CRITICAL HERMENEUTICS AND

CONFLICT RESOLUTION:

AN ASSESSMENT OF THE TRANSITION FROM CONFLICT TO PEACE IN TESO, UGANDA

1986-2000.

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International Relations

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University of London

2002

UMI Number: U162965

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Dissertation Publishing

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ABSTRACT

Soon after Yoweri Museveni's military seizure of power in Uganda in 1986, an insurgency war broke out in the north-eastern region of Teso. After six years of fighting a resolution was mediated by a number of agents drawn partly from the Museveni government and partly from local, indigenous resources in Teso. Today, despite lingering resentment against Museveni, the Teso insurgency is one of the few rare cases in Africa were a conflict was resolved by peaceful means.

Taking a lead from Vivienne Jabri's *Discourses on Violence* the thesis seeks to situate the emergence and support of the Teso insurgency within the discourse that prevailed in the region at the time. The fighting was enabled by an interpretation of the Museveni government as being hostile to the people of Teso, yet it was also facilitated by a prevailing culture of violence.

Understanding what causes an insurgency provides valuable insights into understanding what causes peace. The thesis therefore seeks to situate the emergence and support for peace in discourse. It discusses the different governmental and non-governmental agents that played a role in transforming the 'conflict discourse' into a 'peace discourse'.

Reflecting back on the past of the insurgency and looking forward to the future, the thesis places the process of reconciliation in Teso between past and future. The link between past, present and future is also subject to 'hermeneutics'. Hermeneutics signifies the way understanding is accomplished between, for instance, two parties to a conflict. It argues that the reflecting back to the past is conditioned by a particular anticipation of the future, and vice versa. Although providing a valuable framework to analyse the transition from conflict to peace, hermeneutics is problematic in the way it confornts the problem of authenticity, and it also fails to account for power asymmetries which determine the process of understanding. This thesis suggests expanding it to 'critical hermeneutics' as a way of responding to the issues.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

introducing me to people significant for my research (and social life), and especially for putting my Euro-centred views into perspective.

Most importantly, I am profoundly in debt to Alex de Waal who has been of tremendous personal and intellectual support over the past years, and without whose help many aspects of this thesis simply would not exist.

I am furthermore very grateful to my parents for their assistance which was often badly need.

My final thanks go to Claire Moon and Coady Buckley. To Claire for having been such a fabulous friend and intellectual companion - and to Coady for everything.

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ABBREVIATIONS

CA	Constituent Assembly
CP	Conservative Party
DANIDA	Danish International Development Agency
DP	Democratic Party
FOBA	Fight Obote Back Again
GTZ	German Technical Co-operation
IMF	International Monetary Fund
LC	Local Council
LDU	Local Defence Unit
LRA	Lord Resistance Army
NRA	National Resistance Army
NRM	National Resistance Movement
NV	New Vision
PCT	Presidential Commission for Teso
RC	Resistance Council
RDC	Resident District Commissioner
RPA	Rwandese Patriotic Army
RPF	Rwandese Patriotic Front
UPDF	Uganda People's Defence Forces
UPA	Uganda People's Army
UPC	Uganda People's Congress
UPF	Uganda People's Front
UNLA	Uganda National Liberation Army
UNLF	Uganda National Liberation Front

GLOSSARY

Region	Language	People
Teso (Soroti, Kumi, Katakwi district)	Ateso	Iteso (general and plural), Etesot (sing. male), Ateso (sing. and plural female)
Teso	Kumam	Kumam
Kitgum	Acholi	Acholi
Gulu	Acholi	Acholi
Karamoja (Moroto and Kotido districts)	Various languages	Various communities
Ankole		Banyankole (plural), Munyankole
Buganda	Luganda	Baganda (plural), Muganda (singular)
Lango	Langi	Langi

We have a phenomenon, and many have called it, yet it does not disappear and parades through our walls and does not justify itself. For you behave as if you know it. Raise your eyes and know it not; create a void around it with the questioning of your gaze; starve it with not knowing! And suddenly, out of fear to not be, the demon will shout its name at you and wither away.

Rainer Maria Rilke

INTRODUCTION

People fight. And people reconcile. What lies in-between is the subject of the present thesis.

Teso

I arrived in Teso in January 2000. The initial objective of my research was to investigate a case of successful conflict resolution. Teso, a land-locked region in the north-east of Uganda, lent itself as a case study. Shortly after the seizure of power by President Museveni in 1986 a fierce insurgency war broke out. Six years of fighting between the Iteso and Kumam 'boys' and the government army left a sad toll of too many lost lives.[1]

In a rather exceptional manner for the Great Lakes Region of Central Africa the Teso insurgency was resolved though the collaborative effort of local initiatives, indigenous mediators, churches and not least the government of Uganda. Fighting ceased in 1992 and to today the people of Teso have no intentions to return 'to the bush'.

And yet, peace in Teso is shallow. While conducting fieldwork the discontent of the people of Teso was very apparent. Poverty and destitution reign in the region today, people feel neglected and excluded by the present government. The period of the fieldwork coincided with the resurgence of violent cattle raiding by Karamojong warriors from the neighbouring district, which might have blurred the general attitude of the Iteso and Kumam towards the central government. In consequence, Teso has so far not succeeded in overcoming the paralysis of the post-conflict period and has failed to enter into an era of prosperity, security and contentment. Development in Teso is poor. Economical as well as social and political progress has come to a halt. Education, health care, sanitation and water -

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[1] Two different ethnic groups, the Kumam and the Iteso, inhabit the Teso region of Uganda.

especially the rural areas lack the basic material necessities that provide for a dignified existence.

This thesis draws a link between the resolution of the violent conflict in Teso and the present *status quo*. It illustrates how peace in Teso was accomplished, and how this affects people toady. Rather then attempting to paint a broad picture, the approach taken is that of focusing on the local, Teso specific characteristics of past, present and future. The case study information has been compiled through working and living closely with the Iteso and Kumam; semi-structured interviews, participatory research, workshops and conferences provide the background of the gathered knowledge.

Historical Background

When Yoweri Museveni's troops seized power in Uganda in 1986 they took over a country with a devastating record of human rights abuses, a derelict economy and a past marked by violence and suffering. For more than two decades Uganda had been subjected to the ferocious dictatorships of Milton Obote and Idi Amin. In 1986 hopes were high that Uganda would now finally return to peace. The National Resistance Movement (NRM) implemented a 'no-party system', often referred to as 'the Movement', which continues to operate in Uganda today.

However, although the majority of the country supported the NRM and Museveni's government in Kampala, rebels in the north as well as in the north-east, areas from which Obote and Amin had recruited their soldiers, continued to violently resist the change of leadership. The Acholi people in the north and the Iteso and Kumam in Teso in the north-east of the country were perpetrators as well as victims of atrocious human rights abuses. The protracted nature of the conflict manifested itself in extra-judicial killings, rape and abduction. The people from the Teso region, which covers the districts of Soroti, Kumi and Katakwi, were also subjected to cattle rustling by their Karamojong neighbours. Allegations were voiced that the National Resistance Army (NRA) was involved in these assaults and soon the confidence of the Kumam and Iteso towards the Museveni government and its armed forces was thoroughly undermined.

Transition form Conflict to Peace

This is a thesis about the transition from conflict to peace. With reference to the case study, I argue that recent approaches to peace and conflict studies – post-structuralist informed deconstruction and Habermasian critical theory – fail to successfully conceptualise the *challenging and changing* of the circumstance that give rise to violent conflicts. Instead, critical hermeneutics, it will be argued, offers a powerful alternative for capturing the moment of transition. Consequently, critical hermeneutics represents an important framework through which to analyse the invention of peace.

What is *critical hermeneutics*? Critical hermeneutics reflects the constitution of shared meaning amongst participants of a conversation – such as parties to a conflict in the process of resolving their disputes. This meaning is however not based on a metaphysical foundation, it does not search for a universal truth about the issue at stake. Rather, it is contingent and ever changing. The constitution of shared meaning should hence not be considered as directed towards a *telos* but as a constant process of closing and opening up meaning. Nevertheless, the accomplishment of (contingent) shared meaning is critical for co-existence because it provides the possibility of engagement with the Other, and in our particular case the former enemy. Critical hermeneutics avoids the relativism inherent in Derridian deconstruction while simultaneously escaping the closure of metaphysics inherent in critical theory.

Structure of the Thesis

The structure of the thesis reflects this tension between relativism and metaphysics. Chapter 1 discusses recent approaches to conflict studies which draw on deconstruction. Central to the argument of International Relations (IR) scholars like David Campbell, Richard Ashley and Robert Walker is that deconstruction offers a framework through which to dissent from prevailing hegemonic power structures inherent in modern political theory and practice. Deconstruction opens hidden truths and meanings which have been pushed to the margin of a text, or a discourse. Its

emancipatory potential is hence to challenge prevailing structures of inclusion and exclusion, drawing attention to what has been stifled and offering an opportunity for silenced voices and opinions to emerge.

The value of deconstruction for conflict studies is that it allows for the dissenting of previously marginalised people – and thus it offers valuable insights into the insurgency in Teso. Here, too, people felt excluded by the central government, and started a violent conflict in order to challenge their position in the wider Uganda. However, the central argument of this thesis is that challenging structures of inclusion and exclusion - as central to deconstruction - is not sufficient to improve a marginalised position. Rather, this challenging has to lead to the actual *changing* of the circumstances which have given rise to the conflict, leading from exclusion to co-existence. The relativism inherent in deconstruction, however, does not allow for conceptualising the process of changing essential to the transition from dissidence to co-existence.

In response to deconstruction's impossibility to conceptualise change, Chapter 2 investigates contemporary approaches to IR theory which seek to address the transition from war to peace. The argument takes a lead from what Vivienne Jabri has called 'discourse on peace'.[2] Jabri argues that

> [t]he legitimisation of war is situated in discursive practices based on exclusionist identities.[3]

And asks:

> Is it therefore possible to conceive of peace as situated in a critical discursive process which, rather than reifying exclusion, incorporates difference?[4]

Significant for the present thesis is Jabri's implicit request to *change* the discursive practises of inclusion and exclusion. Since the legitimisation of war is situated in discourse, discourse is also the site for legitimising, or inventing, peace.

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[2] Vivienne Jabri (1996): Discourses on Violence. Conflict Analysis Reconsidered. Manchester: Manchester University Press, ch. 6.
[3] Jabri (1996): 157.
[4] Jabri (1996): 157.

The practices leading to a discourse on peace suggested by Jabri, and subsequently other scholars, are based on Jürgen Habermas' 'discourse ethics'. Yet, discourse ethics has been subjected to fierce criticism because it introduces an element of metaphysics into discourse and understanding. As such, it dissolves the space for dissidence opened up by deconstruction, and consequently infringes on the potential to challenge structures of inclusion and exclusion.

In recognition of deconstruction's value of challenging prevailing structures of exclusion, and after having refuted discourse ethics as a way of changing them, Chapter 3 introduces the notion of critical hermeneutics as a framework which does not bring about change, but nevertheless allows for its analysis. Critical hermeneutics is based on the work of Martin Heidegger and Hans-Georg Gadamer. Hermeneutics signifies the 'fusion of horizons', that is the accomplishment of understanding and meaning in communication. The term 'fusion' does however not signify an end-point but a process. Horizons are the particular backgrounds in which the participants are situated, and which determine the way they understand themselves as well as 'the Other'. In the encounter with the Other, in the process of understanding, people question, and potentially alter, their horizons and consequently their interpretation of Self and Other. Two intertwined movements are at play in hermeneutics. Simultaneously, the participants in a conversation reach back to their past to evaluate their horizons and they cast themselves forward into the future of anticipated meaning, or potential reconciliation, with the Other. Our identity is negotiated in the constant backwards and forwards movement of the hermeneutic encounter in which meaning is accomplished.

Hermeneutics has been subjected to various forms of criticism. Of significance for this thesis is the allegation that it searches for truth and deeper meaning in communication and hence introduces a sense of closure. In response, philosophers such as Gianni Vattimo have suggested a more generous understanding of Heidegger's and Gadamer's work which is not based on the quest for truth. In the present thesis, I shall refer to it as *critical* hermeneutics to emphasise its constant motion of opening and

closing meaning, and hence identities.[5] Critical hermeneutics is what Vattimo has called "the ontology of the actual". [6] It describes an interactive, fluid process, and not the end of a goal-oriented process.

The significant value of hermeneutics for peace and conflict studies is its recognition that identities are constituted with reference to past and future. The way the parties to a conflict remember their past determines how they anticipate their future, and *vice versa*. Future peace and reconciliation is determined by the way the parties interpret what has given rise to the conflict. What stories do they tell about the causes of the war?

Remembering the past is reflected in the particular narratives on which people draw in order to make sense of their lives. They do so not as individuals, rather their memory is determined by their social environment.[7] It is thus produced by, as well as productive of, a collective identity in the present. Hence, remembering is selective: some incidences are chosen to be remembered whereas others are chosen to be forgotten. However, if the past can selectively be remembered or forgotten it suggests that "remembering is not the negative form of forgetting. Remembering is a form of forgetting."[8] In other words, forgetting is not to fail to remember, it is not amnesia, but rather a way of *remembering differently*.

At a collective level, a change in remembering the past therefore manifests itself in *re-membering* a community, that is re-assembling it in a different way. The identity of the community changes in the light of the different interpretation of its past. Yet this new way of re-membering is not static but subject to constant influences and impulses. Despite introducing a sense of closure to a community, it always potentially leaves it open to contestation. Re-membering in the hermeneutic encounter simply "arrests the flux".[9]

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[5] Throughout the thesis I will however simply use the term 'hermeneutics', without the adjective 'critical'.

[6] Gianni Vattimo (1997): Beyond Interpretation. The Meaning of Hermeneutics for Philosophy. Cambridge/Oxford: Polity Press, p. 10.

[7] Maurice Halbwachs (1992): On Collective Memory. Chicago/London: University of Chicago Press, p. 43.

[8] Milan Kundera (1995): Testaments Betrayed. London: Farber and Farber, p. 128.

[9] John Caputo (1987): Radical Hermeneutics. Repetition, Deconstruction and the Hermeneutic Project. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, p. 130.

Compared to deconstruction and discourse ethics, the value of using hermeneutics as a framework becomes most apparent in this interplay between contingency and closure. Similar to deconstruction hermeneutics maintains the openness of structures. However, unlike the relativism inherent in deconstruction, and without introducing a new level of metaphysics in the way discourse ethics does, hermeneutics allows us also to understand how meaning is accomplished and new (contingent) identities are formed. It enables us to understand change. Analysing conflicts through the framework of hermeneutics therefore allows for understanding both *the challenging and the changing* of the exclusive structures that frequently give rise to (violent) conflict.

The aim of the thesis is however not to develop a theory, or method, of conflict resolution but simply to reflect on 'what causes conflicts', and 'what causes peace'. To pose these causal questions does not suggest a search for deeper meaning but instead to look at the discourses and practices which have produced the realities.[10] The approach taken in this thesis hence replaces 'what' with 'how'.[11]

> It is a question of *how*, in history, meaning is imposed, put to question, reinterpreted, and fixed anew. *How*, amidst the diversity and change of texts and signifying practices of a culture, are knowledgeable practices normalized and orchestrated, resistance disciplined, and social energies focused so that, in history, it becomes possible to effect a narrative structuring in which specific modes of subjectivity are constituted both as the self-evident sovereign origins of power, on the one hand, and the truthful voices of history's objective possibilities and necessary limits on the other?"[12]

With reference to the Teso case the significant questions are: How have the antagonistic identities been constituted over time? And how have they changed in the process of mediation? As Chapter 4 argues, without attempting to make wider claims the approach of this study is to focus on

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[10] Michael J. Shapiro (1997): Violent Cartographies. Mapping Cultures of War. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, p. 31.

[11] Richard Ashely (1989): Living on Border Lines: Man, Poststructuralism, and War. in: Der Derian, James/Shapiro, Michael J. (eds.): International/Intertextual Relations. Postmodern Readings of World Politics. New York: Lexington Books, p. 283.

[12] Ashley (1989): 283.

the internal Teso dynamics, and in particular how the local interpretation of past, present and future 'caused' either peace or conflict.

The analysis of the causes of the insurgency begins in Chapter 5 with a rather traditional account of the history of Uganda. It seeks to map the national political dynamics which have developed over time and constituted a Teso/Museveni dichotomy, as well as to provide a background for the reader. Beginning with British colonial rule, I shall argue, some parts of Uganda have been privileged leading to antagonism and resentment in the country. A sequence of violent dictators developed out of these national cleavages, and the Teso insurgency was yet another outcome of it.

After having situated the case study in the historical development of Uganda, a very different approach towards what led to the insurgency is then suggested in Chapter 6. Based on the hermeneutic recognition that identities are situated between past and future, and that the interpretation of the past is reflected in the narratives people chose when referring to it, a selection of different stories about the beginning of the fighting is provided. They present the replies offered in response to my frequent question: 'What caused the insurgency?'. Significantly, eight years after the end of the insurgency one particular narrative is dominating, almost to the exclusion of competing accounts. In this version of the beginning of the insurgency, the Iteso and Kumam are described as the innocent victims of government policies – an account which allows for a particular ordering, or re-membering, of the Teso community, as well as for a number of political claims towards the present government. Through posing the question 'what caused the insurgency' the chapter seeks to illuminate how identities have been constructed in the process of remembering - and hence narrating - the past in one way, whilst forgetting others.

Chapter 7 provides yet another perspective on the beginning of the insurgency. Framed by the Clausewitzian argument that 'war is merely the continuation of politics by other means'[13] it seeks to illustrate whether

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[13] Karl von Clausewitz (1993): On War. London: David Campbell Publishers, p. 99.

politics in Teso in 1986/7 was indeed the main function of violence, or if to some extent the resulting insecurity in Teso was also driven by economic and personal objectives. In addition, the chapter challenges Clausewitz's equation of violence and means and argues that violence is a socially situated form of interaction and that in the particular case of Teso at the beginning of the insurgency a culture of violence prevailed which rendered its application legitimate. Violence is thus a horizon, an aspect of an identity, and not an external tool, or means, which can rationally be applied.

After having discussed the different 'causes' of the insurgency, the thesis turns to look at its resolution when it asks 'what caused the Teso peace?'. Chapter 8 sketches the mediation efforts that contributed to the settlement. The question that runs through the chapter is how different forms of agency worked together to impact on the structures of inclusion and exclusion that ran through Uganda at the time. Against the backdrop of fusing horizons and accomplishing meaning, different actors shall be discussed and their impact assessed. In particular the work of the Presidential Commission for Teso, introduced by Museveni in 1991, played a significant role in 'bringing the rebels out of the bush'. Through the promise of economic development in Teso, the Commission facilitate the people's re-evaluation of their initial reasons to take up arms. This re-interpretation of their past with a view to future prosperity led the people from Teso to accept the government's gesture of peace.

What makes the Teso case significant for my project on hermeneutics is that both parties to the conflict, the Museveni government and the people from Teso, reached out to each other in order to resolve their violent dispute. Peace in Teso did not simply occur due to the overpowering of the insurgents by the national army, rather it was the result of a process in which various agents challenged the prevailing structures of exclusion and animosities. The process of mediation took place in communication, for instance through seminars and workshops organised by the Teso Commission, and it changed the way people in Teso perceived themselves and the Museveni government. The Teso case thus held out the prospect of providing valuable insights into the fusion of horizons.

And yet, in the course of my research it became apparent that peace was shallow. The mediation which ended the insurgency had been successful in bringing the insurgents 'out of the bush', but the resentment that started the fighting lingers to this day. Teso has peace but without reconciliation.[14] Today people still feel excluded, and despite the promise of development by Museveni the region is prone to famine and poverty. So has the relation between Teso and the Museveni government changed as a result of the mediation process?

Altering the way of relating to the Other takes place through remembering the past in a different way. It is here where change occurs, and societies re-member as argued above. In Chapter 9, by way of discussing two examples, the Mukura war memorial and the new cultural leader, Papa Emorimor, I will illustrate that people in Teso still feel antagonistic about the Museveni government. Through analysing how people related to their past and future today I shall assess whether there is potential for change in the future.

Against the backdrop of prevailing poverty and resentment in Teso, the conclusion will ask what went wrong in the process of mediation which promised to be so successful at first. With reference to Michel Foucault's power relations I shall argue that in the process of fusing horizons the Iteso and Kumam failed to dissent from the prevailing exclusive power structures. Despite the accomplishment of shared meaning in the process of mediation the way the people from Teso and the Museveni government relate to each other today has not changed. Rather, it is still marked by the same power asymmetries which gave rise to the insurgency. Consequently, as I shall argue, in order to not only *challenge*, but indeed *change* the *status quo* it requires a process of 'poetic imagination' where the Self alters the way of relating to the Other. It is here where dissenting from hegemonic power structures is successful.

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[14] This term is borrowed from Peter Heriques (2000): Peace Without Reconciliation. War, Peace and Experience Among the Iteso of East Uganda (unpublished doctoral thesis). Institute of Anthropology. Copenhagen: University of Copenhagen.

Structural constraints

Based on Anthony Giddens' 'structuration theory', which has partly been developed out of Gadamer's hermeneutics,[15] the argument forwarded in this thesis is that understanding is constrained by structural properties that have developed over space and time. The recognition of this is relevant both in terms how it restricts the author from fully understanding the developments in Teso, as well as in terms of the Iteso and Kumam fully understanding their 'Other', the government of Uganda. The hermeneutic process of fusing horizons is thus constrained by an "effective history" – a historical development which limits how we understand the world.[16] These historical '*long durees*' of political and social lives take on the form of structures, or rather structural properties as shall be discussed in Chapter 3, which inform the way we see the world.[17] "We understand as we do because we exist as we do."[18]

Two parties to the conflict?

Although the fusion of horizons involves at least two parties it is not the objective of this thesis to portray both sides equally. The main focus is on the people of Teso, while the Government of Uganda's position is only infrequently articulated through speeches by Museveni, government publications or the reports of the Teso Commission. Two reasons were significant for this one-sided portrayal: one hermeneutic, one practical.

Firstly, from a hermeneutic perspective, one of the central arguments of this thesis is that in the hermeneutic process of understanding we always bring ourselves in. It is through our horizons that we interpret the Other, and it is our horizons that change in the process of understanding. The subject of this thesis is to illustrate how the horizon of the people of Teso changed in the process of understanding the Museveni government. Any interpretation of the government therefore has to be considered through

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[15] For a discussion of hermeneutics as the basis of structuration theory see Anthony Giddens (1988): *Hermeneutics and Social Science.* in: Shapiro, Gary/Sica, Alan (eds.): Hermeneutics. Questions and Prospects. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 215-30.

[16] The "effective history" of Teso is elaborated in Chapter 5.

[17] Vivienne Jabri/Stephen Chan (1996): "An Ontologist Always Rings Twice: Two More Stories About Structure and Agency in Reply to Hollis and Smith." *Review of International Studies* **22**, p. 108.

their lens, and not through that of an external analysts.[19] How did they understand the government's actions, gestures, initiatives, and failures? How did they fuse their horizons?

In this thesis the Museveni government is therefore not considered from an outside perspective but rather from the Teso vantagepoint. As a result, the thesis does not attempt to criticise the Museveni government from an isolated perspective. Although the external analyst is able (to some extent) to step back form the events and to form a more critical opinion,[20] the people of Teso remain prisoners of the discourse which defines and confines the way they understand Museveni. These constraints are partly the result of a long historical process. Chapter 5 recounts how present power asymmetries have developed over time and how the Ugandan polity has been split along cleavages which established an antagonistic relationship between Museveni and the people of Teso. At the beginning of the insurgency historically developed structures determined how the Iteso and Kumam interpret the Museveni government, and how they constrained, yet also enabled, the agency of institutions such as the Teso Commission in the process of mediation.

Hence, in this thesis the Museveni government is equally absent and present. It is absent because its horizons are not discussed explicitly, yet it is present by proxy through the way it constitutes the people of Teso in opposition to it. Through discussing the Teso identity, which in its antagonism is established through difference (as shall be elaborated in Chapter 2), the government always remains central to the analysis. The interpretation of the mediation process by the Iteso and Kumam is highly dependent on this disposition. In this sense, it does not matter what the government itself did or does but how the Iteso and Kumam interpret it.

Secondly, from a practical perspective, this thesis can only be a time and space restricted project and to add an in-depth analysis of the Ugandan government would have exhausted its limits. In addition, an analysis of a

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[18] John Caputo (1987): Radical Hermeneutics. Repetition, Deconstruction and the Hermeneutic Project. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, p. 61.
[19] Admittedly, it is not possible for an external analyst to enter into the horizon of another group of people and to fully consider events through their lens. The difficulties of this endeavour and the impact for analysis more widely shall be discussed in chapter 4.

government comes with obstacles such as limited access to information and resources. This thesis therefore does not tell the story of Uganda but only of Teso.

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[20] As expressed in Bernhard Tabaire/Susanne Zistel (forthcoming): *Does Conflict Prevention Work? UK Policy Towards Uganda*. London: ISIS Policy Paper.

THE NEED FOR DISSIDENCE AND THE NEED FOR RECONCILIATION

Criticism lives in the space of exile. "[The] ... ruthless and irreverent dismantling of the workings of discourse, thought, and existence, is therefore the work of a dissident."[21] In the notion of exile and dissidence as a form of criticism, structures and meanings are constantly put into question. It challenges prevailing truths and assumptions, and reveals their contingent nature.

Inspired by Julia Kristeva's call for dissidence cited above, a number of International Relations theorists have given up the safe structures and meaning of modern political theory and ventured into various sites of exile. For instance, in 1990, with special reference to Kristeva, International Studies Quarterly published a Special Issue entitled *Speaking the Language of Exile: Dissidence in International Studies*.[22] Path-breaking for the discipline at the time it provides a collection of post-structural essays criticising the prevailing, modern framework of international theory and practice.

Modern Thought in International Relations

The modern discipline of international politics has since attracted fierce criticism:

> [P]olitics as a modern discipline rests upon an underlying ontology of violence which is in turn derived from the way in which politics as a domain of action relies upon a certain understanding of subjectivity: namely that of an autonomous reasoning subject which is said both to be capable of disclosing the character of politics rationally (an

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[21] Julia Kristeva (1986): *A New Type of Intellectual: The Dissident*. in: Moi, Toril (ed.): The Kristeva Reader. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, p. 299.
[22] International Studies Quarterly (1990), Vol. 34, No.3.

epistemological claim), and of constituting politics in reality (an ontological claim).[23]

This criticism touches the heart of International Relations. Traditionally, subjects take on the form of sovereign entities, like nation-states, governments and statesmen, and they are predominantly, yet not exclusively, couched into a theoretical framework referred to as 'realism'.[24] Espitemologically, realism as a theory

> presents its knowledge of the world in terms of generalized, univerzalised and irreducible patterns of human behaviour, which reduces global politics to the incessant, anarchical power struggle between states, and rational interstate activities to the simple utilitarian pursuit of self-interest.[25]

Critically it has been argued that because it is deeply embedded in modern thought, traditional IR theory fails to account for "the intrinsic ambiguity, contestedness, and dependent arbitrary practice of prevailing modes of subjectivity, objectivity, and conduct in global life."[26] As a response, a new generation of IR scholars has begun 'to read' the social world as a discursive text, challenging implications of dominant forms of 'meaning' and 'knowing' and their role in constructing social and political realities.[27]

Against the backdrop of this briefly sketched criticism the present chapter discusses two contributions to the critique of positivist IR theory.[28] The first highlights the need to dissent form sovereign bodies of knowledge

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[23] David Campbell/Michael Dillon (1993): *The End of Philosophy and the End of International Relations.* in: Campbell, David/Dillon, Michael (eds.): The Political Subject of Violence. Manchester: Manchester University Press, p. 1.

[24] Realism, however, has not always been the dominant thought in IR theory. For a discussion of the 'Great Debates' see Mark V. Kauppi/Paul R. Viotti (1993): International Relations Theory. New York/Toronto: Macmillan.

[25] Jim George (1996): *Understanding International Relations After the Cold War: Probing Beyond the Realist Legacy.* in: Shapiro, Michael J./Alker, Hayward R. (eds.): Challenging Boundaries. Global Flows, Territorial Identities. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, p. 34.

[26] Richard Ashley (1995): *The Powers of Anarchy: Theory, Sovereignty, and the Domestication of Global Life.* in: Der Derian, James (ed.): International Theory. Critical Investigations. London: Macmillan, p. 95.

[27] George (1996): 58-9.

[28] Positivism can be defined with reference to its main assumptions of truth as correspondence, the methodological unity of science, and the value free nature of scientific knowledge. For a detailed explanations see Mark A. Neufeld (1995): The Restructuring of International Relations Theory. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, ch. 2.

like realism; the second, in the same mode, advocates for deconstruction as a tool of criticism and engagement. Despite taking their critique and dissidence seriously, and appreciating its significance and value, I will argue that the need for dissidence is closely intertwined with the need for reconciliation – and that International Relations theory has so far neglected this concern.

Need for Dissidence

The early writing of post-positivist IR scholars was marked by a jargon commonly associated with violent conflict between and inside of nation states. Terms like revolution, violence, dissidence, etc., were frequently used. The rationale behind using a language foreign to the discipline of IR was to alienate the reader from traditional concepts and conceptions with the aim of making contradictions and contingencies apparent. Critical reading and writing that focuses on aesthetics, on artistic performance, is a strategy which itself dissents from traditional conventions, be they about scholarship or IR concepts such as sovereignty or boundaries.[29]

By analogy it is thus inviting to compare the struggle of post-positivist scholars against traditional IR theory, which makes use of combat jargon, with violent conflict between or inside of states.[30] Can such a comparison be made? And if yes, what lessons can be drawn from the analogy between intellectual and physical dissidence?

Reading Dissident/Writing the Discipline

The analogy is best made with regard to individual texts. Richard Ashley's and Robert Walker's conclusion in the above mentioned ISQ Special Issue 'Reading Dissident/Writing the Discipline: Crisis and the Question of

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[29] Richard K. Ashley/R. B. J. Walker (1990): "Reading Dissident/Writing the Discipline: Crisis and the Question of Sovereignty in International Studies." *International Studies Quarterly* **34**(3): 367-415.
[30] To compare rhetoric with fighting is, of course, not intended to belittle the experience of violent conflicts.

Sovereignty in International Studies',[31] which makes reference to Kristeva's appeal for dissidence, as well as a further article by Ashley entitled *'Living on Border Lines: Man, Poststructuralism, and War'*,[32] both lend themselves to the exercise, for not only do they provide a summary of the main post-positivist arguments at the time but they have also become widely used reference texts for sympathetic and opposing arguments.[33] In the following discussion, the notion of dissidence, as continuously used by Ashley and Walker, is taken in its literal sense and related to political dissidence inside of a nation, that is to a group of people that finds itself in opposition to the central power that forms the government. The aim is to explore how Ashley and Walker conceive of dissidence and at the same time to question the fruitfulness of their endeavour in line with their aim – to encourage the critique of sovereignty in the discipline of International Relations and to ultimately change the way IR scholars think about politics and policies in the international realm.

In Ashley and Walker's article the leitmotif of struggle runs through the whole text. From a conflict analytical perspective *'Reading Dissidence/Writing the Discipline'* differentiates a number of categories. Traditional IR theory is set up as the enemy holding a sovereign position of power and knowledge. As such it resembles a hegemonic government with exclusive rights to power and knowledge. Hegemony, however, is threatened by a heterogeneous group of dissidents who find themselves pushed to the margin of the discourse. Whether gender conscious, dissenting from literary criticism, philosophers, poets or post-Marxists the group is united merely by the aspiration to undermine the sovereign body. The members do not resemble a "rude band of dissenting intellectuals bearing only their deconstructive wits and strange words",[34] but rather they exhibit "the ethical discipline that enables them creatively to respond to and

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[31] Ashley/Walker (1990).

[32] Richard Ashley (1989): *Living on Border Lines: Man, Poststructuralism, and War.* in: Der Derian, James/Shapiro, Michael J. (eds.): International/Intertextual Relations. Postmodern Readings of World Politics. New York: Lexington Books, 259-322.

[33] See for instance Richard T. L. Shapcott (1997): Cosmopolitan Conversations: Philosophical Hermeneutics and the Question of Community in International Relations (unpublished doctoral thesis). Department of Politics. Bristol: University of Bristol.

[34] Ashley/Walker (1990): 376.

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exploit the paradoxical crises" created by the sovereign body.[35] Ashley and Walker hence draw attention to a time of 'crisis' in which the contingency of sovereignty has been realised, leading to the challenging of its dominance and thus ultimately to the possibility of change through resistance, dissidence and struggle.

The Sovereignty Crisis

But what has led to the crisis? Ashley and Walker argue that their resistance inside of the discipline of IR has been sparked by the imposition of exclusive boundaries that demarcate who are the legitimate contributors to the body of IR knowledge, and who are not.[36] This imposition requires power to discipline the contributors to the discipline to conform to the prevailing mode of reasoning.[37] The content of the prevailing mode of thinking is insignificant; it is not important what particular tradition of thought is promoted but simply whether it is exclusive in its claims or if it allows for alternative positions and perspectives. If the mode of thinking, or discourse, inside a community makes exclusive claims to truth it becomes hegemonic and imposing – its omnipotent authority stifles and submerges otherness. Exclusive truth claims introduce a sense of *closure* to the debate, they close the debate through the alleged *authenticity* of the promoted knowledge. And this, so Ashley and Walker, is the case in IR.

With reference to insurgency wars, to draw a parallel between the dominance of a particular discourse and an oppressive government is close. Both stifle opposition, both have exclusive truth claims, both do not allow for otherness. In the case of Uganda, as we shall see in the present study, after President Museveni came to power in 1986 people in Teso felt that there was no place for them. The Iteso and Kumam had the distinct sensation that Museveni's Uganda strongly preferred citizens from the western region, Museveni's home area, and that they themselves, due to their past political alliances with the former regime of Milton Obote, against which Museveni's insurgency war was directed, were excluded from being

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[35] Ashley/Walker (1990): 376.
[36] Ashley/Walker (1990): 377.
[37] Michel Foucault (1980): Power/Knowledge. Selected Interviews and Other Things. Hemel Hempstead: Harvester Wheatsheaf.

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appreciated in the new Uganda.[38] They felt that the boundaries of belonging and not belonging went right through the middle of the country, leaving them as well as their neighbours the Acholi and the Langi 'on the margin', to use Ashley's and Walker's phrase. The government of Uganda, in the eyes of the people form Teso, was a hegemon.

To return to IR, the state of hegemony provokes a crisis, Ashley and Walker argue.[39] More and more scholars realise that they are not represented in the prevailing discourse and although their individual interests might be different and diverse they join in their struggle for recognition. This struggle is directed towards dissenting from mainstream IR theory and to offer alternative interpretations of the world and its people. Alternative and yet not superior, Ashley and Walker emphasise, to prevent the establishment of a new hegemony under a different rule.

In Teso, the crisis that eventually led to the insurgency was also caused by a struggle for recognition. Shortly after Museveni came to power the Kumam and Iteso took up their arms in order to violently articulate their opposition and to state their difference from Museveni's Uganda. Thus the people in Teso experienced a form of exclusion which bears strong similarities with the picture painted by Ashley and Walker: they found themselves at the margin of the nation where they had little influence. However, for the Iteso and Kumam, as will be described throughout this thesis, to resist the perceived hegemonic politics by the Museveni government through violent struggle was of little success. Armed struggle, in the case of Teso, was an unsuccessful tool to dissent from prevailing power structures.

At this point it is necessary to pause for a moment and to consider the relevance of modern concepts for non-modern societies. So far it has been argued that the modern state as a representation of sovereignty does not allow for (e.g. ethnic or cultural) diversities and this might lead to

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[38] The historical development of the antagonism is the subject of Chapter 5.
[39] Ashley/Walker (1990): 376-7.

(violent) dissent.[40] Caution is however needed when applying Ashley and Walker's critique of modernity to a thesis on Ugandan politics. Modernity is a philosophy firmly situated in Western historical development and thought and cannot simply be transferred to a cultural context that does not share the same past.[41] Yet, modern notions of statecraft have been introduced to the African continent through colonial boundary drawing, institution building and government structuring so that a comparison is to some extent possible. The introduction of the modern art of statecraft and governance through colonialism has fused with local knowledges and practices. The term colonialism has its origin in the Latin word *colere*, which translates *to cultivate* and *to design*, and it has served to organise and to transform non-European areas into fundamentally European constructs.[42] Today, in a post-colonial age, Western notions of how to structure governments, how to cultivate political systems and how to design national economies are subject to (predominantly liberal-modern) donor policies and practices so that the external influence is still perpetuated. Dependent on international financial assistance the social, economic and political development of most African countries is 'cultivated and designed' along Western worldviews manifested for instance in the call for multiparty systems, economic privatisation and an adherence to international notions of human rights.[43] Based on the donor communities' modern understanding of nation states, with boundaries that demarcate inside/outside, public/civil and domestic/foreign the African state, too, resembles a sovereign body in Ashley and Walker's sense.[44] Similar to a modern state-system it strives to secure consensus among the well-bounded population and, in doing so, submerges forms of difference - it produces a dichotomy of identify/difference.

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[40] R. B. J. Walker (1993): Inside/Outside: International Relations as Political Theory. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 171.

[41] Admittedly, this problem runs through the whole of the thesis. For a discussion of the tension between African philosophy and modernity see Peter Amato (1997): *African Philosophy and Modernity*. in: Eze, Emmanuel Chukwudi (ed.): Postcolonial African Philosophy. A Critical Reader. Oxford: Blackwell, 71-100.

[42] V. Y. Mudimbe (1988): The Invention of Africa. Gnosis, Philosophy and the Order of Knowledge. London: James Curry, p. 1.

[43] For an example of a liberal, human rights based critique of Uganda's non-party democracy see Human Rights Watch (1999): Hostile to Democracy. The Movement System and Political Repression in Uganda. NYC/Washington/London/Brussels: Human Rights Watch.

What is significant for the discussion of dissidence in this chapter is that in Teso the way resistance was practised was in opposition to the government, it was *against*, yet nevertheless *inside of*, the prevailing order. Although the Iteso and Kumam argue that it was not their intention to topple the government they still defined themselves in contrast to it and as such acted inside of the structures that ordered the society at the time. If successful their insurgency war would have inverted the power relations to their advantage, possibility leading to the exclusion and discrimination of other communities in Uganda. They themselves might have formed a new hegemonic regime, which could have given rise to new exclusion and resistance. With reference to Uganda as a whole, a country that has been affected by violence since its independence in 1962, this would have meant a continuation of aggression and tensions.

However, to dissent from prevailing power structures through trying to invert them is not sufficient, as the Teso example shows, to alter the social, political and economic reality of the people concerned. Rather, dissent has to be conducted in a way that challenges, and ultimately *changes*, the structures, which legitimate exclusion and oppression.[45] Consequently, with violent dissidence in opposition to the government merely perpetuating the cycle of conflict, the question becomes pertinent whether there are alternative ways, which challenge the structures of exclusion and inclusion themselves.

Ways to Dissent?

An alternative way to dissent has been developed with reference to post-structuralism. Here dissidence does not aim at inverting structures but rather at challenging the way a particular discourse is organised. In response to the hegemonic character of the IR discipline Ashley writes:

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[44] With a sense of humour cross-border smuggling is often described by many Africans as legitimate 'African trade' - the trade that would take place if there were no colonial boundaries.

[45] The notion of power relations and dissidence shall be discussed in the conclusion.

> Poststructuralism cannot claim to offer an alternative position or perspective, because there is no alternative ground upon which it might be established.[46]

The position of post-structuralist inquiry is at a *non-place*, it resides on the borderline of inclusion and exclusion.[47] From this location the dissident investigates how societies or communities operate. She/he asks what forces work behind the apparent, how modes of relating to each other have been normalised and institutionalised, and how binary oppositions like inside/outside, continuity/change, core/periphery, but also friends/enemies and NRM/Iteso-Kumam have become realities over time.[48] To 'live on the borderline' prevents a form of dissidence that merely inverts power asymmetries, as attempted by the Teso insurgency. Post-structuralist critique is placed outside of the forces that operate within an asymmetry, it is voiced from the borderline and therefore challenges the borderline itself. It does not privilege one side over the other but rather addresses the way these two parties have come to relate to each other – it challenges the very practice of exclusion/inclusion. As elucidated by Ashley:

> Displacing the state, poststructuralism puts this boundary into doubt. The boundary itself is never simply there, poststructuralism knows. It is always in the process of being marked, transgressed, erased, and marked again. The question to be asked is: Where is the boundary? What marks the boundary? ... [T]he sort of question to be asked is ... the *how* question. How, by way of what practice, by appeal to what cultural resources, and in the face of what resistance is this boundary imposed and ritualized?"[49]

The role of the dissident in Ashley and Walker is to step out of prevailing power structures that organise a society. Here, then, the historic forces that have, over space and time, produced a particular environment, or truth, can be criticised. This form of critique, the practice of the dissident, should however not lead to the establishment of an alternative truth. Rather, the task is to refrain from constructing a new, and 'better', environment. This approach is radically different form the Teso insurgency

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[46] Ashley (1989): 278.
[47] Ashley (1989): 260.
[48] Ashley (1989): 261.
[49] Ashley (1989): 311.

which was not trying to challenge the power structures *per se* but rather to invert them.

In its mode of criticism, hence, poststructuralism requires a radical *undecidability*: instead of privileging one side of a binary opposition over the other what is required is

> a respect for this paradox as an opposition in which it is never possible to choose one proposition over the other. It is an undecidable opposition that destabilizes all pretence to secure ground at the end of history ... but it is also an opposition that must be respected as an inescapable feature of the ways through which one may think about history. ... It is to insist that historicity must be taken to the very centre of the practice of doing theory.[50]

At the non-place on the boundary the dissident therefore does not engage in writing history herself/himself. The newly unravelled binary oppositions are to remain open in a constant flux. The role of the critic is to deconstruct historical truths without inventing new ones. With reference to conflicts the task is to lay open the spatio-temporal conditions that have given rise to the antagonism - without developing a new form of co-existence for the people affected.

Deconstruction as Dissidence

Ashley and Walker's account of dissent bears strong similarities to David Campbell's writing on violent conflicts. Campbell's project is also concerned with analysing how rituals of power have arisen, taken shape, gained importance and affected politics.[51] The tool Campbell uses for his investigation is Jacques Derrida's notion of *deconstruction*.

Deconstruction is best explained through what it is not.[52] Deconstruction is not the negative task of demolition, and it is also not a simple dismantling of an entity into small parts. Furthermore, deconstruction is not criticism in a general or Enlightenment sense of faultfinding, nor is it a method (alongside other methods) which can be

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[50] Ashley (1989): 274.

[51] David Campbell (1992): Writing Security: United States Foreign Policy and the Politics of Identity. Manchester: Manchester University Press, p. 6

[52] I am here following Simon Critchley's discussion. Simon Critchley (1999): The Ethics of Deconstruction. Derrida and Levinas. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, pp. 21-22.

applied to a particular case. For Simon Critchley, deconstruction can be explained as the reading of a text in a way that "opens up the blind spots or ellipses within the dominant interpretation."[53] Generally, texts are written in ways that exclude alternative perspectives. Texts make claims to authentically reflect a particular reality so that they introduce a sense of closure, which stifles alternative interpretations. Deconstruction, then, reveals these limits and invites plural, alternative interpretations.

To illustrate the deconstruction of texts Campbell shows how narratives about the violent conflict in Bosnia reflect particular accounts of Bosnian history which are conditioned by a selective understanding of ontological presumptions about ethnicity, nationalism, identity, violence, etc.[54] Ignorant of their ontological selection the texts introduce closure on a multiple interpretation of history through developing a particular truth, or meta-narrative, devoid of contestation. The value of deconstruction is to force open monopolistic accounts and to reveal their contingent character.

