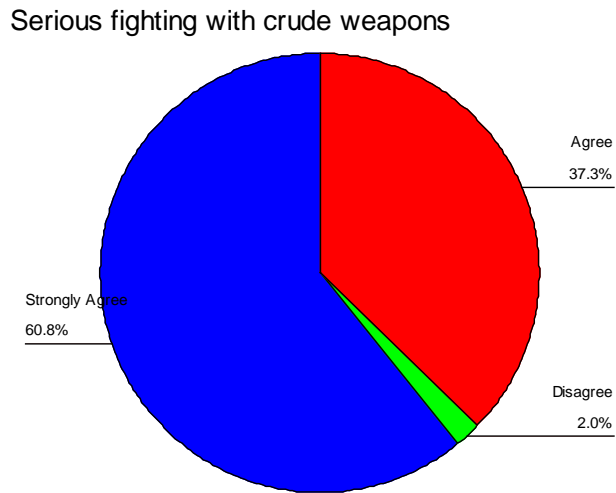
Source: Field research; 2009

From the data above (figure 4), respondents were asked question to demonstrate their views of fighting with serious weapons such as knives, spears among others. Over 60% strongly condemned it and 37% agreed that serious fighting with crude weapons was bad and they agreed that it would disrupt *Kuc*. While 2% of the respondents disagreed, majority condemned the act as being anti-life, destructive to human development. Accordingly, Acholi value practices that promote life. Fighting with crude weapons falls within the categories that de-construct development and destroys life.

Having sex with the step mother
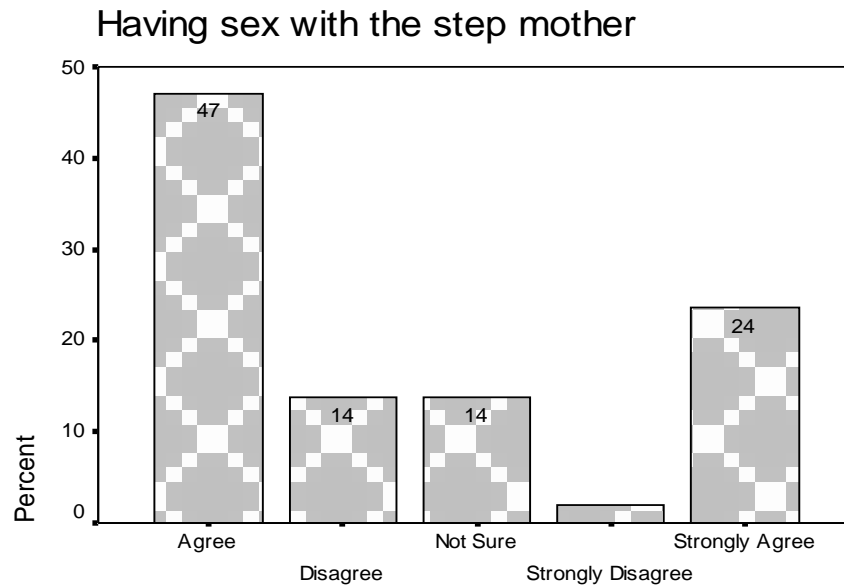
Having sex with the step mother

Source: Field research, 2009

From the data above (figure 5), 47 percent of the respondents agreed that having sex with step mother would disrupt *Kuc*; while 24 percent strongly condemn it, however over 10 percent of the respondents disagreed that having sex with step mother would disrupt *Kuc*, this responses where both from Palaro and Atiak clans and 14 percent where not decisive. Immoral behaviours such as incest, rape are thus morally unaccepted according to Acholi culture. Acholi community in general do not marry off their daughters at an early age. They strongly value virginity. Therefore, having sex with a step mother is something very peculiar and people who commit such crime are normally cursed by elders. They may not even marry all their lives: girls would not even want to talk to them.

Table 11 : Malicious Damage of properties

Categories	Frequency	Percent
Agree	52	51
Disagree	2	2
Strongly Agree	48	47
Total	**102**	**100**

Source: Data from the field research, 2009

The data above on table 11 reveals that, majority of the respondents considered malicious damage of properties destructive and would disrupt *Kuc*; 52

percent of the respondents condemn damage of properties, while 48% strongly opposed it as and believe it would disrupt *Kuc,* however 2 percent of the respondents disagreed that damage of properties would disrupt *Kuc*, in the two Acholi communities of Palaro and Atiak clans. These findings are very normal because Acholi people in general place very high respect and values on properties especially if the properties belong to an elderly person, therefore malicious damage has very high potential to disrupt 'Kuc'

Figure 6:

Wife Battering
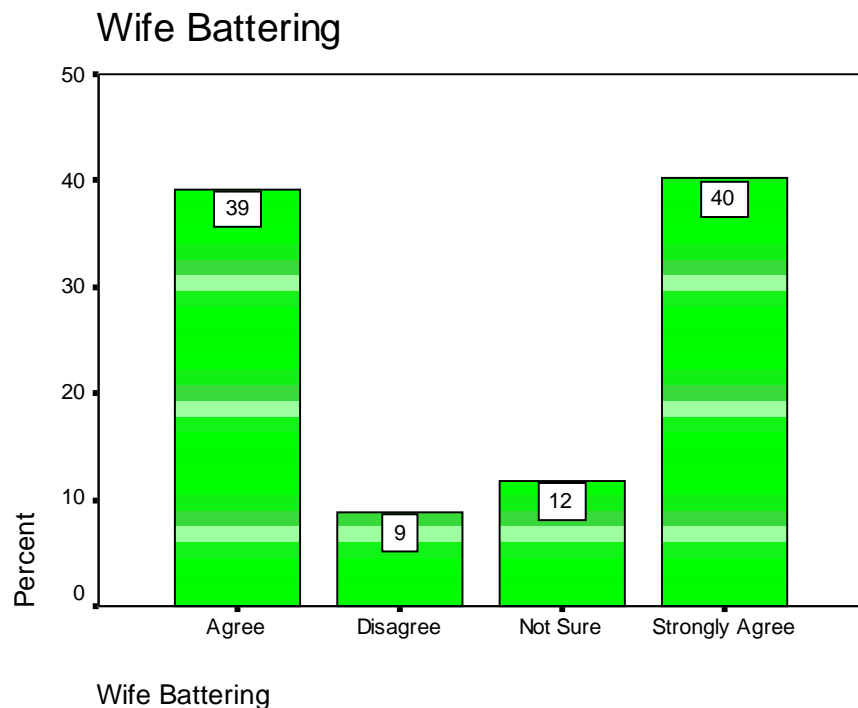
Wife Battering

Source: Field research, 2009

The study reveals that 40% of the respondents were strongly against wife battering, while 39 percent of the respondents also agreed that wife battering would disrupt *Kuc*; however 9% disagreed that wife battering would disrupt *Kuc* and 12 percent of the respondents were not decisive. Among the two Acholi communities of Palaro and Atiak clans wife battering is not supported; however some few individuals who intermarried from other clans or even ethnic groups who believe in wife battering and even the women believe they should at least be beaten once a year as a sign of love, do beat their wives and do not think it can disrupt *Kuc*. This finding is very normal because in Acholi culture generally women are very special and are to be treated with care and tender therefore, wife battering in the villages are