Hence Campbell's use of deconstruction seeks to challenge "the relations of power which, in dealing with difference, move from disturbance to oppression, from irritation to repression, and ... from contestation to eradication."[55] He calls for a different configuration of politics in which the overriding concern is the 'struggle for alterity', in which eradication is replaced by the nourishing and nurturing of antagonism, conflict, and plurality.[56] It is paramount to him to celebrate difference through "the proliferation of perspectives, dimensions and approaches to the very real dilemmas of global life."[57] Campbell's argument thus seeks to "contest the drive for a new normative architecture – especially in form of newly minted codes and principles – as a necessity for responses to the context of crisis."[58]

For Campbell deconstruction consequently turns into an ethical project of celebrating difference. And yet, deconstruction has its limits. The

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[53] Critchley (1999): 23.
[54] David Campbell (1998b): National Deconstruction. Violence, Identity, and Justice in Bosnia. Minnesota: University Press, p. 23.
[55] David Campbell (1998c): "Why Fight: Humanitarianism, Principles, and Post-Structuralism." *Millennium* **27**(3), p. 514.
[56] Campbell (1998c): 513.
[57] Campbell (1992): 5.
[58] Campbell (1998c): 520.

plurality of perspectives and values, nurtured and encouraged by deconstruction, might allow for difference, yet it leads to a state of undecidablity which renders consensus and decision-making an impossible task. As argued by Critchely

> [d]econstruction can certainly be employed as a powerful means of political analysis. For example, showing how a certain dominant political regime ... is based on a set of undecidable presuppositions is an important step in the subversion of the regime's legitimacy. ... But how is one to account for the move from undecidablity to the political *decision* to combat that domination? If deconstruction is the strictest possible determination of undecidablity in the limitless context of, for the lack of the better word, experience, then this entails the suspension of the moment of decisions. Yet decisions have to be taken. But how? And in virtue of what? How does one make decisions in an undecidable terrain?[59]

The inherent relativism of deconstruction and the impossibility of decision making within the framework of deconstruction leads Critchley to supplement Derrida with the French philosopher Emmanuel Levinas, and Campbell follows him in this move.[60] For the purpose of the present study, however, I shall leave their projects here.[61] Important for the remainder of the thesis is the significant value of Derrida's deconstruction, which allows for opening up closed discourses as multiple sites in which difference is not stifled but appreciated. As argued by Critchley above, and illustrated by Campbell in his work on the war in Bosnia, with reference to hegemonic regimes deconstruction enables analysts and people affected to challenge the prevailing exclusion. To return to the argument at the beginning of the chapter, deconstruction allows for questioning structures and meaning and thus for dissent.

And yet, to return to the case of Teso, is challenging structures and meaning sufficient in conflict-ridden societies? Once the prevailing power

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[59] Critchley (1999): 199.
[60] Critchley (1999): 236; Campbell (1998b): 184.
[61] To draw on the work of Emmanuel Levinas is becoming increasingly popular in International Relations theory. Driven by the search for a form of ethics, his accounts of how Self and Other relate to each other (and what responsibility for the Other we can derive out of this) have proven to be of valuable insights. However, it is not the objective of this thesis to discuss ethics, but rather to reflect on a particular body of theory along the lines of a case study.

structures have been contested, maybe even violently, are they to remain open? In fact, can they remain open? Can deconstructing structures lead to the absence of structures, to an infinite plurality and diversity without any certainties? Is living in a constant flux possible, and indeed desirable?

Necessity of Boundaries

To repeat, the projects of Ashley, Walker and Campbell attempt to dispense with the security of boundaries and certainties because boundaries merely perpetuate the structure of inclusion and exclusion. Rather, they attempt to introduce a constant openness of structures allowing for plurality to flourish.

Despite recognising that mapping out political aims like post-war reconciliation reaffirms the structure of exclusion and thus potentially perpetuates closure and the initial cause of the crisis, I would like to suggest that Ashley, Walker and Campbell do not pay sufficient attention to one of the most crucial features of life. They do not pay attention to the fact that people need a sense of identity, a sense of belonging, a sense of limits and boundaries. Not for reasons of 'human nature', anthropological conditions, or 'human needs',[62] but simply because, otherwise, being, inter-human communication and understanding would be impossible. For social interaction to be meaningful shared concepts, or what has been referred to as 'language games', are required, and this is of particular importance for the time after a violent conflict when a new, peaceful future has to be developed.

Wittgenstein's Language Games

Understanding amongst people is central to Ludwig Wittgenstein's *language games*. According to Wittgenstein we can only make sense of the world through agreeing on shared concepts. These linguistic concepts resemble games in which the participants have agreed upon one particular meaning for one particular object, or rather its representation in form of a word. Understanding, devoid of any pre-mortal dispositions, occurs on the

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[62] 'Human needs' refers to a concept introduced by John Burton (1990): Conflict: Resolution and Provention. New York: St. Martin's Press, p. 39. For a discussion see Chapter 8.

basis of conceptual agreement, and, as the following quote shows, not on the basis of an object as such.

> Suppose everyone had a box with something in it: we call it "beetle". No one can look into any one else's box, and everyone says he knows what a beetle is only by looking at *his* beetle. - Here it would be quite possible for everyone to have something different in his box. One might even imagine such a thing constantly changing.-. But suppose the word "beetle" had a use in these people's language? - If so it would not be used as the name of a thing. The thing in the box has no place in the language-game at all; not even as something; for the box might even be empty. - no, one can 'divide through' by the thing in the box; it cancels itself out, whatever it is. [63]

Thus, according to Wittgenstein, there is a certain consensus amongst the members of a community which makes for a conceptual compulsion, and which indeed creates concepts.[64] As a consequence it is only through togetherness that shared concepts are constituted, rules are established and hence understanding on a common ground is possible. Only inside the boundaries of a community, a culture, or - even more abstractly - a discourse, is there a possibility to apply words, or concepts, and hence to shape customs, beliefs and laws that provide guidelines for meaningful behaviour. As signs, invested with meaning through the communicative processes of interaction, they are at the same time medium and outcome – yet they provide necessary significance and meaning for social systems of co-existence.[65] Human knowledgeability, that is the actors knowledge about their actions, a knowledge which is itself produced and reproduced through these actions, is always bounded by a set of structures that at the same time constrain and enable the knowledge.[66]

To return to the question of criticism and dissidence, Wittgenstein suggests that in order to make sense of the world it is important to be a member of a community – only inside of certain boundaries or discourses is communication meaningful. For social interaction to be substantial, shared

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[63] Ludwig Wittgenstein (1993): Philosophical Investigations. (trans. by G.E.M. Ancombe). Oxford: Basil Blackwell, section 65.
[64] Ernest Gellner (1985): Relativism and the Social Science. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 169.
[65] Anthony Giddens (1984): The Constitution of Society. Outline of the Theory of Structuration. Cambridge: Polity Press, p. 31.

concepts and structural systems are necessary. Neither Campbell nor Ashley and Walker account for the time after the dissent when some form of co-existence has to be established. Yet, post-conflict reconstruction requires some form of resolution and re-invention of new structures to prevent a new outbreak of violence.

Need for Reconciliation

If criticism and dissent marks the beginning of a conflict, how, then, does a conflict end? If one was to follow Campbell's project then ending would be an undesired outcome, for ending would introduce a sense of closure on the newly opened debate. And yet, the constant criticism, the constant questioning of boundaries, does not allow for people in war-torn societies to create shared concepts and to return to peace necessary for ease of mind, individual and collective progress and prosperity.

Similarly, the French philosopher Michel Foucault draws our attention to where the 'real challenges' of criticism lie:

> We have to dig deeply to show how things have been historically contingent, for such and such reason intelligible but not necessary. We must make the intelligible appear against a background of emptiness, and deny its necessity. We must think what exists is far from filling all possible spaces. To make a truly unavoidable challenge of the question: what can we make work, what new games can we invent?[67]

The invention of a 'new game', in relation to a violent conflict, resembles the transition from war to peace. Similarly, with reference to Friedrich Nietzsche, Chris Coker remarks "that wars ... only really end when they are *transcended*, when they ... [go] beyond the traditional currency of victory and defeat; when the defeated side ... [accepts] that the victory of its enemy ... [is] also its victory as well."[68] The transcending of a war, then, does not simply result in the new distribution of power; rather, it challenges *and changes* the very power structures themselves. To return to the Teso example, as briefly illustrated above, it would not merely invert the power asymmetries but rather move the two parties to the conflict to a different

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[66] Giddens (1984): 27 and 375.

[67] Michel Foucault (1989): *Friendship as a Way of Life*. in: Lotriner, Sylvere (ed.): Foucault Live. Interviews 1966-84. New York: Columbia University Press, p. 209.

[68] Chris Coker (1997): "How Wars End." *Millennium* **26**(3), p. 621.

level in which the power structures are newly defined and no longer rely on the exclusion of one party at the expenses of the other. Conflict is then positive, for it challenges discrimination and boundaries, *and* it is also positively constructive for it leads to a newly invented, more inclusive, way of relating to each other.

To move from dissidence, via conflict, to peace, and this is the central concern of this thesis, it is not sufficient to deconstruct exclusive power structures, leading to plurality and diversity, but it is at the same time also necessary to *reconcile* these differences moving the parties to a new level beyond enmity. This transition is critical for co-existence and post-conflict reconstruction.

The Case of Teso

Teso is a very good example to illustrate this argument. The insurgency war, as suggested in the previous chapter and illustrated in more detail in Chapter 6, was mainly triggered by a feeling of exclusion and non-appreciation from the Museveni government. It ceased after six years, yet the people in Teso, to this day, are full of resentment towards the central government. They still feel excluded. At the end of the insurgency in Teso social, political and economic relations were left at a loss. The previously prevailing Teso identity had been challenged and its role in Uganda disputed. New relations with the Museveni government and other peoples in Uganda had to be forged in order to secure a more peaceful and participatory role for the Kumam and Iteso. This opportunity was missed, and as a consequence Teso remains a poor and deprived region. Teso never went through a process of internal or external reconciliation, Teso never forged new, 'neighbourly' ties with their former 'enemies'. Teso has peace without reconciliation.[69]

Violent conflicts have different outcomes. No matter whether the outcome is victory, defeat or accord, the former parties to the conflict, more likely than not, will continue sharing the same territory. Consequently the former enemies have to acquire a mode of relating to each other, a mode

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[69] Heriques (2000).

which replaces the violence used in the past. In a post-conflict environment, in which the relations between different constituencies have been disrupted, a new way of co-existence has to develop. To be meaningful social interaction has to be situated in a network of shared concepts, as suggested by Wittgenstein, and the time after a violent conflict is thus crucial for their establishment. It is here where the pathways for the future are being laid.

Hence, in the aftermath of a struggle for recognition, be it intellectually or physically, some form of 'reconciliation' has to take place to allow for the future co-existence of the parties to the conflict.[70] Peace has to be invented. However, this re-conciliation must neither emphasise the prefix 're', and indicate a re-turn to the previous status quo which has given rise to the need to dissent, nor must it, in itself, introduce closure through a new, static system, discipline or structure which includes some constituents at the expenses of others.

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[70] For detailed discussions of the term 'reconciliation' see John Paul Lederach (1997): Building Peace. Sustainable Reconciliation in Divided Societies. Washington: United States Institute of Peace; and Andrew Rigby (2001): Justice and Reconciliation. After the Violence. London: Lynne Rienner.

Inventing War
and Peace

The importance of post-structuralism for peace studies has been questioned by John Vasquez's remark that an analysis based on the discursive construction of reality ...

> ... maintains by its very logic that, because war was invented, it can be disinvented by people. 'Knowing' this, however, does not tell us how to bring about peace.[1]

In the present thesis I would like to challenge this rejection of post-structuralism's value for peace studies. Even if its 'knowledge' does not 'bring about peace' a post-structuralist perspective nevertheless allows for valuable insights into the construction of friend and foe which might lead to an alternative understanding of the transition from war to peace. What Vasquez is critical of is the relativist tendency imbedded in a deconstructivist approach, as discussed in the previous chapter. The question is whether it is possible to conceptionalise the invention of peace without introducing a new form of hegemonic authenticity, which calls for renewed (violent) dissent.

The question is thus how peace can be 'invented'. To this aim the present chapter is split into two sections. The first shall discuss the 'invention of war', and in doing so conceptualise notions of identity and difference relevant for the remainder of the thesis. The second section focuses on recent approaches in IR theory that discuss how war can be 'disinvented' by people.

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[1] John A. Vasquez (1997): "War Endings: What Science and Constructivism Can Tell Us." *Millennium* **26**(3): 672.

Inventing War

The Constitution of Identity

According to Vivienne Jabri, "[i]dentities are constructed representations of the 'self' in relation to the 'other'."[2] Implicit in this statement are at least two assumptions worth investigating more closely. First, Jabri suggests that identities are not realities waiting to be possessed, but rather that they are constructed over space and time, and second, she points to the relations between identity and difference as the locus of conflict. Let us consider each of these in turn.

Constructed Identities

Central to Jabri's argument is that identities do not derive from biological proclivities but rather from being situated in a particular discourse. This social and historical context provides "a variety of pre-existing experiences, implicated in human conduct through practical and discursive consciousness" out of which the individual actively selects particular modes of representation.[3] It is hence not free will that guides the selection; rather it is the individual's belonging to a spatio-temporal community that defines who she/he is and how she/he acts.

In her argument Jabri borrows heavily from Anthony Giddens' structuration theory that suggests that social practice is ordered across space and time. Again, social action is not the result of the actor's free will but rather derives from her/his situatedness in a particular set of structures, or rather structural properties, in the form of "[r]ules and resources, or sets of transformation relations, organised as properties of social systems."[4] Giddens suggests the notion of structural properties in which "structure only exists internal to ... practice and as memory traces orientating the conduct of knowledgeable human agents."[5]

However, Giddens does not suggest that structural properties determine human agency. Rather, social systems, which provide the

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[2] Jabri (1996): 131.
[3] Jabri (1996): 131.
[4] Giddens (1984): 25.
[5] Giddens (1984): 17.

structural properties, consist of reproduced relations between actors that have been organised as social practices.[6] For Giddens, all social life is generated in and through social *praxis*; where social *praxis* is defined to include the nature, conditions, and consequences of historically and spatio-temporally situated activities and interactions produced through the agency of social actors.[7]

There is therefore an important circular movement between agency and structure which forms the main contention of structuration theory:

> Crucial to the idea of structuration is the theorem of the duality of structure ... The constitution of agents and structures are not two independently given sets of phenomena, a dualism, but represent a duality. According to the notion of the duality of structure, the structural properties of social systems are both medium and outcome of the practices they recursively organize. Structure is not 'external' to individuals ... Structure is not to be equated with constraints but is always both constraining and enabling.[8]

In other words the moment of the production of action is simultaneously also the moment of the reproduction of structural properties, even in times of the most radical change.[9] Yet, this is not to suggest that structures are merely constructed by action but rather that actions reproduce them as conditions, as rules and resources, that makes agency possible.

So one important insight that derives from Giddens' structuration theory is that structural properties come into existence through agency, that is through action, as much as agency, or the agent, is constituted through structural properties. And yet, in order to have some impact on structural properties one single act is insufficient - only through repeated action, over space and time, is the agent able to exercise some influence. Repetition is thus central to the creation of being, of the coming into existence of thoughts and ideas, the agent's identity, structural properties, systems and societies.

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[6] Giddens (1984): 25.
[7] Ira J. Cohen (1989): Structuration Theory. Anthony Giddens and the Structuration of Social Life. Basingstoke, Macmillan, p. 2.
[8] Giddens (1984): 25.

As we will see in the course of this thesis, repetition has a significant ontological impact.[10] Ontology, 'the sciences of the study of being', refers to being and the essence of things.[11] The essence of agents, that is identity, is informed and conditioned by the prevailing structural properties of a particular discourse. And yet, since it is agency which shapes the structural properties, non-conformist human action might become powerful by gradually over time transforming the prevailing 'reality' into a different one. This might happen through constantly judging and acting, that is through the permanent provocation of wide-ranging structural practices.[12]

Returning to Jarbi's notion of identity construction, the argument adopted in this thesis is that agents are historically situated and that their actions are enabled and constrained by the particular structural properties, or discourse to use a synonymous term. This recognition has an impact on both the way people invent as well as disinvent war. For the existence of belligerence and hatred is considered as a structural property which has developed in a community over time, and can potentially be un-made. This, however, requires change.

Identity/Difference

The second assumption implicit in Jabri's argument is that there is a 'relation' between the construction of the Self and of the Other. Unfortunately, Jabri's text reveals little about this relation. Yet I would like to suggest that unravelling identity construction along the line of identity/difference provides valuable insights into the enigma of conflicts and therefore merits closer attention.

One scholar who has exerted a strong influence on post-structuralist writing in the discipline of International Relations is the American political theorist William Connolly. According to his profoundly Nietzschean view of the world, the importance of the Other for the Self is that the Self simply

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[9] Giddens (1984): 26.
[10] We shall see the importance of repetition illustrated in Chapter 9.
[11] Martin Heidegger (1988):   Ontologie. Hermeneutik der Faktizitaet. Frankfurt: Vittorio Klosterman, p. 1.
[12] David Campbell (1996): "The Politics of Radical Interdependence: A Rejoinder to Daniel Warner." *Millennium* **25**(1): 139.

would not exist without the Other. Without difference there would be nothing to contrast oneself from. In Connolly's words:

> An identity is established in relation to a series of differences that have become socially recognised. These differences are essential to its being. If they did not coexist as differences, it would not exist in its distinctness and solidity.[13]

Difference is hence indispensable for identity. "[T]he constitution of identity is achieved through the inscription of boundaries which serve to demarcate an 'inside' from an 'outside', a 'self' from an 'other', a 'domestic' from a 'foreign'."[14] Social systems are constructed along the line of inside/outside where exclusion at each level influences the Other and is shaped by it.[15] The spatio-temporal representation gives us a particular identity since we have to draw lines between where we stand and where there is space for somebody else. Here and there, now and then, us and them become meaningful in light of this "affective geography" where loyalty and allegiance is ascribed to those we associate ourselves with.[16] Hand in hand with this process of identity creation, however, goes the claim for legitimacy and the notion of rights for "since we have come to exist we believe that we have a right to exist."[17] This right to exist can only be challenged by somebody who is not a member of my particular identity group - it can only be the indispensable Other who has the ability to deprive us of our identity.

To sum up, the being of the Self is ultimately linked to the Other. Inside the spatio-temporal boundaries, identity is produced and reproduced through routinised practice. Human agency is meaningful for it is conducted along the lines of collective memory traces which allow for knowledge among the members of a discourse. Yet, what influence does the construction of the Self have on the constellation between identity and difference?

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[13] William E. Connolly (1991): Identity/Difference. Democratic Negotiations of Political Space. Ithaca/London: Cornell University Press, p. 64.
[14] Campbell (1992): 8.
[15] Andrew Linklater (1998): The Transformation of Political Community. Ethical Foundations of the Post-Westphalian Era. Cambridge: Polity Press, p. 114.
[16] Eric Ringmar (1996): Identity, Interest, Action. A Cultural Explanation of Sweden's Intervention in the Thirty Years War. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 78.

Identity as Basis for Violent Exclusion

In order to explain conflict as being situated in the prevailing discursive and institutional continuities of a community Jabri introduces the notion of conflict as 'constructed discourse'. Again in accordance with Giddens' structuration theory she suggests that conflicts are not events that suddenly occur but rather that they are situated in an discursive environment. Pre-existing structural properties supply the necessary foundation to justify and legitimise the emergence of and involvement in conflicts with the Other. Myths, memories and symbols not only provide the ground from which identity is drawn, but they also narrate the tale of the Other as enemy and threat.[18] And these exclusionist discourses about the inside/outside split of community boundaries are likewise embedded in discursive and institutional continuities and serve well as a justification for the practice and politics of exclusion.[19]

But where do these exclusive discourses originate from? Why was the Other created as an enemy? Is it simply the existence of difference which provides the basis for conflicts?

In an attempt to respond to these questions David Campbell argues that "[t]he problematic of identity/difference contains ... no foundations which are prior to, or outside of, its operations...."[20] Instead conflict arises on the level of the boundaries which are supposed to provide distinctness and solidity for the respective identities, and which are not always originally clear cut. As Connelly notes "[if] there is no natural or intrinsic identity, power is always inscribed in the relation an exclusive identity bears to the difference it constitutes."[21] This power is manifested in turning the indispensable Other into the evil Other. "Identity requires difference in order

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[17] Ringmar (1996): 78.
[18] Jabri (1996): 134.
[19] Jabri (1996): 130.
[20] Campbell (1992): 8.
[21] Connolly (1991): 66.

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to be, and it converts difference into otherness in order to secure its own self-certainty."[22] Connolly hence argues that

> the paradoxical element in the relation of identity to difference is that we cannot dispense with personal and collective identities, but the multiple drives to stamp truth upon those identities function to convert difference into otherness and otherness into scapegoats created and maintained to secure the appearance of a true identity. To possess a true identity is to be false to difference, while to be true to difference is to sacrifice the promise of a true identity.[23]

Hence, according to Connolly, communities which are uncertain about their own identity have a tendency to affirm this identity through increasing the difference between members and non-members leading to an exaggeration of the differences. Devoid of pre-existing coherent identities, the individual or the community is inclined to demarcate itself from the Other.[24]

The boundary drawing between the Self and the Other is thus central to post-positivist conflict analysis. In consequence, as already argued in the previous chapter, the promotion of peace has to tackle the prevailing social continuity of exclusion by changing the nature of the boundaries between inside and outside.

Emergence of and Support for Violent Conflicts

In linguistic terms Jabri locates the support for post Cold War conflicts in the 'discourse of origins' where elites "hark back to a distant past in order to mobilise a bounded, exclusionist present".[25] She argues that authorities and elites hold the power to control which discursive and institutional practices prevail inside of a community when she writes that

> [t]he ability to consolidate and reproduce authoritative power is dependent on the capacity to manipulate the memory traces of a community and control information gathering and dissemination which generate and reproduce the discursive and institutional continuities which 'bind' societies.[26]

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[22] Connolly (1991): 64.
[23] Connolly (1991): 67.
[24] For a case-study using this mode of reasoning see David Campbell (1993): Politics Without Principles. Sovereignty, Ethics and the Narrative of the Gulf War. London: Lynne Rienner.
[25] Jabri (1996): 134.
[26] Jabri (1996): 132.

The 'binding' of societies can be based on a hegemonic discourse which does not allow for dissident voices, and it may consist in demonising everybody who is not a part of this 'we-group'; a process of boundary drawing and demarcation is set in motion. Due to the overlap of signification, legitimisation and domination plural communication is no longer possible, it is distorted and becomes exclusive. Jabri makes special reference to the state, a highly administered social system, as central to both the reproduction of war through manipulating the public discourse, as well as through institutionalising the war process.[27] Yet, the difficulty with Jabri's argument is that it leads easily into an 'elite conspiracy theory', which I shall criticise below.

Jabri's argument resonates with David Keen and Mats Berdal's study of recent conflicts in sub-Sahara Africa, according to which a range of elites initiate violence in order to deflect political threats.[28] They suggest that the growing internal and external pressure for democratisation puts the mere existence of dictatorial governments in jeopardy, and in order to secure their position governments frequently incite violence along ethnic lines. Due to a general lack of disciplined and effective counter-insurgency military forces, there is a tendency to oppose the flaring-up of rebellion through the mobilisation of 'top-down' violence, "with elites taking advantage of the fear, need and greed of ordinary people to recruit civilians."[29] Ethnic identities provide a useful vehicle for motivating violent conflict against an Other; existing discursive and institutional provisions are deployed to cut a gap through a community serving as a "regressive political function".[30]

Similar to Jabri's 'conspiracy theory', in Keen and Berdal's example, the authority held by elites provides the necessary power to steer the perception, or discourse, of a community into a particular direction. However, the frequent occurrences of insurgency wars suggests that there are also actors outside of governmental institutions. To solely attribute the

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[27] Jabri (1996): 173.
[28] Mats Berdal/David Keen (1997): *Violence and Economic Agendas in Civil Wars: Implications for Outside Intervention*. Paper presented at the Millennium Conference on War Endings, 11.09.1997. London: London School of Economics, p. 6.
[29] Berdal/Keen (1997): 6.
[30] Berdal/Keen (1997): 7.

potential of manipulating discourses into violence and exclusion to governments and elites is thus a reduction of the multiple and diverse agents in a social field. Despite elites having the better access to powerful and far reaching modes of influence like the national media, one should not underestimate the impact small and local initiatives have on the course of a conflict. Especially in Africa, social, political and religious organisations enjoy a high degree of influence on their constituencies, often with backing from the global North, which can manifest itself in both the production of hatred as well as the production of peace constituencies.

In addition, it has been suggested that in Sub-Sahara Africa, since the 1990s, formerly dictatorial regimes have started to lose control over government patronage and violence.[31] Political entrepreneurs are increasingly relocating their activities outside of the state where they are building new centres of power through alternative mechanisms like private armies and militias, as well as through economic channels like the trade of minerals and other resources. Access to global markets for weapons, as well as profit-gaining interests of international security companies and businessman/businesswomen, have further opened national boundaries and eroded the hermetic character of the African nation state (if it ever existed), so that a totalising discourse has become practically impossible. And this is not to mention the vast number of international non-governmental organisations (NGOs), aid agencies and development projects which constantly supply alternative interpretations to a hegemonic discourse.

Moreover, not 'anything goes' when it comes to manipulation. Unless it is in line with a generally prevailing sentiment in the population, propaganda and hate speech incited by individuals does not necessarily lead to wide-spread violence. For here, too, agency is constrained (and enabled) by structure. The genocide in Rwanda, for instance, an often used example to illustrate the degree to which people can be manipulated into committing the most horrendous crimes against humanity, was based on ethnic polarisation first introduced by the Belgian colonial rulers and then politicised after independence. In addition, it was carefully prepared over

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[31] Robin Luckham/Ismail Ahmed/Robert Muggah/Sarah White (2001): *Conflict and Poverty in Sub-Sahara Africa: an Assessment of the Issues and Evidence*. Brighton: Institute of Development Studies report, p. 12.

many years, and it occurred not only in the middle of a civil war and thus extreme polarisation, but also in the context of the flawed peace process and after a series of smaller 'genocides' and 'counter-genocides'. The action of killing was thus situated in a 'long-duree' of fighting and hatred and not merely the result of a spontaneous Hutu conspiracy. In addition, on a more general note, the motivation of people to engage in combat is often very personal, and almost apolitical, as will be discussed in Chapter 7, and not a result of elite manipulation.

My disagreement with Jabri's underlying 'elite conspiracy theory' is on grounds of it simplifying the diverse social and political forces that constitute a discourse. Despite her recognition that discourses are always plural,[32] her emancipatory project of carving out space for excluded voices assumes that at a particular point in time a totalising regime is possible, and that its authority is the sole agent to inform a discourse. When Jabri refers to the plurality of discourses she thus makes a normative claim, that discourses 'ought to be plural', and not a general observation, that they always are. In opposition, I would like to argue, that discourses *are* indeed always plural, and not only in relation to a particular issue at stake, but on an endless scale which manifests itself, for instance, in a large number of motivations to engage in violent conflict. There is, to use Carolyn Nordstrom's term, also 'a different kind of war story'[33] – which cannot be captured by IR concepts and theories, as we shall see later in the thesis.

So far we have been discussing how war is invented and we now turn to the invention of peace.

Inventing Peace

Famously, it has been argued that

> Peace is an ontologically suspicious concept, as troubling in its own ways as war. War's historic opponents – those who want peace – are *inside* a

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[32] Jabri (1996): 158.

[33] Carolyn Nordstrom (1997): A Different Kind of War Story. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

frame with war. ... Peace cannot exist without war, and both are problematic notions...[34]

Despite recognising the importance of suggesting that peace is an 'ontologically suspicious concept', the focus of this thesis is not on making it less so, but to wonder about the processes that bring peace about.[35] War and peace are closely intertwined, as already suggested by Jean Elshtain, and the present study is a further example to sustain this point.

To return to Vasquez' remark at the outset of this chapter the central project of this thesis is to wonder about ways to disinvent war and to invent peace. As already referred to in the introduction to this thesis the attempt at 'inventing peace' is inspired by Jabri's remark, and subsequent question, that

> [t]he legitimation of war is situated in discursive practices based on exclusionist identities. Is it therefore possible to conceive of peace as situated in a critical discursive process which, rather than reifying exclusion, incorporates difference?[36]

In the following I shall discuss, and ultimately reject, a methodology which has recently become popular in conflict resolution, Habermasian discourse ethics, in order to then, in the next chapter, proceed with a different way of conceptualising the invention of peace.

Situating Peace in Discourse

In *Discourses on Violence* Vivienne Jabri promotes a 'discourse on peace' which "assumes a basis for the transformation of symbolic and institutional orders which underpin violent conflict."[37] She thus calls for a "counter-discourse which seeks to understand the structurated legitimation

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[34] Jean B. Elshtain (1987): Women and War. Brighton: Harvester Press, p. 253.

[35] Nevertheless, in line with the actual case study, I use the term 'peace' in at least in two different ways. Peace, on one hand, refers to the cessation of fighting, or what has been called 'negative peace' and which I shall occasionally call 'shallow peace' or 'peace without reconciliation'. The second understanding of the term peace is more profound, or positive. It refers to ideal case scenario of fused horizons, as central to the notion of hermeneutics which will be explained in the following chapter, in which both parties agree on the issue at stake. Here, peace and reconciliation are synonymous.

[36] Jabri (1996): 157.

of violence and challenges the militarist order and exclusionist identities which encompass it."[38] In order to provide a theoretical framework to conceptualise the effort of situating peace in discourse, Jabri draws on the German philosopher Jürgen Habermas and his notion of discourse ethics.[39]

At the centre of Jabri's project is the intention to reveal, and ultimately to eliminate, distorted communication, produced through economic and political power asymmetries, which render a potentially diverse public sphere into a hegemonic discourse without contestation. In order to allow for opposition Jabri therefore advocates reversing the process by situating peace in discourse. This, she contends, requires a process of unhindered communicative action which involves participation and difference.[40] Habermasian discourse ethics is promoted as a framework for situating peace within the process of discourse.

Discourse Ethics

Discourse ethics is located in a wider philosophical framework, Critical Theory, which is concerned with critically investigating the condition of a society to find out whether it is constituted by "ideologically frozen relations of dependence that can in principle be transformed."[41]

In order to 'defrost' relations of dependence Habermas has introduced the concept of communicative action. The process of communication serves at least two purposes: "Speakers simultaneously say something (assert a position) and do something (establish a relationship)."[42] In other words, not only does communicative action provide the possibility of reaching consensus about an issue, it at the same time transforms the

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[37] Jabri (1996): 146.
[38] Jabri (1996): 146.
[39] Since the publication of *Discourses on Violence* Jabri herself has moved away from applying Habermas' discourse ethics towards a mediation of different identities not dissimilar to the approach taken in this thesis. See for instance Vivienne Jabri (1999): *Explorations of Difference in Normative International Relations*. in: Jabri, Vivienne/O'Goreman, Eleanor (eds.): Women, Culture, and International Relations (eds.). Boulder/London: Lynne Rienner, 39-61.
[40] Jabri (1996): 161.
[41] Jay Rothman (1992): From Confrontation to Co-operation. London/Newbury Park/ New Delhi: Sage, p. 72.
[42] Nancy Love (1996): *What's Left of Marx?* in: White, Stephen K. (ed.): The Cambridge Companion to Habermas. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 53.

relationship between the participants of the communicative act. It leads to change.

According to Habermas, interactions are communicative "when the participants co-ordinate their plans of action consensually, with the agreement reached at any point being evaluated in terms of the intersubjective recognition of validity claims."[43] In the process of communication the participants share their views and, so Habermas argues, potentially reach an agreement about the issue at stake. His theory is epitomised in his concept of the 'ideal speech situation', which can be defined as "intersubjective symmetry in the distribution of assertion and dispute, revelation and concealment, prescription and conformity among the partners of communication."[44] Symmetry is here understood as linguistic conceptions of truth (unconstrained consensus), freedom (unimpaired self-representation), and justice (universal norms).[45] When all these elements come together communication is undistorted and potentially leads to a consensus amongst the interloceurs on the basis on 'the best argument'.

The appealing nature of communicative action for conflict studies springs to mind immediately. Critique of existing power asymmetries and transformation of structural properties are central to the transition from war to peace. For instance, Jay Rothman, practitioner and theorist in the field of conflict resolution, derives his Adversarial, Reflexive and Integrative (ARI) Conflict Management Framework from Critical Theory.[46] In addition, the UN War Torn Society Project emphasises the value of Habermas when it explicitly refers to

> 'communicative action' ... [in which] actors communicate through language and are concerned to produce a consensus that has been argued through, participating in making decisions that have been

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[43] Jürgen Habermas (1990): *Discourse Ethics: Notes on Philosophical Justification*. Benhabib, Seyla/Dallmayr, Fred (eds.): The Communicative Ethics Controversy. Cambridge, Mass./London: MIT Press, p. 73.
[44] Jürgen Habermas (1970): "Towards a Theory of Communicative Competence." *Inquiry* II, p. 320.
[45] Love (1996): 54.
[46] Rothman (1992): 73.

validated by this kind of communication - the approach of WSP from the beginning.[47]

Deiniol Lloyd-Jones uses Critical Theory in order to improve international facilitation in violent conflicts.[48] Traditional facilitation theories, he argues, lack a normative framework for what form of conflict resolution should be achieved. They either treat conflict as a form of misunderstanding or as the manifestation of frustrated needs, and facilitators merely act to set the resolution of the dispute into process.[49] To focus on process only, and not on outcome, limits the potential to critique power asymmetries and reduces the chance of them being addressed and resolved.[50] In order to provide a means for criticism Lloyed-Jones turns to Critical Theory. Habermas' discourse ethics, he reminds us, is oriented towards finding a rational consensus through inter-subjective communication. The consensus resembles a normative criteria which guides the facilitation process and thus the potential outcome. The merit of a critical theory of international mediation is that it helps to identify normative criteria, that is it "respects rationality and canons of truth without falling into dogmatism."[51] This is what Lloyd-Jones calls 'Cosmopolitan Mediation'.

Another study of the value of Habermas' discourse ethics for the promotion of peace has been conducted by J. Lauren Snyder. Through analysing the deficits of problem-solving workshops, such as introduced by John Burton, Snyder develops a project of 'Critical Theory of Peace Practice'. Her key contention is that in order to be successful facilitation has to shift its emphasis from mere problem-solving to an approach that takes the constitutive potential of language into account. We will return to Burton's problem-solving approach and workshops in Chapter 8, yet for now it shall suffice to recognise Snyder's attempt to develop a theory for conflict resolution on the basis of discourse ethics, which seeks not only to address

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[47] Lauren Engle (1997): *The Challenge of Peace*. War Torn Societies web site/UNSRID: <http://www.unsrid.org/wsp>/cop5/cop5.htm>, 20.05.2000.
[48] Deiniol Lloyed-Jones (2000): "Mediation, Conflict Resolution and Critical Theory." *Review of International Studies* 26(4): 645-62.
[49] Lloyed-Jones (2000): 657.
[50] Deiniol Jones (1999): Cosmopolitan Mediation? Conflict Resolution and the Oslo Accords. Manchester/New York: Manchester University Press, p. 158.

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the immediate environment of a workshop but wider areas of social and political practices.[52]

The main value of discourse ethics for Snyder is the promise of a certain consensus reached between the parties in conflict, which is not based on the assumption that conflict simply arises out of misunderstanding due to disturbed communication, and that through discussing issues in a workshop environment the parties realise that they all share the same premises. This becomes obvious in her discussion of Jay Rothman's project, which, Snyder argues, despite making explicit reference to Habermas, remains profoundly positivistic when it simply uses communicative ethics to reveal hidden motivations and emotions so that the true cause for the conflict can emerge.[53]

Despite being generally sympathetic to Snyder's research agenda, I am doubtful whether Habermas' discourse ethics provides an insightful enough framework for critique and emancipation on one hand, and for the conceptualisation of how people in conflict may reach understanding about the issues at stake, and how this can then translate into wider social change, on the other.

Critique

Discourse ethics has received criticism from different camps, but I shall limit my arguments to what is relevant in the context of the present study. Amongst other influences, the work of Habermas has developed out of, and in opposition to, Martin Heidegger's and Hans-George Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics. In what follows I shall briefly criticise Habermas' project from a hermeneutics perspective, which shall at the same time serve to open the path to the following chapter to which the concept of hermeneutics is central.

Habermas' discourse ethics demands that, in order for participants to reach rational consensus, communication has to be undisturbed. He fails,

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[51] Jones (1999): 163.

[52] J. Lauren Snyder (2000): A Critical Theory of Peace Practice: Discourse Ethics and Facilitated Conflict Resolution (unpublished doctoral thesis). Department of International Relations. London: London School of Economics, p. 19.

[53] Snyder (2000): 157-8.

however, to recognise that speech, or language, itself is situated in a particular tradition which impacts on the interloceur's 'unimpaired self-representation'. Thus, domination and exclusion, the disturbances that hinder communication according to Habermas, are not external to language but a part of it. The speaker cannot step out of his/her tradition to freely perceive and articulate coercion. Habermas has not fully completed the linguistic turn but maintains a degree of transcendental metaphysics, because for him domination and exclusion happen outside of language, behind its back as we shall see in the conclusion of this thesis, so that they can be problematised in communication. It is however the contention of the present study that 'language is the house of being' and not separate from it. To step outside of this house in a critical manner is impossible. As already established in the previous chapter with reference to Wittgenstein, communication is situated in a network of shared concepts, and not against a background of intelligibility. In other words, the agent in communicative action, in Giddens' terms, is situated in a particular set of structural properties which constrain (and enable) her/his perceptions and actions. In the environment of a conflict resolving workshop the agent remains informed by her/his situatedness which determines how and what she/he communicates. To give an example, in a culture where women are not equal to men, many women, given the opportunity to participate in a workshop based on notions of an ideal speech situation, would very likely not even raise questions about the state of their oppression, for they are not aware of its unusualness and degree. Since it is a part of their tradition they do not challenge the limited freedom but rather accept their position in the prevailing structural properties as fair and just. How would they know about their exclusion and underprivileged status if it is a part of their identity?

In this sense it has been suggested that Habermas operates with two different notions of language.[54] On one hand he implies that language is a tool of social control, a means to exercise power, which can be revealed and criticised. Yet, on the other, he uses language as a means in a dialogic process to bring about understanding. Here, social relations are forged

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[54] Alan How (1995): The Habermas-Gadamer Debate and the Nature of the Social. Aldershot: Avebury, p. 215.

through the use of language. Alan How concludes therefore that the whole idea of undisturbed communication is undermined for language cannot at the same time be constraint and cohesion.

In addition, as mentioned previously, the present study is based on the assumption that identities, be they collective or individual, are constructed in a particular environment, or discourse, and that therefore our beliefs and perceptions are historically and spatially situated in our tradition. Meaning is constituted in a language game which includes some, yet not all others, so that different people have a different understanding about a particular issues at stake. An alternative way of framing this premise is through the notion of 'culture' – a concept which has recently received attention in conflict resolution literature.[55] The importance of culture is recognised as a scheme of reference shaping the parties' different life-forms and local conditions of knowledges, and the subsequent obstacle this poses to bringing about understanding between distinct cultures. Yet, Habermas' discourse ethics does not take different interpretations based on different cultures into account.[56]

In reference to Habermas' rational consensus in communicative action it is thus fair to question whether his emancipatory project is feasible in the light of different traditions and cultures. For difference in self-understanding and meaning is not necessarily the outcome of disturbed communication or ideology, but simply different life forms[57] - and they are equally valid.

So what is Habermas' value for inventing peace? The point frequently emphasised by Jabri and Snyder, and which is also central to the present

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[55] Tarja Vayrynen (1995a): Going Beyond Similarity: The Role of the Facilitator in Problem-Solving Workshop Conflict Resolution. Paradigms, Vol. 9, No. 2, pp. 71-85l; see also Lamont Lindstrom (1992): Context Contest: Debatable Statements on Tannu (Vanutu). in: Duranti, Alessandro/Goodwill, Charles (eds.): Rethinking Context. Language as an Interactive Phenomenon. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 101-24; and Luis Arturo Pinzon (1996): "The Production of Power and Knowledge in Mediation." Mediation Quarterly 14(1): 3-20.
[56] In his recent writing Habermas discusses the inclusion of difference with reference to Europe, statehood and liberal theory. Jürgen Habermas (1996): Die Einbeziehung des Anderen. Frankfurt: Suhrkamp.
[57] How (1995): 222.

study, is the potential to *change* the attitudes and perceptions of parties to a conflict through language and communication. Again, in line with the discussion of structuration theory above, language is a medium through which both, agent and structure, are informed. Through changing the way we talk about, say, our enemy we, over time, alter the wider discursive settings that determine the enemy's role in the society at large. Since we do not have any other access to the 'reality out there' than through language, as we have seen in Wittgenstein's language games, it is here where change occurs. As I shall argue throughout the thesis, in order to understand how to 'invent peace' we have to investigate how, in the process of communication, formerly exclusive conceptions of Self/Other, be they in discourse or institutions, are mediated into a relationship devoid of violent conflict. Discourse ethics has the potential to situate peace into a wider discourse.

Yet, Habermas does not only use language as a means for social cohesion, but also as a tool to reveal the hidden forms of domination that disturb it. Since language cannot at the same time be a medium of constraint and cohesion it is possible to reject Habermas' discourse ethics as the basis for a "counter-discourse which seeks to understand the structurated legitimation of violence and challenge the militarist order and exclusionist identities which encompass it",[58] as suggested by Vivienne Jabri at the beginning of this section. And I shall now proceed with a different conceptualisation of communication which avoids the pitfall of seeking a truth through language.

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[58] Jabri (1996): 146.

CRITICAL HERMENEUTICS

So how does understanding between two parties to a conflict come about? In Chapter 1 we concluded that in a post-conflict environment some form of resolution and re-invention of new structures has to take place to prevent violence from erupting again. Deconstruction, it has been suggested, is a valuable way of opening up closed discourses, yet it does not allow for new ways of co-existence. Looking at contemporary contributions to IR literature, the last chapter discussed, and rejected, Habermas' discourse ethics as a framework for the invention of peace. His emancipatory interest of removing domination and exclusion in order to promote undisturbed communication was contradicted by his use of language as a tool for constructing social relationships.

In order to reconcile the relativism of deconstruction and the meta-physical aspiration of finding truth behind language, in this chapter I shall provide an alternative account of how to conceptualise understanding amongst parties to a conflict. Hermeneutics, the art of understanding, is not driven by emancipatory concerns, but it promises to bridge the gap between the nihilism imbedded in relativism and the conception of meaning imbedded in transcendental metaphysics.[1] In consequence, it provides a valuable framework for the analysis of the transition form conflict to peace.

Gadamer's Hermeneutics

The word hermeneutics has its etymological origin in ancient Greek and it signifies translating, interpreting, and making intelligible. Hermeneutics is derivative of the messenger Hermes whose task it was to dispatch messages between the gods of Greek mythology. The term hermeneutics has been in use since the seventeenth century, yet it was the German theologian Friedrich Schleiermacher (1768-1834) who published the first significant exegesis on the subject. To him, hermeneutics was the

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[1] Hugh Silverman (1994): Textualities. Between Hermeneutics and Deconstruction. New York/London: Routledge, p. 7.

tool through which to understand the meaning of the Bible as well as legal texts. Wilhelm Dilthy (1833-1911), in reference to Schleiermacher's approach, developed the term *hermeneutic circle*, which provoked the German philosopher Martin Heidegger (1889-1976), and subsequently his student Hans-Georg Gadamer (1900-2002), to provide an alternative account of the 'art of understanding' which Gadamer then labelled *philosophical hermeneutics*.[2] Since Heidegger's and Gadamer's departure illustrates aspects significant for the present context I shall give a further account below.

The Notion of Understanding

Hermeneutic Reflection

In his major work *Truth and Method* Gadamer lays out the fundamental ideas behind his notion of hermeneutics. The somewhat misleading title, however, does not introduce the quest for an authentic, universal truth and a methodological guideline for action.[3] Rather Gadamer emphasises that the 'hermeneutic reflection' only serves to lay open alternative ways of knowing, i.e. truths which would not have been noticed otherwise.[4] Hermeneutic reflection refers to the complex process set into motion when we encounter something or somebody new and strange which we seek to understand, like somebody we find ourselves in conflict with.[5] Once understanding has been accomplished the shared meaning about an issue at stake is however not more 'true' then the assumption we had before the encounter. Rather, this newly acquired truth is merely different, and there is no hierarchy of different truths. As a result, hermeneutics

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[2] Throughout the study, I shall use the term 'hermeneutics' only when referring to Heidegger's and Gadamer's notion.

[3] Although Gadamer repeatedly draws attention to the fact that *Truth and Method* is not about truths and methods his readers seem to be reluctant to consider his work from a different perspective, as we shall see below. For an explicit rejection of the connection between title and content see for instance Hans-Georg Gadamer (1979): "Practical Philosophy as a Model of the Human Science." *Research in Phenomenology* IX, p. 78.

[4] Hans-Georg Gadamer (1993g): *Replik zu 'Hermeneutik und Ideologienkritik'*. in: Wahrheit und Methode II. Ergaenzungen. Tuebingen: Mohr Siebeck, p. 255.

[5] In the context of the present study I would like to emphasis that despite hermeneutics' relevance for encountering the new and strange I do not want to suggest that conflict arises out of the unfamiliarity of the Other.

opens the door for a pluralism of interpretation and the competition of different truths.

The question which drives Gadamer's philosophy is not the search for a normative ethics to tell us what we ought to do, but rather what guides us beyond is and ought.[6] In the process of understanding a number of influential factors are at work which impact on the outcome of the encounter. In the following section I shall broadly lay out the central arguments.

The Hermeneutic Circle

One of the main contentions of hermeneutics is that a part can only be understood in relation to the whole and the whole only in relation to its parts. There is thus a circular movement.[7] For instance, the interpretation of a text invokes a circular movement between its overall interpretation and the specific details that a particular reading offers. The new details potentially modify the overall interpretation which in turn sheds light on new parts significant for understanding. In this process, understanding becomes more and more profound.[8] For Schleiermacher, who first theorised hermeneutics, yet without explicit reference to the term 'hermeneutic circle', this suggests that a text can only be understood by the interpreter when she/he fully grasps what the author had in mind. For him, hermeneutic interpretation required the mental retracing of the writer, as well as her/his situatedness in a historical context. In this traditional conception of hermeneutics, understanding is only possible through the reconstruction of the author's subjective and objective circumstances. Schleiermacher's notion of the hermeneutic circle is hence formal and methodical; for to him understanding is the reproduction of the initial production, and it results in a divine act in which the interpreter is able to place her-/himself entirely into the author, or the Other. Through Schleiermacher's, and later Dilthy's, model of hermeneutics a positivist

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[6] Hans-Georg Gadamer (1993c): *Vorwort zur 2. Auflage.* in: Wahrheit und Methode II. Ergaenzungen. Tuebingen: Mohr Siebeck, p. 438.
[7] Hans-Georg Gadamer (1993d): *Vom Zirkel des Verstehens.* in: Wahrheit und Methode II. Ergaenzungen. Tuebingen: Mohr Siebeck, p. 57.
[8] Hubert Dreyfus (1988): *Beyond Hermeneutics. Interpretation in Late Heidegger and Recent Foucault.* in: Gary Shapiro/Alan Sica (eds.): Hermeneutics. Questions and Prospects. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, p. 73.

notion of understanding is suggested where the interpreter and the interpreted remain distinct entities. Yet, due to a particular understanding of subjectivity and rationality, they are able to completely step into the Other's position. Methods like psycho-analysis and historical or bibliographical research help to produce a true and authentic picture of the text and its author.

As mentioned by way of introduction, Gadamer, in following his mentor Heidegger, discarded Schleiermacher's formal interpretation of the hermeneutic circle.[9] In the process of understanding, Gadamer argues, we do not place ourselves into the author's mental situation, nor into their subjective circumstances, but only into her/his opinion. As for the objective circumstances, Gadamer criticises Schleiermacher in that he only recognises the author's historical contextualisation, yet disregards the situatedness of the interpreter her-/himself. We, as interpreters, always also bring our own historical context into the encounter with the text, or the Other, and hence every interpretation, and understanding, can ultimately only happen from the vantage point of our own situatedness. Understanding is thus contingently dependent on both the interpreter's and the text's spatio-temporal background.

In his re-interpretation of the hermeneutic circle Gadamer refers to Heidegger's notion of hermeneutics as discussed in *Being and Time* where the latter argues that understanding is always determined by the interpreter's preconception. In the process of interpretation we do not simply try to paint an accurate picture of the author, nor do we try to understand the text through the author and the author through the text (as subject to the traditional conception the hermeneutic circle) so that accomplished understanding dissolves the circle in complete knowledge. Rather, completeness can never be achieved; there is a constant interplay between the spatio-temporal background of the interpreter and the author, that is the Other in which the interpreter understands her-/himself, and *vice versa*. This process is set into motion through comparing commonalties and then questioning difference. I will return to this point in more detail below.

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[9] Hans-Georg Gadamer (1993a): Wahrheit und Methode I. Grundzuege einer philosophischen Hermeneutik. Tuebingen: Mohr Siebeck, p. 277.

For now it suffices to say that our anticipation of meaning is not guided by a form of sublime subjectivity, but rather that when interpreting a text we always bring ourselves in. Through firstly recognising what we have in common with the Other's tradition, Heidegger emphasises, this communality is always under construction. Thus communality is not merely a precondition for understanding but it is always produced in the process of understanding itself. The hermeneutic circle for Heidegger and Gadamer is hence not formal, as it is for traditional approaches, but it describes an ontological structural moment of understanding.[10] Where for Dilthy and Schleiermacher hermeneutics meant the art of understanding, for Heidegger and Gadamer it is understanding itself.

The redefinition of the hermeneutic circle by Heidegger and Gadamer has significant consequences for ways of approaching otherness, which translates to, for instance, the way a researcher conducts investigations and understands a situation. I shall return to this aspect in my discussion of discourse analysis in the following chapter.

Tradition/Vorurteile

By analogy, when engaged in a dialogue with our 'enemy' we only understand an argument, a part, in relation to her or his historical, social, geographical etc. background, the whole. Statements and utterances have no universal validity which makes them universally intelligible. They are invested with meaning due to the speakers spatio-temporal background, or what Gadamer calls 'tradition'. Traditions can be understood as an ongoing outcome of historical lives, as the representation of meanwhile nameless authorities,[11] or as the historical environment through which we know ourselves. We cannot divest ourselves from tradition. Our understanding of the world is thus ultimately linked to our traditions, which exercise a form of authority on our being, on our view of the world, and our view of the Other. The way we are, the way we understand, the way we relate to our environment is conditioned by our past. As a consequence, the individual cannot, when making judgements, refer back to some pre-social rationale,

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[10] Gadamer (1993a): 299.

but only to what Gadamer calls prejudices, i.e. judgements that have been made before the evaluation of all circumstances. And yet this does not necessarily mean that these prejudices are wrong. But rather

> [p]rejudices are not necessarily unjustified and erroneous, so that they inevitably distort the truth. In fact the historicity of our existence entails that prejudices, in the literal sense of the word, constitute the initial directness of our whole ability to experience. Prejudices are biases of our openness to the world. They are simply conditions whereby we experience something - whereby what we encounter says something to us.[12]

The 'literal sense' of the word Gadamer is referring to derives from the German word for prejudice: *Vorurteil*. *Vor-urteil* means at the same time prejudice and pre-judgement, a judgement we have made previous to being more knowledgeable about the circumstances.[13] We might have strong prejudices against our 'enemy', yet only pre-judgements/prejudices enable us to commence evaluating something new and strange. *Vorurteile* are situated in a particular bounded community through which our being has been constituted. They are at the same time a limitation and a necessity to understanding; they enable and constrain the way we conceive of our 'enemy'.

Wirkungsgeschichte

Gadamer's claim, that in the process of understanding our traditions always have an effect upon us, leads him to develop the term *Wirkungsgeschichte*, or 'effective history': the operative forces of traditions.[14] Traditions are the materialization of effective history. Effective history is thus our own history which has an effect on the way we are. Therefore, to think truly historically means to include one's own history, to render oneself (as an individual, community, etc.) conscious of the effects of the distinct past. In other words, understanding, in its essence, is a process of *wirkungsgeschichtlichem Bewusstsein*, of "effective historical

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[11] Jacob Samuel (1985): Zwischen Gespraech und Diskurs. Untersuchungen zur sozialhermeneutischen Begruendung der Agogik anhand einer Gegenueberstellung von Hans-Georg Gadamer und Jürgen Habermas. Stuttgart: Paul Haupt, p. 58.

[12] Gadamer (1993a): 9. (translation cited in How (1995): 48.)

[13] Gadamer (1993a): 275.

[14] Gadamer (1993a): 305.

consciousness" for it requires the revelation and consideration of one's history.[15] Nevertheless, "[e]ffective-historical consciousness is inevitably more being (Sein) than consciousness (Bewusstsein)",[16] it has strong ontological implications.

To exist historically means that knowledge of oneself can never be complete for every finite present has its limitation which is represented in what Gadamer calls 'horizons'. A "[h]orizon is the range of vision that includes everything that can be seen from a particular vantage point."[17] The term is used to indicate the limitation of thinking to a finite entity. Yet, as a consequence, people are not static but dynamic for they change over space and time. In Gadamer's words:

> Just as the individual is never simply an individual because he is always in understanding with others, so too the closed horizon that is supposed to enclose a culture is an abstraction. The historical movement of human life consists in the fact that it is never absolutely bound to any one standpoint, and hence can never have a truly closed horizon. The horizon is, rather, something into which we move and that moves with us. Horizons change for a person who is moving.[18]

It is of major importance not to misunderstand Gadamer in this aspect. When he suggests that we retrieve our past, and that we question our prejudices, he does not suggest that there is a true self which can be discovered. Hence, Gadamer's truth is relational, and in the process of understanding it is related to the Other and to the anticipation of understanding the Other in the future.

In the process of understanding, Gadamer consequently suggests, we question our own horizons and interrogate our prejudices and prejudgements. In doing so we find out which prejudices about our 'enemy' are wrong and which ones are right. At first sight, the categories 'wrong' and 'right' suggest some deeper 'truth' which calls for uncovering – like a true 'evil spirit' of our 'enemy' which is said to be intrinsic to his/her race, ethnicity or genes. However, in Gadamer, truth never gains absolute,

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[15] Gadamer (1993a): 305.

[16] Georgia Warnke (1987): Hermeneutics, Tradition and Reason. Oxford: Blackwell, p. 80.

[17] Gadamer (1993a): 307.

[18] Gadamer (1993a): 309 (translated in Hans-Georg Gadamer (1975): Truth and Method. New York: Seabury, p. 304).

authentic terms but is rather relative to the experience of being confronted with the strange and different.[19]

As we shall see below, Gadamer's truth is situated in an environment of shared meaning, or fused horizons, where the issue at stake becomes intelligible. Yet "[w]hat does *'meaning'* signify? ... [M]eaning is that wherein the understandability of something maintains itself - even that of something which does not come into view explicitly and thematically."[20] Meaning is thus a shared environment in which interaction is possible and in which it makes sense. To agree on something, i.e. to produce 'truth', is thus always situated in a spatio-temporal context comprised of discursive rules which provide a meaningful environment – and as such it is beyond our grasp. In other words, "[w]e understand as we do because we exist as we do."[21]

Backwards and Forwards Movement of Hermeneutics

When encountering our 'enemy', in the process of reaching understanding, as depicted in Gadamer's hermeneutics, simultaneously two distinct, yet intertwined, movements take place: one movement is the retrieval of the past, the other the casting forward into a future. It is fair to say that Gadamer is generally more concerned with the first and Heidegger with the second movement, yet since the movements form an entity I shall discuss them here together.

Firstly, to render oneself conscious of ones own effective history is a process of retrieving the past. Assumptions and positions, taken for granted and 'naturalised' over time, are questioned. Habits and routines, part of our day-to-day conduct, are re-evaluated. More precisely, the way we think about our 'enemy', the resentment we harbour, is brought under scrutiny. The way we have seen ourselves, thought of ourselves and represented ourselves is challenged through excavating our past in the light of the 'enemy'. From the moment we retrieve our past, and become conscious of our effective history, we become aware of the silent influences, *Vorurteile,*

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[19] Hans-Georg Gadamer (1993f): *Was ist Wahrheit?* in: Wahrheit und Methode II. Ergaenzungen. Tuebingen: Mohr Siebeck, p. 47.
[20] Martin Heiddeger (1962): Being and Time. New York: Haper & How, p. 370-71.

that guide us. Once conscious we might consider them as inappropriate and unsuitable and discard some of our assumptions or positions, habits or routines. In doing so, in discarding features that were intrinsic to our identity, we change. Questioning past horizons, evaluating previously uncontested features of our tradition and potentially discarding them, alters the way we are. Retrieving the past, therefore, has a significant impact on the present for it defines who we are now. Our present identity is a product of the way we conceive ourselves in the light of our own horizon. Yet, we can only interpret the past in the light of today.

The second movement referred to above is to cast oneself forward into a future. The way we see ourselves in the future reflects back on how we conceive ourselves in the present. To cast oneself into the future means for instance to anticipate that an understanding with the 'enemy' will be reached, that there will be some form of reconciliation in the time to come. Thus, to anticipate the accomplishment of understanding in the future, that is the creation of shared meaning, demands a particular attitude in the present. At the same time, through reaching out to a future we reflect back on our presence. When encountering the alien and strange we are confronted with assumptions, positions, habits and routines different from our own. It is the wish, and therefore the anticipation, of accomplishing understanding about the issues that differ that leads us to the self-critical process of evaluating our own horizons, that is of retrieving our past as mentioned above. Essential to retrieving our past is thus to reach forward into the future, to anticipate a certain state of shared understanding with the Other - the possibility of future reconciliation.

To illustrate this point with reference to conflict resolution I would like to borrow a notion introduced by the peace researcher Johan Galtung.[22] While criticising problem-solving workshops Galtung introduced the notion of 'the image'. Parties to a conflict, he suggested, despite sitting around a negotiation table, have little commitment to 'solve their problems' as long as they still consider themselves enemies. What they require is therefore an image of a peaceful and better future, that is the wish to reconcile their

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[21] Caputo (1987): 61.

[22] I am here referring to a contribution by Johan Galtung at the Reporting the World roundtable discussion at Taplow Court, Taplow, 06.07.2001.

problems. Devoid of this image violence will remain a possibility as a means of resolving the conflict.

I assume, yet do not know, that Galtung's notion of 'the image' is not based on the study of hermeneutics, and yet there are obvious parallels with Gadamer's concept of casting oneself into the future. The image, in Galtung's sense, of peaceful co-existence is an incentive to retrieve, or reinterpret, the past in a way that allows for this image to materialise. Therefore, approaches to conflict studies should not simply concentrate on removing problems, so called 'root causes', like access to water, social and political inclusion, or whatever else might have been identified as the cause of a conflict, but they should encourage the anticipation of a peaceful future. The anticipation of a positive and peaceful future might nevertheless include the provision of water, social and political inclusion and so on, as was the case in the mediation of the Teso insurgency.

To return to Gadamer, it is important to state that both parties, in the process of understanding, evaluate their horizons and potentially discard particular features. In so doing they alter their horizons, and who they are, and eventually fuse their horizons. "Understanding ... is always the fusion of horizons which we imagine to exist by themselves."[23] In the process of fusion we enter into a communion with our 'enemy' in which we do not remain who we were, in which we might adopt some of the 'enemy's' views as much as the 'enemy' might adopts ours. This is not to suggest that a process of unification takes place, which deletes all forms of difference.[24] For example, in the context of discussing religion Gadamer suggests that although many non-western cultures have successfully adopted a global, western-centred market economy, which entails a very substantial element of modernity derived from Judeo-Christian religion, the non-western cultures have simultaneously maintained their own forms of religion. They have, on the level of global economy, evaluated their traditional approaches, realised that they will benefit from adapting to western practice, and ultimately altered their routine. Yet only in the field of economy – not in other spheres of their culture.

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[23] Gadamer (1993a): 311 (translated in Gadamer (1975): 273).
[24] Hans-Georg Gadamer (1998): *Dialogues in Capri*. in: Derrida, Jacques/Vattimo, Gianni (eds.): Religion. Cambridge: Polity Press, p. 200-11.

Hence, the fusion of horizons should not be understood as the assimilation of difference. Rather, in the process of hermeneutics, as depicted by Gadamer, we actually appreciate difference in its purest form for we respond to it through questioning ourselves. The communion into which we enter with the 'enemy' is as contingent as our previous identity; it is not an all-absorbing sameness but a consensus reached about a particular issue at stake. Nevertheless, it provides us with meaning and (contingent) truth.

To sum up, two movements, two dynamics, are thus at play in philosophical hermeneutics. Simultaneously, we reach back to our past to evaluate our effective history and we cast ourselves forward into the future of anticipated meaning, or potential reconciliation. Our identity is therefore negotiated in the constant backwards and forwards movement of how we conceive of our history and how we conceive of our future.

To return to the beginning of this section, the backwards and forwards movement is what is illustrated in the *hermeneutic circle*. We understand the part in relation to the whole, that is the Self in relation to the Other, and the whole in relation to the part, that is the Other in relation to our Self. The hermeneutic circle is not a formal template, but rather it describes the ontological structural moment of understanding.[25] Hermeneutics symbolises not the art of understanding, rather it is understanding itself. Hermeneutics is the ontology of the present, its truth or meaning, as much as it is the ontology of the identities involved.

Time and Temporality

Traditionally, time serves as a synonym for a sequence of 'nows' that disappear into the past where they become 'thens'. However, the backwards and forwards movement central to the process of hermeneutic understanding challenges this linear direction and has led Heidegger to develop the notion of *temporality*, which was subsequently adopted by

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[25] Gadamer (1993a): 299.

Gadamer.[26] As explained above, for Heidegger the forward movement of time is also always simultaneously a movement backwards, for it retrieves and recovers what has been in the past. He therefore suggests a circularity where the retrieval of the past conditions what is possible in the future. Again, this circular movement is profoundly ontological for it composes the very identity of individuals and communities. Their present identity is produced through the repetition of narratives about the retrieved history. This repetition makes manifest the social, spatio-temporal reality of the people – it produces and re-produces their identity. Thus "repetition is not recollection, but posing anew the question of what is significant, and how it can be re-manifested in a different historical space."[27] However, situated between past and future, people not only retrieve their past but at the same time they stretch out towards the possible in the future, they cast themselves forward into a horizon of existence. In Heidegger's words:

> [t]he character of 'having been' arises from the future, and in such a way the future which 'has been' (or better, which 'is the process of having been') releases itself from the Present. This phenomenon has the unity which makes present in the process of having been: we designate it as *temporality*.[28]

Being constituted by previous moments the present simultaneously constitutes moments-to-come. The 'now' is only shaped in its presence through a particular interpretation of our past. And this particular way is conditioned by our attitude towards our future. Hence "[t]his past, ... reaching all the way back into the origin, does not pull back but presses forward, and it is, contrary to what one would expect, the future which drives us back to the past."[29] There is a constant forward and backward movement between the horizons of our past and of our future.

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[26] Heidegger (1988): 35-6.
[27] Bruce Janz (1997): *Alterity, Dialogue and African Philosophy*. in: Eze, Emmanuel Chukwudi (ed.): Postcolonial African Philosophy. A Critical Reader. Cambridge, Mass./Oxford: Blackwell, p. 235.
[28] Heidegger (1993): 326. (translation cited in Stephen Mulhall (1996): Heidegger and Being and Time. London: Routledge, p. 145.)
[29] Hannah Arendt (1968): Between Past and Future. Eight Essays on Political Thought. Harmondsworth: Penguin, p. 14.

Temporality and Conflict Studies

To illustrate the above with regard to parties in conflict, Heidegger's temporality suggests that the present identities of parties to a conflict are conditioned by the narratives on which they draw to explain their past. And yet, these life narratives are selected by the parties with a specific view to their future, which might capture them as future combatants, aggressors, parties to a peace process or simply as neighbours. Today's tales of enemies and friends derive at the same time from the constituent's visions of their past *and* their future, from where they think they come from as well as where they want to go to.

A Narrative Approach to Conflict Analysis

One approach which takes Heidegger's rejection of time as being linear into account, is narrative theory. The interpretation of our past, reflected in the story we chose to refer to it, is conditioned by how we cast ourselves into future horizons. The selection of narratives has strong political implications essential to both conflict and peace as future prospects, as will be illustrated in Chapter 6.

Narrative approaches to conflict studies have gained in interest in recent years.[30] Based on the assumption that "[t]he event is not what happens" rather "that which can be narrated"[31] the social dynamics which privilege one story over another are scrutinised and revealed. The tales told about an event are what defines our perception of it, they structure what comes to be considered real and true, and thus close off counter-narratives. "Narrative closure refers to the autopoetic process through which narratives seal off alternative interpretations to themselves."[32] As argued in the previous chapter, to practice closure is an essential requirement to define relationships, socially as well as politically, which have been destroyed by a

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[30] Campbell (1993); Campbell (1998a/1998b/1998c); Sara Cobb (1994): *A Narrative Perspective on Mediation. Towards the Materialization of the 'Storyteller' Metaphor.* in: Folger, Joseph P./Jones, Tricia S. (eds.): New Directions in Mediation. Communication Research and Perspectives. Thousand Oaks/London/New Delhi: Sage, p. 49-63; John Winslade/ Gerald Monk/Alison Cotter (1998): "A Narrative Approach to the Practice of Mediation." *Negotiation Journal* **14**(1): 21-41.
[31] Campbell (1993): 7.
[32] Cobb (1994): 54.

violent conflict. In a post-war environment they forge the fabric which enables people to make sense of their existence, and in particular the traumatic experience of the violence and disruption.

> There is a dialectic relationship between experience and narrative, between the narrating self and the narrated self. As humans, we draw on our experience to shape narratives about our lives, but equally, our identity and character are shaped by our narratives. People emerge from and as the products of their stories about themselves as much as their stories emerge from their lives. Through the act of memory they strive to render their lives in meaningful terms. This entails connecting the parts into a more or less unified narrative in which they identify with various narrative types – heroes, survivors, victim, guilty perpetrator, etc.[33]

People make sense out of events by incorporating them into larger life narratives.[34] Narratives are characterised by their possession of a plot.[35] A sequence of events is 'emploted' through their mediation with time. In this process meaning is provided to what would otherwise be a mere chronicle of events. Beginning, middle and end structure the sequence of events into a story and make it intelligible for both narrator and audience. Thus narratives are understood as

> discourses with a clear sequential order that connects events in a meaningful way for a definite audience, and thus offer insights about the world and/or people's experience of it.[36]

By implications, the represented world does not resemble a clear story line and it is only our desire for "coherence, integrity, fullness, and

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[33] Paul Antze/Michael Lambek (1996): *Introduction. Forecasting Memory.* in: Antze, Paul/Lambek, Michael (eds.): Tense Past. Cultural Essays in Trauma and Memory. New York, London: Routledge, p. xviii.
[34] Wendy Drewery/John Winslade (1997): *The Theoretical Story of Narrative Therapy.* in: Monk, Gerald/Winslade, John/Crocket, Kathie/Epston, David (eds.): Narrative Therapy in Practice. The Archaeology of Hope. San Francisco: Josse-Bass Publishers, p. 43.
[35] Hayden White (1991): *The Metaphysics of Narrativity: Time and Symbol in Ricouer's Philosophy of History.* in: Wood, David (ed.): On Paul Ricoeur. Narrative and Interpretation. London/New York: Routledge, p. 144.
[36] Lewis P. Hinchman/Sandra K. Hinchman (1997): *Introduction.* in: Hinchman, Lewis P./Hinchman Sandra K. (eds.): Memory, Identity, Community. Albany: State of New York Press, p. xx.

closure of an image of life" that renders them into discrete and manageable entities.[37]

In the same vein, in *The Causes of War* Hidemi Suganami contends that causation, explanation and narration of war origins are inextricably intertwined.[38] Suganami argues that we only understand what caused a war when we comprehend the story we are told by way of explanation. The search for the cause of a violent conflict is driven by the wish to render its occurrence more intelligible – that is to make sense of it.[39] In the process of explaining we provide a narrative, a story, about why a war came about. Here, then, concepts of causation, explanation and narration collapse into the promotion of a particular argument which structures the story. The question is not whether the argument is an adequate representation of what happened but rather whether it is convincing and intelligible. Only the structure of signification in a particular narrative renders an event coherent, not the coherence of the event itself.[40] "The best we can do by identifying the origins of any given war, then, is to construct a coherent and convincing narrative on the basis of available knowledge and evidence we have of the world" – there is no way of validating whether one story is the better then another.[41]

Suganami's emphasis on the intelligibility of a structured story renders relative approaches that search for a list of conditions that lead to the breakout of violence. For instance, Christopher Clapham suggests that insurgency wars derive either from blocked political aspirations or from reactive desperation.[42] The most commonly referred to causes for insurgency wars in Africa include:[43]

- political, social, economic exclusion;

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[37] Hayden White (1987): The Content of the Form: Narrative Theory and Historical Representation. Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, p. 24.
[38] Hidemi Suganami (1996): On the Causes of War. Oxford: Clarendon, p. 150.
[39] Suganami (1996): 139.
[40] Richard Baumann (1986): Story, Performance, and Event. Contextual Studies of Oral Narrative. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 5.
[41] Suganami (1996): 208.
[42] Christopher Clapham (1998): *Analysing African Insurgencies.* in: Clapham, Christopher (ed.): African Guerrillas. Oxford/Bloomington: James Curry, p. 5.

- competition for resources;
- tribalism and ethnicism;
- external intervention: colonial legacy of badly distributed territory and proxy war during the Cold War;
- political rivalries;
- religious tensions;
- greed and malice of political leaders/political economy of violence.

Often, these causes are referred to as 'root causes' of violent conflict. Most of the above categories are also evoked when it comes to explaining the cause of the insurgency in Teso. The question remains, why one particular story is better then another.

Narrated events and narrative events are characterised by the interplay of available resources and patterns of narrative performance on one hand, and emergent functions and outcomes of the performance on the other.[44] In Mikhail Bakhtin's words the narrative and the narrated event "take place in different times and in different places, but at the same time these two events are indissolubly united."[45] They are united through their ontological impact situated in temporality as discussed above.

Consequently, a sequence of events might be emploted in various ways by various people – there is more than one story to tell as will be illustrated in Chapter 6 through a selection of different narratives on the beginning of the Teso insurgency. This recognition calls for suspicion towards a narrative which lays claims to be the only representation of reality and for interrogating its authenticity.[46]

Critique of Authenticity

The accomplishment of shared meaning in the hermeneutic process of fusing horizons has been accused of introducing closure by providing an

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[43] See for instance Adebayo Adedeji (1999): *Comprehending African Conflicts*. Adedeji, Adebayo (ed.): Comprehending and Mastering African Conflicts. London/New York: ZED, 3-21.
[44] Baumann (1986): 6.
[45] Mikail Bakhtin (1981): The Dialogic Imagination. Austin: University of Texas Press, p. 255.
[46] Campbell (1998b): 37.

authentic story. One of the most pronounced critics of hermeneutics is Michel Foucault. In his words hermeneutics

> seeks re-apprehension through the manifest meaning of discourse of another meaning at once secondary and primary, that is, the more hidden but also more fundamental.[47]

Being an outspoken opponent of metaphysical truths, Foucault resents the perspective that hermeneutics conveys the search for a deeper and truer truth as the outcome of the process of questioning, and ultimately fusing, horizons. His life-long project was to reveal the contingency of truths, which he endeavoured to do especially through deploying the Nietzschean 'genealogy'. He particularly rejected the existence of 'meaning' which allows, as discussed above, for understanding and some form of truth about an issue at stake.

Foucault's view that hermeneutics introduces authenticity and closure is widely shared, yet nevertheless it has been contested – and in my view successfully. In an essay entitled 'On the Transcendality of Hermeneutics', Richard Palmer seeks to rescue hermeneutics from its bad reputation and provides an alternative interpretation.[48] Almost from the moment of its birth, philosophical hermeneutics was discredited as a method aiming at the establishment of a profound truth. Even Heidegger, who in his early work *Being and Time* developed the notion of hermeneutics as a process of self-interpretation and understanding, a process in which we unconceal - and realise - our cultural situatedness, later rejected this form of 'metaunderstanding' to which the process of hermeneutics allegedly ultimately leads. In *Being and Time* Heidegger tried to show that the hermeneutic relation was the essence of reality which "was supposed to be revealed to each human being in an ever-present but ever-repressed sense

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[47] Michel Foucault (1973): The Order of Things. New York: Vintage Books.

[48] This essay was written in response to a text by Hubert Dreyfus who, although generally an advocate of hermeneutics, in the same edited publication makes a number of critical remarks similar to Foucault's argument above. Richard E. Palmer (1988): *On the Transcendentally of Hermeneutics. A Response to Dreyfus.* in: Shapiro, Gary/Sica, Alan (eds.): Hermeneutics. Questions and Prospects. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 84-95. A similar point is made by Gary B. Madison (1991): *Beyond Seriousness and Frivolity: A Gadamerian Response to Deconstruction.* in: Silverman, Hugh J. (ed.): Gadamer and Hermeneutics. New York/London: Routledge, 119-36.

of anxiety" about the anti-foundational character of existence.[49] The transcendental truth immanent in each human being, as established in *Being and Time*, which initially provided the criterion of success for hermeneutic interpretation, was later discarded by Heidegger.[50]

And yet, Palmer argues that Heidegger maintained, albeit only implicitly, the use of hermeneutics in his own work. Hermeneutics, however, is here not understood in the narrow definition Heidegger himself established in *Being and Time*, that is a form of 'metaunderstanding', but it rather makes reference to the simple act of interpretation. Here, understanding is still accomplished in the process of fusing horizons, yet without any preconception of what the understood is supposed to look like. This use of hermeneutics, Palmer contends, would then include Heidegger himself as a scholar who, although he had explicitly turned his back on the concept, has a hermeneutic approach to reasoning when he, for instance, makes reference to ancient Greece. Hermeneutics, simply understood as interpretation, would then include all efforts to explain the present through the past or the Self through the Other. It would still seek to produce meaning, but a conditional and contingent one.

Palmer draws our attention to this way of using the term hermeneutics – a way which merely points at the act of interpretation or understanding without seeking to establish metaunderstanding. This generously defined use of the term, he suggests, would then also include philosophers like Derrida when he uses, for example, *The Postcard* to reflect on ancient Greek philosophy and Freudian Psychoanalysis.[51] When drawing attention to Derrida's "preoccupation with text, writing, and phenomena", which Palmer considers to be a "continuation of the history of reflection and interpretation", he nevertheless recognises that they are centred on interpretation yet at the same time they are "intertextual".[52] Derrida thus

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[49] Dreyfus (1988): 74.
[50] Dreyfus (1988): 75.
[51] Palmer (1988): 95. The text I am referring to is Jacques Derrida (1987): The Postcard. From Socrates to Freud and Beyond. Chicago/London: University of Chicago Press. Gianni Vattimo, in his re-definition of hermeneutics, also includes Derrida, as well as Foucault, as writing in the hermeneutic tradition. Gianni Vattimo (1988): "Hermeneutic as a Koine." *Theory, Culture & Society* 5(2-3), p. 400.
[52] Palmer (1988): 95.

has developed a new way of applying hermeneutics, a transcendental, antimetaphysical way, or what Palmer refers to as 'deconstructionist hermeneutics'.[53]

Seen in this light, Foucault's use of Nietzsche's genealogy could be considered as a hermeneutic practice, too. Despite his outspoken critique of hermeneutics, Foucault's approach, which draws partially on Husserl's phenomenology, seeks to combine the idea of horizons in which every action and utterance is situated and is thus meaningful and which can be interpreted, while at the same time making apparent that these horizons are merely historical constructs.[54] This becomes apparent in the following quote:

> The analysis of statements, then, is a historical analysis, but one that avoids all interpretation: it does not question things said as to what they are doing, what they are 'really' saying, in spite of themselves, the unspoken element they contain ...; but, on the contrary, it questions them as to their mode of existence, ... what it means for them to have appeared when and where they did - they and no others.[55]

The genealogical interpretation of a discourse is simply a process of understanding the particular horizon, that is the meaning that prevails at a certain time and place, and that makes particular truths possible.

Understanding of horizons and meaning does therefore not allow for better, deeper or more profound, and thus 'truer', but merely different interpretation. It simply permits an (or several) alternative view of a so far uncontested narrative. Hermeneutics, like genealogy, does not appeal to 'truth' or 'correctness', but it can "attend to the text *and* allow for a plurality of interpretations."[56] The text still limits to some extent the scope of the interpretation, and thus prevents unmitigated relativism without denying

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[53] Palmer (1988): 95.

[54] Hubert Dreyfus/Paul Rabinow (1982): Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics. Brighton: Harvester Press, p. 52.

[55] Michel Foucault (1972): The Archaeology of Knowledge. New York: Harper Colophon, p. 121. It is important to note that Foucault in his writing went through various different phases and that the views he held in *The Archaeology of Knowledge* differ from his later work.

[56] Alan D. Schrift (1990): Nietzsche and the Question of Interpretation. Between Hermeneutics and Deconstruction. New York/London: Routledge, p. 171. Italics in original text.

that there is always a different story to tell. And this is key to both hermeneutics and genealogy.

Hence, Gadamer's hermeneutics does not, as frequently suggested by scholars like Foucault, search for something original which is hidden in the past. The past is only of importance because it speaks to us in the language of the present. The past is therefore not a truth we discover through constant questioning of our horizons, but it only has significance in light of the today – it is here where past and present fuse their horizons.[57] To return to Foucault's quote above, hermeneutics does not seek for something more true or more profound but merely for meaning in the light of a particular past in conjunction with a particular present. The established meaning is merely circumstantial.

Hermeneutics – the Ontology of the Actual

Palmer attempts to rescue hermeneutics from its bad reputation not simply on grounds of intellectual disagreement. Rather, he promotes a particular project of re-fashioning hermeneutics. His closing lines are therefore worth quoting at length:

> It may take some adjustment to think of hermeneutics in a way that is free of the ideological connotation that some persons would like to associate with it, but I think that to move in this direction is a logical continuation of the developments in the thinking of both Heidegger and Gadamer. I see no particular need to equate hermeneutics with onto-theology, even if there is a markedly onto-theological dimension in hermeneutics to which some people would like to call attention. Rather, I think popular usage already is moving in this direction with terms like 'deconstructionist hermeneutics' – which, if we were to accept hermeneutics as the kind of thing Foucault 'defines and rejects', would be a contradiction in terms. Manifestly it is not and I have hopes that a broader, more general sense of the term will prevail.[58]

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[57] Gadamer hints at this when rejecting the practice of etymology. He argues that what a word meant in its original sense is insignificant today for it only speaks to us against the backdrop of the present. Gadamer (1998): 210.

[58] Palmer (1988): 95.

Gianni Vattimo's Hermeneutics

A 'more general sense of the term' hermeneutics is also promoted by Gianni Vattimo to whom hermeneutics depicts the 'ontology of the actual'.[59] Vattimo argues that Heidegger's intention in *Being and Time* was not to establish a new and better meaning of Being because all other philosophical approaches were insufficient, although he recognises, like Palmer, that one could, and may, interpret his text in this way. Yet, if one follows the course Heidegger took after *Being and Time*, Vattimo contends, the striving for a deeper meaning would be revealed as contradictory.[60] In Heidegger's writing the positivist notion of 'truth as correspondence' is not simply rejected due to some inadequacy, which needs correction. His project is far more ambitious. For Heidegger, 'Being is event', although Heidegger himself never explicitly makes use of this notion.[61] Thus Heidegger is driven by the motivation not only to deconstruct truth as correspondence and to propose a more adequate conception, but he also aims "to 'respond' to the meaning of Being as event."[62]

When conceiving of Being and truth as an event as opposed to a category which corresponds to an authentic reality it is important to differentiate *truth as opening* and *truth as correspondence*.[63] The post-positivist critique of truth as correspondence is directed to the sense of closure it entails. Truth as correspondence is an ultimate truth, it is authenticity beyond contestation, as discussed in Chapter 1.

For Gadamer (and Heidegger), however, 'truth as correspondence' refers to a truth as opening in terms of "a historico-cultural horizon shared by a community that speaks the same language, and within which specific rules of verification and validation are in force...".[64] Truth as opening is then not true because it conforms to certain criteria but it is truly "original" for it summons the horizons which provide the backdrop for all verification and falsification.[65] The question in hermeneutics is not simply related to

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[59] Vattimo (1997): 10.
[60] Vattimo (1997): 76.
[61] Vattimo (1997): 76.
[62] Vattimo (1997): 78.
[63] Vattimo (1997): 78.
[64] Vattimo (1997): 80.
[65] Vattimo (1997): 81

encountering the unknown, but it simultaneously questions the taken-for-granted and what has become a habit. As such, it opens up horizons in order to keep them open.[66] The 'hermeneutic experience of opening' is consequently an aesthetic event, a poetic creation.[67] Vattimo concludes that therefore

> ... the truth of the opening can ... only be thought on the basis of the metaphor of dwelling. ... I can do epistemology, I can formulate propositions that rate valid according to certain rules, only on the condition that I dwell in a determinate linguistic universe or paradigm. It is 'dwelling' that is the first condition of me saying the truth. But I cannot describe it to a universal structural and stable condition.[68]

Truth as opening understood as dwelling resembles Gadamer's notion of belonging to, and being imbedded in, a particular tradition (like Wittgenstein's language games discussed Chapter 1) for it is only then that we share certain concepts, or even words, and understanding occurs. It is here where we can speak the 'truth'. Yet Vattimo emphasises that this does not mean being passively subjected to a particular system or structure, but rather that "[d]welling implies ... an interpretative belonging which involves both *consensus and the possibility of critical activity*."[69] This is similar to Gadamer constantly referring to the ability to question one's own horizon.

The rejection of an accommodation of truth in a deeper origin is what leads Vattimo to coin the phrase 'the nihilistic vocation of hermeneutics'.[70] Hermeneutics, as the locus of dwelling, turns into the ontology of the locus and its population. It turns into the 'ontology of the actual'.[71] A particular identity prevails at a particular time and place. Not forever, not everywhere, but nonetheless there. Hermeneutics is the arresting of the flux, the fragile existence of something which ceases to be in the very moment of its origin.[72]

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[66] Hermann Braun (1970): *Zum Verhaeltnis von Hermeneutik und Ontologie*. in: Bubner, Ruediger/Cramer, Konrad/Wiehl, Reiner (eds.): Hermeneutik und Dialektik. Aufsaetze II. Tuebingen: JCB Mohr (Paul Siebeck), p. 203.
[67] Vattimo (1997): 81.
[68] Vattimo (1997): 82.
[69] Vattimo (1997): 82. Emphasis added.
[70] So the title of a chapter in Vattimo (1997).
[71] Vattimo (1997): 10.
[72] Caputo (1987): 130.

To sum up, in order to understand each other, and this is what hermeneutics stands for, it is necessary to have a shared notion of truth. This is not only a prime requirement for co-existence but even for simple communication. Some form of boundedness is necessary to make sense of the world.

And yet, being bounded does not mean being confined. Understanding merely suggest dwelling in a here and now, for a spur of a moment - before again drifting apart. In philosophical terms the truth which is brought about in the process of a hermeneutic encounter, in the process of fusing horizons, is at the same time always contested from outside and inside alike. It is never there to stay for it is itself not the representation of an authentic origin. Rather, it is contingent in its existence – and in its disappearance.

To illustrate this point with reference to the Teso case study, for the Iteso and Kumam this means that, on a day to day basis, they re-evaluate and re-negotiate their boundaries and their identity. Despite the present interpretation of their past and future introducing a sense of closure, potentially the Kumam and Iteso can alter the way they see the world.

> The community, for it's part, is not something closed and isolated in a point of space or a moment of history. Like the horizon, it moves with us. In this way, the integration of individual experiences in the horizon that sustains them is never concluded. Interpretative mediation has no limits, any more than the traducibility and commensurability of cultures.[73]

Regarding the insurgency, the 'interpretative mediation' of the Kumam and Iteso, of course, is also highly dependent on the interpretation of their Other, that is the Museveni government. The 'ontology of the actual' is not retrieved in isolation but, as the present study tries to illustrate, in relation to the Other. And yet, to understand the Other can never be based on an effort to *truly* understand all intentions and motivations, as I have discussed above with reference to the hermeneutic circle of Dilthy and Schleiermacher *versus* Heidegger and Gadamer. The Other, here the Museveni government,

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[73] Vattimo (1997): 38.

is interpreted in a discourse which does not reflect authentically the Museveni government's actions but the way people in Teso interpret them, as will be discussed in Chapter 6. In the process of understanding we always bring ourselves in. This is not to say that the government's actions do not matter but simply (as we have seen with Wittgenstein's 'beetle in the box' analogy in Chapter 1) that discourses are informed by the 'world out there' to which we do not have access except through language. The 'world out there', e.g. the government of Uganda, constitutes discourses, yet at the same time these discourses have a significant impact on the constitution of how this world, i.e. the government, relates to the people form Teso.

Collective Remembering and Collective Identity

Identities emerge where the flux is arrested, and this arresting, as discussed above, results from retrieving the past and casting oneself forward into the future. As for the backwards movement

> [t]he core meaning of any individual or group identity, namely a sense of sameness over time and space, is sustained by remembering; and what is remembered is defined by the assumed identity.[74]

In a community, for instance through the act of performing remembrance with the aid of a memorial as shall be illustrated in Chapter 9, a particular truth about the past is created which translates into shared meaning about the past. Commemoration through memorials thus assists in the production of a particular language game which binds a community. Identities are consolidated in reference to a collective biography channelled through the symbol of the site.

Halbwachs' Collective Identity

The correlation between memory and collective identity is central to the writing of the French sociologist Maurice Halbwachs. According to him, individual memory seems to answer expectations we assume from our

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[74] John R. Gillis (1994): *Memory and Identity. The History of a Relationship*. in: Gillis, John R. (ed.): Commemorations. The Politics of National Identity. Princeton: New Jersey, p. 3.

environment so that the way we remember is already framed by the answer we seek to give in response to this environment.[75] Halbwachs draws our attention to the importance of language as constituted by and constitutive of social coexistence, that is the 'house of being' in Gadamer's words, which provides memory with intelligibility. Language offers both recollection and the language in which we recall. In accordance with Wittgenstein's language games Halbwachs therefore argues that language is a system of social conventions "that makes our own past possible".[76] Memory depends on social environments[77] - memory is always collective. By the same token, forgetting is not necessarily an individual failure, but rather the deformation of recollections.[78] When forgetting, societies modify their language games, and thus the way they remember according to their present circumstances and needs. We shall return to the issue of forgetting again later in this chapter.

The important contribution of Halbwachs for the understanding of memory is his argument that "even at the moment of reproducing the past our imagination remains under the influence of the present social milieu."[79] If memory is determined by the present collective, it is at the same time also ideological, for remembering and forgetting are selected according to the present ideological patterns of a community. At the same time however, memory also produces ideology for it allows for commemoration and/or silencing in support of a particular ideological orientation. It thus reproduces power relations.[80]

A word of caution is necessary at this point. The above section discusses the notion of identity as applied in European and American scholarship. However, different cultures strive for different forms of communities and societies, and cultures outside of Europe and North

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[75] Liliane Weissberg (1999): *Introduction*. In: Ben-Amos, Dan/Weissberg, Liliane (eds.): Cultural Memory and the Construction of Identity. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, p. 14.
[76] Weissberg (1999): 14.
[77] Halbwachs (1992): 43.
[78] Weissberg (1999): 15.
[79] Halbwachs (1992): 49.

America might be more contingent in their boundaries.[81] Similar to the notions of sovereignty and nation states, as discussed in Chapter 1, the modern notion of finite entities of Self and Other, with clear demarcations, derives from the particular historical experiences in Europe and North America, and from the particular school of thought which has developed out of circumstances like the Middle Ages, the Enlightenment, or today's 'Globalisation'. This is not to deny the impact colonialism had on, for instance, the production of collective identities on the basis of ethnicity.[82] Nevertheless, in places like Teso, despite strong influence through missionaries, colonialism and now international communication networks, concepts like identity and boundaries are not mere copies of those used in Anglo-Saxon discourse. The difficulty that arises for the European researcher like myself is thus to expand my horizon beyond my own spatio-temporal situatedness – an almost impossible endeavour.[83]

In addition, questions have to be raised as to how collective a collective identity can be. With reference to Teso, the interpretation of a particular historical event produces a collective identity – but geographically it probably reaches not much further than beyond the area directly affected. Due to very bad infrastructure, almost no means of communication and therefore no way of sharing narratives, the discourse about an event remains confined to the people who were affected and who live in the immediate environment. For example in Teso, people all over the region have stories to tell about their suffering during the insurgency, yet their accounts may differ in scope and intensity.[84] When I use the term 'collective

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[80] Michel Billing (1990): *Collective Memory, Ideology and the Royal Family*. in: Middleton, David/Edwards, Derek (eds.): Collective Remembering. London/Newbury Park/New Delhi: Sage, p. 65.