not very common; however with changing culture due to negative impact of life in the camps, some men resorted to punishing their women by beating mainly over food.

Figure 7:

Chopping off people's arms
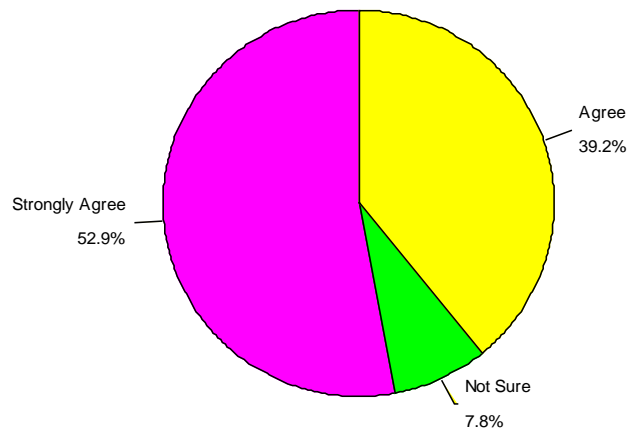
Source: Field research, 2009

From Figure 7 above, it is explicit that chopping off people's arms is not part of Acholi culture. Majority condemned this act which was practiced by rebels. Over 52% noted it as very bad and 39% also opposed this act, terming it as bad. Acholi people believe that cutting off someone's body or disabling him/her for whatever reason was close to murder. The practice by the rebels was extremely immoral and unacceptable. It shows the extent Acholi moral values have degenerated.

The Acholi ethnic group that is found in northern Uganda has been experiencing large-scale conflicts for so long. These conflicts were from different fronts – the Acholi-led rebel forces fighting against the government and the conflict with the Karamojong cattle rustlers. The characteristic features of the civil wars were that they were ritualistic with aggressive tendencies towards what Lorenz called self-preservation. Despite various mechanisms that have been employed to resolve the conflicts, no permanent solution has been realized, partly due to lack of understanding of the concept peace in Acholi perspective and the implications and applications.

The failure to identify a conflict resolution framework that could resolve the conflicts generated a lot of debate as to whether the traditional justice system may

provide a better answer. This idea is premised on the Acholi proverb "a stick from far away cannot help one strike a snake". Some elders in Acholi believe that using rituals, as the "nearest stick", could be useful in addressing their needs for conflict resolutions.

An insight into the role of Acholi traditional rituals in conflict transformation revealed that there are "pathways" for management of both small-scale and large-scale conflicts. Acholi society, with its highly bureaucratic social structure, resolves conflicts starting from the "grassroots" with the family court or extended family and neighbours. If the conflict cannot be resolved at this level, it is resolved at community level where clans and chiefs come in. Conflict resolutions follow the social structure where referral of cases that cannot be handled at one level is made to the next level.

Acholi traditional conflict resolution places emphasis on reconciling the antagonists with each other, rather than establishing right and wrong or winner or loser. This is especially so when the conflict is intra-Acholi. Thus, where punishment is used, it is not aimed at retaliation, but at restoring equilibrium, usually through the mechanisms of restitution, apology, reconciliation and reparation. There is emphasis on justice and fairness, forgiveness, tolerance and coexistence under this indigenous conflict resolution system. This is clearly beneficial in a close community where individuals have no choice but to keep living together.

The findings of the research revealed that the two Acholi communities of Palaro and Atiak clans, rituals are perceived to be effective in small-scale conflict management and they carry with them same potential value at large-scale levels. Not all rituals can be used to address all conflicts; rather, their applicability is confined to specific conditions. This understanding suggests that caution must be exercised in attempting to apply some of the well-know Acholi rituals used for interpersonal conflict to large-scale conflict or war.

Concerning the factors that could disrupt *Kuc*, the finding reveals that majority of the respondents considered most of the items during the interview as obstacles to peace or anti-*Kuc*.

The traditional Acholi culture views justice as means of restoring social relations. In other words, justice in the traditional Acholi culture should be considered as restorative. Paramount Chief *Rwot* David Onen Acana II pointed out

that, "The wounds of war will be healed if the Acholi practice their traditional guiding principles." He pointed out the following as the guiding principles: "Do not be a trouble maker," "Respect," "Sincerity," "Do not steal," "Reconciliation and harmony," "Forgiveness," "Problem solving through discussion," and "Children, women, and the disabled are not to be harmed in war." Most of the principles emphasize the need to live in harmony with others and restoring social relations. This shows that traditionally, the Acholi are a peace-loving people. The Acholi traditional culture encourages individuals to accept their mistakes and take responsibility for their actions. It is important to note that an individual does this voluntarily. Individuals are encouraged to forgive and not to seek revenge. One of the mechanisms for forgiveness and reconciliation among the Acholi is the *Mato Oput* (drinking the bitter herb).

Today's military forces are less likely to deal with inter-state conflicts and more likely to be involved with protracted internal social conflicts like Northern Uganda situation. The old tools of state level diplomacy are insufficient to deal with the large numbers of independent actors in today's ethnic conflicts. The study of modern theories of conflict resolution is most appropriate for Uganda government, LRA officers to give them insight into the approaches and means that should be used to provide lasting solutions after the military job of controlling violence has been carried out and failed.

Ronald Fisher proposes a contingency approach based on the stage of the conflict at the time of the intervention. He describes conflict escalation in four stages and specific means and approaches that are appropriate for de-escalation at each stage. Key to his contingency model is the requirement to deal with the current stage of the conflict and bring about de-escalation to the next lower stage before attempting to resolve the issues at lower stages. The theory of conflict resolution suggests that the military forces are doomed to failure as a means to build peace in Northern Uganda.

4.7. Implications of Kuc in Acholi communities of Palaro and Atiak clans

The respondents were also asked to give their opinions on the implications of *Kuc* in the two Acholi communities of Palaro and Atiak clans; a collection of their responses is discussed next.

When asked whether *Kuc* has any implication in the two Acholi communities of Palaro and Atiak clans, vast majority 98% of respondents said *Yes* however the remaining two percent of respondents said *No*. And the Ninety eighty percent 98% of respondents who said Yes; added that peace in their communities is promoted through the following means:

> Performing rituals particularly the ritual of reconciliation (*Mato-Oput*), peace/moral education to the young people by elders, arbitration by elders, chiefs among warring or conflicting parties and occasionally punishing/excommunicating perpetrators of conflict in the community [source: interview with Odong of Palaro 200916th October Friday]

There are considerable contradictions between traditional and local authorities. Traditionally many cases would be dealt with by the court of the *Rwodi Moo*, who would also establish the level of compensation which had to be paid before reconciliation rituals (*Mato-Oput*) could be carried out. However, people who are also taken through the modern court system refuse to pay the compensation, such that the normalization of relationships which follows the payment of compensation cannot take place.

When asked to give/list some of the implications of *Kuc* within the two Acholi communities of Palaro and Atiak, respondents had the following comments:

"Long life, we believe that one of the positive implications is long life; this comes as a result of healthy living" (Source: personal interview with Opio Gulu 17th September 2009)

One of the respondents remarked that *Kuc* has these implications; Happiness, Prosperity and Harmony in the community, harmonious living in the community is link to forgiveness.

"Acholi traditions embody the principles and practices which have been central to the support for reconciliation and amnesty within that community." Forgiveness and reconciliation are said to be at the centre of the traditional Acholi culture. Traditionally, the Acholi believe in the world of the "living-dead" and divine spirits. Their belief in this world plays a significant role in shaping how they see justice and reconciliation.

Jok (gods or divine spirits) and ancestors guide the Acholi moral order, and when a wrong is committed, they send misfortune and illness (*cen*) until appropriate actions are taken by elders and the offender." As a result, the Acholi discourage an

individual from being a troublemaker since the individual's actions can have grave consequences for his/her whole clan. This "phenomenon of *cen* illustrates the centrality of relationships between the natural and the supernatural worlds in Acholi, the living and the dead, the normative continuity between an individual and the community.

One of the respondents said that *Kuc* has positive implications in the two Acholi communities of Atiak and Palaro which includes the following: "High production of food crops and livestock, freedom of movement, and population growth." Loss of Cattle/Traction/Labour, the loss of livestock due to cattle rustling by the cattle raiders and the fighting forces undermined the whole agricultural system in Gulu and Amuru districts, and has not yet been reversed, though some steps are now being taken to re-stock the area. Before 1986, livestock used to rank high in the lists of assets and economic activities in the two districts. Livestock was the financier of school fees, dowry, family welfare, transport, source of security and pride.

Another respondent remarked that core implications of *Kuc* in the two Acholi communities of Palaro and Atiak clans are: "Restoration of Acholi traditional dances and songs and promotion of cultural rites such as funeral, initiation of twin or twin ceremonies in the villages which almost died during the long war, improvement of livelihood"

Social capital is an important determinant in enabling households and individuals to access livelihood assets and to employ livelihood strategies. Respondents with strong social connections and familial ties are better able to access land, receive food from neighbours and relatives, work in collective groups, participate in savings associations and take advantage of opportunities for paid labour.

Social capital is particularly important in providing individuals and households with access to networks that serve a protective function. In contrast, individuals or households with a more limited social network have greater difficulty accessing resources such as land and employment opportunities and often have to take greater security risks, such as collecting natural resources alone.

Household livelihood strategies and levels of human security are determined by access to and the quality of sources of capital, including natural capital (or

resources), financial capital, human capital and social capital. Lack of access to or control over these sources of capital has a detrimental effect on the ability of households to pursue successful livelihood strategies.

The researcher found that some of these forms of capital, particularly social capital, were essential to household and individual protective strategies. Social capital is particularly important because it enables people to engage in collective livelihood strategies, which are more productive and allow for spreading of financial risk, and also to participate in group protective strategies, which are shown to be more effective than individual strategies in mitigating physical insecurity.

4.8. Application of "Kuc" in Acholi communities of Palaro and Atiak clans

Traditionally, the Acholi people of northern Uganda lived in homesteads, with only a few families living within the same area. The land around the homestead was farmed for subsistence food, and shallow wells provided water. Normally not more than three or five families used the well, so contamination was rare and there was no conflict over cleaning the well. Villagers would gather on market day. Communal planting was customary for women and men as a way to socialize and get away from the burdens of the family. Each night families sat together for a fireside chat called "*Wang Oo*" and listened to stories, riddles as formal education on various topics related to *Kuc*. Family burials near to the homestead were a vital feature in northern Ugandan culture.

It was the intention of section 4.2 to test the last part of the research question in the light of the empirical findings. The analysis has shown that an Acholi traditional conflict management mechanism has indeed had an impact on *Kuc* and respondents described the applications of *Kuc* as shown below:

When each respondent was asked to describe the applications of *Kuc* in the two Acholi communities of Palaro and Atiak clans; these are what they had to say: "Peaceful conflict resolution", "implementation of community development work", "Raising happy and healthy families"

Abraham Maslow posits that, "failure to meet basic human needs can cause conflicts". Such needs include the need for personal fulfilment in all areas of life, need for identity in relation to the outside world, and cultural security. While identity and cultural needs are sources of conflicts, they are also important

components in conflict resolution. Burton affirms that culture is important because it influences our thoughts and behaviours especially our experiences with conflict. Since culture prescribes strategies for conflict intervention, it is a "satisfier". Traditional societies are more inclined towards traditional rituals that lead to cooperative problem solving than the type of confrontation and power bargaining which has become dominant in addressing contemporary conflicts.