[81] Elisabeth Tonkin (1992): Narrating Our Past. The Social Construction of Oral History. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 126; and Richard Handler (1994): *Is "Identity" a Useful Cross-Cultural Concept?* in: Gillis, John R. (ed.): Commemorations. The Politics of National Identity. Princeton: Princeton University Press, p. 33.

[82] Terence Ranger (2000): *The Invention of Tradition in Colonial Africa*. in: Hobsbawm, Eric/Ranger, Terence (eds.): The Invention of Tradition. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 249.

[83] Due to space constrains this point cannot be discussed in detail. For a discussion see Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak(1993): *Can the Subaltern Speak?* in: Williams, Patrick/Chrisman, Laura (eds.): Colonial Discourse and Post-Colonial Theory. New York/London: Harvester/Wheatsheaf, 66-111.

[84] The regional differences are very apparent in recent studies on the Teso region. Apart from myself, two other PhD students have written their thesis on post-conflict Teso: Joanna de Berry and Peter Heriques, both of whom are anthropologists. Each of us was based in a

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identity' I am therefore referring to a very local terrain. Also, I do not want to go as far as using the argument made in Benedict Anderson's *Imagined Communities* suggesting that part of the imagination of, in his case a nation, is an imagined 'we-feeling' amongst a group of people who might never meet each other.[85] In Teso, it seems to me, people are far too remote, diverse, and deeply immersed in their own lives, including the day-to-day struggles which go along with this, to be interested in their fellow Iteso or Kumam. Community spirit seems in the first instance to be localised at a clan level.[86]

On Remembering

After ethnic wars, both sides end up trapped in collective identities.[87] Victors may collectively 'suffer' from amnesia and forgetting of atrocities committed, while victims might refuse to accept defeat through constant reference to the injustice endured at the hands of the victors. These fates shape memory and reality, and Teso is a good example to illustrate this point. But here we might ask: what does it mean to remember some things and not others? What is the reality of the future?

Remembering and Forgetting

Remembering is traditionally associated with securing past experiences.[88] The past is understood as a former reality to which we have unhindered access so that it appears in our mind in the same manner as we experienced it originally. The memory of a moment is an identical copy of the moment itself.

More recent academic scholarship questions this assumption when it suggests that "the present moment is nothing like the memory of it".[89] An

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different region in Teso, de Berry (1996-8) in a very remote village in Katakwi district, close to the Karamoja border, Heriques (1995-6) in a small village close to Kumi town, and myself in Soroti town and neighbouring villages. The differences in the information we received from our informants were striking.

[85] Benedict Anderson (1991): Imagined Communities. Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism. London/New York: Verso, p. 6.

[86] A similar point has been made by Tonkin (1992): 125.

[87] Michael Ignatieff (1998): The Warrior's Honor. Ethnic War and the Modern Conscience. London: Chatto & Windus, p. 178.

[88] Frank Kermonde (2001): "Places of Memory." *Index on Censorship* **30**(1), p. 87.

[89] Kundera (1995): 128.

ever-growing body of literature is available which investigates memory either from a psychological or sociological perspective. To begin I shall start from the viewpoint of philosophy.

One of the first philosophers to introduce an alternative vision of memory, and history, was Friedrich Nietzsche. In an essay entitled *On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life*, he challenges the way we remember the past. The past as in

> a moment, now here and then gone, nothing before it came, again nothing after it has gone, nevertheless returns as a ghost and disturbs the peace of a later moment.[90]

For Nietzsche the act of historicising, the rendering conscious of the past, leads to a "degree of sleeplessness, of rumination, of the historical sense, which is harmful and ultimately fatal to the living thing, whether this living thing be a man, or a people or a culture."[91] Not to be able to forget, that is to "feel unhistorical", prevents people from happiness.[92] Nietzsche therefore encourages one to liberate oneself from these past pressures which encumber one's steps as dark, invisible burdens: "the unhistorical and the historical are necessary in equal measures for the health of an individual, of a people and of a culture."[93]

The importance of being unhistorical, or forgetting, becomes apparent in Nietzsche's discussion of horizons. He suggests that humans need to be rounded up and enclosed by horizons since for him it is a universal law that "living beings can be healthy, strong and fruitful only when bounded by a horizon."[94] The line of the horizon is drawn through remembering and forgetting the past, through enclosing some moments into the horizon while leaving out others.

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[90] Friedrich Nietzsche (1983): *On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life.* in: Untimely Meditations. Cambridge: University Press, p. 61.
[91] Nietzsche (1983): 62.
[92] Nietzsche (1983):62.
[93] Nietzsche (1983): 63.
[94] Nietzsche (1983): 63.

Although the use of the term 'horizon' immediately brings to mind Gadamer's use of the term in hermeneutics, it is of salient importance to differentiate the application of the term. Nietzsche's horizons differ from Gadamer's in so far as the former seems to promote rather fixed and impermeable boundaries. The difference becomes apparent in Nietzsche's comparison of an ignorant dweller in the Alps, who might have a limited horizon but be very vital and healthy, to an intellectual who is full of knowledge (referring here to memory) and who collapses because "the lines of his horizon are always relentlessly changing" and for whom it is thus difficult to make a decision and to have an opinion.[95] Having too many different influences, in Nietzsche's cynical view, undermines happiness.

For Gadamer, on the other hand, horizons are by definition ever changing entities. When he writes that "[h]orizons change for a person who is moving",[96] as quoted above, he refers to what he considers to be the most important aspect of human life. Moving horizons are vital and a most rewarding endeavour. The more we encounter the alien and strange, the more advantageous for our own horizon. Forgetting in Nietzsche hence signifies a break with a particular historical consciousness, a break necessary to leave behind painful experiences which prevent us from overcoming present deadlocks.

If one follows Nietzsche's advice, one could argue that the shared, collective knowledge of a community's past includes remembered as well as forgotten aspects. Remembering and forgetting are constitutive of an identity. The present as well as the absence of the past binds people together. As described by Ernest Renan in his famous essay *What is a Nation*: "The essence of nations is that all individuals have many things in common, and also that they have forgotten many things."[97]

At first sight, since the subject of the present thesis is to consider the transition from conflict to peace, Nietzsche's forgetting seems both, useful

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[95] Nietzsche (1983): 63.
[96] Gadamer (1993a): 309 (translated Gadamer (1975): 304).
[97] Quoted in Joseph R. Llobera (1996): The Role of Historical Memory in (Ethno)Nation-Building. London: Goldsmith College, p. 5.

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and necessary. Does forgetting past atrocities open up new prospects for a peaceful future?

Despite recognising that forgetting is necessary for 'happiness' I would like to suggest that, for Nietzsche, breaking with the past requires a rather drastic obliteration of events. Nietzsche's notion of forgetting suggests the oblivion of crucial experiences. This strategy proves problematic in, for instance, a post-conflict society where people have suffered atrocities and pain, and where forgetting, deleting or obliterating takes away people's legitimate urge to articulate grievance and to have their traumas recognised. As such it belittles their agony. In addition, in most cases, violence has left obvious reminders like the loss of family members, houses and homes which call for endless remembering. Nietzsche's invitation to forget seems necessary, yet his strategy appears unfeasible.

There is, however, an alternative to Nietzsche's conception of forgetting which recognises the validity of remembering while at the same time allowing for breaking, or rather transforming, the boundaries of horizons.[98] It recognises that present consciousness, in fact the present identity, by necessity derives from remembering the past (which is still in accordance with Nietzsche's suggestion) and yet contains a form of forgetting that does not lead to a state of oblivion or amnesia. Rather, it recognises that forgetting itself is simply a way of *remembering differently*. Here, "remembering is not the negative form of forgetting. Remembering is a form of forgetting."[99]

When, for instance, Gadamer writes that "[o]nly by forgetting does the mind have … the capacity to see everything with fresh eyes, so that what is long familiar combines with the new into a many levelled unity",[100] he does not call for oblivion in order to determine the boundaries of a horizon, in the way Nietzsche does. Gadamer rather suggests opening one's

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[98] I am very grateful for the discussions at the ECPR workshop on *The Political Use of Narrative* in Mannheim from 26-31 March 1999 which led to the development of this argument.
[99] Kundera (1995): 128.

horizon to the interpretation of somebody else's experience in order to re-evaluate one's own horizon and to potentially change the way one interprets, and thus remembers, an event.

In doing so Gadamer recognises that there cannot be a true interpretation of one's past. To be *a la rechere du temps perdu*, to use Marcel Proust's aphorism, does not suggest that there is a true time to be rediscovered. Remembering is rather a re-fashioning of this *temps perdu*, in fact it is a re-membering of thoughts, or, put another way, it is an opportunity to construct a new 'ordering' of contingent historical events. The crucial difference between Gadamer and Nietzsche is that whilst Nietzsche seems to suggest blanking-out of past experience, Gadamer asks for re-interpreting the incidence. One could paraphrase Nietzsche as suggesting 'forget the past, it did not happen', and Gadamer to say 'look at your past, are there not different ways of interpreting it?'

To return to the subject of this thesis, post-conflict societies in transition from war to peace, one could illustrate their difference by either suggesting that some of the atrocities never happened, or by encouraging people to consider their own responsibilities during the insurgency and not to use the indisputably horrible crime to produce, or continue to produce, the Museveni government as the evil Other.

Re-membering

So to remember the past differently is to re-member.[101] The remembering of the past by a community previously exposed to violent conflict re-members the members of this community, it re-organises social life, that is it assembles it in a different way. Through re-membering differently we re-constitute our previous horizons and simultaneously the narratives we draw upon to constitute our own identity as well our opponent's. This re-construction bears the potential to assemble not only our thoughts and perceptions in a different way but also war-torn

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communities *per se*. It allows for a redefinition of the collective identity which is not based on antagonism against an outside (former) enemy. Where there was an exclusive boundary between identity/difference before, this border might become more permeable. Re-membering, or re-arranging the members, allows for removing the enemy from the site formerly known as 'hostile territory' - in both metaphorical as well as actual terms. As such it opens up possibilities for a peaceful co-existence.

To return to Halbwachs' notion of collective memory, re-membering is a social process which produces meaning and creates a collective identity on the basis of shared language games. Through evaluating the past anew the language used to narrate the experience changes and so does the identity of the community.

It has been suggested that only through taking control of the apparatus of memory and history can societies coming out of violence begin to engage with and develop constructive collective memories of the conflict.[102] Constructive here is not only understood in terms of portraying an adequate and just picture of past atrocities, if this is ever possible, but also transforming the structural properties that allow for violence and discrimination to occur in the first place. The focus must not only be on direct action, in form of killings and gross abuses of human rights, but also on the structures that give way to enforced removal, poor infrastructures, and poor educational institutions to name just a few.[103]

Critical Hermeneutics

Our discussion of violent conflicts and the transition to peace began in Chapter 1 with a discussion of post-structuralism in International Relations theory. Through introducing deconstruction, scholars like Ashley, Walker and Campbell have provided the discipline with a valuable

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[102] Brandon Hamber (1998b): *Remembering to Foret: Issues to Consider when Establishing Structures for Dealing with the Past.* in: Hamber, Brandon (ed.): Past Imperfect. Dealing with the Past in Northern Ireland and Societies in Transition. Londonderry: INCORE, p. 78.
[103] Mahmood Mamdani (1997): *From Justice to Reconciliation: Making Sense of the African Experience.* in: Leys, Colin/Mamdani, Mahmood (eds.): Crisis and Reconstruction - African Perspective. Uppsala: Nordiska Afrikainstitutet, p. 23.

methodology to challenge sovereignty and exclusion. However, the use of deconstruction with reference to violent conflicts only allows for opening up closed environments, but it does not provide any suggestions as to how to change the status quo and how to invent new ways of co-existence which are less exclusive. One way of inventing peace, which promises to change the structural properties of exclusion, is Habermas' discourse ethics. However, as we have seen, Habermas' emancipatory project maintains a degree of authenticity and closure itself, and thus cannot sufficiently challenge and change exclusion.

In order to reconcile the relativism inherent in deconstructive thought and the degree of authenticity in discourse ethics hermeneutics was suggested as a mode of conceptualising the fusion of divergent entities like parties to a conflict. In contrast to deconstruction, it focuses on the creation of shared concepts and truths as important for war-torn societies. Yet at the same time it avoids the pitfall of discourse ethics for it remains truly contingent – it merely depicts the arresting of the flux, encouraging it at the same time to flow again. Hermeneutics is thus *critical*. It is critical for *challenging* traditions and horizons and for revealing the structures of inclusion and exclusion that run through them. And, it is critical because it allows for understanding the *changing* of these exclusive structures in the process of fusing horizons. Critical hermeneutics should therefore not be understood in the sense of critiquing and faultfinding, but rather in terms of being important and crucial.

By way of conclusion the question arises what value the introduction of critical hermeneutics has for peace and conflict studies. First of all, it is important to remember that hermeneutics is not a method which can simply be applied to 'invent peace'. Rather, it is the description of a process that happens when two or more parties reach understanding. In contrast to Habermas' discourse ethics, hermeneutics does not invite to establish models of communication, or conflict facilitation workshops in our case. Hermeneutics is neither normative nor does it promote a certain code of conduct. As such, it does not advance the 'invention of peace', in the way Jabri, Hoffman, Snyder and Lloyed-Jones suggest communication ethics does. Hermeneutics does not solve problems.

The important insights gained through the discussion of hermeneutics are thus of a different nature. To conceptualise how understanding is accomplished, or horizons fused, to use Gadamer's terminology, enables us to comprehend the formative and transformative process through which the parties to the conflict have to go in order to 'invent peace'. The particular focus on ontology and identity inherent in an hermeneutic approach might then reveal what mitigates or exacerbates the fusing of horizons. To be able to identify these successes and failures might lead to the articulation of particular policies and strategies to enhance a peace-building process.

Gadamer's fusion of horizons depicts an ideal case of understanding. In reality, however, the encounter with what is different to us is often less harmonious. As for the case of the Teso insurgency, the former parties to the conflict are today still strongly divided. The fighting has ceased yet no horizons have been fused. The case study of the present thesis therefore does not attempt to illustrate how understanding is brought about, but how the forces, the effective history, that work in the horizons of the Iteso and Kumam obstruct their potential to question their own role in the antagonism, to re-evaluate their position towards the government and to enter into a process of rapprochement.

Another valuable insight gained by hermeneutics is the importance that the 'retrieval of the past' and the 'casting forward into the future' have on how people perceive themselves today. The retrieval of the past can be analysed through narrative theory as introduced above and deployed in Chapter 6.

Violent conflict is not simply a means which leads to a political end. Rather, the legitimate application of violence is deeply embedded in structural properties as they prevail in a society at a particular time, and the pursuit of political objectives is often revealed to be much more personal than national power distributions. It can, for instance, result from particular traditional and economic constraints as was the case in Teso, which will be discussed in Chapter 7.

Hermeneutics, however, can also permit us to understand how, in the process of communication, horizons may indeed fuse, or at least approach each other, as will be the subject of Chapter 8 which explores the mediation efforts which brought the fighting in Teso to a halt.

To what extent has the Teso mediation led to a re-membering of the community? Do the people of Teso still define themselves in antagonism to the Museveni government? With reference to a war memorial as well as a newly invented tradition of monarchy, Chapter 9 will discuss ways of recalling the past and casting oneself forward into the future shall be illustrated and the process of reconciliation assessed.

Hermeneutics as a train of thought has not been without criticism. As already noted in the earlier discussion of Habermas' discourse ethics, hermeneutics lacks the potential to be an emancipatory project. In the conclusion I will therefore take up the discussion of power in mediation and suggest that the process of fusing horizons requires a creative element in order not to perpetuate the domination of the stronger party. Only through a poetic process of redefining ways to relate to the Other is dissent possible.

Hermeneutics is not the new truth of discourse analysis in general and peace and conflict studies in particular. Rather, it is a way of looking at the world with all its problems and conflicts, which goes beyond positivist analysis. To return to Vasquez, it does not invent peace, yet it might open up new possibilities to understand its invention and by implication increase the range of responses we are able to imagine.

LOCAL APPROACHES

TO

CONFLICT ANALYSIS

In his publication *Violent Cartographies: Mapping Cultures of War,* Michael Shapiro argues that traditionally the focus of war and security studies is on policing, defending and transgressing of boundaries. He argues that this traditional methodology prevents the disclosure of ontological aspects which facilitate the outbreak of violence.[1] Shapiro suggests an alternative approach which looks at the *practices* and *discourses* through which boundaries have been established, that is how space and identity have materialised performatively and how the relation between Self and Other has been defined historically.[2] This emphasis, Shapiro proposes, requires a people centred rather than a strategic approach to violent conflict.

In recognition of the importance of anthropos, that is human beings, the present study tries to give a voice to the people, regardless of their political and social position.[3] Through applying Participatory Action Research, as shall be discussed in the following, the thesis seeks to pay attention to "local, discontinuous, disqualified, illegitimate knowledges against the claims of a unitary body".[4] As such it seeks to pay respect to the 'objects of research' whose stories and lives form the core of the case study. The focus on the local shall however not be to the exclusion of

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[1] Michael J. Shapiro (1997): Violent Cartographies. Mapping Cultures of War. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, p. ix.

[2] Shapiro (1997): 31.

[3] Anthropology, nevertheless, is also a highly contested concept and discipline. From a hermeneutic perspective one has to ask how we interpret other people, and what aspects of ourselves we bring in. Can the anthropologist's work ever be more then a personal confession? as asked by Levi-Strauss and paraphrased by V.Y. Mudimbe (1991): Parables and Fables. Exegesis, Textuality, and the Political in Central Africa. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, p. xv.

[4] Michel Foucault (1994a): *Two Lectures.* in: Kelly, Michael (ed.): Critique and Power. Recasting the Foucault/Habermas Debate. Cambridge, Mass. and London: MIT Press, p. 22.

regional, or even global, aspects but rather acknowledge their interaction, or the lack thereof.

One form of analysis which seeks to sketch the ontology of societies is discourse analysis in the form of text analysis. In this chapter I shall critically discuss its potential, show its limitations and suggest a participatory approach as an alternative way of understanding what constitutes a society.

Discourse Analysis

Inside and outside of International Relations literature discourse analysis has risen to significant popularity. Discourses, it has been recognised, are invested with meaning and form the locus for the production and reproduction of individual or collective identities. Deeply imbedded in the concept of hermeneutics, discourse analysis has taken more recent departures towards post-Marxism (Ernesto Laclau/Chantal Mouffe), deconstruction (Jacques Derrida) or universalism (Jurgen Habermas).[5]

While many analysts have a wide conception of what constitutes a discourse others have limited their research to pure text analysis. The writings of David Howarth, Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe include wider social practices whereas the textual approaches taken by Michael Shapiro for instance focus mainly on their semiotic expressions.[6] In the following I shall briefly criticise the limits of discourse analysis when focusing on text only (textuality), in order to then introduce an alternative methodology in the following section.

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[5] For an introduction into discourse analysis see David Howarth (2000): Discourse. Buckingham/Philadelphia: Open University Press.
[6] Michael Shapiro (1989a): *Textualising Global Politics*. in: Der Derian, James/Shapiro, Michael (eds.): International/Intertextual Relations. New York: Lexington Books, 11-22.

Text Analysis

The aim of text analysis is to map the constitution of a community, or international relations, at a particular point in time. According to Michael Shapiro

> [t]o regard the world of 'international relations' as a text ... is to inquire into the style of scripting, to reveal the way is has been mediated by historically specific scripts governing the interpretations through which it has emerged.[7]

Shapiro makes reference to the writings of the French philosopher Roland Barthes which has had a significant influence on IR scholars advocating textuality.[8] Barthes' text analysis shifts the focus from trying to identify the essence of the writing to the rhetorical and textual practices that invest individuals, acts and institutions.[9] Based on semiotics, Barthes seeks to isolate signs and codes of signification as expressed in the text, and to interrogate what questions are raised, answered or avoided. In doing so, he tries to identify where the meaning of the text is opened or closed, what images are deployed to produce a particular understanding and how the text is situated in a wider network of other texts.[10]

As a consequence, in Barthes' textual approach, the author is of no significance to the text – she/he is dead. The meaning of the text is not produced by whoever wrote the words but rather by the reader. Since it is language that performs rather then the author, the reader is the true owner of the text.[11] The meaning of the text is liberated from the domination of the author in particular and higher powers in general, and becomes dependent on the reader. "[T]he death of the author makes way for the birth of the reader".[12] The reader can thus, uncontrolled by the author, produce different and alternative interpretations of a text.

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[7] Shapiro (1989a): 11-2.
[8] Alfred J. Fortin (1989): *Notes on a Terrorist Text: A Critical Use of Roland Barthes Textual Analysis in the Interpretation of Political Meaning.* in: Der Derian, James/Shapiro, Michael J. (eds.): International/Intertextual Relations. New York: Lexington Books, 189-206.
[9] Fortin (1989): 190.
[10] Fortin (1989): 191.
[11] James Risser (1991): *Reading the Text.* in: Silverman, Hugh J. (ed.): Gadamer and Hermeneutics. New York/London: Routledge, p. 95.

Based on Barthes' strategy of showing what images are produced in a text and how they invest individuals and communities, Cornelia Ilie analyses a collection of speeches given by the former Romanian dictator Nicolae Ceausescu from 1960-80.[13] Ilie deploys a strictly semantic analysis in order to account for the "ideologically based and deliberate linguistic distortion underlying the rhetoric of [a] totalitarian discourse."[14] In his speeches, she argues, Ceausescu sought to deconstruct and reconstruct reality through the systemic distortion of linguistic structures with the aim of imposing a particular perspective from which events were assumed to be perceived.[15] Amongst Ceausescu's tools were the "agentless use of verbs", as well as the "agent like treatment of typically inanimate participant roles".[16]

Ilie links the constitution of individual and collective identities to the understanding of a text or speech. She argues that Ceausescu's rhetoric "promotes a distorted image of reality" which gradually shapes the recipient society according to this image. The discourse analysis of Ceausescu's speeches reveals, according to Ilie, how in Romania party discipline and dictatorial control became more coercive, fear-triggering and all-pervasive.[17] She argues that the analysis of particular texts, here Ceausescu's speeches, allows for ontological insights into the constitution of a community. With the aid of text analysis Ilie attempts to break into the political ideology of the Romanian dictator and to illustrate its effect on the Romanian people. Ilie's analysis seeks to provide an example of how the liberation from the authority of the author allows for alternative insights into the ontological politics that work inside of a text. The ontological importance of a text for the constitution of a community is best illustrated by the impact of Hitler's *Mein Kampf*, a 'little red book' called *Quotations from Chairman Mao*, or even the Bible. Here, texts were highly significant for the production and re-production of collective identities, perceptions and truths.

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[12] Risser (1991): 97.
[13] Cornelia Ilie (1998): "The Ideological Remapping of Semantic Roles in Totalitarian Discourses, or, How to Paint a White Rose Red." *Discourse & Society* 9(1): 57-80.
[14] Ilie (1998): 58.
[15] Ilie (1998): 76.
[16] Ilie (1998): 76.
[17] Ilie (1998): 63-4.

However, does the impact of a text only depend on its language and content? Or does the interpretation of a text depend on its readership, too?

To answer this question I would like to return to Gadamer's notion of horizons. In Barthes' argument, the death of the author empowers the reader (or researcher) to analyse a text without considering the horizon of its author in order to understand how the text invests individuals or communities. This presupposes that individuals and communities have a horizon which can potentially be transformed. In the Romanian example, the recipients of the text, the people of Romania, changed their horizon in the process of understanding Ceausescu. They questioned their prejudices and prejudgements and ultimately fused their horizons with that of the speech. This fusion of horizons relies heavily on the particular effective history which has shaped the horizon of the people from Romania. Understanding is only possible from a particular spatio-historical position; the interpretation of a text is closely tied to the situatedness of the reader. To repeat Caputo's words, "[w]e understand as we do because we exist as we do"[18] In the process of understanding, not only the semantic construction of a text is of importance, the historical construction of the recipients is, too.

If the horizon of the reader is significant for the ontological impact of a text, if the transformation of a community is dependent on its particular spatio-temporal situatedness from which it derives its *Vor-urteile* (prejudgements and prejudices), how is an external analyst like Ilie able to evaluate the way a text impacts on the identity of the people of Romania? She, herself, is situated in a different effective history which gives way to different *Vor-urteile* as starting points from which she interprets the text, leading to a different understanding. Consequently, when trying to identify the ontological impact of a text an outside observer, who is situated in a different historical context, is unable to map the way the addressed readership is constituted.

In short, discourse analysis based on texts is conducted with the intention of identifying the elements that have an impact on the ontology of

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[18] Caputo (1987): 61.

the community to which the text is directed. It asks: "How does the text shape perceptions and realities?" Posing these questions presupposes that the community, in reading the text, engages in a process of transformation which changes its prevailing identity. Thus, it is accepted that the community has a particular horizon which is affected when understanding a text. Yet, what is not considered in many cases is that the analyst who investigates the impact of a text on the prevailing identity is also conditioned by her/his effective history which has a strong impact on the way she/he approaches and analysis a text. Due to different circumstances, epochs, or cultures our own reading is restricted by who we are and how we have come to understand ourselves, and cannot simply be transferred to other cultures.

To briefly illustrate my argument with reference to a widespread text, the Bible, the way people in Britain interpret the testaments, and practice Christianity, is very different to, say, Uganda; notions of what constitutes the Self and how we relate to God differ significantly. For many people in Britain, believing is an additive to the day-to-day life, it is removed from the realm of necessity and is thus 'pure'. As modern beings, people are able to care for their own needs so that to pray *for* something is inappropriate. In Uganda, on the other hand, in a context where half of the population have less then 1 USD/per day, and where poverty and hunger prevail, to ask God for the bare necessities of life is essential. Here, God is seen as the provider of, for example, food, whereas in Britain supermarket chains supply the meals. In the event of a British analyst interpreting a religious Ugandan text, or a Ugandan analyst a religious British text, difficulties may arise as to how to understand particular concepts, and more importantly, their ontological impact.

Another anecdote to illustrate the different analysis of a text, or in this case a film, is a conversation I had with an Iteso friend. We were talking about the film house in Soroti town, a room with a video projector, which shows a small selection of Kung-Fu films, but also occasionally the American blockbuster *Titanic*. My friend had seen the film so I asked him whether he liked it. I expected him to launch into a critique of Hollywood movies, an interpretation likely to be the subject of discussion in my place

of residence in London. Yet he looked at me for a while and said in a very affectionate voice: "Please let me assure you that my people here really feel for you people there." Knowing that the basic narrative of the *Titanic* sinking and people dying was true my friend took up his responsibility to express his condolences to me. To him, the film was a documentation of a true event which cost many British people their lives – as it indeed did. He interpreted it according to his knowledge and experience, and responded in a way appropriate to his very polite and formal culture. Was he to conduct a discourse analysis based on the film *Titanic* his insights into British culture would have probably suggested that in the UK a high degree of trauma amongst the survivors of the *Titanic* accident prevails which lead them to narrating their story in public. As for the viewers in the UK, I am doubtful whether many British filmgoers contemplated the fate of their compatriots who died in the cold depth of the Atlantic Ocean.

In the context of the present study, to focus on textuality only, and to analyse newspaper-articles, reports, statements etc., would have led to very different results. For instance, the insurgency army in Teso, the Uganda Peoples Army (UPA), released a number of communiqués which potentially lend themselves to an exercise of textual analysis – a futile endeavour considering that they had almost no impact on the ground. Texts might have the potential to inform social life in a highly industrialised society where the media and other means of communication are very powerful, yet outside of this geographically limited sphere their ontological impact can be contested. In Teso, the sparse distribution of political manifestos and the high degree of illiteracy hindered their wider reception as much as the fact that many people did not join the rebels for political reasons anyway. The ontology of the insurgents, and of the people of Teso as their supporters, had little to do with printed paper. For myself, a German student, to analyse the Uganda Peoples Army and Uganda Peoples Front's (UPA/F) political manifesto would have misrepresented the situation.[19] When analysing the identity constituting impact of a script, a

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[19] Amongst them are for example UPF/UPA (1988a): Random Thought and Notes Towards Analysis of 'Lt. Gen.' Yoweri Museveni's Dynasty. Kampala: UPA/F Headquarters; UPF/UPA (1988b): The Face Behind Museveni's Pretensions to Belief in the Rule of Law and Human

non-indigenous analyst runs the risk of applying her/his own notions of what concepts have a performative capacity, and how.

So does this leave us with the impossibility of analysing culturally different discourses? The view suggested in the present study is that in order to be able to understand issues as culturally determined as the interpretation of meaning or the formation of identity the mere reading of a text is insufficient. In the following I shall discuss a research methodology, again based on a hermeneutic framework, which meditates Self and Other and hence allows for a better understanding.

Participatory Action Research

Participatory Action Research (PAR) was first developed in the 1960s and 1970 in the wake of liberation theology,[20] and it soon became increasingly popular amongst academics and practitioners alike. Especially in development or organisational studies PAR is becoming more and more prominent as a helpful evaluation methodology. The amount of literature, networks and working-groups on the worldwide web is vast, development institutes organise courses and NGOs employ specialists to assist their programme design.

The aim of PAR, as loosely used in this thesis, is to understand conflict in its social, political and institutional context. It is an interactive and participatory process that facilitates the understanding of an environment different from one's own. Through active participation in the research environment the analyst, seeking to interpret the unfamiliar, evaluates, and possibly alters, concepts and conceptions deriving out of her/his own tradition. PAR is thus a methodology which seeks to bridge the

Rights. Kampala: UPF/A Headquarters; UPF/UPA (1989): Lt. Gen. Yoweri Kaguta Museveni's Terror and Genocide in Uganda Grinds on Unabated: Children and Women Incinerated in Metal Wagons in Kumi. Kampala: UPF/A Headquarters; UPF/UPA (1990a): Uganda: Myths, Prejudices and Realities. Kampala: UPF/A Headquarters; UPF/UPA (1990b): Today's Uganda. Re: Sadistic and Gruesome Massacres by Lt. Ge. Museveni's NRM/A. Kampala: UPF/A Headquarters; UPF/UPA (1990c): Lt. Gen. Y. K. Museveni (The OAU Current Chairman) Invades Rwanda Under the Pseudo-Expression of NRA "Dissenters". Kampala: UPF/A Headquarters; UPF/UPA (1991): Uganda: The Hidden Tyranny. Kampala: UPF/A Headquarters; UPF/UPA (1992): Press Release. Kampala: UPF/A Headquarters.

gap between different cultural backgrounds through practice. This, of course, can only happen to a limited extent.

One project which has applied PAR to post-conflict reconstruction is the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development's (UNRISD) War-Torn Society Project (WSP). Although I do not want to discuss the project in depth it is worth mentioning WSP's emphasis that

> [t]he subject matter of the project necessitates that the primary focus of its activities be at the field level. It is in the war-torn countries themselves that new approaches to rebuilding have to be supported, from the bottom up, if they are to be sustainable.[21]

WPS is po licy oriented and thus very different from the present study. Nevertheless, PAR provides a valuable framework through which to develop new policies.

It appears that the epistemological roots of PAR vary with every person who applies the concept. A range of influences from Aristotelian ethics, critical social science, Deweyian philosophy, feminism, Buddhism to popular knowledge have been identified. All approaches nevertheless share the same strategy and incentive.[22] PAR stands in stark contrast to 'classical' anthropological research in which the researcher is an outside observer with an assumed capacity to accurately record social interactions within the community studied.[23] PAR, at least in my use in this thesis, does not seek to reveal true insights but rather to create new, shared meaning. I hence want to contribute to the colourfulness of underlying methodologies and argue that the basic idea of PAR is similar to the notion of hermeneutics. When setting out to conduct research for, say, a PhD thesis, the researcher has in her/his mind a series of hypotheses and concepts, Gadamer's *Vorurteile*, which she/he attempts to verify or falsify. Naturally, these concepts derive form the researcher's cultural horizon, they are determined by her/his

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[20] WSP (n.d.): *Eritrea.* War Torn Societies web site/UNRISD: <www.unrisd.org.wsp.erit/erit.htm>, 20.05.2000.
[21] WSP (n.d.): *Objectives, Approaches and Intended Outcomes.* War Torn Societies web site/UNRISD: <www.unrisd.org/wap/exec.htm>, 20.05.2000.
[22] Robin McTaggart (1997): *Reading the Collection.* in: McTaggart, Robin (ed.): Participatory Action Research. International Context and Consequences. Albany: State University of New York Press, p. 8.

particular spatio-temporal background. For a project which seeks to understand why people fight, or stop fighting, such as the present, the researcher might have a list of topics like 'the availability of fire-arms', 'the level of education in a society', 'the economic interests of elites' and many others. Yet, once the researcher has arrived at the destination, a participatory approach suggests, the concepts can be compared against the horizon of the people concerned. Researchers are encouraged to visit places, to spend time with the people, and to get local 'street-wisdom'. Practical ways and attitudes to go about might include:[24]

- listening and learning rather then lecturing and imposing;
- relaxing and not rushing;
- 'handing over the stick';
- embracing error and falling forwards;
- being transparent;
- asking them;
- unlearning.

On a personal note from my experience in Teso, the most rewarding places to conduct research were the local pub, market stalls and celebrations, that is areas and occasions where one does not go with notepad and pen, but with local friends. While staying in Teso, considering the different cultural and geographic environment, I was indeed dependent on local people to teach me various things like how to show respect to a leader, what to say how and when, or how to ride on the back of a bicycle taxi. Oblique as it may sound, it nevertheless facilitated some 'insight into the Other's horizon'. As a female, and in the context a relatively young person, people in Teso, I felt, did not feel patronised by me as an 'outside researcher', but rather they were constantly concerned about my health, entertainment and work. 'Handing over the stick', allowing people I met to

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[23] WSP (n.d.): *Eritrea*.
[24] Tim Holmes (2001): A Participatory Approach in Practice: Understanding Fieldworkers' Use of Participatory Rural Appraisal in ActionAid the Gambia. Brighton: Institute of Development Studies report, p. 10.

look after me, was not only personally very rewarding, but also led to changes in both my attitude and my research agenda.

To return to a more abstract level, in the encounter the researcher learns to understand better how communities different from her/his own operate. Their own horizon is evaluated in the light of the Other's, concepts are reconsidered, confirmed, amended or discarded, and by consequence the initial research agenda modified. In what Gadamer calls 'a fusion of horizons' neither the researcher nor the people who she/he encounters remain who they were. Rather, the experience of the unfamiliar enriches the respective horizons and thus identities. Participatory Action Research is thus a dynamic, ontological process of defining and redefining researcher and research agenda.

Jay Rothman takes a similar approach with what he calls 'reflexivity'. Reflexivity acknowledges the limit of one's understanding by one's own spatio-temporal situatedness, and it suggests that "interactions and relations with others can also importantly influence and even shape oneself."[25] This requires an awareness of one's own interactions, as I have done to a very limited extent with some personal narratives above. Rothman applies his approach to both the 'outside observer' as well as to parties in a conflict-resolving workshop, which leads him to develop his so called ARIA Conflict Management Framework based on Adversarial, Reflexive and Integrative stages.[26]

Reflexivity can be conceptualised as understanding every statement by the other as an answer to a question. This then leads to reflecting back on one's own position which poses this question, and to a reflexive self-evaluation in light of the other's horizon. In Gadamer's words:

> [A] person who wants to understand must question what lies behind what is said. He [or she] must understand it as an answer to a question. If we go back *behind* what is said, then we inevitably ask questions *beyond* what is said. We understand the sense of the text only by acquiring the horizon of the question – a horizon that, as such, includes

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[25] Rothman (1992): 59; see also Jay Rothman (1997): "Action Evaluation and Conflict Resolution: Theory and Practice." *Mediation Quarterly* **15**(2): 119-31.
[26] Rothman (1992): 65.

other possible answers. Thus the meaning of a sentence is relative to the question to which it is a reply, but that implies that its meaning necessarily exceeds what is said in it.[27]

Again, as argued above, how we understand always already includes our own interpretation which relates back to our own understanding of the issue at stake and which supports and extends the statement of the other. The reflective relationship between question and answer therefore simultaneously evaluates our own as well as the Other's prejudices and prejudgements.

Another approach similar to Participatory Action Research, and based on hermeneutics, has been suggested by Joseph Rychlak in what he calls a 'Hermeneutic-Dialectic Method of Inquiry'.[28] His methodology is guided by the question of "how to allow human beings under observation the freedom to express their true and spontaneous behavioural inclinations, as opposed to what is viewed as the natural-science strategy of forcing data into preconceived models which 'fit' in the laboratory but distort or otherwise trivialize ... criticism."[29] Rychlak denounces traditional ways of theorising based on *procedural evidence,* derived from a coherence theory of drawing on internal consistency and plausibility, and *validating evidence* through empirical tests based on a succession of events fitting into a pre-established hypothesis. Because the research collector always brings herself/himself into the data collection, Rychlak argues, what she/he ends up with is framed by the theoretical preconceptions she/he harbours. Yet a lot of 'the world out there' does not fall inside these categories. He therefore suggests not attempting to locate some kind of validity and truth, and promotes hermeneutics as a backdrop for an alternative research design which recognises human beings as meaning-creating agents and allows for a productive interaction between researcher and researched.

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[27] Gadamer (1993a): 370. (translation cited in Hans Herbert Koehler (1999): The Power of Dialogue. Cambridge, Mass./London: MIT Press, p. 122-2.)
[28] Joseph Rychlak (1996): "An Enquiry into the Hermeneutic-Dialectic Method of Inquiry." *Journal of Social Distress and Homelessness* 5(3): 305-17.
[29] Rychlak (1996): 306.

To sum up, in contrast to textuality drawing on personal experiences through PAR allows for the dynamic process of evaluating, and maybe changing, concepts and conceptions about violent conflicts. Since conflicts are very particular to where they occur it is paramount to find the solutions for reconciliation amongst the former combatants, and not in an abstract handbook. This can only be achieved if the affected people themselves dictate the analysis, and this is only possible in their presence. A text has little to say about who fights and why, and it might obstruct important insights as to how to bring about peace in war-torn societies.

New Methodologies?

Nevertheless, it is worth considering Clifford Geertz' appeal for caution when he writes that

> to turn from trying to explain social phenomena and weaving them into grand textures of cause and effect to trying to explain them by placing them in local frames of awareness is to exchange a set of well-charted difficulties for a set of largely uncharted ones.[30]

It is not my intention in this present study to develop answers to newly arising difficulties of research methodologies but rather to given an account of how social phenomena have been constructed over space and time, and what implications this has for the future. The lack of a more traditional research framework might lead to questioning the work, to acknowledging doubts about underlying assumptions, to feelings of guilt and embarrassment, as well as to an uncertainty of what to do next,[31] Yet at the same time the moment of doubt opens up the opportunity to be creative and inventive.

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[30] Clifford Geertz (1993): Local Knowledge. Glasgow: Harper Collins, p. 6.

[31] Patricia Spittal et. al. (1997): *"We are Dying. It is Finished." Linking and Ethnographic Research Design to an HIV/AIDS Participatory Approach in Uganda*. in: Smith, Susan E./Willms, Dennis/Johnson, Nancy (eds.): Nurtured by Knowledge. Learning to do Participatory Action Research. Ottawa: International Development Research Centre, p. 86.

STORY OF UGANDA

Wirkungsgeschichte, the effects of history on us, are central to this part of the thesis. While the main focus shall be on the immediate historical surroundings of the insurgency in Teso from 1987 to 1992, this chapter seeks to situate the occurrence of the insurgency in a wider, national context.[1] The Ugandan polity, like any other community, has been shaped over time, it has developed alliances and cleavages amongst its people, it has developed party structures and its own political culture.

The chapter is split into two parts. While the first part seeks to provide a 'history of origin' for the Iteso, the second focuses on the national history. Against the backdrop of British colonial rule it outlines the developments in Uganda from Teso's perspective. The people of Teso have never played a major role in national politics, although they benefited from some governments more than from others, so that their existence has been largely ignored by historians. Nevertheless, despite the gap in the literature, a few observations can be made in relation to general trends in the country which had repercussions for Teso.

The Iteso

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[1] One of the central arguments of the present thesis is that history is always selective and narrated with view to a particular aim. Within this wider argument a chapter on the 'Story of Uganda' can at best be ironic. At the outset I would therefore like to confess my personal motivations in selecting the particular accounts of history that fill these pages. Firstly, they serve the purpose of introducing a number of people and events which will be repeated in later chapters. Secondly, it establishes 'truths' about the antagonism between the Iteso and Kumam and the Museveni government, which have developed over time. These particular 'truths' will again be of significance for later arguments. And thirdly, it attributes a considerable number of the causes for conflict and violence in Uganda to white colonial rule which renders the people of Uganda somewhat innocent – and makes writing for a white researcher like myself slightly easier. The accounts on the history I have selected are thus strongly anti-colonial, and mainly situated in Marxist thought. This reflects a general tendency amongst contemporary historians writing on Uganda for many are close to, or even promoted by, Museveni's (originally left-wing) government. Personally, due to encounters and affiliations, I am strongly sympathetic with the anti-colonial/Marxist line of thought and prefer it to other, equally biased, accounts. Admittedly, the present chapter is simply one account of Uganda's past, but one I happen to prefer.

The Turkana, the Iteso and Karimojong were living peacefully together in northern Kenya. Whether because of the difficulties in finding pastures, or because of the severity of the winters, they decided to disperse. The Turkana said 'Caves are enough shelter for us, and enough protection from our enemies.' Turkana means 'cave'. The Karimojong said 'We will keep moving until we become withered old men.' *Amojong* means 'old', and *akikar* means 'thin', so that Ngikarimojong means 'those who have become dried up with age'. The Iteso said: 'nor will we close ourselves up in caves until the tomb claims us'. *Ates* means 'tomb', and so they became the Ngiteso, 'those of the tombs'.[2]

The Turkana, so the story goes, therefore stayed in Kenya, and the Karamojong and the Iteso moved into what is now known as Uganda. From there, only the Iteso continued the journey westwards until they reached what is today called Teso. Their exodus is said to have happened between 1600 and 1830.[3]

The story of origin of the people of Teso might sound romantic, yet it has great significance for the Iteso today. Although the people of Teso have never been important national political players, there always has been a degree of regional turmoil with their Karamojong neighbours. And yet, as transpiring in the above narrative, the Iteso and the Karamojong are blood relatives. "The Karamojong", so the Iteso say, "are our uncles". Since the 'Karamoja problem' had a serious impact on the beginning and development of the insurgency, it will be described in greater detail in the following section.

Teso today is comprised of three districts: Soroti, Kumi and Katakwi. Katakwi was only secluded recently, it formerly belonged to Soroti district. Two different ethnic groups inhabit the region of Teso: the Iteso derive from the Karimojong, the Kumam are of Luo decent. They share many cultural traits, yet their languages differ and so does their self-conception. Although the two people have been living in the same region for generations they still maintain their individuality and distinction. Conflicts between the ethnic groups occur sporadically, however they are hardly ever violent in scope.

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[2] Augosto Pazzaglia (1982): The Karimojong: Some Aspects. Bologna: EMI, p. 35.
[3] Jan Jelmert Jorgensen (1981): Uganda. A Modern History. London: Croon Helm, p. 102.

Only during the insurgency did the differences lead to mutual persecution, and cut a rift through the society that has not yet been reconciled.

The Kumam and Iteso were formerly cattle herding people. However, especially due to the introduction of cash crops during the colonial period the tradition has gradually changed towards an increase of agriculture. The insurgency disrupted this process violently, it left the Iteso and Kumam with merely 7% of their cattle. Ever since, Teso has been struggling to find a middle-way between agriculture and livestock. Compared to western and central Uganda the agricultural and farming conditions of Teso are rather harsh. The climate is very hot with little rainfall, and food scarcity after poor rainy seasons is not uncommon. The seasonal cattle rustling by the neighbouring Karamojong warriors constantly disrupts the local economy, standing in the way of growth and prosperity.

The Karamojong

Karamoja is the largest region in Uganda, yet it has the lowest population. Situated in the northeast it is comprised of Moroto and Kodito district with international boundaries to Sudan and Kenya, and national to Kitgum, Lira, Katakwi, Kumi, Mbale and Kapchorwa. The immediate neighbouring district to Teso (bordering Kumi and Katakwi) is Moroto. In Moroto, about 180,000 people live in a semi-arid area of 14,113 km²; the landscape is sparsely decorated with isolated thorny trees and shrubs. Annual rainfall is as low as 400-600mm, with an average temperature over 30°C.[4] Rainfall is also highly variable and droughts are cyclical.