Scholars who are advocates of cultural and indigenous approaches to conflict resolutions believe that incorporating various traditional theories and practices into the contemporary general mechanism of conflict resolution would lead to durable peace. Augsburger (1992: 186) argues that in traditional culture, there exist pathways in the ethnic wisdom for managing conflicts. This important component of culture may be lost to westernization. Taking northern Uganda as an example, some rebel groups manipulated the Acholi ethnic wisdom to support conflict. The two Acholi communities of Palaro and Atiak clans believe that peaceful or harmonious settlement of dispute without supporting or leaning on one side is one of the major applications of *Kuc*.

Traditional approaches to conflict management do not segregate people based on their faith or political inclination. They are holistic, comprising social, economic, cultural and religious-spiritual dimensions. The conflicting parties can directly engage in negotiations on conflict termination and in the search for a solution, or a third party can be invited to mediate. The process is public, and the participation in the process and the approval of results is voluntary. Social groups such as extended families, clans, village communities, tribes, and relatives participate in the mediation, negotiation and arbitration of conflict and chiefs, elders, traditional healers or diviners usually lead them.

Another respondent described the applications of Kuc as:

Good relationship among inter-clans", informal education at Wang-Oo; (folk stories) as a mean of sharing with young people the values of Kuc and what should be done to have and maintain Kuc", "Participation at social gathering such as funeral, celebration of twin and ritual of reunion (source: interview with Olara of Amuru September 2009)

In Acholi community attending funerals or any social gathering is paramount as it promote togetherness and a great sign of peace and unity among different clans and informal education system "*Wang-Oo*", was commonly use to impart cultural

values into youth especially in the evening hours; according to the respondents the issues normally articulated at "*Wang-Oo*"; are: "Relationship (marriage), Farming, Peace-building, folk stories telling, riddles and religious education the nature of gods" among others. These gods include "*Lagoro*", "*Olal-Teng*", and "*Baka*", "*Amyel*" could be angered but also appeased. The name *Jok* means god and *Ajwaka* means priest of god. Religious life of Acholi hinged on the importance of doing good things at all times or (being peaceful).

Youth are the production force in Acholi society and bear tremendous socio-economic and cultural responsibilities. The effects of the war and displacement have placed strenuous demands on youth; they are often unprepared for these responsibilities and receive very little assistance and both informal and formal education as used to take place in every home state.

There is a strong correlation between youth threats and the camp environments. In fact, many threats are generated and perpetuated by these settings. Camps lack all basic necessities, and as one humanitarian aid worker noted, "none of the camps meet the Sphere Standards at the very minimum.

Displacement has also disrupted social roles and violated Acholi culture; the result being new forms of atrocities that previously did not exist in Acholi society, such as abductions and mutilations. This has devastated the socio-economic livelihoods of those trapped in the midst of conflict while producing the following threats: "Food insecurity, Health threats, Alternative forms of income, including underage recruitment and sex workers ,Forced marriage and domestic violence"

The campfire "*Wang-Oo*" culture died out when people moved into camps. Here, educational activities and cultural norms and values were seriously limited - including parent to child contact - and the children exposed to all sorts of different behaviour.

Camp residents said the fact that some parents slept in a single hut with up to six children was also to blame. "Marital responsibilities in a home have exposed these children to [sexual] behaviour while still too young," Rwot Otinga of Lamogi noted during a focus group discussion that. Marital issues, including intimacy between couples, used to be sacred among the Acholi people. "Indeed the process of marriage was always conducted through an elaborate process and ensured that

people of the same lineage did not get married, but that too has collapsed", according to one of the respondents.

Jackson Ocaya one of the respondents last attended an evening campfire 20 years ago and was nostalgic about the important role such gatherings played in promoting the social values of the Acholi people in northern Uganda. "In the past, we used to gather children around the fire, to educate them about proper behaviour and bond with them," the 77-year-old said at a recent campfire in Purongo Sub-county.

The campfire, called *'Wang Oo'* in the local Acholi dialect, had been organized by *Ker Kal Kwaro* Acholi with support from NUTI (Northern Uganda Transitional Initiative) as a way of restoring Acholi traditional values. *'Wang Oo'*, a forum for the exchange of ideas and discussion of problems facing the community, was the seat of wisdom where parents and elders taught youngsters good behaviour, traditional norms and gender roles.   "The war has shattered all that," Ocaya explained. "Children who have grown up today have no reason to attend the fire and in the process our customs and traditions have been eroded".

Besides the gross violations of human rights, the conflict in northern Uganda has damaged the fabric of Acholi society and culture, the insecurity is also preventing Acholi from carrying out normal domestic activities such as collecting firewood and wild vegetables, and fetching water. These used to be a woman's leisurely activity.

The social and cultural factors compounding the conflict ought to be looked at in both negative and positive terms. For one thing, it has become clear that while the conflict has had a tremendous impact on the social and cultural lives of the people of Acholi, this has both undermined elements of the old social life and cultures as well as bringing new challenges to the Acholi people. On this question, one key informant who was interviewed in Gulu said that the conflict had, among other things, brought a new cohesion to the Acholi people and a new sense of "Acholiness." New forms of organisation of the Acholi people that are uniting the peasants, intellectuals and religious leaders and elders have been emerging. These included the *Kacoke Madit*, the Acholi Council of Chiefs as well as the coalition of the religious leaders. The conflict had also raised the profile of the women in the cultural life of the Acholi people as well as the youth who had become the main

recruiting ground for both the rebels and the government forces. Acholi could never be the same again in its social and cultural setting.

But it was noted that there were new roles being defined for the old institutions as well. For instance, the institution of traditional leaders was being defined in terms of its Acholi-wide role. The elders were increasingly being challenged to look at Acholi as a unity in place of the old clan-based structures of local lineages and kinship relations. This also went for the youth -both girls and boys, who in their new plight found themselves mixed not only in terms of gender but also in terms of their social-political functions as bearers of arms. Their social relations in the rebel camps and in the IDP camps had radically altered not only their gender roles but also their definition of youth. The social class status for both the youth and the elders was also altered due to the weakening and disruption of the Acholiland economy, which has in turn undermined their role in the economy. The 'camp economy' has altered their relations to women, youth and the elders. This also affected their political roles, a question that has to be investigated further.

More than 77 percent of the respondents said that young generations do not know the Acholi culture anymore. The parents sleep together with their children in small huts. There is high level of moral degeneration, especially among the children. There are no longer any fireplace conversations and socializations of Acholi culture. This used to be the time in the past where the parents would tell stories to their children that transmitted certain moral values and norms. The culture of keeping domestic animals has been destroyed, together with all social and cultural ramifications. Marriage life has been affected with this development.