The Karamojong people are semi-nomadic cattle herders. During the dry season, water and pasture become so scarce that the pastoralists are forced to move their animals to more fertile regions like Teso. Throughout recorded history the Karamojong have used the grazing area in what is now

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[4] Mugisha Odrek Rwabwoogo (ed.): Uganda District Handbook. Kampala: Fountain Publishers, 1997, p. 94.

referred to as Teso district, yet the conflict has been intensified by colonial boundary drawing.[5]

Contrary to the Iteso and Kumam the Karamojong are pure cattle herders, they have hardly any other economic or social base but their animals. In Karamoja, therefore, animals mean survival. Water and pasture become matters of security, the loss of animals is the loss of life.

The Karamoja region consists of a number of different sub-groups that share some cultural traits, however there is no community called the 'Karamojong'. Karamojong merely refers to all different tribes who reside in Karamoja, a territory defined by colonial administration. One of the tribes, however, is the Karimojong (with 'i' as opposed to 'a'), which consists of the Bokora, Mathenico and Pian. Together with the Chekwii and the Upe they inhabit the territory of Moroto district.

So far, the Karamojong have escaped attempts of western modernisation. Today the resentment amongst many Karamojong towards the British colonialists is very strong. The accusations range from merely neglecting Karamoja to consciously creating a 'human zoo' where nature, including humans, was kept in the most original state. Karamoja has always been excluded from the Ugandan polity, it differs in culture and tradition, not least due to the lack of western influence, and is treated rather sceptically by many Ugandans and non-Ugandans alike. Numerous myths about Karamoja distort the perception of, and attitude to, the region.[6] Infrastructure, education, economic and social development lag behind the general standards in Uganda. Inside and outside of Uganda, the Karamojong are either criminalised or romanticised. For instance, in the Ugandan media they are referred to as 'naked savages' and pictures showing Karamojong warriors drinking fresh blood from puddles are used to

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[5] a.a. (1994): *Security in Grazing Areas and Villages.* Paper presented at the Conference on Strategies for Peace and Sustainable Development in Karamoja and Neighbouring Districts, 18th-22nd July. Kampala: Makerere University.
[6] David Pulkol (1994): *Karamoja Cattle Rustling - a National Dilemma: Myths and Realities.* Paper presented at the Conference on Strategies for Peace and Sustainable Development in Karamoja and Neighbouring Districts, 18th-22nd July. Kampala: Makerere University.

document their beastliness and unhumanness.[7] The Iteso and Kumam refer to the Karamojong as *Illoke* which translates 'naked people who smell'.[8] The debates on how to 'civilise' Karamoja are fierce, and opposed by the view that the Karamojong should be granted the right to continue living their life in their own way.

The only modern object widely available in Karamoja is the firearm. In the 1960s and 1970s the Karamojong were subjected to raids by their Kenyan neighbours and relatives, the Turkana. At the time, the Turkana were already armed, so that in the course of the raids the Karamojong obtained their first guns. When Idi Amin was defeated in 1979, his retreating soldiers left behind a large gun arsenal in Moroto; about 30,000 guns were suddenly available in Karamoja.[9] In 1985 and 1986 more guns were acquired due to the retreat of Obote's troops and the UNLA, so that the availability of guns today is estimated at about 80,000.[10] Of major importance is also the business of international arms trafficking through the Horn of Africa which guarantees a permanent proliferation of small arms. Yet, not all tribes who inhabit the area of Karamoja possess firearms.

The source of the 'Karamoja problem' is their warring culture. Warriors protect as well as acquire cattle through raiding; the tradition of cattle rustling predates colonialism. Today, the districts neighbouring Karamoja like Teso are frequently subjected to cattle raiding, which occasionally takes violent forms and causes the death of herders.and farmers.[11] However, it is important to note that raiding is not a feature of all tribes, nor of all members of a particular tribe. Only Karamojong warriors cattle rustle, and not every Karamojong, as it is widely believed. Raiding is

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[7] My visit to Teso coincided with the strongest cattle rustling ever since the beginning of the insurgency. In spring 2000 the Ugandan media was very instrumental in demonising the Karamojong. Almost every day new reports about killings and raids covered the front pages. During my trip to Moroto I learned that not only were most stories unfounded, the violence that did indeed occur was also started by individual Iteso, and, so the allegations, by the UPDF.

[8] Joanna de Berry (2000): Life After Loss: An Anthropological Study of Post-war Recovery, Teso, Uganda, with Special Reference to Young People (unpublished doctoral thesis). Department of Anthropology. London: London School of Economics, p. 75.

[9] Interview Michael Griffith, London 12.01.2000.

[10] Interview Owmony Owjok, Arapai 20.03.2000.

[11] The death-toll of battles amongst different Karamojong group occasionally reaches several hundred. Whilst I was in Uganda, allegedly 600 Karamojong perished in one battle.

not only practised against non-Karamojong ethnic groups, like the Iteso or Turkana, but it also occurs amongst the different groups inside of Karamoja. What was formerly carried out with spears, bows and arrows, has today increased in scope due to the availability of AK-47s. Especially non-armed communities, like the Iteso and Kumam, have no possibility to defend themselves, let alone to counter-raid to return their animals.[12]

And yet, despite the constant fear of their neighbours the Iteso always emphasis that the Karamojong are their uncles. As a consequence, every time the dry season forces the Karamojong pastoralists to move into Teso's grazing areas the Iteso welcome them and share their grounds. Although most people on the boarder between Karamoja and Teso would probably prefer not to have to host their seasonal guests they nevertheless forge friendship with their 'uncles' and 'aunties'. Young men in particular develop friendships.[13]

Colonialism

Karamoja is not the only district of Uganda to have inherited the legacy of colonialism. The history of Uganda, like all formerly colonised nations, has been strongly affected by foreign rule. The following section shall first given an account of the impact of British colonial rule on Teso and then on Uganda as a whole.

Colonialism in Teso

After five years of negotiation between the Iteso and the missionary enterprise Teso district was created in 1912. According to Joan Vincent, the mission of Christianity was instrumental in providing the ideology of capitalism in Teso. The establishment of colonial rule saw the introduction of taxes, the growth of an ethnically heterogeneous and racially administered population; the creation of hierarchies of civil service chiefs (partly based in

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[12] Due to a number of violent incidences in spring 2000 the Ugandan government gave way to the demands of the people form Teso, Lango, and Acholi to provide arms for Local Defence Units so the farmers could defend themselves against the rustling.

the structure of indigenous leadership and Baganda overrule as we shall see in the following); mission education; as well as the growth of a small middle sector education.[14]

Education, through church missions, gained major significance in Teso. To this very day the Iteso pride themselves on their training and education, which has become an important part of the regional identity.[15] During and after colonialism, many Iteso gained access to influential administrative positions. In addition, in relation to the vastly illiterate Karamojong, the Iteso make constant reference to their own status and their superiority over their neighbours.[16]

Today, the people of Teso think back to the colonial period as 'the golden age', and it is against this backdrop that the present lack of development in measured.[17] The wealth accumulated in Teso during colonialism was mainly due to the introduction of cash crops, most notably cotton. The introduction of cotton production through the colonial rulers into the peasant society of Teso led to the development of a labour market in which 20% of Teso men were employed.[18] As we shall see, this radical shift from ancestral farming to labour had significant implications for the historical and political development of Uganda.

Colonialism in Uganda

British colonialism in Uganda began with the Anglo-German Agreement of 1890 which brought Uganda under the sphere of British influence. The administration of the country was first given to the Imperial British East African Company. In 1893, Britain took full control of the country's administration and turned it into a provisional 'protectorate'.[19] One year later, Uganda was formerly declared a British Protectorate.

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[13] de Berry (2000). Interviews with Peter Otim and Alfred Aruo.

[14] Joan Vincent (1982): Teso in Transformation. Berkley: University of California Press, p. 10.

[15] de Berry (2000): 75.

[16] de Berry (2000): 80.

[17] de Berry (2000): 79.

[18] Vincent (1982): 10.

[19] Mahmood Mamdani (1983): Imperialism and Fascism in Uganda. London: Heineman, p. 6.

The colonial period in Uganda lasted for 68 years. In 1962, the British Parliament approved a constitution that handed over state power to elite groups "best trusted to serve the British Interest".[20] On the 9th of October 1962, Uganda gained independence. During the 68 year of colonial rule, the political landscape of Uganda had changed dramatically; the cleavages produced through British colonial administration still have repercussions today.

Jan Jorgensen has identified three areas on which the British administration had a lasting impact and which are of relevance for the present study:[21]

1. the political tension between the encapsulated kingdom of Buganda and the colonial state of the Uganda Protectorate.
2. the economic and political tension between regions with *de jure* or *de facto* systems of private ownership and land (Buganda, Sebei, south Busoga, and parts of Kigezi, Toro, Ankole and Bunyoro) and the rest of the country where, apart from official estates granted to chiefs, African cultivators were technically tenants on Crown (Public) Land.
3. the economic tension between the export-commodity producing areas of southern and central Uganda and the labour-exporting regions of the north, northwest and southwest.

In the fol lowing I shall address each of these points separately.

Political Tensions due to Power Asymmetries between Different Regions in Uganda

The political tensions between different regions in Uganda are the result of a policy of inequality practised under colonial rule which supported the kingdom of Buganda at the expense of the rest of the country. This

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[20] Winfred K. Byanyima (1992): *How Guerrillas Became Peace Builders*. Boulding, Elise (ed.): New Agendas for Peace Research. Conflict and Security Reexamined. London/Boulder: Lynne Rienner, p. 131.

established a power asymmetry which still affects the political landscape. The privileging of Buganda was a result of the British policy of indirect rule. According to Terence Ranger

> [c]olonial governments in Africa did not wish to rule by a constant exercise of military force and they needed a wider range of collaborators than those Africans who were brought into the neo-traditions of subordination. In particular, they needed to collaborate with chiefs, headmen and elders in the rural areas.[22]

The attempt to avoid military force was however not an altruistic decision. Rather it had proved impossible to control the large populations of people in colonised states. In Uganda, the first six years of British involvement led to three civil wars, which had a devastating impact on export and trade.[23] The British realised that colonialism was impossible without the mediation of rules and laws through classes physically located in the colonies. They hence established a system of 'indirect rule' in which part of the colonised people are involved is governing the country.[24]

The people of Buganda, the area around the capital Kampala, became the main vehicles for indirect rule; it was here where Uganda's administrative system was first introduced.[25] In 1900 the (B)Uganda Agreement was signed between the British administrators and the chiefs of Buganda, who were then already literate Christians and allegedly in full understanding of the terms of the treaty.[26] The agreement consisted of three parts: the fixing of Buganda's boundaries; the establishment of indirect rule through the Baganda king Kabaka,[27] as well as land settlement. Buganda became an independent province under the British Protectorate, equal in status to the other provinces. In return, the Kabaka, his chiefs and his people had to co-operate with the Protectorate governments.[28] Hence, the Kabaka, and this was an exception in British colonialism, remained the

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[21] Jorgensen (1981): 176.

[22] Ranger (2000): 229.

[23] Mahmood Mamdani (1976): Politics and Class Formation in Uganda. London: Heinemann, p. 41.

[24] Mamdani (1976): 41.

[25] Buganda is the name of the region, Baganda of the people and Luganda of the language.

[26] M. Louise Pirout (1995): Historical Dictionary of Uganda. London: The Scarecrow Press, p. 96.

[27] Kabaka is the word for king in Luganda.

[28] Pirout (1995): 97.

leader of his people. The most radical deviation from British colonial practise was however the land settlement which allocated almost half of the land of Buganda to the Kabaka and his chiefs.[29]

In response to obtaining land, the predominately protestant Baganda chiefs were loyal to the colonial rulers. Over the years, the so called 'Buganda system of administration' was extended to other regions of the country, and land guarantees and chief appointments of Baganda chiefs started reaching beyond the border of Buganda.[30] Teso became the home of a number of Baganda whose interest was mainly in commerce and who, unlike the Iteso, were permitted to acquire land. The colonial administration benefited from the cultural proximity of the Baganda to the Iteso which turned them into "intermediaries or brokers for the 'civilising mission' of European Christianity and administration"[31] - indirect rule was successfully established. However, due to increasing disagreement and resentment between Iteso and Baganda, the colonial rulers were forced to withdraw the Baganda later.

Why did the Baganda receive special treatment from the British administration? The, albeit very limited, respect for the Baganda is apparent in the following quote:

> If there is any country formatting part in the Uganda Protectorate which could do us any real harm it is Uganda itself – the kingdom of Uganda [i.e. Buganda]. Here we have something like a million fairly intelligent, slightly civilised negroes of warlike tendency, and possessing about 10,000 to 12,000 guns. These are the only people for a long time to come who can deal a serious blow to British rule in this direction.[32]

It has been suggested that the pride of their own monarchy led colonial anthropologists to classify African societies into centralised (monarchical) and stateless societies.[33] The monarchical societies resembled 'civilised' European states with a higher degree of cultural development.

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[29] Pirout (1995): 98; Apolo Nsibambi (1989): *The Land Question and Conflict*. Rupesinghe, Kumar (ed.): Conflict Resolution in Uganda. London: James Curry, p. 233.
[30] Mamdani (1983): 9.
[31] Vincent (1982): 145.
[32] Memorandum by Johnston, No. 13, East African Confidential, London, March 2, 1903, quoted in Mamdani (1976): 42.

Other societies were still considered savage. In the case of Uganda, the kingdoms of Buganda, Bunyoro, Toro, and Ankole, all based in southwest and central Uganda, were thus considered more civilised than the north and the northeast.

It has been argued that the British administrators were furthermore concerned that at least some Africans should become members of the governing class of colonial Africa. They established institutions like King's College, Budo, in Buganda.[34] The education of a political and cultural elite was valued highly, as apparent in the following quote:

> We felt strongly that if the ruling class in the country were to exercise in the days to come an influence for good upon their people and to have a sense of responsibility towards them, it was essential that something should be done for the education of these neglected children, on the soundest possible line ... by the disciplines of work and games in boarding school so as to build character as to enable Baganda to take their proper place in the administrative, commercial and industrial life of their own country.[35]

The king of Buganda, Kabaka Mutesa, was inaugurated while still at school at King's College, Budo, where he stayed until he finished his studies. In addition to his formal education through the British administration the Kabaka also joined the Cambridge Officer's Corps, and was later, thanks to the suggestion of King George VI, promoted to the rank of a captain, which was a very rare exception for an African.[36]

The role of kingship in Buganda was thus adapted to the British idea of the Crown. As a culture which honoured and respected royalty "British administrators set about inventing African traditions for Africans", they started codifying and promulgating traditions they considered valuable, thereby transforming flexible customs into hard prescriptions.[37] As for Uganda, it promoted the kingdom of Buganda and turned it into the centre of political power for the whole of the country. Whilst the Baganda enjoyed

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[33] As stated by Apolo Nsibambi (1995): *The Restoration of Traditional Rulers*. Hansen, Holger Berndt/Twaddle, Michael (eds.): From Chaos to Order. The Politics of Constitution Making in Uganda. Kampala/London: Fountain/James Curry, p. 43.
[34] Ranger (2000): 221.
[35] G. P. McGreagor (1967): King's College, Budo: The First Sixty Years. London; quoted in Ranger (2000): 221.
[36] Ranger (2000): 225.
[37] Ranger (2000): 212.

privileges laid out in the Uganda Agreement of 1900, the rest of the country was governed under the Native Authority Audience of 1919.[38] This imbalance of power between Buganda and the other kingdoms, on one hand, and the rest of Uganda on the other, remains the locus for tensions until today. It introduced major cleavages into the polity.

The Economic and Political Tension due to the Distribution of Land and the Means of Production in Different Regions of Uganda

The Buganda Agreement of 1900 created a class of Baganda notables and powerful landlords which resulted in an increasing class division amongst Ugandans. In an agricultural economy like Uganda the ownership of land is the most important means of production. Due to the commercialisation of agriculture and the inclusion of Uganda into the world economy a capitalist class developed. Landowners either received taxes from farming tenants or use their land for cash-crop production through paid labour.[39] The private ownership of large areas of land in the hands of a minority eventually led to the first appearance of landless proletariat in 1972.[40]

In the early days of colonialism, while Buganda was economically prospering and producing export commodities, cash-crops were discouraged in the northern regions, and the land remained in the hands of the Crown. Simultaneously, in central and south Uganda the colonial rulers encouraged a culture of kingship supremacy and a high degree of education and commodity production for export, whilst the north and north-east of the country was turned into a labour reservoir.[41] West Nile, Acholi, Lango and Teso turned into recruitment grounds for soldiers, police officers and prison guards, but also administrators, clerks and farm workers. The employment in the security sector in particular had a significant impact on the identity of the region, which still prevails today.

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[38] Samwiri Lwanga-Lunyiigo (1989): *The Colonial Roots of Internal Conflict.* Rupesinghe, Kumar (ed.): Conflict Resolution in Uganda. London: James Curry, p. 31.
[39] Jorgensen (1981): 90.
[40] Jorgensen (1981): 94.
[41] Yoweri Museveni (1987): Speech given at a consultation organised by International Alert, 25th September 1987. Kampala: Makerere University.

With the increase of labour migration from Rwanda, the recruitment process came to a sudden halt.[42] Due to the harsh Belgian colonial rule many Rwandans left their countries to make a better living in Uganda. The sudden increase in the number of available workers made the labour force from northern Uganda partly redundant and turned peasants farmers into petty commodity producers.[43]

This process coincided with the promotion of cash crops, particularly cotton, in Teso in the early 1920s. As we have seen above, the agricultural change from farming to cash crops introduced a radical rupture to the social make-up and created an even larger workforce. Most Iteso stopped working in the army, the administration or on Baganda farms and started paid labour on Teso farms.[44] The introduction of oxen ploughs in the late 1930s led to significant changes in the farming of cash crops, and to an increase in production as well as in the wealth of landowners. Plough and oxen owners emerged as the 'Big Men', as capitalist farmers, who owned large parts of the land and employed workers for cultivation.[45] For Teso, at the time, cultivating cotton led to increasing prosperity, which today still marks a point of reference. Working in the civil sector remained nevertheless important so that in the 1950s, traders, teachers, and civil servants comprised a petty bourgeoisie.[46]

Consequently, British colonialism had a very significant influence on the Teso identity. People defined themselves in opposition to the rich kingdoms of the south. The majority of Kumam and Iteso belonged to a certain work force and, despite modest wealth, there was a large gap between the prosperity of the kingdoms and the district of Teso.

Towards Independence

At the time of independence Uganda was spilt by a strong north/south divide. Buganda, as well as to some extent the kingdoms of

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[42] Mamdani (1976): 133.
[43] Mamdani (1976): 133.
[44] Mamdani (1976): 133.
[45] Jorgensen (1981): 106.
[46] Mamdani (1976): 209.

Bunyoro, Toro, and Ankole, were characterised by their wealth, prosperity and education.[47] The rest of the country, however, was united in the struggle against the "sub-imperialism by non-indigenous chiefs like Baganda, Batoro, Banyoro [and] Bagisu" as well as against the Buganda style land settlement.[48] Hence, in the wake of independence, Uganda was split along ethnic lines of Baganda and non-Baganda, yet also along religious lines between Protestants in the north and Catholics in the south.[49] "[R]eligion and the modern political Uganda were like Siamese twins that saw the light of the day at the same time."[50] In 1962, Uganda was rated one of the most promising economies on the African continent, yet it was highly unstable politically.

Five parties emerged in the last years of colonialism:[51] the Uganda National Congress (UNC), which later turned into the Uganda People Congress (UPC), the Progressive Party (PP), the Democratic Party (DP) and Kabaka Yekka ('Kabaka Only', KY). However, the newly formed parties did not reflect a rise of national interest but rather ethnic, religious and regional divisions. Amongst the parties that consolidated over time, the UPC had a strong socialist profile and was affiliated with the Northern regions, the DP was strongly Catholic and anti-communist and could draw on large support in Buganda, whereas the KY, established in response to the DP, was Baganda, strongly loyalist and did not recognise any person as superior to the Kabaka.

The British colonial rulers handed over Uganda to the parties they thought were best suited to govern the country. Buganda and the Kabaka maintained their privileged status to the extent that Buganda was granted federal status in relation to the central government.[52]

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[47] A. G. Gingyera-Pinycwa (1987): Milton Obote and His Time. London: NOK Publishers, p. 22.
[48] Jorgensen (1981): 176.
[49] Susan Dicklitch (1998): The Elusive Promise of NGOs in Africa. Lessons from Uganda. Basingstoke/London: Macmillan, p. 32.
[50] Gingyera-Pinycwa (1987): 23.
[51] Dicklitch (1998): 38.
[52] Gingyera-Pinycwa (1987): 127.

Independent Uganda

Party Politics and Dictatorships

Milton Obote

In the first few years after independence the political parties operated in a multi-party framework.[53] In 1962, the UPC, under the leadership of Milton Obote from Lango in the north, formed an alliance with the KY in order to increase its strength against the DP in the first Ugandan elections. As anticipated, the UPC won the majority of the seats outside of Buganda, whereas the KY emerged as the strongest party inside of Buganda.[54] The UPC/KY coalition formed the first government, based on the Westminster model, with Milton Obote as the Prime Minister and Kabaka Mutesa as President. The harmony between UPC and KY was however short-lived. Within a few years the ideological and political discrepancies defeated pragmatism and led to a civil constitutional coup in 1966. The coup culminated in the battle of Mengo, in which the army under Idi Amin defeated the Baganda. About one thousand people were killed, leaving lasting hatred for Obote amongst the Baganda.[55] The Kabaka fled to the UK and Obote imposed a unitary constitution, appointing himself as the President of Uganda. One year later, he abolished all kingdoms and rendered Uganda a republic.

Uganda's new constitution abolished the federal status and independent powers of the former kingdoms, as well as all Baganda privileges. It consolidated the power around the President. Obote justified this radical shift by arguing that it de-ethnicised politics, yet he achieved the opposite.[56] The dissatisfaction in Buganda, and in the southern regions in general, forced Obote to rely more and more on military force to secure his power.

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[53] Holger Berndt Hansen/Michael Twaddle (1995): *The Issues*. Hansen, Holger Berndt/Twaddle, Michael (eds.): From Chaos to Order. The Politics of Constitution Making in Uganda. Kampala/London: Fountain/James Curry, p. 3.
[54] Athur Gakwandi (1999): Uganda Pocket Facts. Kampala: Fountain, p. 22.
[55] Pirout (1995): 296.
[56] Dicklitch (1998): 40.

Obote increasingly adopted left-wing policies culminating in the 'Move to the Left' in 1969. In 1970, he nationalised Uganda's 85 leading companies, a move which was not appreciated by the former British colonial rulers.[57] In addition, Obote abolished strikes and attacked feudalism and Buganda hegemony.[58]

Teso was one of Obote's strongholds. As a northeastern region it was traditional UPC territory. The UPC promised to solve all post-colonial hopes and fears: to tame the dominance of the Baganda, to abolish feudalism and to equalise the national economy through unitary price regulation.

Idi Amin

While Obote was preoccupied with introducing new politics to Uganda as well as struggling against the increasing ethnic divide, the greatest threat to his Presidency emerged from his own ranks. The creation of northern Uganda as a labour reservoir by colonial administration led to most of his soldiers coming from the north. Ethnic tensions between the different northern groups soon developed.[59] Disputes grew between soldiers from Acholi and Lango (the latter Obote's ethnic group) on one hand, and the people from West Nile on the other.[60] Central to this was the increasing personal mistrust between Obote and his army commander from West Nile, Idi Amin. When Obote left the country to attend a Commonwealth meeting in January 1971, Amin took over power.

In the first instance, especially in Buganda, Amin's coup was welcomed.[61] He returned the dead body of the Kabaka, who had died in exile, and arranged a state funeral. Amin released prisoners and he was widely hailed as 'a man of peace'.[62] This situation was short lived and Amin governed the country in a reign of terror. "Within three months after he took over power ... Amin suspended all democratic rights, gave the army

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[57] Gakwandi (1999): 23.
[58] Dicklitch (1998): 40.
[59] Human Rights Watch (1999): 31.
[60] Phared Mutibwa (1992): Uganda Since Independence. A Story of Unfulfilled Hope. London: Hurst & Company, p. 9.
[61] Thomas P. Ofcansky (1996): Uganda. Tarnished Pear of Africa. Boulder: WestView Press, p. 43.
[62] Mutibwa (1992): 86.

dictatorial powers of arrest and punishment, and set up a military tribunal to try political offenders."[63]

Amin destroyed Uganda. He destroyed the people through his unimaginable cruelty,[64] of which he made no effort to conceal, and by driving the rather prosperous country into financial ruin through, for instance, the expulsion of all Asians from Uganda in 1972. The fairly large Asian community had developed as one of the economic backbones of the country and with its disappearance commerce and trade came to an almost complete halt.

Today, people in Uganda still seem bewildered by the experience of the time. Amin has become the subject of a countless number of jokes,[65] derived from the lack of understanding of his personality. As apparent in the following quote:

> Amin had a kind of intelligence but he was undisciplined and uneducated, and appeared to lack any moral sense. Even his enemies said he possessed a commanding presence and could be charming, but he would fly into ungoverned rages. He did not understand either the process of government or the function of civil society. He made much play of being Muslim, but made little effort to practice the Muslim ethical code, and frequently offended against its norms, drinking to excess, for example, and ordering public executions on a Friday during Ramada, as well as ruling with terror.[66]

Contrary to most regions of Uganda Teso was little affected by Amin's terror regime. People continued their lives without showing any political ambitions and successfully avoided falling into Amin's discredit.

The international community followed the developments in Uganda with shock and horror, yet it was a more immediate neighbour who came to

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[63] James J. Busuttil et. al. (1991): "Uganda at the Crossroads – A Report on Current Human Rights Conditions." The Record, October 1991; quoted in Human Rights Watch (1999): 32.

[64] It is estimated that between 100, 000 and 500,000 people were killed in Amin's eighth year presidency. Persecuted were mainly supporters of Obote from Lango and Acholi, as well as Baganda. Human Rights Watch (1999): 32.

[65] Two most popular Amin jokes go as follows: 'One day Amin orders guns on the phone. The line was very bad so he had to spell his request. "GUNS as in G for Jinja [town in Uganda], U for youth; N for knowledge and S for psychology."' In another joke Amin is quoted to have said: "Uganda is north of the UK, south of South Africa, West of Japan and east of America. Therefore, Uganda is in the centre of the Equator and should be the home of the United Nations."

the countries defence. Amin's politics finally went one step to far when he annexed 1,800 square miles of Tanzanian territory, alienating President Nyerere who had already been an outspoken critic of the dictator.[67] In Tanzania, a group of exiled Ugandans formed the UNLA (Uganda National Liberation Army) and united with the Tanzanian People's Defence Force (TPDF). They invaded Uganda jointly in 1979. Amin fled to Saudi Arabia where he still lives today.

Milton Obote II

Amin's defeat was followed by two short periods of governance. Yusuf Lule (UNLA) only stayed in office for 69 days until political intrigues, paired with his lack of experience in political leadership, led to his removal.[68] His successor Godfrey Binaisa fell prey to a bloodless coup by the military regime of Paulo Muwaga in 1980, which opened the path to general elections in the same year.

The main contending parties in the elections were the two major traditional parties, the DP with much support in the south and the UPC which could draw mainly on the votes of the northern regions. In addition, the Conservative Party (CP) and the Uganda Patriotic Movement under Yoweri Museveni competed in the elections.

Obote's UPC won the election and he became President of Uganda for the second time.[69] His success was strongly contested by his opponents, accusing him of rigging the elections. Museveni, despite his party having performed rather poorly in the election, set up the National Resistance Movement (NRM), and its military wing the National Resistance Army (NRA), and began an insurgency war in a region called Luwero, which soon became known as the 'Luwero Triangle'.

Two rival accounts are on offer to explain the beginning of Museveni's guerrilla warfare.[70] People from the north argued that Museveni took up

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[66] Pirout (1995): 35.
[67] Human Rights Watch (1999): 33.
[68] Mutibwa (1992): 128.
[69] Obote's second presidency is commonly referred to as Obote II.
[70] Mutibwa (1992): 154.

arms to end the succession of northern rule of the country. Since Kabaka Mutesa fled into exile, Uganda had been ruled by people form the northern districts. Museveni, himself from Ankole in the southwest, represented the section of the country which had been privileged by the colonial rulers but which had not been in power since independence. The people around Museveni, however, argue that Uganda had in the past suffered from oppressive regimes, that the elections had been seen as a window of hope for a democratic government, but that Obote's rigging of the elections had brought these ambitions to a halt. For them, NRM/A guerrilla warfare was the only alternative.

The Luwero Triangle

During the Luwero insurgency, the Kumam and Iteso fought side by side with the Acholi and Langi in Obote's UNLA. In line with colonial traditions and political affiliations Obote had recruited his army staff predominately amongst the northern and northeastern ethnic groups. Yet, after several years of fighting against Museveni, Obote faced strong tensions inside his army and was accused by the Acholi of favouring his own ethnic group the Langi. The tensions culminated in a military coup in 1985, which gave way to the military council of Tito Okello and Bazilio Olara Okello.

With the Okello government in place disunity persisted in Uganda. The instability of the new government forced it into negotiations with the NRM, resulting in the Nairobi Peace Accord. Despite the Nairobi Accord, Museveni's troops launched a final attack in January 1986, which led to the successful seizure of Kampala, and the subsequent installation of the NRM as the new government. By March 1986 the NRA/M had gained control of the whole country.

Defeated in their struggle the Kumam and Iteso UNLA soldiers retreated eastwards towards their homes where they sceptically awaited the course the new government would take. Many returned to their villages and families.

Museveni's Uganda

Amongst the left-wing African elite Museveni's victory was celebrated and praised. In the words of A. M. Babu:

> The Uganda Revolution is ... politically and morally the most significant event that has happened in Africa since the Ghana victory; and there is no doubt that in the next few years it will establish itself as having had a much more profound and far-reaching impact on Africa's history than even Ghana's. Ghana was the first place, and Uganda the second in the long march to genuinely free Africa[71]

Museveni, at the time, personified the end of post-colonial influence and the beginning of a new area.

And yet, Uganda's liberation was not for everybody and armed resistance developed rapidly.[72] In 1986, a group of UNLA soldiers fled to Sudan and regrouped as Uganda People's Democratic Army/Movement (UPDA/M);[73] pro-Amin rebels gathered in West Nile and formed the West Nile Bank Front (WNBF); in western Uganda the Allied Democratic Front (ADF) came into existence and is still active today; in the most southern parts of the country the Rwandan Interahamwe —the main culprit of the 1994 genocide— started raiding Ugandan settlers, and in Acholi a women called Alice Lakwena started the Holy Spirit Movement which has now turned into Joseph Koney's Lord Resistance Army (LRA).

As for Teso, Museveni's take-over was initially welcome. The cattle raiding by the Karamojong warriors had accelerated in 1985-6. It had been supported by the Okellos who used it as a means of intimidating the Iteso and Kumam. The new Museveni government was expected to put an end to the neighbour's assaults.

From the NRM government's side there was also no initial antagonism against the Iteso and Kumam. The resentment was rather directed against the Acholi, as manifested in a radio speech by Museveni in which he

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[71] A. M. Babu, quoted in Ondoga ori Amaza (1998): Museveni's Long March to from Guerrilla to Statesman. Kampala: Fountain, p. 1.
[72] Sverker Finnstroem (1999): *Living with Bad Surroundings. War and Uncertainly in Northern Uganda.* Uppsala: Department of Cultural Anthropology and Ethnology report, Uppsala University, p. 10.
[73] Interview David Mafabi.

explained that his quarrel was not with the Obote soldiers but with the 'Okellos'. 'Okellos' served as a synonym for Acholi.[74]

Museveni's Policy of Demobilisation

Army and Civil Servants

Nevertheless, the climate changed within a few months and mutual mistrust grew gradually. Immediately after Museveni seized power he began to reorganise the public sector.[75] As a consequence, vast numbers of civil servants were made redundant, and since Teso had, during Obote's regime, provided a substantial portion of the police, prison and military staff, unemployment affected the region severely.

The reorganisation of the national army was one of Museveni's priorities:

> [W]e had realised that once we came to power it would be necessary to do away with the old colonial-style army which had been recruited along sectarian lines and manipulated by unscrupulous politicians and directors. Therefore, immediately after the fall of Kampala we started organising a new national army.[76]

The ex-combatants in Teso learned about their demobilisation through a radio announcement in 1986/7 in which they were asked to report to the local administration to hand in their guns.[77] This message, however, evoked negative memories. When Idi Amin came to power in 1971 he broadcast a similar announcement, and when the soldiers arrived at the administration offices to deliver their arms many were tortured or executed. In 1986, the Kumam and Iteso ex-soldiers feared that these atrocities would be repeated, and that they would be punished for having fought Museveni in the Luwero Triangle. Instead of reporting to the authorities many kept their arms and hid in the villages.

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[74] Interview Dennis Pain, London 13.01.2000.
[75] It has been suggested that the reorganisation was imposed by IMF and World Bank as part of the Structural Adjustment Programme. Interview with Grace Akello, Portsmouth 06.01.2000.
[76] Yoweri Museveni: Sowing the Mustard Seeds. The Struggle for Freedom and Democracy in Uganda. London & Oxford: Macmillan, p. 174.
[77] Interview Dennis Pain.

Special Forces

In addition, in 1981 Obote had introduced a para-military police force, called Special Forces, out of with 5000 out of 8000 members originated from Teso.[78] The Special Forces were under direct control of the Minister of State of Internal Affairs, Col. Omaria, himself an Etesot. They had played an instrumental role in Obote's regime, and they were all well trained professional combatants. During the Luwero bush war the Special Forces gained a bad reputation for their aggressiveness against the NRA, UFM/A (Uganda Freedom Party) and FEDEMU/FDA (Federal Democratic Army). One of Museveni's first political decisions was to disband the Force, yet many of its members found it difficult being made redundant.[79]

Militia

In addition to the Kumam and Iteso soldiers and the Special Forces a third military group was demobilised. During Obote's regime a Militia had been established with the objective to guard the borders between Karamoja and its neighbours. The Militia deterred cattle raiding and enabled the Kumam and Iteso to thrive economically. Museveni's interpretation of the militia was however different:

> During the Obote II regime, UPC politicians complicated the [Karamoja] problem further by creating tribal militia in Acholi and Teso which, in turn, raided Karamoja and counter-plundered.[80]

It has been suggested that this view of the Militia may be closer to the truth than that of it merely being a protector of Teso.[81] For instance, the Militia has been accused of being aggressive towards the Karamojong.[82] However, in 1986-7 the removal of the Militia from the Karamoja border opened the way for the Karamojong warriors to enter and raid Teso to an extent previously unknown.

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[78] Interview Musa Echweru.
[79] Col. Omaria himself commented once that after having received special training at home as well as abroad it is difficult for a professional soldier to 'retire' forcefully.
[80] Museveni (1996): 58.
[81] Henriques (2000): 39.
[82] Interview with Teko Lokeris, Moroto 14.04.2000.

The scale of the demobilisation of combat forces from Teso was large and left the Kumam and Iteso with a feeling of mistrust. Since many of them had played a significant role in the Luwero war they interpreted the new government's action as punishment. The Iteso and Kumam feared harassment and human rights abuses, including extra-judicial executions.

And yet, in the first phase of the NRM government a policy of reconciliation prevailed. The exiled political leadership was encouraged to return to Uganda.[83] The rationale was to 'bring the enemies in', to give them a prestigious public office in order to prevent them from turning against the Movement. The NRM policy of reconciliation contributed significantly to taming potential political opponents.

Inside the NRM cadre Museveni's long-term supporters were critical of this policy.[84] To co-operate with the politicians against whom they had fought so fiercely in the Luwero Triangle went against their conception of victory. It was also felt that many opponents, especially from the UPC, had joined the NRM for opportunist reasons and that they were only waiting for power relations to change again to continue with their own political agenda.[85]

Such was the atmosphere in Uganda and Teso at the beginning of Museveni's leadership. In north and northeast Uganda peace was very fragile. Although the NRM made an effort to assure people that it's intention was to unite the country, it was unsuccessful in establishing trust. Armed warfare began in Teso, as well as in Lango and Acholi. In Lango, the violent conflict ceased after a short while, in Teso it continued for some years, in Acholi it persists to this day.

Changes in Uganda

Many things have changed in Uganda since the days of Obote and Amin. Most importantly, in order to facilitate the democratisation process

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[83] E. A. Brett (1996): *Rebuilding War Damaged Communities in Uganda*. Allen, Tim (ed.): In Search of Cool Ground. War, Flight and Homecoming in Northeast Africa. London/Trenton: James Curry/Africa World Press, p. 208.
[84] Conversation with Okwiri Rabwoni, Kampala 05.04.2000.
[85] ori Amaza (1998): 129.

Museveni introduced an alternative governance and administration system On a local, institutional level, the government set up a system of Resistance Councils (RCs) which operated on village, parish, sub-county, county and district level.[86] Through direct elections at the village and indirect at higher levels the population at large is drawn into the decision making process, enabling them to influence communal politics. Although their executive power is limited the RCs nevertheless provide some scope to criticise the activities of central and local authorities. It has been argued that the RC system had a crucial impact on the process of reconciliation and integration.[87]

Nationally, multi-party politics was replaced by the National Resistance Movement, or in short 'the Movement'. The Movement system is a no-party system, which Museveni introduced with reference to the legacy of Ugandan party politics being the causes for violence and disruption. Initially designed as a temporary solution to allow the split country to reconcile the Movement is today highly contested, and often described as a one-party system, and admittedly this is also the way it is being referred to in the present study.[88] In June 2000 a referendum was held about keeping the Movement system, or re-introducing multiparty politics. The outcome was in favour of the Movement yet in Uganda today there is increasing discontent about the system, leading to demonstrations and sporadic violence. Nevertheless, compared to most other countries in Africa, Museveni's Uganda maintains a relatively high degree of civil rights and is fairly prosperous.

A History of Violence

Since independence in 1962, Uganda has suffered from five violent political overturns: the first Prime Minister Milton Obote launched a civil constitutional coup in 1966 which removed Kabaka Mutesa as the head of state and rendered Obote President; Obote was overthrown by his army commander Idi Amin in 1971; and Amin was toppled by the UNLA with assistance of Tanzanian forces in 1979. This led eventually to a second

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[86] The RCs have been replaced by very similar LCs (Local Councils).
[87] Brett (1996): 210.
[88] Human Rights Watch (1999).

Presidency of Obote, the period is commonly referred to as Obote II, which was again terminated violently, this time by Bazillo and Tito Okello in 1985, who were, in 1986, ousted by Yoweri Museveni.

Uganda's history of violence was largely a result of colonialism. What this chapter sought to reveal is that the post-colonial Uganda has suffered from tensions introduced by the British rulers. Obviously, it is impossible to know how Uganda would have developed in conditions free from this strong foreign influence, and whether its past would have been more peaceful. Nevertheless, the British influence split the polity and provided the ground for violence and conflict, with the Teso insurgency presenting yet another instance of this legacy, as we shall see in the following chapters.

HISTORY AND TRUTH:
THE BEGINNING OF
THE INSURGENCY

The uses and disadvantages of history have been contested for some time.[1] We cannot simply reduce the past to pure knowledge since the past is subjected to the impulse of life and the living.[2] Events are properties of the past, narratives of the present. In Gadamer's words

> If we are trying to understand a historical phenomenon from the historical distance ... we are always subjected to the effects of effective history. ... True historical thinking must take account of its own historically. ... A proper hermeneutics would have to demonstrate the effectivity of history within understanding itself.[3]

Conventionally, past events are first memorised, then documented and through this act turned into everlasting monuments.[4] Writing history is thus the process of rendering remembered narratives into established and solid structures and it needs an exercise of genealogy to reveal their contingency.

> [I]n contrast to the various projects which aim to inscribe knowledge, a genealogy should be seen as a kind of attempt to emancipate historical knowledges from ... subjection, to render them .. capable of opposition and of struggle against the coercion of a theoretical, unitary, formal and scientific discourse.[5]

The objective of the present chapter is therefore to reveal the discontinuities and contestations in the local history of Teso.

In contrast to the previous chapter, which offered a traditional approach of mapping the cleavages that run through Uganda in order to

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[1] Nietzsche (1983).
[2] Nietzsche (1983): 104.
[3] Gadamer (1975): 267.
[4] Foucault (1972): 7.

explain what caused the Teso insurgency, in the following we shall seek to understand how the antagonism between the Kumam and Iteso on one side, and the government on the other have evolved over time. In Ashley's words:

> It is a question of *how*, in history, meaning is imposed, put to question, reinterpreted, and fixed anew. *How*, admits the diversity and change of texts and signifying practices of a culture, are knowledgable practices normalized and orchestrated, resistance disciplined, and social energies focused so that, in history, it becomes possible to effect a narrative structuring in which specific modes of subjectivity are constituted both as the self-evident sovereign origins of power, on the one hand, and the truthful voices of history's objective possibilities and necessary limits on the other?[6]

Consequently, this chapter will look at the Teso past through the lens of the Iteso and Kumam today.

The present Teso identity is shaped by recollections of the past and anticipations of the future. As suggested in Chapter 3, the way people remember their past re-members their society, while forgetting is simply a way of remembering differently. In order to understand Teso it is therefore essential to ask how the Iteso and Kumam refer to the beginning of the insurgency. How is the way the Iteso and Kumam narrate their past constituted by and constitutive of their present identity? And how is their Other, the Museveni government, determined in this process?

How, then, do people in Teso reply to the question *'What caused the Teso insurgency?'*

Teso History

The truth about the beginning of the insurgency in Teso has not been confined to a formal discourse as referred to by Foucault in the above quote. In fact, no literature about it has ever been published, and yet in Teso there is a consensus about how the insurgency began.[7] The oral documentation of the past has a similar effect to the academic discipline of

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[5] Foucault (1994a): 24.
[6] Ashley (1989): 283.
[7] Oral and written accounts of past events do not vary in their characteristics of importance to this study and are thus treated in the same way. See also Tonkin (1992): 113.

history departments: it creates a regime of truth. Foucault understands truth as "a system of ordered procedures for the production, regulation, distribution, circulation and operation of statements."[8] Central to his work in the notion of power relations, a concept which we will take up in the conclusions. For now it is important to stress that the disciplining power of truth as described in the above quote makes possible what can be said in a particular social environment.

The disciplining power is very apparent in Teso where the discourse about the beginning of the insurgency is tightly ordered. Accounts that are not in line with the meta-narrative are conventionally not appreciated.[9] Whereas towards the end of the insurgency in 1990-2 people seemed to have a much more nuanced understanding of why they were fighting, and listed a number of different reasons,[10] eight years later a 'true history', a 'true account', of the past has developed.

Competing Narratives

In order to understand the people of Teso today it is important to pay special attention to the way they refer to their past, and what claims arise out of this recollection. The following outlines three different narratives about the beginning of the insurgency. They are neither exclusive nor comprehensive. For foreigners who newly arrive in the Teso region only the first version is on offer. The vast majority of people today refer to the cattle raiding by the Karamojong as the reason for taking up armed struggle, to the exclusion of all other accounts. When listening to, for instance, senior school students it becomes apparent that this is also the version passed on to the younger generation, which has no conscious memory of the time of the insurgency.[11] As collective memory it therefore becomes local history. However, in the course of my research, and after staying in Teso for several weeks, alternative voice began to emerge, as reproduced in the following.

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[8] Foucault (1980): 133.
[9] This view is supported by numerous encounters with people in Teso.
[10] I am here referring to the collection of interviews conducted by E. A. Brett during a field trip to Teso in 1990-2.
[11] Impression won at workshop at a secondary school in Soroti (Soroti SS).

Karamojong Warriors' Raiding

As we saw in the previous chapter, shortly after his inauguration Museveni disbanded the Militia which protected the border between Karamoja and Teso.[12] The Karamojong warriors used the power vacuum to raid their neighbours with an intensity previously unknown, even exceeding the extent experienced under the Okellos in 1985-1986.[13] Within a few months after the NRM came into power the Karamojong warriors had overrun the whole of Teso, then comprised of Soroti and Kumi districts. They did not only raid cattle but also other animals. It is estimated that the livestock in Teso was reduced to 7%.[14] According to an Oxfam report the figures were[15]

District	1980	1989	Loss/Gain
Soroti (then Soroti and Katakwi)	317,563	20,000	-297,563
Kumi	135,000	15,000	-120,000

The report estimates that the cattle stock in Kumi went down to 3-4,000 after renewed raiding in 1990-1. When the raiding of Teso began in late 1986, it was marked by the power asymmetry deriving from the armament of the Karamojong warriors. People in Teso had no means to protect themselves. The Karamojong warriors walked all the way to Lake Kyoga, no area in Teso was spared from their assaults. They came through towns, and killed and abused people indiscriminately. Witnesses affirm that they were accompanied by their wives and children, who collected clothing and household goods, while the warriors took the animals.[16]

As early as April 1987 political attempts were made to stop the rustling. In a meeting at the Conference Centre in Kampala the government was urged to stamp out the raids, to disarm the Karamojong, to establish

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[12] Interview with Musa Echweru, Soroti 26.3.2000.
[13] Interview with James Eceret, Kampala 9.2.2000.
[14] Interview with James Eceret.
[15] OXFAM (1993): OXFAM Kumi District Agricultural Rehabilitation Project: Final Evaluation. Uganda: OXFAM report, p. 13.
[16] E. A. Brett's private notes from Oct 1990.

an emergency relief programme and to implement development projects in Karamoja in order to provide sufficient water and pasture for the Karamojong cattle.[17] From the Karamojong side, elders promised peace and pleaded with the government to establish development programmes in their districts.[18] These appeals, however, remained unsuccessful.

The government's policy towards the raiding in Teso was marked by inactivity. The failure to secure stability in Kumi and Soroti was explained by a lack of military resources, for the new government had to fight against violent opposition in the north and west of the country. In Museveni's words: "We did not have enough forces to deal simultaneously with the cattle raiding. As a result the Karamojong cattle raiding intensified, especially in Teso."[19]

Nevertheless, the inactivity of the NRM was interpreted by many people in Teso as a deliberate policy by the new government to intimidate them, and to deprive them of their main source of livelihood. At the time, cattle were the major economic and cultural commodities in the region. People called their cows their 'bank', for they provided them with the means to pay tuition fees, dowries, day-to-day necessities and food.[20] Apart from cattle being economic commodities they were also of social and cultural significance. Cattle were a symbol of wealth and prosperity, they provided power. Large herds of cattle were often invested in the acquisition of new wives and dependants, and thus became a political currency. The loss of cattle due to raiding and the insurgency not only deprived the Iteso and Kumam of their economic but also of their social livelihood.[21]

When the rustling by the Karamojong warriors began, the first rumours spread that the NRA actively supported the assaults in order to undermine the economic and social foundation of Teso. People reported that they saw lorries full of cows being driven southwards, towards Kampala,

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[17] New Vision, 16.4.87.
[18] New Vision, 14.5.87.
[19] Museveni (1996): 177.
[20] Interview with Frieda Ediamo, Soroti 25.2.2000.

and that they went 'as far as Museveni's house' in west Uganda. The allegations were never verified, yet the mistrust remained. Museveni, towards the end of the insurgency, invited a group of Iteso to west Uganda to prove that he had not 'stolen' Teso cattle. The delegation's report was negative, yet its findings were not accepted by most people in Teso.[22]

Although, in my interviews, the Kumam and Iteso always mentioned that the NRM/A-Karimojong co-operation is only alleged it nevertheless is a shared belief and as such legitimates the collective resentment against the NRM/A. The cattle rustling narrative is invoked whenever the beginning of the Teso insurgency is explained. It symbolises the perceived deprivation and punishment by the Museveni government and legitimates taking up arms. The insurgency is therefore seen as just.

Harassment of Former Special Forces and Military

Parallel to the cattle rustling, the NRM local administration started a policy of harassing the Iteso and Kumam.[23] Former political leaders and military personnel were arrested without explanation,[24] but also less prominent Kumam and Iteso suffered intimidation. Torture in custody was frequent.[25]

One narrative, alternative to the cattle rustling, is that the insurgency was a result of the harassment of the former Luwero combatants in particular and the Kumam and Iteso in general. The Special Forces in particular were targeted.[26] There was widespread fear of being punished for the atrocities committed in Luwero, which were very fierce (allegedly up to 300,000 people were killed by the Special Forces),[27] and from where the

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[21] Heriques (2000): 47.

[22] Interview with Kenneth Oluma, Soroti, 24.02.2000.

[23] Musa Echweru: *"Iteso Love Museveni - Ex-rebel"*. The Monitor: Kampala, 22-26 April 1994.

[24] Amongst the targets were for instance Col. Omaria (MP for Soroti Central from 1980, and Minister of State for Internal Affairs in Obote II) (NV 18.11.86, p. 16) as well as the Director of the Flying School George Oguli (NV 22.8.86, front-page)

[25] Interview with Sam Otai, Soroti 27.3.2000. Interview with Musa Echweru, Soroti 26.3.2000.

[26] Interview with Musa Echweru.

[27] Interview with Kenneth Oluina, Soroti 24.2.2000.

NRA soldiers and the soldiers from Teso already had a six year history of fighting against each other. Rumours spread rapidly that Museveni's NRA, when fighting Obote's troops in Luwero, had threatened them with punishment once they came to power.[28]

Another rumour that was spread at the time was the cruelty and violence of Museveni's troops. The Teso rebels ...

> ... told heart-chilling stories of hideous crimes that the NRA allegedly committed on innocent civilians. Such crimes, according to the rebels, included cutting open pregnant women's tummies, bashing babies' heads on trees, burying people alive and cutting off people's ears. ... Those in the know, however, said that those were some of the crimes that the [Teso] rebels themselves used to mete out to innocent people in Luwero Triangle, during their war with Museveni.[29]

For former Kumam and Iteso combatants, in response to the harassment, self-defence seemed necessary. In the words of the former rebel-leader and now Minister of State Omax Omeda:

> The truth about the insurgency is very clear. We were forced to go into the bush. The administrators who came to Soroti first, or to Teso as a region, had their own problems. They really mishandled the situation. For when the arrests of prominent politicians started, when they started prosecuting former Special Forces and police ...... understandably people ran away. We were not organised that we wanted to fight government - people just run to the bush for fear of being harassed. Then, after some time we saw the thing continued, and we thought that the only way to handle this situation was to group ourselves. Maybe where we went wrong was that we did not contact the authority, but we did not have the opportunity to reach the President. So the only way we thought we had was to take up our arms and to defend ourselves.[30]

Self-defence rendered the insurgency just.

The new government legitimised the arrest and intimidation of Iteso and Kumam by arguing that it was hunting for dissidents, especially from a political organisation called Force Obote Back Again (FOBA). The hunt for FOBA members was intense and affected the whole of Teso. FOBA was

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[28] Olupot (2000): 60.

[29] Fidel Omunyokol (2000): *The Day a Helicopter Landed in Mukongoro*. Soroti: private manuscript.

[30] Interview with Omax Omeda, Kampala 13.3.2000.

discussed in the press at large,[31] and funds were allocated to the army to conduct an operation to clear Teso of FOBA members.[32] FOBA, however, never existed. It was invented as a joke by former UPC politicians in a bar in Kampala.[33] Today, it is difficult to find out if the NRM/A genuinely believed in the existence of FOBA or if they only needed a pretext to legitimise the strong actions against the Kumam and Iteso.

Regardless of the 'FOBA-joke', the concern of the NRM/A that violent opposition might flare up in Teso was not unwarranted. When withdrawing from Luwero the thought of revenge was already playing on the mind of a number of Kumam and Iteso soldiers and Special Forces, as we shall see in the following.

Political Motives

The third narrative to explain the beginning of the insurgency suggests that there were political ambitions to topple Museveni. Some UPC politicians, most notably Peter Otai, former Minister for Defence in the Obote II government, realised the degree of resentment against Museveni in Teso and used the situation for their own political objectives. Based in Kenya and London they promised arms and military support, yet failed to deliver.[34] The frustration at the time is apparent in Min. Omeda's remarks:

> For us at home [in Uganda] we wanted government to recognise our existence. To say: 'These are people of Uganda, what has been done to them'. But the politicians [abroad] wanted to use us as mercenaries to fight for them. Which was very unfair. And we never got any assistance from them.[35]

As described in the previous chapter, Teso had always been an UPC stronghold, and had supported Obote since independence. During his presidency Teso was prosperous and peaceful, employment rates were high and people were generally content. In Teso, there has always been little ambition to provide a leader, people are is satisfied as long as they can live

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[31] New Vision, 16.9.86, p.3/p.6-7; 19.9.86 p.8-9
[32] Interview with Ateker Ejalu, Kampala 5.4.2000.
[33] Interview with Ateker Ejalu.
[34] Interview with Musa Echweru.
[35] Interview with Omax Omeda.

without major disturbances.[36] After having been privileged by Obote, however, the policy of Museveni was perceived as strong neglect. The good-life the Iteso and Kumam had appreciated for so long was suddenly interrupted by Museveni's seizure of power.

From an ethnicity perspective, Museveni, who was born in Western Uganda, is considered a 'natural adversary' in Teso.[37] Ethnicity is an often cited cause for violent conflict in Africa. Despite wide recognition that ethnic groups are invented rather than natural David Turton reminds us that ethnicity is not imaginary.[38] Firstly, because it is a subjective reality, and secondly because it has historically developed and consolidated over time. For people in Uganda ethnicity is therefore plausible and meaningful.

Museveni belongs to the Banyankole, a Bantu group, while the Iteso are Nilo-Hamites, a Nilotics sub-group.[39] According to a now-discredited tradition of colonial anthropology, the African continent is divided into Hamitic and Nilotic tribes in the north, and Bantu in the South.[40] The separation runs right through Uganda, splitting east and west into two different camps. Colonialism, throughout Africa, invented categories to define not only who people were but also which qualities their 'tribe' possessed.

> Terms like the Bantu, the Nilotics, the Nilo-Hamites, the Sudanics, and all that, began to crop up in school classrooms, so that a child who was a "Nilotic" was now made to learn in his Primary 3 or 4 that he was, while another child in another class was similarly now made to know that he was from the "Bantu" group.[41]

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[36] Olupot (2000) 54.
[37] Interview with Frieda Ediamo.
[38] David Turton (1997): *Introduction: War and Ethnicity*. in: Turton, David (ed.): War and Ethnicity. Global Connections and Local Violence. Rochester: University of Rochester Press, p. 3-4.
[39] For a description of different cultures see Richard Nzita (1995): Peoples and Cultures of Uganda. Kampala: Fountain Publishers.
[40] Heriques (2000): 32. See also Lwanga-Lunyiigo (1989).
[41] A. G. Gingyera-Pinycwa (1989): *Is there a Northern Question?* in: Kumar Rupesinghe (ed.): Internal Conflicts and their Resolution: The Case of Uganda. London: James Curry, p. 49.

Museveni, in agreement with many historians,[42] and as discussed in the previous chapter, suggests that the ethnic separation in Uganda is a result of the colonial legacy where cash crops and economic development were introduced to the central and western region of the country, whereas the north and the north-east served as a reserve for army recruitment.[43] Inequalities in wealth were created, which generated conflicts between the different ethnic groups. According to Museveni "[t]he rivalry over access to opportunities and resources gave rise to the formation of attitudes of superiority and inferiority complexes."[44] At the time of the insurgency, the Ugandan polity was strongly split along ethnic lines, leading to a rejection of Museveni by the Iteso as the 'right' president to govern the country.

Challenged Teso Identity

The above provides an account of some of the different narratives about what caused the Teso insurgency. One feature that runs through all stories is that the reality of the Kumam and Iteso existence in the wider Uganda had changed. During Obote, the people from Teso had been relatively privileged but under Museveni this role was reversed. Manifested in actual changes like the removal of the Militia along the border to Karamoja as well as the disbanding of the security service personnel and the Special Forces, the people of Teso realised that their position in Uganda had changed. They had to give up what had historically constituted their identity, that is being relatively privileged compared to other ethnic groups in Uganda.

To this day, people in Teso constantly draw attention to the fact that before the insurgency they were educated, affluent and westernised, and that they had good relations with the colonial rulers. All was lost due Museveni's seizure of power and the subsequent insurgency. A vast amount of Iteso and Kumam lost their jobs in the Ugandan civil sector and the security services which led to immense economic problems. People had to return to farming in an environment where land was scarce and already a

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[42] See for instance Gingyera-Pinycwa (1989) and Paul Gifford (1998): African Christianity. Its Public Role. London: Hurst & Company, p. 133.
[43] Museveni (1987): 62.

source for conflict. Whilst some regions of Uganda, particularly Museveni's home area, began to prosper, the people in Teso felt that their status was declining.[45] The Kumam and Iteso had to re-adjust themselves in light of a changing nation, and find a new niche for their existence.

The Beginning of the Fighting

The combination of the cattle rustling, the hunt for former Special Forces combatants, the indiscriminate arrests of Iteso and Kumam as well as political objectives marked the beginning of the creation of the Rebel High Command. The 1st Commander of the Rebel High Command was 'Hitler' Francis Eregu, a former Special Forces member. Sam Otai, who had previously fought in Obote's army, became 2nd Commander. Together they planned the insurgency, bought arms from NRA soldiers and mobilised Eregu's former Special Forces and UNLF soldiers. The former President Obote as well as the potential future President Peter Otai (Sam Otai's uncle), then already in exile in Kenya, were unaware of this development until a meeting in Peter Otai's house in Nairobi in 1987 where the insurgency was formally launched.[46] The first attacks were simultaneously on the Soroti Flying School, Soroti Barracks and Soroti Hotel. Although largely unsuccessful the rebels managed to free their detained comrades from Soroti prison and to increase their manpower.

Significantly, today it is very difficult to establish whether the insurgency preceded the cattle rustling, or whether it was a consequence. As mentioned above, in the locally narrated history the violent uprising is referred to as a response to the Karamojong warriors' raiding and the government's inactivity, which was interpreted by the Iteso and Kumam as neglect and punishment for their former allegiance to Obote. However, it is also possible that 'Hitler' Eregu and Sam Otai already planned the

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[44] Museveni (1987): 62.
[45] Interview with Stella Sabiiti.
[46] Interview with Sam Otai.

insurgency before the cattle rustling began. In Teso today, nobody is prepared to answer this question.[47]

The Government's Position

The government's version of the beginning of the insurgency is that a number of Kumam and Iteso politicians, with the intention to regain power, manipulated and misled the Teso population.[48] Through drawing on cattle rustling, vast support was mobilised. The NRA, however, admitted to having made a mistake by not responding to the cattle rustling by the Karamojong, and that they attacked the Iteso and Kumam rebels instead. They nevertheless justified their strategy by saying that "cattle rustling is a criminal offence but rebellion against an established government is not only criminal but also treasonable".[49]

In the military rhetoric at the time, described in the widely read NRA journal and mouthpiece *Tarehe Sita*, the insurgency was explained as follows:[50]

- The conflict in Teso is essentially a problem of armed criminals who sometimes collude with misguided rebels.
- In addition, there are other criminal gangs (esp. in Soroti district) of former UNLA soldiers comprised mostly of elements who have committed crimes while serving in the army and who now fear facing law. They did not surrender their guns when they were demobilised during and after the Okello regime.
- Karamojong mainly raid for cattle and fight those who try to prevent them. Rebels, on the other hand, steal everything and indiscriminately harass, rape and regularly murder civilians.

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[47] Interview with Sam Otai, Ateker Ejalu, Frieda Ediamo.
[48] The Museveni government position shall only be mentioned here, it is however not subject of the present study.
[49] Brig. Chefe Ali (1994): *Preaching Peace Against War*. Conference on Strategies for Peace and Sustainable Development in Karamoja and Neighbouring Districts, 18th-22nd July 1994. Kampala: Makerere University.
[50] "Defeating the Rebels and Cattle Rustlers". Tarehe Sita: Kampala, May/June 1987.

- Karamojong and rebels are not organised. After sharing their loot their unity rarely goes beyond collective defence against other gangs and the NRA.

- Efforts by UPDA rebels to join forces with Karamojong have failed because Karamojong are only interested in cattle rustling.

- FOBA has not been successful in unifying different force in Soroti. FOBA is still handicapped by internal power struggles.

- In Teso the NRA's integrity is tarnished to alienate it from popular support.

What is apparent in the above rhetoric is that the Teso insurgency was not given any status by the NRA/M, it was not recognised as an insurgency but rather degraded to thuggery and criminal offence. This deliberate ignorance has important implications for political and military responses. Militarily the NRA/M started a strong offensive against the Teso rebels,[51] and a scorched earth policy against civilians.[52] Paired with the inability to prevent the Karamojong cattle rustling this also served as a conventient strategy. When the insurgency in Teso began the northern Ugandan region Acholi (today Kitgum and Gulu) was already fighting fiercely against Museveni. The government was concerned that the Acholi and the Teso rebels would collaborate in their struggle and thus become too powerful a threat. And indeed, the Teso Rebel High Command had meetings with Alice Lakwena, and later Joseph Kony, to contemplate potential co-operation.[53] For the government to sustain the assaults by the Karamojong warriors along the Acholi and Teso border guaranteed a buffer zone and prevented the two insurgencies from fusing.

From a political perspective, not to recognise the insurgency undermined its national impact. The rebels were not given any legitimacy

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[51] The number of troops reduced very suddenly in 1990 when Uganda supported the invasion of exile-Rwandans into Rwanda. This military exodus might have had a very strong effect on the ending of the insurgency as argued in interviews by Grace Akello, John Maitland (London 15.01.2000) and Dennis Pain.
[52] Interview with John Maitland.
[53] The prime reason for the Rebel High Command not to collaborate with Kony was that the Acholi rebels were considered to be too violent and cruel towards their own people. Interview with Sam Otai.

and thus their cause remained unrecognised. Deliberate political ignorance meant not having to address the political claims made by the Teso people, whilst at the same time undermining the insurgency militarily. As we shall see later, to recognise an insurgency is important for it legitimises the struggle, as the Iteso and Kumam experienced through the support from 'friends' in the UK. Simultaneously, however, the fact that Museveni suppressed rather than promoted bipolar enemy structures between his government and Teso made it easier for him to then, at a later point, reach out in a gesture of reconciliation, as we shall see in Chapter 8.

Teso and Narratives

In the first instance, for a new visitor to Teso the awareness of the availability of different narratives of the beginning of the insurgency, and the exclusive preference of one in particular, leaves one at best bewildered. The experience raises serious questions about the truthfulness of the prevailing narrative. I therefore would like to emphasis explicitly that when referring to different, alternative, contested or prevailing truths I by no means want to imply that people in Teso are in any way insincere. What is at stake in the selection of one truth as the dominant discourse is far more ontological a phenomenon, and is a characteristic of every community. In Chapter 3 we argued that people select the narratives on which they draw to make up their lives. Stories are always told in a particular situation and with a particular audience in mind.[54] The interpretation and recollection of the past, expressed in the choice of a particular explanation and narrated in a particular way, is always performed with view to a particular future. In the case of Teso, what was the future people envisaged and how did they try to make up their lives?

Unmade Worlds

After the insurgency Teso required a coherent collective identity in order to come to terms with the shock of the insurgency. The narrative

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[54] Donald Brenneis (1996): *Telling Troubles: Narrative, Conflict, and Experience.* in: Briggs, Charles (ed.): Disorderly Discourse. Narrative, Conflict and Inequality. New York/Oxford: Oxford University Press, p. 42.

construction of a collective identity is particularly important in a post-conflict environment in which the communities lay in pieces. For "[w]ars unmake worlds, both real and conceptual."[55] As a result of violent conflict, people lose their houses, friends and family members, jobs, wealth and material goods. In addition, they might be permanently disabled, HIV positive as a result of rape, or suffer from post-traumatic symptoms. Ex-soldiers and ex-rebels are difficult to re-integrate into the community, their future is often marked by severe poverty and even more severe frustration. Family and neighbourhood support structures have eroded, institutions like churches or schools have lost credibility. Migration and refugee movements have unsettled local notions of belonging and what constitutes a home. Most of the material past is gone forever.

In Teso, at the end of the insurgency people had lost everything.[56] Many people had been killed in the fighting, insurgency-related crimes or homicides. Trust in each other and faith in the future was very low, while tensions remained high.[57] An aggressiveness previously unknown prevailed amongst the Kumam/Iteso.[58]

But not only were these 'real worlds' unmade by the insurgency – concepts were erod, too. Formerly apparently fixed notions of good and bad, right and wrong, friend and enemy were shaken beyond repair: in Teso atrocities were committed by the NRA, but also by the rebels and Iteso/Kumam; cattle were stolen by the Karamojong, but also by the local people; rebels fought in the bush, yet surrendered and joined the NRA the same day; neighbours supported each other, but they also committed crimes against each other; the church preached reconciliation, and incited the people to support the armed struggle; the cause was just, yet was it really justified? This list of eroded concepts could be endlessly continued. It reveals that during violent conflict previously established orientation is lost. The loss of certainty and faith, in combination with poverty and destruction,

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[55] Carolyn Nordstrom (1995): *War on the Front Lines.* in: Nordstrom, Carolyn/Robben, Anthonius (eds.): Fieldwork under Fire: Contemporary Studies in Violence and Survival. Berkley: University of California Press, p. 131.
[56] Interview with James Eceret.
[57] Conversation with Pius Okiria, Soroti 15.03.2000.
[58] Interview with Michael Obwaatum, Kumi town 28.03.2000.

are heavy burdens to carry. To re-make a world and to re-gain lost confidence are difficult tasks.

In light of the 'unmade world' in Teso, after a few years a collective truth about the causes of the conflict emerged. As suggested via Foucault at the beginning of the chapter, 'truth' refers to a system of ordered practises that produce, regulate, distribute and circulate statements. The statements in the case of the Teso insurgency are that it broke out as a response to the government's aggressive and exclusive politics. In Teso today there is an unarticulated consensus about the validity of this account of events. As stated above, the cattle rustling narrative prevails, it is produced and reproduced in social encounters. Yet what effects does the selection of this narrative have on the Teso identity?

Performative Power of Narratives

To define the local history about the cause of the insurgency with reference to cattle rustling has the advantage of producing a collective Teso identity. It has been argued that "[i]f winners write history, losers dwell on it more".[59] In order to explain this phenomenon, the term 'chosen trauma' has been suggested, which refers to an event

> that causes the group to feel helpless and victimized by another group. .... The group draws the mental representations or emotional meanings of the traumatic event into its very identity, and then it passes on the emotional and symbolic meaning from generation to generation. For each generation the description of the actual event is modified; what remains is its role in ... the group identity....[60]

Here, then, a true narrative is not only produced by, but is at the same time productive of a collective identity. The repetition of tales about the own identity, as well as the identity of the enemy, becomes the social reality for those who participate in this discourse. A common identity, a 'we-

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[59] J. Cole (1998): *The Use of Defeat: Memory and Political Morality in East Madagascar.* in: R. Werbner (eds.): Memory and the Postcolonial. African Anthropology and the Crisis of Power. London/New York: Zed, p. 121.
[60] Vamik Volkan (1991): "On Chosen Trauma". *Mind and Human Interaction*, **3**:13. Cited in Cole (1998): 121.

feeling', is shared between the people who apply the same words and metaphors (as suggested by Wittgenstein's language games); their social interaction is meaningful for, and indicative of, their belonging together. To narrate the beginning of the insurgency in terms of cattle rustling by the Karamojong provides exactly this 'we-feeling'. From today's perspective, everybody living in Teso at the time fell prey to either the Karamojong or/and the NRA atrocities. This shared experience has the capacity to unite people under the guise of 'victimhood'. In this interpretation the perpetrators (the Karamojong and the NRA/M) and victims (the Iteso and Kumam) are clearly defined. To promote the narrative of cattle rustling constitutes a coherent identity behind which all the people of Teso can gather. And, in the words of Pius Okiria: "The collective memory of the people, I have the feeling there is a lot of anger in them."[61]

What is wiped out in the production of a collective Teso identity is the differentiation between people who became victims and people who had political motivations to go into the bush. Discussions about their reasons to participate in the insurgency have disappeared from the public discourse and they have been submerged into the collective victimhood.

This is particularly interesting because, as the next chapter will show, during the insurgency a high rate of crimes were committed by Iteso/Kumam against each other. Homicide, robbery and violence occurred inside the community. To recognise this was highly unsettling for the community. A true identity had to be established as a means of coming to terms with the disruptive experience of internal violence. Societies torn by violent conflict need to establish new certainties and coherence to start a process of inner social healing and to re-make unmade worlds. In particular in light of internal mistrust and suspicion a collective identity carries the promise of consolidation.

Identities are established in relation to difference, and in the case of Teso the former enemy (the Museveni government) was the obvious "Other" in opposition to whom a new identity could be created. However, as already quoted in Chapter 2, "the multiple drives to stamp truth upon ... identities function to convert difference into otherness, and otherness into

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[61] Interview with Pius Okiria, Soroti 24.02.2000.

scapegoats created and maintained to secure the appearance of a true identity."[62] In the process of narrating their identity 'true', people in Teso again turned the former enemy into a scapegoat. The way the past is recalled not only constitutes a, in this case, rather coherent identity internally, but it simultaneously defines outside relations. To portray Museveni as the perpetrator who caused the insurgency produces and re-produces a solid us/them dichotomy. A process of boundary drawing is enacted which leaves little space for national dialogue and reconciliation between Teso and the NRM/A. Here, then, an authentic discourse defines who is friend and who is foe, it introduces a sense of closure which does not allow for alternative interpretations. In Chapter 3, I argued that to practice closure is an essential requirement to define local relationships which have been destroyed by a violent conflict and that, through a degree of closure, eroded concepts can be re-made. In Teso, however, the hermeneutic process of recalling the past in light of the Other, the Museveni government, has led to the exclusive interpretation of Self and Other. The flux of time was arrested and, to extend the metaphor, given a long prison sentence. The recollection of the past in a particular way has introduced an authentic truth, and identity, which stands in the way of future reconciliation.

The Politics of Narratives

The political function of narratives becomes apparent if one looks at the claims the Iteso and Kumam derive from promoting a particular tale. Regarding Ugandan national politics, if indeed innocent the Iteso have the negotiating power of a victim. The Museveni government, solely responsible for the violent conflict, owes the people what they have lost: development, education, political participation etc. There is thus an important political dimension in the selection of one narrative over another: to be constituted in a certain way entitles to certain demands.

In addition, in a post-conflict society victimhood might lead to a degree of apathy, as apparent in Teso. To blame the central government for causing pain and suffering, and to demand compensation, results in not

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[62] Connelly (1991): 67.

taking on responsibility and not trying to improve the condition out of one's own energy.

In hindsight a number of different narratives are on offer to explain the motivation behind 'going into the bush'. The one which has turned into the true story about the cause of the insurgency portrays the people of Teso as victims and the Museveni government as perpetrators, leading to a coherent collective identity. While this is helpful for the process of social healing it obstructs future reconciliation, and ignores the fact that the insurgency served numerous internal functions. These issues are the subject of the next chapter.

THE SOCIAL CONSTITUTION OF TESO AT THE BEGINNING OF THE INSURGENCY

Why do people fight? Traditionally, conflict analysis focuses on broad, mostly national power asymmetries that give rise to violent conflicts. As criticised by Shapiro in Chapter 4, it takes issue with policing, defending and transgressing of boundaries between Self/Other. As an alternative, the previous chapter has analysed the drawing of boundaries between Teso/government from an ontological perspective. In addition, however, what is frequently ignored by conflict analysts are the prevailing social and cultural continuities that allow for acts of violence to occur. Not every conflict leads to outbreaks of violence so it is essential to ask why this was the case in Teso.

The importance of mapping the constitution, or structural proclivities, which allow violent conflict to occur have recently been highlighted by Carolyn Nordstrom and JoAnn Martin. With reference to academic research they suggest that outside observers to violent conflicts are generally misled by textual analysis and media sources.[1]

> The 'images' of conflict that are carried to outsiders by the visual and print media focus on dramatic vignettes that are intended to convey sociopolitical 'truths' about the situation in question. In all of these formal portrayals the ideology is clear-cut, the opponents are obvious, and the fighting takes place among delineated factions that are politically recognisable. Soldiers fight, ideology teaches, civilians support or suffer for power.[2]

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[1] Carolyn Nordstrom/JoAnn Martin (1992): *The Culture of Conflict: Field Reality and Theory.* in: Nordstrom, Carolyn/Martin, JoAnn (eds.): The Paths to Domination, Resistance, and Terror. Berkley, Los Angeles, Oxford: University of California Press, p. 4.
[2] Nordstrom/Martin (1992): 4.

A discipline like International Relations is susceptible to these allegations for much of the conflict literature is written on the basis of newspaper reports and public statements. As argued before, this proves highly problematic if one is to write about a culture different from one's own. In countries like Uganda, for instance, where not only documents as such are rare but illiteracy rates high, and, even more importantly, where radios and newspapers are too expensive to purchase, public discourses are the domain of a small elite. Interviews with leaders and policy-makers, another feature of IR field research, also misrepresent the population at large, for leaders are often educated in the West, and will most likely not divert from the official line of explanation.[3]

As a consequence, in the discipline of IR, case studies neatly fit into categories and concepts. Violent conflicts are often characterised as sporadic and exceptional – so that their resolution is envisaged as the addressing of a 'cause' like the lack of resources, repression or exclusion. In addition, it is frequently argued that insurgency wars derive either from blocked political aspirations or from reactive desperation.[4] The act of violence is silenced through rational explanations of violent conflicts, where the focus is on *conflict* and not on *violence*. In doing so the event is rendered more controllable, the threat of the unpredictability of violence is disciplined into safe accounts and theories.

This thesis therefore tries to narrate 'a different kind of war story'.[5] The outbreak, as well as the mediation, of the Teso insurgency was facilitated by a number of factors that find no representation in traditional conflict analysis. And yet, they might have been vital factors to the commencement as well as end of fighting.

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[3] Nevertheless, it is important to mention here that interviews can contribute to some extent to learning about a particular situation. My criticism is rather focused on research with exclusively uses interviews, newspaper articles and other public sources yet which fails to learn about the horizons through which the people affected interpret the sources themselves, as argued in ch. 4.
[4] Clapham (1998): 5.
[5] Nordstrom (1997).

The Social Constitution Teso in 1986-7

One of the most striking features of the Teso insurgency was that it was a 'people's insurgency': "In those days, we were all rebels!"[6] people say today. Women and girls hid their brothers and husbands from the government troops, they provided food and shelter. Boys, too young to fight, acted as spies or messengers.

Rebel leaders found it easy to recruit and encourage people to support them with all their efforts; the whole community supported the cause. Thus the beginning of the insurgency, like any other development, was situated in an interaction of agency and structure as elaborated in Giddens' structuration theory. At the time, the prevailing structural properties provided a fertile ground on which to promulgate an insurgency war. The following section shall describe in more detail the social constitution of Teso in 1986-7. The question is again: what caused the insurgency in Teso? Once more, it shall be addressed from the very local, internal perspective when we ask: is war the continuation of politics by other means?

The Different Practices of Warfare

The 'field reality' of violent conflict is very different from the detached and protected distance afforded the analysis of texts and sources conducted at some removal.[7] Carolyn Nordstrom and JoAnn Martin draw our attention to the fact that

> notions of witchcraft, bureaucracy, time, and everyday conversation or their repressive silencing are often the arenas in which power struggles are manifested and aggression given a cultural voice;... and claims of just war are often used as ideological whitewash covering far different practices.[8]

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[6] Joseph Okello, Serere 02.05.2000.

[7] From my very limited experience of staying in and travelling through regions classified as 'insecure and unsafe', whilst conducting research (in Karamoja, Uganda, during the raiding of Teso cattle in Spring 2000), I am in strong agreement this argument. Not only is one able to see the conflict from an almost shockingly new perspective, but, in addition, the personal experience of threat and the anticipation of danger, whether justified or not, alters one's perception and understanding of people's motivations.

[8] Nordstrom/Martin (1992): 4.

Nordstrom and Martin's argument that "just war" narratives of, say, fighting against a hegemon, cover "far different practices" runs counter Karl von Clausewitz's comment that

> [w]hen whole communities go to war ... the reason always lies in some political situation, and the occasion is always due to some political object. War, therefore, is an act of politics.[9]

Since in Teso the whole community went to war it is essential to ask whether Clausewitz's rational argument can be sustained.[10] Or was Teso, at the beginning of the insurgency, also driven by 'different practices', other than acts of politics?

The Benefits of the Insecurity

Murray Last suggests two different dimensions of war: "[f]ighting against fighting men, and, separately, violence against what fighting men claim as their property in its broadest sense."[11] In the second case, violence is not restricted to the frontlines, it does not know of any boundaries but floods into the domestic and personal realm. Last thus suggests that "people live in a *region* of war where conditions of insecurity are generalised."[12] In 'regions of war' a large number of people benefit from the insecurity through pursuing their own interests, and they consequently promote, and even increase, instability and violence. As revealed in the following Iteso comment quoted by Heriques:[13]

> ... the other reasons [for joining the insurgency] were more personal and cannot be generalised. For example people who were treated as social outcasts, thieves, those who practised witchcraft and so on. So suddenly these people were no longer needed and felt the best thing to do would be to go to the bush.

During the insurgency, many rebels, but also civilians, raided cattle, intimidated fellow community members to elicit material support as well as

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[9] Clausewitz (1993): 98.

[10] A similar point is made by David Keen, David (2000): *Incentives and Disincentives for Violence.* in: Berdal, Mats/Malone, David (eds.): Greed and Grievance. Economic Agendas in Civil Wars. Boulder: Lynne Rienner.

[11] Murray Last (2000): *Healing the Wounds of War.* (Murray Last's private notes) Lecture given at University College London: London, p. 6.

[12] Last (2000): 6.

[13] Heriques (2000): 129.

threatened and killed Kumam and Iteso they claimed had collaborated with the government.[14] What is striking in the case of Teso is that, allegedly, during the insurgency, more Iteso were killed in feuds between each other than by government troops.[15] Violence had become, to some extent, a tolerable way of solving problems or of 'settling old scores'. Violence can thus be understood as a structural property in Giddens' sense which, over space and time, had become a legitimate way of social interaction.

With a view to the functional use of violence, the following shall give a brief, yet incomplete, overview of motives (alternative to Clausewitz's political goals) for engaging in a violent conflict as they transpired during my research in Teso:

- Land tenure: land is scarce in Teso. In an economic environment which relies heavily on (subsistence) farming land is one of the most valuable assets. However, as a result of inheritance, marriage or bad neighbourly relations, land ownership is often contested. Arguments over land often lead to physical violence and even homicide.
- Women: women in Teso are often considered as assets. When married, the bride's parents receive a dowry payment such as cattle, food, household goods, clothes and today also occasionally money. The dowry system opens ground for disagreement about both the dowry and the performance of the new wife. Physical violence occasionally results from this. In addition, due to the subdued role of women domestic violence, rape and child abuse are not exceptional.
- Cattle: for a (formerly) cattle herding culture like the Kumam and the Iteso cattle signify the most important asset. Arguments occasionally arise regarding distribution or care of animals and similar to land disputes this often leads to violence and homicide.

The above examples all refer to the economic assets, which in Teso often mean bare existence. They concern the livelihood of people and are therefore defended fiercely. Here "[v]iolence ... meet[s] an individual's basic

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[14] Interview with Alibai, Soroti 17.3.2000. Similar reports where collected by E. A. Brett and Heriques (2000).
[15] Interview with Pius Okiria.

needs when long-term under-development and economic and social exclusion mean that peaceful behaviour does not."[16] In addition many young rebels I spoke to acknowledged that they went into the bush because they were offered money or because they hoped for other rewards.[17] Poverty was thus an important factor that facilitated the beginning of the insurgency.[18]

Moreover, the insurgency in Teso offered the potential for 'settling old scores', that is for resolving long-standing arguments, through killing the enemy.[19] This happened either in clandestine acts or through more refined measures like denouncing the person to the NRA as a rebel, which would most likely lead to their execution. The insurgency in these terms was beneficial for personal and private revenge.

In addition to economic functions, some traditional components were important:

- Youth: For the youth the insurgency brought significant advantages. Teso, like in many African cultures, has strong age hierarchies which leave little room for young people. With the increase of westernisation, traditional and modern social roles become more and more difficult to negotiate. Especially for sons who were not 'first-borns', and who do not inherit house, farm and gardens, the future is often rather bleak and hopeless. The insurgency enabled them to break with these traditions: young men could either join the army or the rebels and gain some form of autonomy and independence.
- Witchcraft: before the insurgency Teso had a large population of witches and sorcerers. They were often made responsible for the death of a person, diseases, family misfortunes, or environmental miseries like droughts. A very large number of alleged witches and sorcerers were

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[16] David Keen (1998): *The Economic Function of Violence in Civil Wars*. London: Adelphi Paper 320/IISS, p. 46.

[17] The irony is here that the same young men left the bush when promised money by the NRA. And yet, apparently, the 'boys' never received a single Ugandan Shilling from anybody.

[18] Interviews with James Eceret and Peter Kalagala, Soroti 23.2.2000.

[19] Interview with Pius Okiria and Mary Epechu, Soroti 24.02.2000.

assassinated in the course of the insurgency so that their prevalence is today very low.

In short, in Teso many people benefited from the insurgency. As mentioned above, it is estimated that more people were killed due to internal rivalries than by government troops. So people in Teso had a stake in the beginning of the insurgency, too. Teso society contained many fissures and was split along many lines. The disunity in Teso is apparent in the words of Iteso Anglican Bishop Illokur towards the end of the insurgency:

> [t]he division of Teso society goes back many years: religion, pride, richness, clans, politics. There has been loss of culture and loss of language. Teso has been deserted by educated people – break down in development. Iteso are not engaged in picking up pieces and reconstruction. Iteso have destroyed themselves and their area.[20]

In a similar mode, Mahmood Mamdani points out that many peasant communities are internally divided and reproduced through internal struggles, and that

> to focus exclusively on the dimension of tribalism as civil war, and thereby to present a peasant movement as an unmitigated revolt from below against oppression form above is to indulge in mythmaking by presenting an aspect of reality as totality.[21]

Components like class, gender and age are also of salient importance since they make up the social fabric of the community.

The above has to be considered against the particular backdrop of the Teso region in Uganda.[22] Many rural dwellers live in very remote areas and have little access to national news. For instance, during the time of my research in Teso the region was 'endangered' by new raids from the Karamojong. The newspapers were full of horror stories about the 'naked savages' in the north of the country. Whilst the Karamojong 'threat' was the

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[20] Geresom Illukor (1991): *Divided We Have Fallen - United We Stand*. Seminar on the Role of Women in Securing Peace and Development for Teso and Pallisa, Ongino, Kumi District.
[21] Mahmood Mamdani (1996): Citizen and Subject. Contemporary Africa and the Legacy of Late Colonialism. Kampala/London: Fountain/James Curry, p. 186.

sole topic of discussion in urban settings, people in the villages knew very little about the 'looming danger' and did not seem to care much.[23] Similarly, when asked about the motivation behind the insurgency, many interviewees did not know about the political context of its origins. Then, as well as today, it appears, they were very badly informed about national or even regional politics. What matters to people are issues that effected them directly such as water supplies, farming, medical care and family, and also for an increasing number their religious faith.[24] National, or regional, politics are a luxury people simply cannot afford to engage in.

The absence of a greater political picture, and interest, in the life of many rural dwellers in Teso enforces the argument that local dynamics and motivations are crucial in fuelling an insurgency war. People are easily mobilised into violent combat, simply because they recognise the benefits insecurity and instability has for their lives: hopefully better living conditions and less poverty. As for Teso, within a few years of fighting people realised that the insurgency had the opposite effect for it made their condition far worse. So they surrendered, as we shall see in the following chapter.

The benefits of instability and violent conflict for some people in Teso should not therefore be underestimated. It adds an important dimension to all the external, national or international factors that give rise to the fighting. Returning to Clausewitz, it is thus fair to challenge the maxim, "[w]ar is .." merely "an act of force to compel your enemy to do your will",[25] and to suggest that this 'will' hides a number of alternative objectives, as it did in Teso.

Recognition of the economic function of violent conflicts has recently given rise to discussions about 'greed' or 'grievance'.[26] Paul Collier and Anke Hoeffler have developed an econometric model through which to analyses the degree of motivation broadly based on greed (the ability to finance a

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[22] The following argument is based on a large number of conversations I had with rural people in Kamuda, Soroti district 24.3.-25.3.2000.
[23] The urban and rural divide is very strong so that I e.g. met villagers who had not been to Soroti town for about 15 years, although they only live 10 km away.
[24] It is amazing to realise that in the most remote areas people know more about the Pentecostal Church then about national politics.
[25] Clausewitz (1993): 83.
[26] Luckham/Ahmed/Muggah/White (2001): 23.

rebellion through primary commodity exports and through a large disapora) versus grievance (based on the size of ethnic and religious diversity, political repression and inequality).[27] They conclude that primary commodity export and lack of opportunities for young men strongly correlate with civil conflict, and that thus 'greed' is stronger a motivation than 'grievance' to engage in violent struggle.

Without being able to make a wider argument due to the local scope of the present study, I would like to contend that in Teso the two categories 'greed' and 'grievance' cannot be sustained or separated. What is labelled 'greed' is often a sheer survival mechanism in order to cope with social and economic exclusion promoted in the public realm through concepts like 'ethnicity' or 'religion', which are in themselves mere discursive terms legitimising inequality. Against the backdrop of a high degree of poverty as prevalent in Teso 'going into the bush' indeed promised economic benefits, yet at the same time it was also motivated by the political objective of fighting against Museveni's governance as well as very complex internal issues which disrupted the community at the time. The insurgency started because of political objectives and the economic functions only emerged once people realised that they could 'materially' benefit from the insecurity.[28] Thus, to separate the concepts of 'greed' and 'grievance' is impossible in light of the present case. To make assumptions about the occurrence of violent conflicts it is thus more important to understand how greed and grievance interact.[29]

Whilst this section has addressed the functional *motivations* of why people fight, and put into perspective the central importance of 'political objectives' in Clausewitz's account of war, the following shall focus on the *practical* component of *violence* as 'the means' of warfare.

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[27] Paul Collier/Anke Hoeffler (2001): *Greed and Grievance in Civil War*. Washington: World Bank report, p. 1.
[28] David Keen, for instance, argues that so called "war economies" only develop in the course of a conflict yet do not cause it. Keen (2000).
[29] David Keen (2001): Disqualifying Grievance? A Response to the Collier/Hoeffler Model as an Explanation of Civil Wars. CODEP Conference, 18th-20th June 2001. London: SOAS, p. 4.

The Means of Warfare

According to Clausewitz:

> War is merely the continuation of politics by other means. ... [W]ar is not merely an act of policy but a true political instrument, a continuation of political intercourse, carried on with other means. What remains peculiar to war is simply the peculiar nature of means.... The political object is the goal, war is the means of reaching it, and means can never be considered in isolation from their purpose.[30]

The means of warfare is violence. Violence, for Clausewitz, is an instrument which can be deployed whenever necessary. The use of violence is rational action, it can be separated from the individual or the community that resorts to it. In Clausewitz's argument, violence and culture are disconnected. "Violence and culture ... [are] conceived as externals to each other, as alters, and not as historically complicit."[31] In other words, violence is not a cultural expression but a universally applicable tool.

This perspective has been contested by the writing of Nordstrom. Her research on violent conflict in Mozambique suggests that local people understand violence not as a means but rather as a fluid cultural construct. "Violence is crafted into action by those seeking to control others. It is *made*."[32] People exposed to violence 'learn violence' and are then able to use it themselves.[33] To 'learn violence' is a historical process which does not only involve individuals but also communities. Over space and time certain cultural traits are being developed as responses to internal and external influences. They provide the structural properties that define what is possible in a particular society. In order to understand the violent conflict in Teso it is thus important to situate the use of violence historically.

A Culture of Violence?

How has violence been legitimated over time? In the case of Teso it is difficult to map out the historical process of 'learning violence'. Hardly any literature is available, apart from the anthropological studies of British

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[30] Clausewitz (1993): 99.

[31] Allen Feldmann (1994): Writing the Inhuman: Aesthetic Control and Iconic Transgression in the Depiction of Violence. Atlanta: American Anthropology Association report, p. 5.

[32] Nordstrom (1997): 217.