These new realities were revealed in the responses to questions put by the researchers to the people living in the camps. For instance, it was revealed that the cultural setting of keeping the animals in relation to funerals and marriages has been undermined. Courtship and its cultural import have been destroyed by camp life.

The non-existence of cattle has meant that no proper rituals for the dead can be carried out. It has also meant that marriage cannot be carried out so that people in love find they have to go without proper marriages. This has also irrevocably altered the social roles and social relations between women and men, a problem that also calls for further research.

The traditional way of organizing the economy by pooling and sharing labour as well as food has been destroyed. Formal education in the villages has also been destroyed for the children of the poor. Only the rich can afford to send their children to schools outside Acholiland, where the normal formal system of education is still in place. The Acholi people love dancing and cultural festivals. These have been undermined by camp life where there is nothing to celebrate but agonizes about. Traditional religious life of the Acholi has been interfered with and traditional religious shrines have been destroyed.

The conciliatory role of the elders has been undermined with the destruction of shrines. In the words of the Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) working in the Acholi region:

> The conflict situation has drastically undermined elements of the social and cultural lives of the Acholi people as well as bringing new challenges. The active roles of the traditional leaders and chiefs have been eroded. The young generations being brought up in the camps do not know the Acholi culture any more. This phenomenon of internal displacement has further exacerbated the problem resulting in the breakdown of the whole traditional social systems, marital breakdown and family separation, moral degeneration and all that is characterized in the Acholi culture. … Acholi well cherished and very rich African culture will never be the same again in its social and cultural centre (Civil Society working in northern region 2009)

Peace "*Kuc*" was the simplest vocabulary any newly born child would be introduced to, all efforts was directed to peaceful gains these used to take place during "*Wang-Oo*". And because of the community setting, a child or one was easily identified by the names of their parents and his origin, consequently such instilled discipline and peaceful existence among the Acholi.

The existences of the gods were seen as the fulcrum on the stability and peace in Acholi. To the effect in a judicial conviction no death sentence existed as a remedy. The rules of war were strictly enforced that whatever the outcome the Acholi believe in peaceful settlement of dispute as a lasting and sustainable resolution to conflict. This may entail bending of spears "*Gommo tong*" meant to seal relationship where the two parties reaffirm never to go to war again. Reconciliation of warring parties and parties in dispute were also executable, this ritual is known as "*Mato Oput*". Such rituals once successfully performed, were taken binding and never breached.

Acholi culture is dynamic rather than static, and there is significant potential in adopting some traditional notion of *Kuc*, its implications and applications so that

they can be used hand in hand with the contemporary concept of peace and conflict resolution mechanisms. As the Acholi proverb says, "you use the closest stick to strike the snake", even if you have never used that particular type of stick before, the seriousness of the situation and the strong desire for "*Kuc*" (peace) seems to have led the respondents in this study to consider making use of 'the nearest stick' a worthwhile complement. That is to understand the indigenous concept of *Kuc*: digging up its implications and applications and constructively use it to address the conflict in the region.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0. Introduction

In this chapter, the researcher presents the conclusions drawn from the findings of this study. The chapter also gives recommendations and suggestions for further research.

5.1. Conclusions

The study generated several interesting findings. Some of these include the fact that while a considerable number of approaches such as military, and negotiation have been used to end the conflict between the LRA and the government of Uganda, these approaches have not yielded fruit since there was no clear understanding of 'Kuc' and conflict in the local perspective yet the potential of 'Kuc' is there. There is a high level of knowledge on *Kuc*, its functions, applications and clear understanding of conflict, early warning mechanisms to mitigate conflict and ways to promote peace. However, it is quite clear that there are many grey areas that need the involvement of the parents, relatives and cultural institutions of *Ker Kal Kwaro*, for example not being close to people to educate cultural values

The mass media (Local Radio and print media) are the main sources of *Kuc* information for the respondents. Churches, schools, friends are other notable sources of information, but sometimes the information especially on the radio is conveyed by non-Acholi who do not fully understand the ingenious culture and therefore the information needs to be harmonized. Although over 80 percent of the respondents have indicated they had adequate information about *Kuc*, there was evidence that some respondents may have knowledge which is noncompliance with the Acholi traditional understanding.

Both military means and dialogue have been used by the government on different occasions to try to end the LRA conflict. While some of these initiatives

have achieved certain successes, the war has not yet ended. Many of those caught up within the conflict have therefore become despondent about reaching a peaceful resolution. While this does not mean that there is no hope for ending the war, it indicates that the Acholi notion of peace, how peace is promoted has not been fully understood to end the conflict – whether it be peaceful dialogue or military measures.

These findings show that there is strong relationship between indigenous knowledge, functions and applications of *Kuc* in the two Acholi communities of Palaro and Atiak clans. This also reinforces the finding that much of the knowledge, about *Kuc* is not influenced by the religious inclination of the respondents but mainly through the media, which the respondents from Catholic, Muslim, Protestant and Born Again acknowledged as their main source of information on *Kuc*.

There is no doubt that traditional ways of conflict prevention and resolution are still strongly rooted in Acholi society and thus still have the potential to play an important and positive role at community level. However they have been much weakened not only during the colonial rule, but even more so in the course of the current conflict. The destitute poverty of the people and the restricted living conditions in IDP camps have posed major obstacles to traditional ways of living.

Furthermore the cultural identity has shifted in the last century, now for most people their identity is based on the three pillars of "Tradition", "Christianity or Islam" and "modern/global" influences. Approaches to conflict management should strive to integrate and support practices related to the three pillars of identity in a way that they can complement each other and produce effects of synergy. There is evident danger that they can easily be seen as competing with each other, thus enhancing confusion, disorientation and conflicts among people.

The blending of traditional and modern methods in times of rapid change is quite a challenge that calls for further research and documentation in this area. But in addition to that, a systematic process of discussion with the objective of generating ideas and agreeing on how best traditional approaches can be used to foster peaceful living in and among communities is much needed. In this process the communities at grassroots level should be involved, including traditional, church, and civic leaders.

5.2. Recommendations

In the light of the findings and conclusions of the study the following recommendations were made to the Acholi people and the general public:

a) Cultural norms and values which are often at the core of human development and informed coexistence are founded and bonded on specific sets of principles that guide human behaviour in favourable ways. Resort to culture should therefore not be seen through lenses that depict primitive undertones but rather in such a way as to identify the values that will be useful to humanity.

b) It is easy to resolve or help resolve a conflict stemming from a clash of interests. It is more difficult to deal with a conflict that emanates from a clash of values. And it is even more difficult to handle a conflict in which at least one party's basic human needs are not satisfied. That is why such conflicts usually are deep-rooted and intractable. There are several basic human needs that are especially pertinent to conflict and conflict resolution: The needs for recognition, for development (and self-actualization), for security, for identity, for bonding, and finally for targets to project hate.

c) We must never merely discourse on the present situation, must never provide the people with programs which have little or nothing to do with their own preoccupations, doubts, hopes, and fears… It is not our role to speak to the people about our own view of the world, nor to attempt to impose that view on them, but rather to dialogue with the people about their views and ours.' (Paulo Freire, 1993: 77)

d) Negotiations, to date, have emphasised the need to function within a political framework. However, rather than approaching negotiation by demanding lists of grievances, it is recommended that a more open-ended approach be adopted, one that allows a better understanding of Acholi worldview of peace and understands Kony's worldview. In particular, it is vital that he is approached with a desire to understanding him (which is not the same as endorsing his actions) rather than destroying him.

e) The ending of the war in Acholiland will signal the beginnings of a new era for the people of the region, which will need reinforcement by other developments. Moreover, what has happened in Acholiland has produced new situations, which will need to be digested and understood not only by the people of Acholi, but also of other Ugandans and the world at large. The researcher therefore recommends that as part of this processes of reconciliation, a programme of further research be undertaken that will reveal the impact of what has happened so that future generations can avoid their re-occurrence. The knowledge so generated and the pro cess of research, which should be participatory and grass rooted, will also go to reinforce that the rehabilitation will be based on sound knowledge of what has happened, what has changed and what new ideas we need to adopt to meet these new situations.

f) On a more general note, many people claim that strengthening and supporting the unique and positive identity and values of a people ravaged by war can help restore a sense of dignity and orientation for the future and thus be a strong factor for "psychosocial healing" and "peace building" on a collective (community or society) level. Even if "indigenous traditional identity" has been weakened by many influences in the last decades, the roots and much of the uniqueness of an ethnic group still lie in their traditions. Thus it is certainly encouraging for the Acholi particularly Palaro and Atiak where this research was done to see their roots recognize and relate practices supported by "outsiders", rather than further weakened by neglect and oversight.

g) Many practices of Acholi culture were abandoned or weakened starting from the beginning of the colonial era and deprecated as being backward. This happened without the foreigners fully understanding their meaning or assessing them for their positive social function. Also in this respect, the acknowledging of positive cultural values and related practices is important. If NGOs, government, and individuals working in the area of "conflict

resolution and peace- building" remain ignorant on the precious traditional values and practices of the local culture they might not be in a good position to blend their "modern contribution" with the resources that are already available on the ground. Such ignorance would not only convey a "colonial spirit" of automatically assuming that modern approaches are superior to traditional ones, it would also reduce the effectiveness of well intentioned support.

5.3. Suggestions for Further Research

The process of reconciliation in Acholiland will require a thorough understanding of what has happened for the society to pull itself together and take stock of the new situation. This is a learning process through self-enquiry, self-understanding and self-empowerment. The researcher therefore suggests that a research programme be undertaken on the Acholi traditional reconciliation processes and the impact of the conflict on them. The programme should, among other issues, focus on the following areas of concern: Restorative justice in Acholi and global contexts; the changes in cultural behaviour and patterns, especially the position of women, the youth and the elderly; Acholi traditional religion and its links to Acholi traditional beliefs and cultures, and their relationships with the Christian and Islamic religions; and human security.

Traditional Rituals and Contemporary Conflict Transformation Mechanisms in Peace-building, the study concluded by suggesting that the indigenous and contemporary conflict resolution mechanism should be integrated if sustainable peace is to be realised in northern Uganda. There is need to compare and contrast the two mechanisms.

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LIST OF RESPONDENTS

Below are some of the respondents who had no objection to having their names mentioned in the report.

I am grateful to all my respondents for the contribution they have made toward this research.

NO.	NAME	AGE	LOCATION	Position
1	Rwot Onen David Achana II	53	Gulu	Paramount chief
2	Rwot Picho Edward Oywelo	54	Nwoya	Chief - Ariya
3	Rwot Otinga Otto Martin Yai	62	Lamogi	Chief - Lamogi
4	Rwot Ochan Jimmy	50	Bobi	Chief - Bobi
5	Mego Milly Akwero	51	Purongo	Elder
6	Samwiri Paito	87	Gulu	Elder
7	Obol Layung	70	Atiak	Elder
8	Kidega Edward	46	Gulu	Local Leader
9	Olweny Jimmy	65	Palaro	Elder
10	Odong Ocii	73	Atiak	Elder
11	Odongtoo Penywii	32	Palaro	Local Leader
12	Opiyo Ociti	66	Amuru	Elder
13	Oola Mark	29	Okidi	Youth Leader
14	John Olara	41	Amuru	Atiak
15	Amon Lilly	58	Palaro	Elder
16	Ocaya Jackson	34	Atiak	Local Leader
17	Aparo Rose	49	Nwoya	Leader
18	Opwonya Onencan	69	Gulu	Elder
19	Odama John Baptist	69	Gulu	Bishop
20	Kibwota Henry	24	Atiak	Youth
21	Lacam Bel Wod Ogena	51	Gulu	Radio Presenter
22	Lamwaka Grace	57	Palaro	Elder
23	Akello Mary Oryema	63	Abalokodi	Elder
24	Ladur Christine	35	Amuru	Leader
25	Santa Otim	54	Atiak	Elder

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Glossary of Vernacular Words Used