[33] Nordstrom (1997): 217.

colonial administrators, which do in fact make reference to the use of violence in Teso.[34] However, the act of colonial conquest was in itself an act of violence, including the use of physical violence, against people in Teso and elsewhere. Moreover, as discussed in Chapter 5, ever since independence in 1962, Uganda has been ruled by a sequence of violent dictators. It has been suggested that the experience of terror and oppression under Obote and Amin served to undermine the development of tolerance and trust.[35] Especially the degree of political violence under Amin encouraged a culture of private violence to remove enemies.[36] Furthermore,

> Ugandans killed each other for property, for a culture of okuliira mu kavuyo (literally 'eating in confusion') had set in the minds of people. Given a background of considerable poverty and the element of uncertainty of the new ownership, instant wealth at the cost of no more effort than that involved in gambling (praise the chief, blacken the present owner or what-have-you) diverted many away from honest hard work to concentrate on the search for titles to new assets that could be appropriated.[37]

With the seizure of power by Museveni in 1986 the use of violence and coercion reduced on a national level. This is despite Museveni's victory being a new legitimisation of military violence as a political strategy, and indeed in areas such as Acholi rebels have been fighting the government ever since it has been in place.[38] Often, forms of violence are inherent in traditional expressions, too.[39] In addition, throughout the whole of Uganda violent acts, such as mob justice (including killing the suspect) sexual abuse and domestic violence are constantly on the front pages of the newspapers, rendering violence almost normal.

Before the western influence through colonialism, traditionally crimes such as murder amongst the Iteso were settled through a council of elders

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[34] As argued for instance in the ethnographic work of the colonial administrator in Teso J. C. D. Lawrence (1957): The Iteso: Fifty Years of Change in a Nilo-Hammitic Tribe of Uganda. London: Oxford University Press.
[35] Dicklitch (1998): 46.
[36] Pirout (1995): 34.
[37] Mutibwa (1992): 117.
[38] See for instance Heike Behrend (1999): Alice and the Holy Spirits. War in Northern Uganda 1985-97. Kampala/London: Fountain/James Curry.
[39] Suzette Heald (1999): Manhood and Morality. Sex, Violence and Rituals in Gisu Society. London: Routledge.

and required compensation in form of a girl or a cow. During inter-clan settlement the elders would debate fully armed. "In case the other side showed uncompromising behaviour, fighting could easily ensue."[40] The waging of war depended on the prognoses of a fortune teller, *Amurwok,* and the collective approval of the elders.[41]

Yet, a more recent development in Teso increases the use of violence, too. As a result of economic globalisation and the spread of western thought through different forms of the media, many people in Teso find themselves at a loss. Elders report about the rapid increase of violence, for example, committed by street children in Soroti as a result of Kung-Fu videos shown in local film houses.[42] The clash of modern and traditional worlds leaves elders angry and almost helpless for they have lost the authority to discipline their offspring. Traditional structures and institutions of reconciliation have been eroded due to external influence,[43] while the youth in particular finds itself in confusion over what is right or wrong. Violence is often a result of breaking old structures without having alternative conceptions.

Hence in Teso, physical violence is part of the day to day life and as such it constitutes a feature of the Iteso and Kumam identity.[44] The daily discourse is informed by references to violence, be it caning of school children or as a punishment for petty crime, domestic violence or abuse of women, occasional killings of thieves and the like.

> When Iteso talk much about violence it is not because it is absent, but because it is part of life. We cannot say, "'life is cheap'" in Teso, but violence has a place as a social praxis.[45]

Therefore, without engaging in value-laden allegations about the preparedness to use violence in Uganda in general, and in Teso in

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[40] Nzita (1995): 124.
[41] Nzita (1995): 125.
[42] Interview with Francis Okello, Soroti 17.04.2000 and Edmund Okella, Soroti 20.3.2000.
[43] Heald reports about similar developments in neighbouring Gisu district, Uganda. Suzette Heald (1998): Controlling Anger. The Anthropology of Gisu Violence. Kampala/Oxford: Fountain/James Curry.
[44] Heriques (2000): 223.
[45] Heriques (2000): 224.

particular, I would like to suggest that the use of violence as a way of social interaction is more widely accepted than in Germany, for instance.[46] This is not to say that violence does not exist in Germany, but rather that it is not legitimised in the same way as in Teso.   To refer to the concept 'legitimisation' has one important implication: in the west violence has a negative connotation, it is conceived of as being anti-social. In other cultures, however, it is a more common practice and does not have the same negative tinge. Violence therefore does not constitute something anti-social or pre-social but should be considered in its social context as one form of social interaction amongst others. The acceptance or non-acceptance of violence is a cultural trait which cannot be judged on universal grounds of right and wrong.

Not every conflict necessarily leads to the outbreak of violence and yet in a cultural environment, where the threshold for using violence is rather low and legitimate, a violent conflict might occur more easily. It is here where violence becomes *a means*, yet it is not rational or irrational but rather historically conditioned. In Teso, at the beginning of the insurgency, and to some extent also today, violence was socially accepted and therefore facilitated the outbreak of the fighting.

Agency in Teso

When discussing the social constitution of Teso which enabled the agency of a small group of rebel leaders to ignite widespread violence one must also pay attention to the social constitution of the rebel leaders (and rebels) as actors themselves. How are leaders socially constituted so that they consider violent conflict as an adequate option to achieve their aims?

In many African countries inter- and intra-state wars have a long history. Often the political leaders and elites fought their way into government as rebels trained in military practise and strategic thought. Proxy wars during the Cold War guaranteed military training either in the

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[46] This section refers to physical violence only. The preparedness to use violence has also been pointed out by Angelika Spelten (2000): GTZ-Studie zu Kriesenpraevention und Konfliktmanagement in Uganda. Kampala: GTZ, p. 12; and Olupot (2000): 7.

Soviet Union, Cuba or North Korea, or in the US. Former rebels in Teso, for instance, without hesitation quote Mao, Marx or Lenin, or they praise German Wehrmacht warfare strategy. In many African countries, a culture of militarism prevails which renders fighting a more comfortable and familiar activity than negotiation or settlement.[47]

Militarism, it has been argued, "is a belief system founded on the basic assumption that human beings are by nature violent, aggressive and competitive and on the corollary assumption that social order must be maintained by force and power."[48] This interpretation of human nature legitimises war as a necessary means to an end.[49]

Due to their historically ascribed role as military staff, police forces and prison officers, imposed by the British colonial power, many men in Teso identify themselves strongly with a certain culture of militarism. For instance, during a conference on Peace, Conflict Resolution and Development the former Special Forces commander and Minister of the Interior under Obote (and later rebel leader during the insurgency) Col. Omaria stated that when Museveni came to power senior army officers like himself, who had received the best military training all over the world, found themselves deprived of their former importance, stripped of their identity and left with a sensation of uselessness, which led to strong resentment.[50] The disillusioned ex-army commanders thus resorted to the behaviour they were trained in and most familiar with: armed struggle.

What is at the core of this form of governance is the understanding that politics and the use of military force are intrinsically, and legitimately, intertwined. This attitude is embedded in left-wing thought (as it prevails in Teso thanks to Obote) and bush-war practice where the resort to arms is a

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[47] Alex de Waal (2001): "Brute Causes." *Index on Censorship* **30**(1): p. 134. I am very grateful to Alex de Waal for inspiring me to this argument.
[48] Betty Reardon (1985): Sexism and the War System. New York: Teachers College Press, p. 14.
[49] Riitta Wahlstrom (1992): *The Challenge of Peace Education: Replacing Cultures of Militarism*. in: Boulding, Elise (ed.): New Agendas for Peace Research. Boulder: Lynne Rienner, p. 173.
[50] Col. Omaria's comment at the Peace, Conflict Resolution and Development consultation organised by the Office of the Prime Minister in conjunction with the Swedish government at Soroti 24.3.2000.

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commonplace. Having received political and military training from allies like Cuba, Libya, Russia, North Korea etc. left-wing political leaders are heavily indoctrinated with notions of revolution and violent struggle – they strive on the notion of being a vanguard fighter. Here military doctrine has entered body and mind of the individual as a rebel leader, or the rebels as a group. Practical and intellectual training has disciplining effects which determine how the world appears – and by indication how one responds to it.[51] Left-wing military training orders thoughts and decision-making in a way that legitimises, if not demands, the use of violence as a way of emancipation. The agency of Teso leaders, the act of starting the insurgency, was deeply embedded in their historical constitution as soldiers which rendered the decision to retreat into the bush to fight against Museveni an adequate option.

A Different Kind of War Story?

With reference to Clausewitz, what this chapter has sought to illustrate is that violent conflict is not merely the result of the pursuit of political objectives, but also economic, cultural and traditional motivations, and that violence is not simply a means to an end, that is achieving these objectives, but rather a cultural trait situated in structural properties.

In Teso the fighting was plotted and initiated by a small group of people, whose decision-making agency was conditioned by their constitution through military training and practise. Their actions were enabled by the silent consent of the society at large that fighting was both just and necessary, even if only for very personal reasons. The rebel leaders at the time were aware of the support in the population, they had no difficulties recruiting rebels, or to survive in the bush with the help of villagers who provided food and shelter. Agency was thus enabled by the prevailing structural properties in Teso at the time.

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[51] For the disciplining power of military training see Michel Foucault (1991a): Discipline and Punish. London: Penguin, part III.

And yet, in the course of the fighting people in Teso altered their attitude to the insurgency and withdrew their widespread support. The experience of death, extreme poverty and deprivation, as a result of the armed struggle, not only ran counter the expected economic improvement, but also led to disillusionment regarding the political aims that could be achieved. Thus, the popular support ceased eventually and opened a possibility for peace.[52]

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[52] The present thesis takes issue with the past, present and future of Teso. As for the past, however, it does not attempt to give a comprehensive historical account of the developments during the insurgency but merely mention what is of significance with reference to the process of reconciliation.

MEDIATING HORIZONS – THE CONSTITUTION OF PEACE IN TESO

How does peace occur? Where does it derive from? Is it a sudden rupture? Or is it rather a process?

Changing structural properties

As we have seen in the previous chapters on the Teso past, the insurgency was situated in discursive practices based on exclusive identities, as well as cultural properties that rendered the use of violence a legitimate means for interaction. The subject of this chapter is to investigate the process of reconciliation in Teso, and to assess whether the present peace has changed from excluding to incorporating difference.[1] It shall therefore introduce the different agents that participated in the mediation process in Teso. What runs like a thread through this chapter is the question whether the various agents were successful in changing the structural properties of inclusion and exclusion that gave rise to the insurgency. Did they have an impact on rendering the dichotomy Museveni government/Iteso-Kumam less exclusive?

In addition, in recognition of the culture of violence that prevailed in Teso at the beginning of the insurgency, and the role it played in legitimising 'going into the bush', in the chapter I shall frequently ask whether the mediation efforts reduced the use of violence as a means of conflict resolution.

As for the structure of this chapter, I shall first develop a theoretical framework, based on hermeneutics, which allows for the understanding of mediation as embedded in the process of the transformation of prevailing structural properties. This shall then serve as a backdrop against which to evaluate the conciliation process in Teso.

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[1] Jabri (1996): 157.

In-Between Time

According to Gadamer "[t]he true locus of hermeneutics is the in-between."[2] By analogy the time and space after a violent conflict can be described as the time 'in-between': in-between war and peace, in-between friend and enemy, in-between the parties to the conflict, in-between territorial boundaries. "In this situation past and future are equally present precisely because they become equally absent from our sense."[3] This notion of in-betweenness is what Hannah Arendt calls 'the odd time in-between', where the threads of traditions are broken and a gap becomes vacant in which action and change may occur.[4] This gap, she suggests, is no longer a condition peculiar to thought but provides the tangible reality for political action. Arendt's notion of the gap serves as a useful metaphor for a site on which to locate conflict resolution, and the ending of a war provides a distinct point in time to accommodate this odd time in-between, the gap.

Mediation

Human Needs and Problem Solving

The term mediation, as used in International Relations discourse, can be defined as "a voluntary process in which the parties retain control over the outcome (pure mediation), although it may include positive and negative inducements."[5] Traditionally, academic scholarship which theorises mediation is based on the assumption that human beings share the same needs and interests, and that conflict arises out of two parties pursuing the same, often scarce, good. Most prominently, John Burton's 'human needs approach' identifies a series of needs, defined as inherent drives for survival,[6] like identity, security and development, as the preconditions of

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[2]Gadamer (1993a): 300. (translated in Gadamer (1975): 295)
[3]Hannah Arendt (1978): The Life of the Mind. One/Thinking. London: Secker & Warburg, p. 203.
[4] Arendt (1968): 14.
[5] Hugh Miall/Oliver Ramsbotham/Tom Woodhouse (1999): Contemporary Conflict Resolution. Cambridge: Polity Press, p. 21-2.
[6] Burton (1990): 39.

individual progress.[7] Burton's human needs approach thus implicitly postulates that all human beings have certain inherent drives that are outside of the individual's control.[8] It has been argued that Burton's theory relies on a particular, universal conception of human nature with regards to its 'needs',[9] yet that these 'needs' might be mere cultural expressions of a western, white, middle-class and male environment.[10]

According to Burton, needs cannot be suppressed or socialised away, and unless they are fulfilled there can be no social stability.[11] In response to essential features of humans like their 'needs', conflict resolution takes the shape of 'problem-solving' where the parties to a conflict are brought together to realise the similarities in their interests and to find ways to cover all participants' 'needs'. With the aid of a third party as facilitator an atmosphere is created which allows the parties to the conflict to constructively manage their disagreements.[12] Oblivious of cultural difference, problem-solving workshops endeavour to create a "non-distorted and reciprocal communication" so that the participants can realise where their problems 'really' lie.[13] Consequently, the theory of problem-solving workshops is situated in a particular wider political tradition which assumes a certain set of underlying normative principles - principles that have recently been challenged.[14]

In addition, problem-solving approaches to conflict resolution do not account for violence being a part of the social fabric of a community but promote a view of violence being a means to an end.[15] Yet, as argued in

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[7] Burton (1990): 32.

[8] Ingrid Sandole-Staroste (1994): *Overlapping Radicalism: Convergence Between Feminist and Human Needs Theories in Conflict Resolution.* in: Taylor, Anita/Beinstein Miller, Judi (eds.): Conflict and Gender. Cresskill: Hampton Press, p. 310.

[9] Tarja Vayrynen (1995a): Sharing Reality: An Insight from Phenomenology to John Burton's Problem-Solving Conflict Resolution Theory (unpublished doctoral thesis). Department of International Relations. Canterbury: University of Kent.

[10] Sandole-Staroste (1994): 312.

[11] Burton (1990): 23.

[12] Vayrynen (1995b): 72.

[13] Vayrynen (1995b): 73.

[14] Jones (1999): 67; Jabri (1996); Vayrynen (1995a/1995b); Robert A. Baruch Bush/Joseph P. Folgner (1994): The Promise of Mediation. Responding to Conflict Through Empowerment and Recognition. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.

[15] As argued in Michel Banks/Christopher Mitchell (1996): Handbook of Conflict Resolution. The Analytical Problem-Solving Approach. New York: Pinter, p. 3.

Chapter 7, the use of violence in times of conflict might be legitimated in a particular social, economic and cultural environment. In Teso, the insecurity gave way to people pursuing their personal interests like settling old scores. More importantly, against the backdrop of severe poverty, violence might be functional for economic benefits which ease the hardship of day to day life. In an environment where the resort to violence is culturally legitimated violent conflict is fuelled by this propensity. This, however, is different from Burton's 'needs theory' which considers violent conflict as a means to accomplish a particular notion of identity, development or security. The aim of a problem-solving workshop is then to exchange violence with a non-forcible method.[16] In not recognising that violence is not simply a means but a socially learned way of interaction, problem-solving workshops do not focus on 'unlearning violence'. Cultures of violence remain unchallenged, and thus in place.

On a structural note, problem-solving workshops, it has been argued, are often couched in the prevailing power relations and institutions and shun the alteration of the power relations *per se*.[17] Starting from a notion of conflict which sees it as non-structural and ahistorical the workshops are more concerned with tactics than with strategy and leave structural properties of discursive and institutional inclusion and exclusion unquestioned. In addition, they mainly focus at the level of leaders and leave the social constitution of a society unchallenged.

Narrative Mediation

In response to the shortcomings of problem-solving workshops, the present study suggests an alternative approach to conflict resolution. It has at its core what has been referred to as 'narrative mediation' in which the complex social contexts that shape conflicts are considered.[18] Focusing on the constitutive properties of conflict stories, narrative mediation does not evaluate whether a story is true or factual but rather how it constitutes the

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[16] Banks/Mitchell (1996): 5.

[17] Raimo Vayrynen (1991): *To Settle or to Transform. Perspectives on the Resolution of National and International Conflicts.* in: Vayrynen, Raimo (ed.): New Directions in Conflict Theory. Conflict Resolution and Conflict Transformation. London/Newbury Park/New Delhi: Sage, p. 2.

[18] John Winslade/Gerald Monk (2000): Narrative Mediation. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, p. xi. See also Cobb (1994).

parties to the conflict as enemies. The recent growth of interest in conflict studies with a focus on discourse and mediation is closely tied to communication studies.[19] As we have seen in Chapter 1 and 2, in the discipline of International Relations, Discourse Ethics, in the Habermasian tradition, and post-structuralism have become increasingly popular.[20]

A narrative approach to mediation is deeply imbedded in an understanding of individual and collective identity as constructed over space and time. Different from Burton's problem-solving approach, it is profoundly cultural in orientation for it assumes that different people perceive reality, and thus conflicts, in different ways – and that any resolution has to take this into account. If we accept that social realities and truth only occur in language, and that they are transmitted through language games as I tried to show with the aid of Wittgenstein, then communication can be the only arena in which to resolve conflicts. Changing the language game, that is the way we see and refer to the world (or our enemy), is hence core to a post-positivist approach to conflict resolution. In the process of mediation the mediators seek to open up a space amongst the tightly woven stories of the opponents in order to allow for different, less totalising, descriptions of events.[21] Hence, from the perspective of the mediator, Sara Cobb draws attention to the fact that "[u]nderstanding stories ... requires a set of theoretical assumptions:

(a) that social process (negotiation) is both dynamic and interactive – stories emerge in interaction;

(b) that problematic stories are transformed in interaction;

(c) that the transformation of stories requires reflection and inquiry with others, over time; and

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[19] Leda M. Cooks/ Claudia L. Hale (1994): "The Construction of Ethics in Mediation." *Mediation Quarterly* **12**(1): 57. See for example the contributions to Linda L. Putman/ Michael E. Roloff (eds.) (1992): *Communication and Negotiation*. Newbury Park/London/Delhi: Sage.

[20] Jabri (1996); Mark Hoffman (1995): "Defining and Evaluating Success: Facilitative Problem-Solving Workshops in an Interconnected Context." *Paradigms* **9**(2): 150-63; Lloyed-Jones (2000); Jones (1999); Rothman (1992); Angela R. Febbraro/Roland D. Chrisjohn (1994): *A Wittgensteinian Approach to the Meaning of Conflict*. in: Taylor, Ann/Bernstein Miller, Judi (eds.): Conflict and Gender. Cresskill: Hampton, 237-58.

[21] Winslade/Monk (2000): 5.

(d)   that fostering inquiry (in self and others) is facilitated by appreciative and legitimising moves in interaction, rather than negative and delegitimising moves."[22]

The process of mediation thus changes both story and reality.

While contributions to the field of mediation are often very limited in scope when they focus on workshops and third party intervention, my use of the term 'mediation' will be much broader.[23] Mediation shall be used synonymously with Gadamer's notion of *fusing horizons* as discussed in Chapter 3, and thus include aspects of social transformation and change. The post-conflict society, together with the former enemy, has to establish new ways of communicating with each other, ways that avoid the tensions of the past. In the process of mediation, of the fusion of horizons, imagination is required to invent new identities. Mediation is hence a poetic process of creating something new out of what has been.[24] As such, mediation happens always and everywhere, it is ontological in character and a core feature of life. Thus, in Gilles Deleuze words:

> Mediators are fundamental. Creation is all about mediators. Without them nothing happens. They can be people ... but things too. Whether they're real or imaginary, animated or inanimate, you have to form your mediators. It's a series. If you're not in some series, even a completely imaginary one, you're lost. I need my mediators to express myself, and they'd never express themselves without me: you are always working within a group, even when you seem working on your own.[25]

Deleuze draws our attention to the perennial influences and impulses we are exposed to and which lead us to permanently challenge and adapt our identity. We thus constantly change who we are and what we aspire to. By consequence, we are closely tied to our environment, to the Other. Being is always being-with.[26]

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[22] Sara Cobb (2000): "Negotiation Pedagogy: Learning to Learn." *Negotiation Journal* **16**(4): 316-7.

[23] For reviews of mediation literature see Lloyed-Jones (2000) and Jabri (1996).

[24] Nordstrom (1997): 190. The etymology of the Greek word *poetic* reveals its ancient meaning as 'creating' or 'making'.

[25] Gillles Deleuze (1995): Negotiations 1972-1990. New York: Columbia University Press, p. 125.

Similar to the individual, communities also find themselves in constant transformation, mediated through space and time. As argued by Vattimo and quoted in Chapter 3, communities are not something closed and isolated but they move with their horizons. [27]

If the poetic character of mediation holds true for individuals and communities it offers an adequate framework through which to consider the ontology of peace. Different from Burton's problem-solving approach it avoids the pitfall of cultural universalism, of regarding violence as a means to an end and of leaving wider social structures of inclusion and exclusion unchallenged. Rather, the poetic process of (re)creation, of *fusing horizons*, challenges and changes prevailing truths leading (potentially) to the invention of peace. This becomes especially apparent in the odd time in-between war and peace.

Yet was this the case in Teso?

Discourse on Peace

To restate the argument of Chapter 2, in *Discourses on Violence* Vivienne Jabri promotes a discourse on peace which "assumes a basis for the transformation of symbolic and institutional orders which underpin violent conflict." Again, she encourages a counter-discourse which allows for the understanding of the structurated legitimisation of violence as well as challenging the militarist order and exclusionist identities in which it is embedded.[28] Jabri thus emphasises that

> [t]he construct of peace, therefore, must aim to incorporate both a rejection of violence and its institutional underpinnings in combination with a defined process which would enable its realisation.[29]

With reference to Teso, this chapter will investigate if the present peace adheres to Jabri's requirements. Is violence rejected and structural exclusion dissolved? In order to do so it is first important to understand how peace came about, who the driving forces were and how they achieved a

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[26] Heidegger (1993): 117.
[27] Vattimo (1997): 38.
[28] Jabri (1996): 146.

change in people's motivation from war to peace. This shall then lead to an evaluation of the present conditions of peace in Teso in the following chapter.

The Development of the Insurgency

In order to understand the resolution of the insurgency in Teso it is not only vital to know how it began, but also how it developed over time. In the course of violent struggles the political motivations change, economic interests drop in and out, personalities emerge and disappear so that the initial constellation may have little resemblance to what is at stake at a later point.

Although the support amongst the Kumam and Iteso for the fight against the new government was vast not everybody was prepared to actively engage in the armed struggle. And yet, those who were suitable for combat were given little chance. Either the rebels forced them to come into 'the bush', or they had to join the NRA. For an adult male to stay inactively in the village was impossible; they immediately became suspected of either collaborating with the army or with the rebels. Thus many were drawn into combat although under other circumstances they would never have participated out of their own initiative.[30] Others had to leave Teso for safer grounds.

The cattle raiding of the Karamojong warriors was used to mobilise the society. The public discourse revolved around the NRA's involvement, resentment was generated. Even in churches, priests and clergymen used their position to address the need to fight against the government. This led to the shared belief that injustice was committed against the Iteso and Kumam and enabled the collective mobilisation of the population. As a result 'everybody was a rebel',[31] either actively in the bush or in a

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[29] Jabri (1996): 150.
[30] Interview with Michael Obwaatum.
[31] Interview with Joseph Okello.

supportive role through cooking and catering. Women, children and elders, who remained in the villages, did their best to assist 'the boys'.

Defeat or Success?

Militarily, the rebels had little chance to succeed against the NRA. Apart from the availability of arms and resources to the national army it also followed a ruthless policy of scorched earth, forceful encampment of civil population for 6 months in Kumi district in order to separate the rebels from the non-combatants, splitting of rebel groups into small, regional units confined to their areas of operation, and undermining of arms supply from abroad, which left the Teso rebels with little hope of victory.

In an environment of violent conflict the heavy loss of human and material capacities leads to two alternative conclusions:[32] either the combatants feel that they have already lost so much and thus they have to continue their struggle for they owe it to the cause and their fallen comrades. Or they realise that their chances for victory are too slim, and that they should avoid increasing the costs the violent conflict has already taken and thus surrender. In Teso, the second sentiment prevailed so that the rebels, one after the other, came out of 'the bush'. It is estimated that the NRA absorbed 10,000 rebels. Many turned from fighting against the NRA on one day to fighting with the NRA on the next.

Thus the reasons generally given for the ending of the violent struggle in Teso are twofold: first, it was recognised that the rebels were too weak to topple the government, and second, the suffering was so fierce that people were not prepared to expose themselves to it for much longer.[33]

At first sight, the two reasons provided have the characteristics of defeat, and many people in Teso today feel they were outplayed by the NRA/M. However, I would like to suggest that these developments in Teso were more nuanced than simple surrender, and that a number of actors,

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[32] This point is similar to an argument made by Christopher Mitchell (1995): "The Right Moment: Notes on four Models of "Ripeness"." *Paradigms* 9(2), p. 39.

[33] Interview with Musa Echweru.

including the government and indigenous actors, contributed to the resolution. It became evident to me during field work that the Kumam and Iteso credit local, indigenous agents to a greater extent than government efforts.

Mediation in Teso

African Principles of Conflict Resolution

In the field of conflict studies indigenous conflict resolution has gained much attention in recent years. Especially in light of the so-called 'African renaissance',[34] a new African consciousness is developing with the aim of returning 'Africa to the Africans'. This is strongly expressed in the words of the General Secretary of the Pan African Movement, Tajudeen Abdul-Raheem:

> We are our own liberators. We cannot expect the world to save us. We have to show, through responsible and democratic governance that we can save ourselves. As they say, where there is a will there is a way. *Woza Africa!* (Wake up Africa!).[35]

Hand in hand with the increase of African confidence goes the notion that Africa bears in itself the potential to solve its own conflicts.[36] This is manifested in a 'return' to African ways of conflict resolution, such as for instance discussed at the UN *All African Conference on African Principles of Conflict Resolution and Reconciliation*, held in Addis Ababa in 1999.[37]

Key features of an African approach to conflict resolution, the report states, are[38]

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[34] The term 'African renaissance' was first used by the former US President Bill Clinton in his speech in Ghana in March 1998. Oliver Furley (1999): *Democratisation in Uganda*. London: RISCT report.

[35] Tajudeen Abdul-Raheem (2000): "Africa Must Be Her Own Saviour. The Continent Must Show Responsibility and Will to Act". New Vision: Kampala, 13.4.2000.

[36] Josaphat Balegamire (2000): *The All African Conference on African Principles of Conflict Resolution*. OneWorld website: <http://www.oneworld.org/euconflict/publicat/nl3.1/page20.html>, 30.06.2000.

[37] Tim Murithi (ed.) (1999): Final Report of the All-African Conference on African Principles of Conflict Resolution and Reconciliation. Addis Ababa: UNITAR.

- a culture of consensus through discussion and dialogue;
- a bottom up/grass-root approach of 'participatory democracy';
- an atmosphere of co-operation enshrined in tradition and religion;
- a culture of tolerance, reconciliation, interdependence, trust, cross-cultural respect and ethnic loyalty; and a
- predominant climate of relational living and co-existence.

As potential mediators, elders, and in particular women are mentioned. I shall return to these groups and their roles and potential in the following section.

In Teso, before colonialism, disputes were settled through the consultation of elders.[39] The charge for the highest crime, murder, was paid for with a girl or a cow, whereas the lack of beauty in the girl was compensated for through additional cows. The price would be handed during a ceremony, *epucit* or *aijuk*, in which a bull, provided by the offending side, was roasted and eaten as a gesture of renewed co-operation between the clans.

On a general level, African societies have a reputation for conducting affairs by discussion. "The elders sit under a big tree and talk until they agree" as the late former President of Tanzania, Mwalimu Nyerere, was quoted saying.[40] This tradition of resolving conflicts through dialogue, it has been suggested, should be revived and promoted as an African way of decision making.[41]

However, not only dialogue is a feature of pre-colonial conflict resolution, but also public gestures like burying spears or roasting and eating an ox remain important.[42] These cultural celebrations of reconciliation are at present subject to a romantic renaissance. Often, however, these traditional acts of reconciliation do not involve an element of problem

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[38] Murithi (1999): 15-22.
[39] Nzita (1995): 124.
[40] Kwasi Wiredu (1996): *Democracy and Consensus in African Traditional Politics: A Plea for a Non-party Polity.* in: Eze, Emmanuel Chukwudi (ed.): Postcolonial African Philosophy. Cambridge, Mass./Oxford: Blackwell, p. 303.
[41] Wiredu (1996): 304.
[42] See for instance Dennis Pain (1997): *Bending of Spears - Producing Consensus for Peace and Development in Northern Uganda.* London: International Alert/Kacoke Madit report.

solving so that especially younger generations with strong Western influence remain dissatisfied. The ritual killing of an ox, for instance, signifies a sacrificial 'payment' of a god to take care of and resolve the dispute. It then is no longer in the hands of the worldly people. This symbolism strongly contradicts demands for actual resolution like distributing land more equally, allowing access to resources, compensating for theft, challenging exclusion etc. – often the issue that ignited the conflict remains unresolved. Frequently, in opposition to traditional rituals, questions of justice and punishment are raised, which exceed the mere gesture of burying spears and thus silencing a pending conflict.

This nostalgic 'return to the past' of especially pre-colonial African values has not remained without criticism. According to Emmanuel Chukwudi Eze, the past of colonialism and the introduction of Western modes of thinking cannot be undone, nor can the increase of information from, and thus proximity to, Europe and North America be halted.[43] Moreover, "[t]radition survives by evolving, not by remaining the same,"[44] it is permanently challenged by changes in the environment and thus adapted to the present. It has therefore been suggested that

> [b]y appealing to the praxis and wisdom of our African foreparents, we do not mean to repeat them, but we mean to make use of this praxis and wisdom as interpretative tools to enlighten present generations of Africans.[45]

As for the praxis of peace-making, therefore, marginalised, indigenous approaches should not seek to replace current modern approaches but rather attempt to compliment them.[46] As such

> [a] 'hybrid' approach has become all the more essential; using both traditional African and western approaches to solve conflicts and disputes. We should therefore acknowledge the need to strengthen local and indigenous capacities in Africa. NGOs that operate at local, national, sub-regional, regional and international levels should be empowered to act as facilitators in terms of dialogue, conflict prevention, management

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[43] Emmanuel Chukwudi Eze (1996): *Democracy or Consensus?* in: Eze, Emmanuel Chukwudi (ed.): Postcolonial African Philosophy. Cambridge, Mass./Oxford: Blackwell, p. 313.
[44] Jean-Marie Makang (1997): *Of the Good Use of Tradition*. in: Eze, Emmanuel Chukwudi (ed.): Postcolonial African Philosophy. Cambridge, Mass./Oxford: Blackwell, p. 328.
[45] Makang (1997): 338.
[46] Murithi (1999): v.

and resolution. The goals in the twenty-first century in Africa should be to strengthen local and traditional capacities, to prevent violent conflict, and to promote development.[47]

One possibility is the use of indigenous people as mediators between the parties to the conflict, as was the case with the Presidential Commission for Teso. Together with a number of other actors, the Commission was successful in turning Teso from war to peace, as we shall see below.

Indigenous Mediation

Generally, the expectation underlying indigenous mediation is to reach practical agreement which keeps broader inter-communal relations positive. "Additional results of local conflict management occur when actors who do not have a political, social or economic stake in continuing violence come together and build a 'constituency for peace'."[48] Constituencies for peace potentially undermine the perpetration of violence, and thus encourage the process of peace-building.

Hence, indigenous mediation can be conducted by a variety of actors such as churches or elders. Typically it

> incorporates consensus-building based on open discussions to exchange information and clarify issues. Conflicting parties are more likely to accept guidance from these mediators than from other sources because an elder's decision does not entail any loss of face and is backed by social pressure. The end result is, ideally, a sense of unity, shared involvement and responsibility, and dialogue among groups otherwise in conflict.[49]

The Teso insurgency was mediated by a number of different actors - all of them where indigenous to Uganda, or even to the region itself. Below I shall describe the actions taken by (1) the government, (2) the army, (3) the Presidential Commission for Teso (PCT), (4) churches, (5) women and (6) elders. Only the PCT acted as a third-party mediator in the above sense. The impact of the other actors was much less formal and organised.

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[47] Balegamire (2000).
[48] CAII (2000): *Non-Official Conflict Management Method. Indigenous Conflict Management Mechanisms.* CAII web site: <http://www.caii-dc.com/ghai/toolbox4.htm>, 30.06.2000.

Aims of Mediation Processes

To briefly repeat what has been laid out in the beginning of this chapter, mediation seeks to open-up totalising discourses that define friends and foes, it seeks to transcend traditional notions of winning and loosing. In Chapter 6 we have established that the current interpretation of their past has led the Iteso and Kumam to a rather closed understanding of themselves as well as the Museveni government. Mediation thus requires a significant change of the prevailing structural properties of the belligerent parties so that they no longer (partially) define identity by way of excluding the Other. As a poetic process, mediation creates new horizons – it is the process of fusing horizons between the past and the present, as well as the Self and the Other.

Based on a narrative approach, the process of mediation therefore attempts to re-define the stories people refer to when they talk about a violent conflict. Whether the indigenous mediators in Teso have accomplished the writing of alternative narratives about the causes, rationale and development of the Teso insurgency will be the subject of the discussion presented below.

Non-indigenous, International Impact on the Teso Mediation

International involvement in Teso occurred by proxy, yet it played a significant role. Based in the UK, a group of people, who used to work in Ngora hospital, Kumi district, over a long period of time after independence, and who had kept in very close contact with their Iteso friends in Ngora and started the Teso Relief Committee, learned about Museveni's 'scorched earth policy' and started a public campaign.[50] The former director of Ngora hospital, John Maitland, criticised the Ugandan government in a letter published in *The Independent* newspaper and in a BBC interview regarding the NRA atrocities. Below is an extract from *The Independent* piece:

> However, in Teso, where the military crackdown took place [Maitland refers here to the killings in Mukura which will be discussed in Chapter 9], promises will not convince a population embittered by years of

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[49] CAII (2000).
[50] John Maitland's private correspondence.

military confrontation. The 'cordon and search' operations ... combined with the visitations by rebel militia and raiders from the north, have devastated a once economically self-sufficient area. One and a half million people from Teso are suffering from severe poverty, malnutrition and disease. They have lost everything - homes, crops, schools, cattle, clinics and social structures.[51]

Maitland's BBC interview was heard all over Uganda, and the Ugandan media picked up the story. Museveni's response in an interview was rather confident:

[Q] This morning there was an interview with somebody who said he was a chairman of Teso relief committee and he alleged that NRA was carrying out a scorched earth policy. I wonder what your comment on this?

[Museveni] But you know those fellows are just talking stories. Our work is to crush the bandits, which we have done in the whole of the north; and this small area of Kumi, where they will remain, you are going to crush them. So, the sympathisers of the bandits will have to talk on BBC since the BBC is available to them. But for us, we shall do our work.
These are our people. You know how many chairmen we lost, the RCs? But you have been hearing the chairman, you see what has been happening when the people elect a chairman, the bandits come and kill him. They elect another bandit [as heard], they come and kill him. So they (?are wanting) to destroy our democratic institutions. And we can't allow that to happen. We are also going to crush them. Once you kill people, and that is what we have done in the north, that is why you hear the north is now peaceful. Now this small area of Kumi which was remaining, we are also going to crush them.
Now, if they go to BBC and BBC sympathises with them, we have also got our own radio here. So, our radio doesn't go very far. It just ends here around the lake [presumably Lake Victoria]. But that is good enough, eh, it is good enough...[52]

Nevertheless, the British Foreign and Commonwealth Office's interest in the human rights abuses in Uganda began to develop. At the time of the insurgency Ateso Grace Akello was resident in the UK, and together with her British friends from the Teso Relief Committee she organised a demonstration against Museveni in Whitehall.[53]

The bad publicity in the UK was very inconvenient for Uganda. Museveni, who had just seized power, heavily relied on the support of

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[51] John Maitland (1989): "*Suffering of the People form Teso*". The Independent: London, 25 July 1998, Letters, p. 15.
[52] "Ugandan President Responds to 'Concentration Camps' Allegations". Radio Uganda: Kampala, 1 March 1990.
[53] Interview with Grace Akello.

international donors. The UK was then, and still is today, one of the most pronounced advocates of Museveni's government, so that a public demonstration in London would have harmed this relationship badly. In response, Museveni called Grace Akello in London and sent a small delegation of senior government members to discuss the insurgency with her.[54] He invited Akello to return to her country and to work for him as the secretary of the Presidential Commission for Teso in the mediation between the government and the Iteso/Kumam, an offer she accepted, albeit reluctantly.[55]

Although the insurgency as well as its reconciliation was a very local and indigenous process it is worth wondering whether Museveni would have offered his gesture of reconciliation through the Teso Commission if it had not been for the international pressure. In many cases local uprising and violent dissent remain unheard of, and thus futile, as long as the government's military can keep the insurgence at bay. International recognition, however, lends a voice to those oppressed and is therefore a very important mechanism in the advocacy of excluded people. The importance of, in particular, the western governmental and non-governmental organisations is closely tied to matters of development aid and financial support which are vital to sub-Saharan countries. Here, then, local and global forces coalesce.

Yet the international impact on Teso, and other violent conflicts, does not stop with political and development projects. In addition to the above case of UK advocacy, in Teso the international community was represented in form of small arms and combat gear, as well as through training of insurgents and soldiers.[56] Weapons manufactured in Europe and combatants trained in institutions such as the military training facility Sandhurst in the UK, blur the boundaries between here and there. Despite the insurgency in Teso having being a rather local event, the global and the local are intrinsically intertwined on many levels.

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[54] Interviews with Grace Akello and Ateker Ejalu.
[55] Interview with Grace Akello.

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The Government

The government offered a number of initiatives to promote peace in Teso. Twice it sent mediators, first in form of three ministers, then the Teso Commission. In addition, the NRA had an impact through a number of staff members that gained the confidence of the Rebel High Command over time. Today it is difficult to understand why Museveni sought to establish peace in Teso region whilst continuing counter-insurgencies elsewhere. Possible explanations are that the NRA was already preoccupied with fighting in Acholi in the north, and that another source of insecurity might have been too great a burden.

It has also been suggested that Museveni severely underestimated the size of the insurgency in Teso, and thus did not conceive of it as a serious threat.[57] Museveni's advisors at the time downplayed the importance of the insurgency by telling him that he should not think of Teso in terms of 'a rebellion', but rather mere anarchy, for the rebels had no motivation to topple the government.[58] There was never an ideological struggle about different forms of policies, and the UPC never offered an alternative political programme on how to govern Uganda. The cause was local, and so were the targets.[59] Although the rebels in Teso would have resented this explanation and denigration of their violent struggle, it might have helped to prevent the acceleration of the NRM actions against Teso. Keeping the insurgency rather harmless might have aided the fact that the NRM government was willing to reach out to the people in Teso, and to offer a cease-fire.

Although the reasons seem opaque today, the NRM government, which does not have a very good track record for solving violent conflicts peacefully, had little intention to 'crush' the insurgency in Teso.[60] Instead, an effort was made to build basic trust between the Iteso and the new

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[56] Interviews with Musa Echweru and Sam Otai.

[57] Interview with Ateker Ejalu. A further indication of the little importance Museveni gave to the Teso insurgency is that it does not find any mentioning in his autobiography, Museveni (1996).

[58] Interview with Ateker Ejalu.

[59] Interview with Ateker Ejalu.

government. The two major elements were a general amnesty for all rebels and development support for the Teso region.

In order to make the rebels' return from 'bush' to civilian life attractive, an Amnesty Statute was released, which included the following elements:[61]

- Amnesty for all persons within or without Uganda who were fighting as combatants or aiding the prosecution of war in any other way.
- Amnesty for all members of former armies, fighting groups, former police forces, prison services and state securities.
- Report and surrender of all weapons of these groups.
- Resettlement of 'reporters'.[62]

Today, many ex-rebels refer to the Amnesty Statute as being the most important incentive for their surrender. It provided them with a safety net, and gave them an opportunity to admit that their going to the bush had become a failure. Thanks to the Amnesty Statute they could make this step reversible without being harmed and punished. Even rebels captured in combat were not executed but merely detained.

Moreover, for many young rebels the lack of employment opportunities and future perspectives had been a driving force to join the insurgency. After a few years in the bush they realised the danger and hardship of being a combatant. The financial rewards they were promised when they joined the rebels were never paid so that the young men were highly disillusioned and felt deceived. When the government reached out to them through offering financial rewards and employment in the NRA if they only surrendered, the youth suddenly had a new and positive outlook to the

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[60] Although Museveni threatened to do so in his rhetoric. "Museveni vows to crush Rebels" New Vision, 2.3.1990, front-page.

[61] International Alert (1987): *Uganda - International Seminar on Internal Conflict, 21th-25th September 1987*. Kampala: Makerere University, Appendix G, p. 32. The general Amnesty Statute expired after a few years and has been replaced by a series of Presidential Pardons with the same content.

future. They deserted in very large numbers, and many were absorbed into the army or police forces. It was particularly the work of the Teso Commission that encouraged the reporting, and I will address this issue again in the next section.

The promotion of the development of Teso was again a part of the Teso Commission's mandate. The underlying rationale was to prevent the Kumam and Iteso from thinking that they as a people were not appreciated. Building trust and confidence was central to the effort. In addition, due to the cattle raiding as well as the insurgency, the development of Teso had deteriorated to a point where the vast majority of the population suffered from severe poverty and hunger. Relief and aid were needed urgently. The strategies of the Commission's development aid will again be laid out below.

The Amnesty Statute and the development support together allowed for the Kumam and Iteso to feel appreciated in Uganda. The fear of prosecution due to the former Obote alliance was dissolved through the Statute, and the hardship and suffering of Teso recognised through aid and relief, and later restocking.

In addition, in the first phase of the NRM government a policy of reconciliation prevailed. The rationale was to 'bring the enemy in', to give him/her a prestigious public office, in order to prevent them from turning against the Movement.

To return to the discussion of mediation at the outset of this chapter, the question arises whether the government's actions contributed to changing the institutional and discursive structures which gave rise to the conflict, and whether it aided in rendering violence an illegitimate tool of inter-action. Despite its successful impact on ending the fighting, did it merely solve immediate problems or did it also contribute to the poetic

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[62] 'Reporter' is the NRM/A jargon for ex-rebels who have reported to authorities and handed in their guns. 'Reporters' became the term commonly used for surrendering rebels; it was considered more neutral then 'dissident' or 'ex-rebel'. Interview with James Eceret.

process of creating a new relationship between the Museveni government and Teso?

In the early nineties, the Ugandan government did indeed manage to ease the binary opposition between Teso/Museveni along which the insurgency was fought. In particular the promise of development and economic re-construction, which will be discussed later in relation to the Teso Commission, encouraged the Iteso and Kumam to believe that they were increasingly included into the wider Uganda, and that their perceived neglect would turn into a prosperous integration. Museveni's image changed from the role of the enemy to patron or benevolent dictator. The people in Teso, over time, ceased conceiving of themselves in us/them terms, and instead put hope and trust in the care of their president.

Through practising a policy of reconciliation, and incorporating former enemies into his government, Museveni created a picture of structural change which was hospitable to opposing politicians. The representation of Teso in the central government shortly after the insurgency, through, for example, outspoken critics like Grace Akello and ex-rebel commander Omax Omeda, was to give account of the plurality of views. The Iteso and Kumam electorate welcomed this open-door policy and felt appreciated and respected. A notion of hope prevailed that now Teso would play a significant role in Museveni's Uganda.

As discussed in the previous chapter, in Teso at the time of the insurgency violence was accepted as a legitimate way of solving disputes. The insurgency amplified these practices through introducing almost all men to combat and armed struggle. In order to deal with this tendency amongst former rebels, the government offered to enlist *reporters* in the NRA. And yet, in doing so, it did not break with the spiral of violence but merely used it to further its own (military) goals. To this day members of the former Teso rebel high command are active in the UPDF (former NRA).[63]

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[63] In relation to the current involvement of Uganda in the war with neighbouring Democratic Republic of Congo people frequently explain Uganda's interest in the fighting by the need of keeping the large amount of Ugandan soldiers occupied. There is a great fear that 'idle' soldiers (especially form Acholi in North Uganda where an insurgency war has been in place ever since Museveni ceased power in 1986) would turn against their own government.