Abila	Shrine related sicknesses
Acwiny	Liver; The place where anguish is traditionally believed to be kept; a store for blood (life)
An Arwotki Oda	I am chief (king) in my own hut
Atekere	Village chief
Akote	Prophetic dream; "bad" dream associated with calamities which happen; dreams associated to witchcraft
Ajwaka	Priest of oracle; traditional healers
Cen	Evil spirits
Dwog Paco	Come back home
Gomo Tong	"Bending of the Spears"; cessation of hostilities; ritual of mediation
Goyo Laa	Spitting of saliva; a means of blessing by elders
Goyo Pii	Washing tears during a reunion ceremony.
Gure Madit	Grand council/meeting
Kacoke Madit	Grand Acholi meeting held at London
Ker Kal Kwaro	Acholi Palace
Kiir	(Taboo) A very serious abomination which requires sacrificing a (very troublesome beast) goat for redress
Kuc	Peace
Kwero Merok	Ritual for cleansing after killing a human being who is an enemy
Lodito Apoka	Elders (senior members of the community who have power and authority in the community; they are considered to be the link between the spiritual and the living worlds)
Ladit	Elder *(*A title for an elderly and respectable male member of the society (*Mego* – as for a female) Plural – *Ludito*
Laneno	An expert who knows how to "see" the inside of a goat for ritual purpose

Layibi	Forked pole for opening granaries; it symbolizes the unlocking of the new world of hope
Leketio	Birth belt (in Pokot); Ritual belt used to support or stop conflict in Pokot
Ludito Apoka	Senior elders; elders who are aged 60years and above
Neno i Dyel	"Seeing" the inside of a goat; soothsaying
Nyanrubanga	Supreme deity/god
Muma	A ritual conducted by Pokot to curse a thief or "Satan"
Odoo	A stick; a club
Olet	Bush; communal grazing ground
Olwedo	Ritual tree meant for protection
Onyot	A Pokot word for a thief
Pobo	Ritual tree that is stepped on during a cleansing ceremony; it has slippery sap that "washes" away wrong doings
Pketiis	Pokot's traditional beer
Rwodi	Cultural leaders; traditional Chiefs; singular-*Rwot*
Tong-gweno	Chicken egg
Tol Wat	Code of relationship with relatives
Jok	god [plural *Joggi*]- gods/ divine spirit
Jok Ker	The ruling deity/god
Yoko wic	Literally 'knocking heads'
Yubu Kom	Cleansing ceremony conducted after an abomination has been committed.
Tum	Sacrifice
Twol	A snake
Wang oo	Fire place in a traditional home setting where elders used as a "school" for imparting knowledge

Gulu and Amuru Map showing Palaro and Atiak where research was conducted
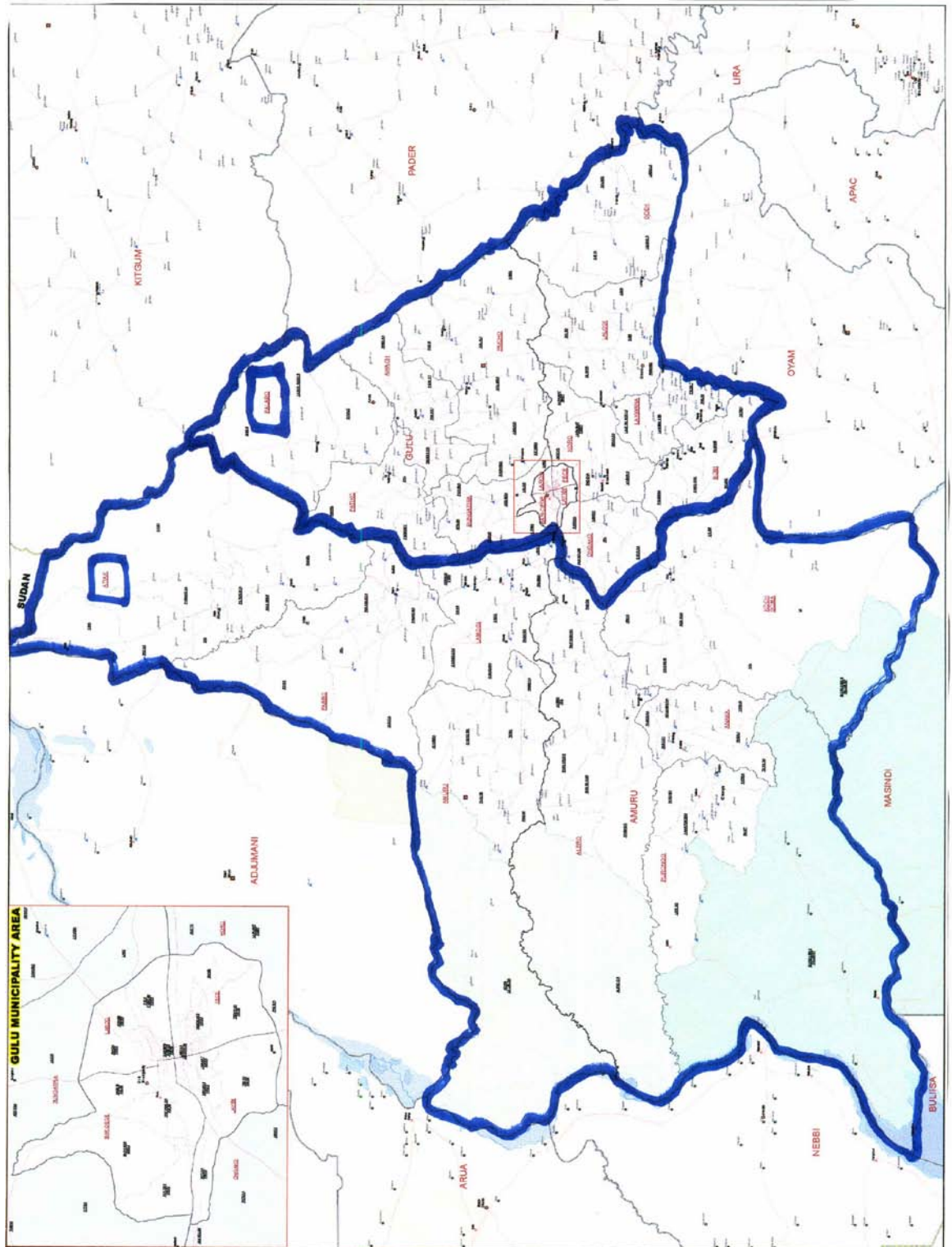
Source: Gulu and Amuru District planning unit July 2009

MAKERERE UNIVERSITY FACULTY OF ARTS
DEPARTMENT OF RELIGIOUS STUDIES
M.A PEACE AND CONFLICT STUDIES PROGRAMME
Tel: 0774 084 694
E-mail: oringa.christopher@gmail.com or extopher2002@yahoo.com

My name is Christopher ORINGA. I am doing a Master degree in Peace and Conflict Studies (M.A PCS) in the Department of Religious Studies, at Makerere University. I need to know more about the culture of Acholi therefore, I am carrying out research on this topic *['Kuc': (Peace); its Implications and Applications in Acholi communities of Palaro and Atiak clans*]. Kindly be open and honest so that we can represent Acholi culture fairly. Your responses will invaluably contribute to the peace-building effort in Acholi sub-region, northern Uganda, and to understanding and preserving our own culture. Your contribution will be treated with high confidentiality and will be used for academic purposes only.

INSTRUCTIONS: Please answer all questions by ticking appropriate boxes and filling the blank spaces

Section One: Personal Detail

1.   Gender

        (1) Male [   ]   (2)   Female [   ]

2.   Age bracket

        (1) 20 – 30 [   ]   (2) 31 – 50 [   ] (3)   51 – 70 [   ]   (4)   71+ [   ]

3.   Education level

        (1)   Secondary [   ]   (2) College [   ]   (3) University [   ]   (4) Others [   ]

Specify_____

4.   Categories of respondent

                1) Youth   [   ]

                2) Elders   [   ]

                3) Religious Leaders   [   ]

                4) Chiefs   [   ]

Section Two (A): Knowledge of "*KUC*"

5. Please indicate **how much you have learnt about '*Kuc*' [Peace]** from each of the following sources: *(Tick Appropriate Box)*

	A great deal	*Quite a lot*	*Little*	*Nothing*
Radio	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
News papers	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
Elders	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
Posters	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
Rwodi (Chiefs)	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
Others	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]

(Specify) ………………………………….

6). Do you think you have enough knowledge about "*Kuc*" [Peace]?

Yes [ ]   No [ ]   Not sure [ ]

Section Two B: Disruption OF "*KUC*"

7). Can the following practices disrupt '*Kuc*' (peace)? [Tick]

Practices	Agree	Disagree	Not sure	Strongly Disagree	Strongly Agree
Killing a community member	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
Killing outside the community	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
Witchcraft	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
Stealing from the community	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
Stealing from outside the community	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
Wife battering	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
Serious fighting with crude weapons	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
Malicious damage of properties	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
Chopping off people's arms	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
Having sex with a relative (Incest)	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
Having sex with the step mother	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
Rape	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
Cutting people's lips	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
Abduction	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]

Burning houses	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
Disrespect to elders or parents	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
Disobedience to cultural institutions	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
Others [Indicate]					

Section Three: Meaning and Perception of 'Kuc' (Peace)

8) What is the meaning of 'Kuc' in Acholi community?

   i.   _____

   ii.   _____

9). In your opinion what are the fundamentals of "*Kuc"* (Peace) in Acholi

Community?

   i.   _____

   ii.   _____

10 a) Was/is there a mechanism of promoting 'Kuc' (Peace) in Acholi

community?

                  Yes [   ]   No [   ]

10 b) If yes how was/is peace promoted in Acholi community?

    i.   _____

Section Four: Implications and Application of 'Kuc' in Acholi community

11 a) Does 'Kuc': (Peace) have implications and application in Acholi community?

              Yes   [   ]   No [   ]

11 b) List down some of the implications of 'Kuc' in Acholi communities

   i.   _____

   ii.   _____

11 c) Describe the application of 'Kuc' within Acholi community

   i.   _____

   ii.   _____

12) Describe other information you would wish to give regarding this study

_____

_____

Thank you for your cooperation

APPENDIX D

Focus Group Discussion Guide

- What is the meaning of 'Kuc' in Acholi?

- What were the trends of promoting 'Kuc': Peace in Acholi community? What are these mechanisms/practices? How were these mechanisms/practices effective? How were/are these mechanisms/practices administered? Who administer these practices to promote 'Kuc' (Peace); Why?

- Were /is there particular venue/place to administer these mechanisms? At what time; why?

- How can 'Kuc' be best promoted in Acholiland today?

- Are there practices/behaviours that can disrupt 'Kuc': (Peace)? What are these practices and behaviours? What do the community do normally to stop these practices/behaviours?

- What are the perception/meaning/understanding of 'Kuc': (peace) in Acholi?

- What are the basics of 'Kuc' in Acholi? How were/are these basics maintained? Are there different ways of maintaining Kuc in Acholi community today? Why?

- What are the implications of 'Kuc' in Acholi community? Describe the applications? Explain what Acholi community dose to individuals who disrupt 'Kuc' or cause conflict?

- Other information regarding this studies

APPENDIX E

Sample Pictures

Children attending "*Wang – Oo*" at night which was organized by NUTI in Bobi Sub-county – Gulu District (Photo by Researcher, 2009)

Photo of members of Atiak Sub-county attending "*Wang – Oo*" organized by NUTI: informal learning place of the Acholi people (Photo by Researcher; 2009)

Picture showing one of Focus Group Discussions being conducted in Atiak Sub-county – Amuru District (Photo by the researcher; 2009) From Left in yellow is the researcher

Picture showing one of the Focus Group Discussions held with Chiefs in Gulu, (From right is Rwot Otto Otinga Yai, Rwot Ochan Jimmy and some elders) Photo by researcher; 2009

APPENDIX F

Introductory Letter from Makerere University

MAKERERE
P.O. Box 7062 Kampala Uganda
Cables: MAKUNIKA

UNIVERSITY
Tel: 256-41-532251/542241
Fax: 256-41-542265
E-mail rs@arts.mak.ac.ug

DEPARTMENT OF RELIGIOUS STUDIES

Your Ref: ....
Our Ref: ....

Date: 14/09/09

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

The bearer of this letter *CHRISTOPHER O* a Master of Arts Student on the Programme Peace and Conflict Studies in the Department of Religious Studies. Makerere University. He/She is to carry out research on *CONCEPT OF 'KUC' (PEACE) ITS IMPLICATIONS AND APPLICATIONS IN ACHOLI COMMUNITY*

He/She is kindly requesting you to avail him/her with relevant data to his/her dissertation.

The purpose of this letter therefore is to introduce him/her to you and to thank you in advance for assistance you will render him/her during this period.

Yours sincerely

HAJI KATENDE ABDU
Head, Department of Religious Studies

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