The Army

The insurgency was characterised by a large number of severe human rights abuses concerning both combatants and non-combatants.[64] The incident mostly referred to is the suffocation of 47 Iteso in a railway wagon in Mukura, Kumi district.[65] In general, the NRA soldiers were notorious for raping, looting and indiscriminate killing.[66]

In order to safeguard the reputation of the NRA being a disciplined army, attempts were made to prosecute and punish 'out-of-service' atrocities by soldiers such as rape, defilement and murder, committed by soldiers. This included public execution of offenders.[67]

In the late 1980s, a large part of the NRA was comprised of Rwandans living in diaspora in Uganda. Therefore, when the exiled Rwandans formed the RPF/A (Rwandese Patriotic Front/Army) and invaded Rwanda in 1990 the number of NRA soldiers in Teso suddenly dropped significantly. Eyewitnesses disclose that there was heavy troop deployment in Teso at the time.[68] The sudden reduction of NRA soldiers in the Teso region might have had a favourable impact on the course of the insurgency.

Today, many ex-rebels, especially those who featured in the High Command, refer to personal relationships with high-ranking NRA official as being crucial to their reporting. Sam Otai, 2nd Commander, was conversing with a senior military person, Charles Agina, through letters delivered by his wife.[69] Musa Echweru, responsible for arms supply, refers to Brigadier Chefe Ali as a key figure in the trust-building process between the rebels and the army.[70] When coming out of the bush the Rebel High Command was received respectfully by their former enemies, they discussed the matters of

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[64]Amnesty International (1992): *Uganda. The Failure to Safeguard Human Rights*. London: Amnesty International Report.
[65] The Star, 28.7.1989, frontpage.
[66] The Citizen, 2.8.1989, frontpage.
[67] New Vision, 17.11.1989.
[68] E. A. Brett's private notes.
[69] Interview with Sam Otai.
[70] Interview with Musa Echweru.

the insurgency frankly and openly, so that some rebels even learned to appreciate the government's political philosophy.[71] In the words of the former rebel Musa Echweru:

> The Movement [NRM] has continued to be pragmatic. There was a message of reconciliation. Those who came out were actually treated well. This kind of flexibility was initially there. This flexibility was seen and needed. Even if you had disagreement, you were still seen to be acceptable. You could sit down and discuss issues.[72]

The NRA/M policy of welcoming, or even rewarding, former rebels had a significant impact. Musa Echweru is now RDC of Nebbi district, while Omax Omeda, former rebel leader, is now Minister for Works, Housing and Communication. More cynical observers suggest the rebels have been 'bought' by the government.

In conclusion, at the beginning of the insurgency the behaviour of the NRA strongly fuelled the violent conflict. However, after a change in army personnel there was also a 'change from NRA combatants to agents of peace'.[73] The personalities of individuals had a great impact.

Through showing respect for the Iteso and Kumam rebels, and even offering them lucrative army or civil positions, the rebels felt they were equal to the NRA officers. While the insurgency was fought on grounds of exclusion and neglect, the attitude of the NRA towards the rebels built a bridge of co-operation and potential reconciliation.

The 1st Peace Initiative

The first initiative undertaken by the government in late 1987-8, under the guidance of Minister of State Ateker Ejalu and Paul Etjan, the former Kumam and the latter Etesot, was comprised of three Iteso Ministers: Minister of Labour S. K. Okurut, Deputy Minister of Animal Industry Dr Okol Aporu, and Minister Ekino.[74] Despite worries about their

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[71] Interview with Michael Obwaatum.
[72] Interview with Musa Echweru.
[73] Interview with Musa Echweru.
[74] Interview with Ateker Ejalu.

safety the three ministers travelled to Soroti town where they met and discussed the insurgency with the Anglican Bishop Illukor. Since the meeting went very well, the three Ministers continued their journey to Kumi town where they received a surprising message that they were expected to meet with members of the Rebel High Command at a location in Ngora. The Ministers went, accompanied by two priests. At their arrival they were immediately brought to Serere Research Station where they realised that they had been taken hostage by the rebels.

It took two years until the Ministers were freed. Ekino died in the course of the liberation, the circumstances are still unclear. Apuro, shortly after his release, passed away within 24h of falling sick – allegations of poisoning have been raised.[75] Okurut has failed to have a successful political career ever since.

According to the report of a rebel eyewitness of the hijacking in Ngora, the Ministers' attitude towards the rebels was characterised by arrogance and superiority.[76] Before the meeting, Okurut, a former prominent UPC politician, had allegedly called the rebels on national radio 'thugs and thieves without any political agenda'. The group of ministers thus received little respect, but much resentment, from the rebels. There was a general feeling that, although being of Iteso origin, the Ministers were little concerned about the cause of the insurgency and the suffering and plight of the people in Teso, but rather interested their personal political careers and the 'good-life' in Kampala.[77]

Hence, what contributed significantly to the failure of the mission was that the ministers had no credibility in the eyes of the Rebel High Command. In addition to the lack of trust, the 1st peace initiative entered the conflict at a time when Teso was not ready for peace. Ambitions amongst the civil population and the rebels were still high and hopes for future gains great.

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[75] Interview with Kenneth Olumia (brother to the late minister's wife), Soroti 24.02.2000.
[76] Peter Olupot (2000): 185.

The 2nd Peace Initiative: The Teso Commission

The most successful initiative to end the Teso insurgency was the Presidential Commission of Teso. Comprised of indigenous people only, it crossed a bridge between the two adversaries: the people from Teso and the Museveni government.

The Presidential Commission of Teso is a very good example to illustrate the success of indigenous efforts in conflict resolution. Again hand-picked by Minister of State Ateker Ejalu in 1990, the Teso Commission consisted of a number of respected Iteso.[78] Apart from Grace Akello as the Secretary it included the PCT Chairman Prof. Epelu-Opio, now Deputy Vice Chancellor of Makerere University, James Eceret, an economist who still manages the PCT today, Mzee Oguli, who now managers the PCT office in Soroti, as well as secretaries, drivers and local assistants.

Where the first initiative lacked credibility, the composition of the Teso Commission immediately earned the reputation for trustworthiness – even though it was clearly operating on behalf of the government. As Akello noted:

> Most of the people in Teso saw the Commission as an organ to stop the bleeding, and to find a niche for them in the political order of Uganda. It was seen as independent. They knew that I was working for Museveni, but they knew that I was working under protest. So they knew that I was critical.[79]

Even today there is a general agreement that the PCT was "probably the best catalyst for change" for Teso.[80] What contributed a lot to the acceptance was that the Commission sought advice from politicians, activists, rebels, local leaders and clerics. Considering that the members of the Commission had themselves never been involved in an insurgency war before, but rather lived a life in the safety of universities and institutions,

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[77] Interview with Peter Olupot, Kumi 01.05.01.
[78] "Uganda Presidential Commission to Investigate Rebellion in Eastern Districts". Radio Uganda: Kampala, 17 October 1990.
[79] Interview with Grace Akello.
[80] Dan Ochyang (1991): Proposal for the Restoration of Stability, Peace and Progress to Teso. Kampala: UPC, p. 2.

their risky ventures in Teso were also rather brave.[81] There was one ambush on the Commission,[82] in which the rebels had the opportunity to kill the Commissioners - yet they refrained from doing so and the Commissioners interpreted the incidents as a warning not to travel with the protection of the NRA. The PCT followed the hint, and their movements remained undisturbed.[83]

The main objective of the Teso Commission was to address the post-conflict scenario in the region. The mandate was split into two phases: in the first phase in 1991-2, the overall priority was the insecurity in Teso, and it was contended that this had to be achieved and preserved by local people; government could only supplement it.[84] Peace and security were considered to be vital for economic development and social progress. The second phase, 1993-4 until today, addresses more practical issues like re-stocking and re-integration of reporters.

The Commission's stated strategies to achieve peace and security were as follows:[85]

- Sensitisation of people about correlation between peace and development.
- Strategic reduction of army presence (and restoration of police services).
- Acceleration of recruitment and training of Local Defence Units (LDUs) so that local people can defend their own property against rustlers and anti-social behaviour (this mainly related to the Karamojong rustling).
- Reinstatement of former security personnel (after screening), or alternatively resettlement of former rebels.

In order to encourage the rebels to desert from the bush, the Teso Commission set up a series of seminars in villages and trading centres

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[81] Grace Akello, for instance, was taken to meet the Rebel High Command by a catholic reverent Father Pius Okiria. Interview with Pius Okiria.
[82] Financial Times, 20.12.1990, page 1.
[83] Interview with George Oguli, Soroti 24.2.2000.
[84] PCT (1991a): *Rehabilitation and Development Plan for Teso Region 1991/2-2000/1. Vol. 1: Guidelines/Strategies.* Kampala: Ministry for Planning and Economic Development, Republic of Uganda, p. 48.
[85] PCT (1991a): 48-9.

where they targeted particular groups of the population. Apart from economic development, women, youth and leaders from various levels were given special consideration. The rationale of focusing on women was to reach their husbands or sons. The Teso Commission was very well aware that the people at large supported the 'boys', spiritually as well as practically, and that the women were in frequent contact with their male family members. Through appealing to their sense of family, development and health for their children, the Teso Commission encouraged the women to influence their husbands and sons at any given opportunity. I will address the role of women in a separate section below.

In order to enable the people of Teso to state their distress and to vent their anger, the Teso Commission always started their seminars by dedicating the first day to asking people what was most important to them.[86] The main complaints of the Iteso and Kumam were related to rustling, poverty and general lack of support. Political reasons were hardly ever voiced. This strong emphasis on economic development was however only on the surface and served as a metaphor for the general sensation of not being welcome in Museveni's new Uganda.

The Teso Commission responded to this problem by addressing the pronounced allegations, and by implication the underlying subtext. The complaints raised by the Kumam and Iteso were immediately responded to. If they demanded development aid, the Teso Commission provided it. If they asked for oxen, the Teso Commission delivered the animals. If they demanded ploughs, the Teso Commission organised the supply. If they complained about misbehaviour of NRA soldiers, the Teso Commission guaranteed that the army took care of their prosecution. For the people in Teso this experience of asking the representatives of the President for assistance, and receiving it with little delay, very much contradicted with their perception of the government being hostile to them as a people. As a consequence, they reconsidered their allegations against Museveni, for the notion that he intentionally excluded them from the new Uganda no longer held true.

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[86] Interview with James Eceret.

What the Teso Commission achieved was therefore to undermine the support of the insurgency in the non-combatant community. According to Mzee Oguli a conversation would run as follows:

> Every time there was a concentration of rebels we held meetings surrounding their place. The idea was that this people would send some people to ask them to listen to us. Or some rebels came and listen to us. The majority of the people who came to our meetings were women, men were not there. One day when we went to Gweri. There were many women, men were also there. A woman sat in front with a baby of about 4 months. And as I was speaking I picked on her and I said: 'Where is your husband?'
> And she said: 'My husband went to the bush two years ago.'
> I said 'Is that your baby?'
> 'Yes!'
> 'But how old is your baby?'
> '3-4 months.'
> 'But how did you get that baby when your husband is not there? Or he sneaks in? Do you usually have that child sick?'
> 'Oh, many times!'
> 'Do you have a problem of food?'
> 'Oh yes!'
> So we started to have a conversation there. 'Why don't you tell him that 'it is peaceful now? Why can't you come back and help me?' Go and cry! When he sneaks in you cry and say: 'Please you come. Nobody will kill you.' And we have assured you that whoever gives in is not going to be killed. Why don't you tell him to come?'
> From there we were beginning to break through.[87]

In their seminars, the Teso Commission succeeded in shifting the intentions of the women and elderly, who stayed at home, from strengthening 'the boys' to appealing to the rebels' reason and responsibility to care for the well-being of their families.

This achievement is of major importance. For what is significant about the Teso case is that the civil and combatant community over time withdrew the support for the fighting. The strategy of the Teso Commission was to influence exactly on this level, and they were very successful in convincing people that a peaceful way of dealing with their worries was much more beneficial for them as individuals and the region as a whole.

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[87] Interview with George Oguli.

Taking care of *reporters* was another major task of the PCT. As soon as a rebel came out of the bush, the Teso Commission would take him to a place outside of Teso for 5-6 months in order to prevent his return. The reporter would thereafter attend the PCT seminars in his home area to assure his family, but more importantly other potential reporters, that he was safe and taken care of. This again established confidence among the rebels who wanted to surrender.

As mentioned above, the Teso Commissioners were all indigenous mediators with strong social and family bonds linked to Teso. Whenever they came to a new area they met with friends or family members, sat down with them over supper and discussed the political situation in Teso. The low-key consultation, familiarity and the subsequent influence they had was what contributed to their initial success.

However, today many people suggest that the Teso Commission was only successful because it entered the process of reconciliation when the violent conflict was already resolved. In fact, due to frustration and destitution, many rebels had already surrendered before the PCT came into action. Nevertheless, the role of immediate post-conflict reconstruction was significant for the maintenance of the cease-fire. Reconciliation and peace are always reversible and many peace initiatives reach the stage of apparent breakthrough only to collapse. Frustrated people are easily encouraged to re-start an insurgency. In Teso, the Commission was seen as a guarantor for the government's commitment to the people. Through the Teso Commission, the government promised that the Teso economy would start prospering again and that they would compensate for the loss of cattle. The task of the Teso Commission was to rehabilitate the Iteso's mind through restocking.[88] Trust in the NRM government was of salient importance.

At the time, it seems, only a few people were critical of the Commission. Today, there are accusations of arrogance, and the fact that in

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[88] Interview with Peter Kalagala.

some areas the meetings were compulsory and kept people from working in their gardens was also not appreciated. In general, however, the initiative was very well received at the time.

The success of the PCT was built on various aspects. Thanks to the indigenous nature of the Commissioners the PCT rapidly gained the trust and confidence of civilians and insurgents alike. The workshops and seminars the Commission organised were informative and well attended – they allowed for a close proximity between Commissioners and people so that individual matters could be raised and personal problems solved. Due to the immediate response of the Commissioners to challenges raised,the people felt their views mattered and were taken care of.

The discourse the PCT fostered in its seminars was entirely focused on economic and security issues such as the lack of food or atrocities committed by the NRA or Karamojong – political questions were not considered.[89] Through resolving physical and material security concerns the Commission undermined the prevailing motivation for the insurgency being fought, that is, economic deprivation by the Museveni government. They simply deprived people of their preferred motive for combat.

As a consequence, due to being commissioned by central government, the PCT changed the narrative about the opponent from 'Museveni being the enemy' to 'Museveni being the care-taker and provider'. Through avoiding political confrontation in the PCT seminars, the discourse about the insurgency was turned into a struggle for material commodities, which were entirely unrelated to national politics. And through providing the commodities which had come to occupy a central place in the discourse of the insurgency, the PCT resolved the conflict.

What the Teso Commission thus achieved was to transform the reality of the opposing, irreconcilable binary, of us/them into a more blurred distinction. The sharp boundaries were eroded and therefore the structural exclusion transformed. With reference to Jabri's requirement of reducing the

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[89] Interview with George Oguli.

prevailing structural properties of exclusion, the Teso Commission can hence be considered a success.

In addition, the economic support the Teso Commission provided for ex-rebels assisted their re-integration into society.[90] This is especially important in light of poverty and the economic rewards hoped for when joining an insurgency war, which drives many young men 'into the bush', as we have seen in Chapter 5. Through offering 'starter packs' for returnees the PCT successfully convinced the ex-combatants that there is hope in future farming, business and employment.

Against the backdrop of the tendency in Teso around the time of the insurgency to resort to violence as a mode of conflict management, the re-integration of reporters is a very significant aspect. To them, it offered a future beyond combat as an economic strategy, and thus led to a de-militarisation of the society – with the result of rendering violence less legitimate.

Today, unfortunately, the opinions have changed considerably, and the Teso Commission, which still functions, is no longer thought of so highly. This will be discussed in the following chapter.

Churches

Parallel to the PCT, the Teso churches had a major impact on the resolution of the insurgency. More generally, in Africa, churches play a very significant role in the social and political sector. This situation dates back to the late nineteenth century, when most missionary organisations established mission schools, hospitals and dispensaries.[91] To date, churches in Africa gain an ever more prominent role as advocates for human rights, social injustice and poverty, and some would even suggest that it is their obligation to "struggle for societal transformation in the effort to build an

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[90] DANIDA (1994): *Teso Resettlement Programme 1994/5*. Kampala: DANIDA report, p. 3.
[91] Deborah Ajulu/Sara Gibbs (1999): The Role of the Church in Advocacy: Case Studies from Southern and Eastern Africa. Oxford: INTRAC, p. 4.

equitable society where no one is oppressed."[92] Most prominently with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa, churches increasingly recognise their potential to act as mediators between parties to a conflict, and to set into practice Christian notions of peace and reconciliation. Trying to create harmony by mending the conflicts that separate individuals from God is core to the Bible, and can also be applied to communities in conflict.[93]

What is unique about the position of the church, or mosque, is that it simultaneously reaches the grass-roots of a society and the political elites of a country. Churches are thus in a very prominent position to mediate local needs and national politics.

In order to understand the role Christian churches play in Uganda it is important for the western reader to remember the difference between, for instance, British and Ugandan attitudes to Christianity as suggested in Chapter 4.[94] Whereas in many 'modern' central and north European countries Christianity has become an independent 'luxury', a selected addition to our autonomous lives, in the Teso, religion or more generally religious belief, is a substantial and tangible part of everyday life. In countries where resources are scarce and conditions of life harsh, belief becomes almost a necessity for it is through praying, and thus trusting, that God, Allah or spirits will alleviate the believer's suffering and provide food, or health, or shelter. In saturated societies, like many in the North, there is little necessity to ask for earthly goods.[95]

While churches have an important role to play as mediators and peace-builders, Christianity also bears counter-productive traces. The Christian discourse is founded on clear-cut notions of good and evil, heaven and hell, right and wrong. It thus establishes insurmountable binary

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[92] Chukwudum B. Okolo (1991): The Liberating Role of the Church in Africa Today. Eldoret: AMECEA Gaba Publishers, p. 64.

[93] Hizkias Assefa (1996): Peace and Reconciliation as a Paradigm. A Philosophy of Peace and Its Impact for Conflict, Governance and Economic Growth in Africa. in: Assefa, Hizkias/Wachira, George (eds.): Peacemaking and Democratisation in Africa. Nairobi: East African Educational Press, p. 47. Nevertheless, the genocide in Rwanda shows that churches can also have a very strong impact in inciting violence and killings.

[94] When referring to Britain and Uganda, I of course do not want to suggest that all people in these countries experience Christianity in the same way.

[95] I am very grateful to Tajudeen Abdul-Raheem for this comment.

oppositions which are fundamental to 'believing', and inform the congregation's perception of the world in a way that leaves little space for negotiation. For instance, while conducting research in Teso, I had the privilege of being invited to a very remote village on the Teso-Karamoja boarder. The small village had been established as a Karamojong-Iteso reconciliation project by a UK based NGO called CHIPS (Christian International Peace Services) in an attempt to encourage pastoral Karamojong to settle and work with the Iteso on farms and in gardens. During my stay a Pentecostal priest addressed the small congregation of Iteso villagers and a few present Karamojong warriors in his morning prayers. The subtext of his ceremony was that Christians are good people, while non-Christians 'have a pact with the devil'. Considering that the reconciliation village has attracted a group of about 50 Karamojong who are settling in the immediate neighbourhood, and that it has a rationale of bridging the gap between Iteso and Karamojong, the problematic of the Pentecostal Christian discourse becomes apparent: Karamojong are mostly non-believers, and thus, in the priest rhetoric, they have a 'pact with the devil'. For a project which aims at bringing together culturally very different communities this form of religious discourse, which relies heavily on notions of Christianity, is most likely counter-productive.[96]

Churches and the Teso Insurgency

The largest Christian churches in Uganda are the Anglican Church of Uganda, the Catholic Church, the Uganda Orthodox church, the Pentecostal churches and the Seventh Day Adventist church. The country also has a large proportion of Muslims. However, ever since the dictatorship of Idi Amin, the Islamic communities have suffered badly in reputation. The internal conflicts prior to Museveni's victory in 1986 had been largely fought

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[96] In general, it has been suggested that the disappointment with the Ugandan government has led many citizens to find support in religion. See for instance *"Govt failed, so radical religion is taking over"*. The Monitor: Kampala, 02.03.2000, 8; Odoobo C. Bichachi (2000): *"Cleaning Up Sects Must Start With Sate House. Why Did Kanungu Happen?"*. The Monitor: Kampala, 22.03.2000, 26; Peter G. Mwesige (2000): *"Poverty and Illiteracy Has Led People into Cults"*. New Vision: Kampala, 25.03.2000, 25.

in religious terms, as discussed in Chapter 5, so that to this day churches in Uganda are highly politicised.[97]

It has been argued that in the 1990s the churches played an important role in the national reconstruction: their views were considered while drafting the national constitution, and they carried out civic education programmes prior to the Constituent Assembly as well as Presidential and Parliamentarian elections, which they also monitored.[98] Although this political impact cannot be disputed it does not hold true for all churches. Due to their political role churches themselves often become involved in national conflicts and thus turn into the government's adversaries. Such was the case in Teso. In the beginning in 1987, particularly the Anglican Church of Uganda was very supportive of the insurgency. The Christian churches in Teso, like everywhere else in Uganda, play a very prominent role in day-to-day politics. Priests, and especially bishops, are leading figures in the public discourse - they are very powerful opinion leaders. In Teso, the political position they took was anti-Museveni. The political power of, for instance, the now retired Anglican Bishop Illukor is not dissimilar to that of a regional king – a parallel often made in Uganda.[99]

Many of the rebels as well as rebel leaders were faithful Christians and thus receptive to the discourse encouraged by the churches.[100]

> The rebels were very religious. They would come to churches, and sing in the choirs. On Sundays. And then the other days they were killing.[101]

And yet, over the course of time, and with the increasing suffering in Teso, the churches changed their opinion and started "preaching the message of peace and reconciliation".[102] Their efforts benefited from the

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[97] Gifford (1998): 133.

[98] Wilson M. Mande (1997): *The Role of the Churches in the Political Reconstruction of Uganda in the 1990s.* in: Mugambi, J.N.K. (ed.): The Church and Reconstruction of Africa. Nairobi: All African Council of Churches, p. 180.

[99] This comment was made by Prof. Opio-Epelu, Vice-President of Makerere University and former head of the PCT at Bishop Illukor's retirement service at the bishop's home in Kumi district, 08.04.2000.

[100] Interview with Musa Echweru.

[101] Interview with Pius Okiria.

[102] Speech by Bishop Illukor, Church of Uganda at a Seminar of Bukedia Devilment Trust on Peace and Development, Feb 1991, E. A. Brett's private notes.

very close ties between Bishop Illukor, Grace Akello and the UK based Teso Relief Committee which financially supported the Anglican Church and its relief assistance.

Two priests were particularly engaged in the process of reconciliation: Father Michael Corcoran and Father Pius Okiria initiated a major mediation effort. At the beginning, in 1991, Father Pius, in his function as a priest in one of the Teso satellite parishes, in which the High Command was based, made contact with the rebels in order to help the local civilians who were innocently persecuted by them.[103] Similarly Father Michael Corcoran had frequent contact with the rebels, and together they convinced the Catholic and the Anglican Bishops of Teso to offer to intercede between the parties. The churches treated everybody equally, although the army complained about the contacts with the rebels. And yet, whenever rebels asked the church for medical or other support the church declined.[104]

After long negotiations in 1991/2 the churches convinced Hitler Eregu, 1st Rebel Commander, to accept their offer to mediate between the High Command and Museveni. The rebels appreciated the recognition they received from the churches, especially when they invited international journalists to cover the insurgency.[105] However, it took more time to finally persuade the government to join the talks.

In the end, the peace talks did not take place. And yet, due to the interaction between the churches and 'the boys' a number of high-ranking rebels like Sam Otai, 2nd Rebel Commander, deserted with large groups. Others used the churches as places to surrender, or find refuge from their former fellow rebels as well as NRA soldiers.[106] Through maintaining close links with the rebels, the churches provided the necessary assurance and trust to become sites for soldiers to report, and thus contributed significantly to the resolution of the violent conflict.

Today, the contributions of the churches in Teso are rated highly. Nevertheless, it has to be emphasised that, in the late 1980s, particularly

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[103] Interview with Pius Okiria.

[104] Conversation between E. A. Brett and Father Michael, E. A. Brett's private notes.

[105] Pius Okiria (2000): *Personal Experience*. in: CECORE: Experiences and Best Practices of Peace-Builders. Kampala: CECORE, p. 4.

the Anglican Church had a large impact on the anti-Museveni sentiments in Teso. When the churches then turned around to preach the message of non-violence and reconciliation it earned them a reputation as political agents with the best interests of Teso closest to their hearts.

The role the churches played was less to advocate collaboration with Museveni, and thus to alter the structural properties of friend/enemy, but rather to appeal to the Iteso and Kumam to recognise the futility of the killing and suffering. In doing so, the churches had an impact on the reduction of violence and aggression, yet not so much on the reconciliation between the former enemies. Even today, the relationship remains antagonistic.[107] As Illukor stated in 1991 in reference to development and peace:

> Some people first need food, then peace. What is needed though is reconciliation and forgiveness. The job of the PTC is to listen to the voices of Teso and to carry them back to Kampala. People in Teso are waiting for an apology for cattle raiding. Then bitterness would dissipate.[108]

Women

Despite an apparent increase in the number of female combatants world-wide, the most prominent role for women in war remains that of the victim.[109] It has become increasingly popular to argue that women suffer most from violent conflict,[110] an argument which is difficult to maintain in light of the direct exposure to fighting and death faced by combatants: in Burundi for instance, it has been estimated that boys were 2-4 times more likely to be killed then girls.[111] Nevertheless, to acknowledge women's plight in times of insecurity is essential, for rape and violation, assault and attack are not merely 'side effects' of conflicts but also increasingly strategic tools

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[106] Interview with George Oguli.

[107] With reference to the renewed cattle raiding in spring 2000, Illukor was quoted saying: "The Iteso went to the bush because of their cows and they were accused of being misled to the bush. The Iteso should, therefore, not continue to suffer without effective government intervention. "Illukor Advises Teso". New Vision: Kampala, 10.04.2000.

[108] Illukor (1991).

[109] Elisabeth G. Ferris (1996): Women as Peace Makers. in: Gnanadason, Aruna/Kanyoro, Musimbi/McSpadden, Lucia Ann (eds.): Women, Violence and Non-Violent Change, p. 8.

[110] Murithi (1999): 37.

[111] World Vision quoted in Luckham/Ahmed/Muggah/White (2001): 44.

of warfare.[112] This does not only hold true for female combatants but also for civilians, and in the light of HIV/AIDS (systematic) rape by both rebels as well as soldiers has become a lethal weapon.[113] In addition, women suffer strongly from the absence of men in households and farms, as well as from the economic deprivation that accompanies violent conflict – especially in cases of the central government practising a 'scorched earth' policy or introducing sanctioning mechanisms. In many African cultures, widowed women have no right to land and property which leads to an inescapable spiral of poverty, displacement and dislocation as well as the permanent disruption of family bonds.

The heightened awareness of the suffering of women in wartime has led to an increasing focus on women as peace-builders. In recognition of women as key stakeholders, various actors in the international community, in collaboration with indigenous NGOs, are trying to promote women's influence 'from the village council to the negotiating table'.[114]

So are women good agents for peace? As the 'gentle sex', women are often ascribed peaceful attitudes of non-violence and co-operation, rather than aggression. By way of justification, biological arguments are frequently rehearsed, 'for no mother would want her children to be killed in combat'. Nevertheless, across different cultures some mothers seem less anxious about their children when they encourage violent conflict, like for example the wives of Karamojong warriors, who, rightly or wrongly, have a reputation of inciting their husbands to cattle raid;[115] the former British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher showed no hesitation in entering a war

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[112] ISIS (1998): Women's Experience in Armed Conflict. Situations in Uganda 1980-86: Luwero District. A Research Report. Kampala: ISIS - International Cross Cultural Exchange.

[113] In countries like Rwanda, for instance, where rape was a common instrument of degradation during the 1994 genocide, the HIV/AIDS prevalence amongst the survivors is shockingly high. Before the war, 45-60% of Rwandan soldiers and army officers were infected with HIV, and, allegedly, they violated Rwandan women in full knowledge of their infection. (see Clotilde Twagiramariya/Meredeth Turshen (1998): *'Favours' to Give and 'Consenting' Victims: The Sexual Politics of Survival in Rwanda*. in: Twagiramariya, Clotilde/Turshen, Meredeth (eds.): What Women Do in Wartime. Gender and Conflict in Africa. London/New York: Zed Books, p. 110.)

[114] For instance, the London based conflict resolution NGO International Alert is currently working on a global advocacy project with the title: 'Women Building Peace: From the Village Council to the Negotiating Table'. (www.international-alert.org)

between Britain and Argentina in 1982; and some women in Rwanda during the Genocide in 1994 committed the most atrocious crimes.[116] The simple stereotype of women being peaceful and men being aggressive does not hold if tested against history.

Yet, in Uganda, the significance of women in peace movements is often described along the lines of the 'gentle sex'. And indeed, at first sight, women seem gentler by far then men. Nevertheless, if one looks at the social constitution of women in Uganda it becomes apparent that many characteristics are deeply enshrined in traditional role-plays and forms of up bringing. Anthropological studies about women and war therefore argue that if there is in fact an apparent difference between men's and women's predisposition to violence, this is very likely founded less in fixed drives and material determinants of behaviour, but rather in culture and ideology, as well as social values and socialisation.[117]

In Teso, cultural expressions of gender roles in peace and warfare include aspects of men-only warrior cultures; a tendency to rate war and men as powerful and active, and peace and female as inactive, almost domestic features; an equation of women as mothers and care-takers, that is as reproductive as opposed to destructive parts of the society; as well as a degree of ingenuousness, warmth and naivete said to be intrinsic to women.[118] Whether one agrees with the prevailing gender role play in Teso or not, the way women have been socialised provides them with characteristics valuable for the promotion of peace, and renders them important agents for change in the process of reconciliation.

> In traditional Africa, a woman played a vital role in her society. By nature she is described as a pacifist, tolerant, compassionate, patient, modest and soft spoken. Self-control, and maintaining silence or speaking at opportune times are some of her other winning

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[115] Interview with Terence Achia and Thomas Okoth, Moroto 14.04.2000.
[116] African Rights (1995): Rwanda: Not So Innocent. When Women Become Killers. London: African Rights.
[117] Sharon MacDonald (1991): Gender, Peace and War: Anthropological Perspectives. Oxford: Oxford Project for Peace Studies, p. 5.
[118] This is similar to the experience illustrated in MacDonald (1991): 12.

characteristics. These qualities made the woman well qualified for the task of conflict resolution and reconciliation.[119]

Self-control and self-censorship are common features amongst African women, and so is their strong dependence on either father or husband.[120] On a general level, the role of women in Teso, like in other parts of Uganda, is characterised by inferiority to their male counterparts.[121] In many cases

> [t]he African woman lives in a state of abject poverty, social status and means of livelihood. The condition which determine the African woman's state are imposed on her by a society which maintains rigid socio-cultural values and practices against her.[122]

Socio-cultural values and practises define women's potential for peace-building, too. Often, their impact can only be very local and individual.

Women and the Teso Insurgency

In Teso, the influence women had on their husbands and sons was thus only informal – yet nevertheless very effective. During the insurgency, in most villages, only women remained. Their husbands and sons joined the rebels, either voluntarily or were recruited forcefully, or left for safer regions of Uganda. Men in Teso at the time had no choice but to either partake in the insurgency or to abandon their families, while women, left to their own devices, had to accomplish all tasks of every day life.[123] In addition to this burden, they faced poverty and famine; their children suffered from diseases and lack of medical care. Many women lost their sons and husbands in the insurgency, and they themselves became targets of NRA offensives. Rape and abuse by soldiers was frequent, sometimes with the

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[119] Murithi (1999): 34.

[120] Ruth Besha (1996): *A Life of Endless Struggle: The Position of Women in Africa.* in: Gnanadason, Aruna/Kanyoro, Musimbi/McSappen, Lucia Ann (eds.): Women, Violence and Non-Violent Change. Geneva: WCC, p. 57.

[121] Nevertheless, women in Uganda have benefited from Museveni's national policy of promoting gender issues. Compared with many other African societies, women in Uganda have made some progress in the past decade. See for instance Arthur Bainomugisha, (1999): *The Empowerment of Women in Uganda.* in: Mugaju, Justus (ed.): Uganda's Age of Reforms. Kampala: Fountain Publishers, 89-103.

[122] Victoria Sekitoleka (1996): *The African Woman on the Continent: Her Present State, Prospects and Strategies.* in: Abdul-Raheem, Tajudeen (ed.): Pan Africanism. Politics, Economy and Social Change in the Twenty-First Century. London: Pluto, p. 67.

[123] Interview with Alfred Aruo.

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rationale of punishing their rebel husbands in the bush. Yet the Teso women also became victims of their own 'boys'.

Since the insurgency in Teso was mainly fought on grounds of economic deprivation and a policy of neglect by the new government, which manifested itself in extreme poverty and famine, the women realised that the violent conflict in Teso only deteriorated their situation. Instead of improving the circumstances, the fighting made them worse. Through informal and casual meetings while collecting water from the wells, mourning about lost family members or similar shared day to day practices, the women exchanged their worries and fears and collaborated in passing on messages to related rebels in the bush to encourage their return. They used emotional pressure to appeal to their husbands' and sons' responsibility to care for them and their small children, as opposed to making their conditions even more difficult.[124] Some women even went as far as refusing their partners their 'marital duties' in order to exercise pressure on them. [125] The informal role women played is apparent in the words of an ex-rebel

> Women played a very big role. I must say, in any conflict zone you women have a lot of power. Amongst other things the problem is that you have not realised your power and sometimes the people who deal in conflict resolution have not realised it and addressed it seriously.
> Especially here in Teso, the women helped us so much. The morale they give to you. You can be in the bush for as long as 7 days, that means you have not taken care of yourself, and she still hugs you and tells you: 'You are nice.' So you can see what it means. Then in terms of pacification they can say: 'Here, the children, they need you! So I think the best is whatever happens out there - lets go. You may lose what happens out there, but you save your life for my sake and for the children.'[126]

However what, in Echweru's words, appears to be a collaborative effort amongst the Teso women was, according to most of my interviewees, merely the deployment of their pitiful situation.[127] Women used sympathy to

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[124] Interview with Mary Epechu and Pius Okiria.
[125] Interview with Stella Sabiiti, Kampala 9.2.2000.
[126] Interview with Musa Echweru.
[127] My experience runs counter the attempt of using the Teso women as role-models for women's impact on peace-building as promoted by CECORE, Kampala. Interview with Stella Sabiiti.

emotionally appeal to their husbands and sons. Although this belief is not generally shared,[128] according to my experience, women in Teso have very little influence on political decision-making. Due to their poor education paired with the traditionally patriarchal culture, women were not able to organise themselves formally and to exercise resistance against their fighting men.

The domestic appeal of the Teso women to their husbands and sons worked mainly because it revealed a paradox in the struggle. Since one of the rebels' motives was to alleviate poverty and economic exclusion, they had to acknowledge that the insurgency was counter-productive. If the rebels had been stronger it is likely they would not have listened too much to their women, yet maybe the women would not have seen any reason to influence their husbands anyway.[129] In Teso, however, the women rather preferred their men to look defeated than to be killed.[130]

On a general level, the limited role of organised women's initiatives to the resolution of the Teso insurgency raises significant questions about the empowerment of women. "Empowerment is associated with the positive transformation of individuals, groups, and structures,"[131] and is thus vital for every peace-process. Women, like all other social groups, are stakeholders in peace (and war) and should therefore be able to participate in political decision making. In addition, as stated in Chapter 7 with reference to Murray Last, violent conflict does not know of boundaries, it is not restricted to frontlines but stretches into the domestic realm predominately occupied by women. Violent conflict happens on different levels and appears in different forms, and the abuse of women is a major feature. By consequence, it is suggested that the road from war to peace should therefore also include the transformation of the role of women from victims to empowered agents.

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[128] Sabiiti refers to a proverb saying that 'decisions are made in the bedroom'.

[129] A very different role of domestic persuasion seems to occur amongst the families of Karamojong warriors were women allegedly encourage their husbands to be brave and to raid cattle.

[130] Interview with Musa Echweru.

And yet, the project of 'women building peace' relies heavily on paradoxes. As pointed out by Donna Pankhurst and Jenny Pearce, the promotion of women as peace agents depends on their cultural 'gentleness' - like 'pacifist, tolerant, compassionate, patient, modest and soft spoken' as quoted above - that is on terms "which restrict their ability to challenge those gender relations which inhibit their empowerment".[132] Instead of challenging structures of exclusion and inclusion, here between women and men, the promotion of women as peace-builders produces and re-produces relations of inequality and subjugation. Once women have been liberated from their inferior role they become as outspoken and controversial as their husbands and sons. In Teso, the most powerful women were strong advocates of the insurgency and continue to remain hostile to Museveni.[133]

In Teso, the women were however successful in reducing the use of violence through emphasising their suffering to their husbands and sons, and thus rendering them conscious of the traumatising implications of fighting. Albeit based on a notion of compassion and pity, their strategy proved successful and reduced the level of violence.

Elders

Traditionally, elders are the most highly respected mediators in African culture. Their social status as eminent persons provides them with both the necessary trust and respect to act as facilitators as well as judges. Most African societies are based on a hierarchical system which provides elders with a reputation of wisdom and ultimately social and political power. Respect is key and decisions made by (mostly male) elders are commonly adhered to. Although the increase of western influence and its egalitarian culture of 'modernity' undermines this tradition, even today the role of a *Mzee*, the Swahili world for elder, is of major significance. Nevertheless, as a consequence of western cultural influence such as notions of

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[131] Edward W. Schwerin (1995): Mediation, Citizen Empowerment and Transformational Politics. Westport/London: Praeger, p. 6.
[132] Donna Pankhurst/Jenny Pearce (1998): *Engendering the Analysis of Conflict: Perspectives from the South*. in: Afshar, Haleh (ed.): Women and Empowerment. London: Macmillian, p. 162.
[133] Interview with Frieda Ediamo.

independence, equality and liberation, the significant role of elders has begun to crumble.

Elders and the Teso Insurgency

In Teso, many elders did not like the insurgency for they realised that it would bring suffering to Teso. Although they consented that the fighting was justified, they nevertheless emphasised that the rebels had no chance, and that it would hinder progress in the region. Most of them advised against fighting, yet the rebels were not receptive. Often, when an elder spoke out he would be killed.[134]

One of the casualties of the insurgency was therefore the authority that elders traditionally had over the youth. The power of the gun disrupted the hierarchies and led the youth to disrespect their parents and grandparents. As a result, elders had less impact on the reconciliation then one would assume in the Ugandan context.

And yet, one major initiative was undertaken by Haji Okodel from Kumi district in 1992. He chaired a meeting between a selected team of Iteso elders and the Brigadier Command in Mbale in which both military personnel and elders encouraged a reconciliation strategy of persuasion rather then force.[135]

On a local and family level elders consulted and advised their rebel sons and called for reason and the end of fighting. Similar to the women they thus had an informal impact on the promotion of peace in Teso. However, according to my information, public clan meetings and long debates facilitated by elders never occurred.

Due to the small role elders played in the resolution of the insurgency it is difficult to assess their impact on changing the prevailing power asymmetries of inclusion and exclusion. In the public domain, their efforts proved to have little success. In the private realm, however, through

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[134] Interview with Pius Okiria.
[135] NV 24.4.1992

appealing to their sons' consciousness, they might have had an impact on the reduction of violence.

Nevertheless, in light of the present fashion of promoting elders' participation in conflict resolution it has to be acknowledged that elders have the potential to influence communities. However, and Teso is a very good example here, elders can also encourage violence. Similar to clerics and women, and possibly all other agents in a process of mediation, they do not have an intrinsic agenda of peace and reconciliation. What they do have is social and political power – and this can work in favour or against violent conflicts. The present promotion of community elders, or a council of elders, as agents of peace is therefore a delicate enterprise.

Mediation and the End of the Insurgency

The insurgency in Teso never had a formal ending. 'Hitler' Eregu, the 1st Commander of the Rebel High Command and one of the last boys remaining in the bush, left Uganda in May 1992. For most people today this constituted the end.[136] However, smaller groups of insurgents continued fighting until 1994 when they either surrendered or where captured by the NRA.[137]

One important lesson learned from investigating the different actors that contributed to the end of the insurgency is that third party intervention has to happen on different levels and at different stages of the conflict.[138] The various actors influenced the constituency from different angles, leading to greater impact. The Teso Commission and the churches, for instance, addressed a similar group of people: the local population, on one hand, and the Rebel High Command, on the other. They communicated about their ventures, and supported each other on a small scale. Father Pius, for instance, enabled Grace Akello to meet with the 2nd Commander Sam Otai,

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[136] NV 19.9.1993
[137] "Rebel Leader Surrenders". Radio Uganda: Kampala, 2 February 1993; "Ugandan Minister Says for Rebel Army to Dissolve, Calls for Exiles to Return". Radio Uganda: Kampala, 6 July 1992.
[138] This point is also central to traditional approaches to mediation. See for instance Keith Webb (1995): "Third Party Intervention and the Ending of Wars." *Paradigms* 9(2), p. 28.

Bishop Illukor participated in seminars and conferences organised by the Teso Commission. Together they were successful in convincing the remaining rebels to come out of the bush and to surrender their guns.

Evaluation of the Mediation Process

By way of conclusion it has to be admitted that the issue of evaluating mediation efforts is a problematic one. How can we possibly measure success?[139] And "what does it mean to settle or resolve, or manage an ethnic conflict successfully?"[140] Most obviously, the cessation of hostilities is a reliable indicator, but many mediation attempts contribute valuable small pieces to a larger whole which might result in some form of peace. Yet, how can one determine which initiatives contributed in what way?

At the outset of this chapter, with the aid of Jabri, we established that a discourse on peace requires the challenging of the structural exclusion that has given rise to the conflict, as well as the reduction of the culture of violence which renders violence a legitimate way of solving disputes. In Chapter 2 and 3 it has been argued that this discourse cannot be placed in an environment of undistorted communication, as suggested by Habermas' discourse ethics, but rather that it resembles what Gadamer calls *a fusion of horizons* in which both parties no longer remain who they were. By way of conclusion I would like to return to Jabri's requirements, link them to the process of hermeneutics and evaluate whether the mediation in Teso has indeed led to changes.

Structural Exclusion

The accumulation of various different mediation efforts, from various different agents, did indeed lead to a change in Teso. Couched in a framework of analysis based on Giddens' structuration theory, it is fair to argue that the mediation efforts served as the agency that ultimately

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[139] See for example Hoffman (1995).

[140] Mark Howard Ross/Jay Rothman (1999): *Issues of Theory and Practice in Ethnic Conflict Resolution*. in: Ross, Mark Howard/Rothman, Jay (eds.): Theory and Practice in Ethnic Conflict Resolution. Theorizing Success and Failure. Basingstoke/London: Macmillan Press, p. 5.

changed the structural properties prevailing in Teso at the time of the insurgency. At the outset, from the Iteso and Kumam perspective, people felt marginalised in Museveni's Uganda. Economically, politically and culturally they believed to be unappreciated and excluded. As a result, their perception was very much characterised by an us/them dichotomy. Through the agency of the various mediators, and first and foremost the Teso Commission, this strict binary was challenged and changed. Especially the promise of development, at a time where famine was looming in Teso, assured people that the central government would care for them. Their image of Museveni changed from that of a dictator to a patron.

In this sense the political objective of the insurgency, to challenge the exclusive boundaries, proved successful to a degree. As argued in Chapter 1, the rationale behind the dissent in Teso was to challenge the prevailing structural properties of exclusion. And yet, in light of the suffering experienced during the years of bush war especially the civilian population, which had supported the insurgency so strongly, moderated their political objectives in favour of simple personal and economic security. Here, again, the structural dispositions, which prevailed at the outset of the insurgency, changed and as a consequence enabled the agency of the mediators. Giving up ambitious political aims led to Museveni's promise of economic development to be a sufficient incentive to cease the struggle.

The Promise of Development

As mentioned above, the language used in the process of mediation by the government was mainly with reference to food security. And yet, as shown in Chapters 6 and 7, in Teso, the insurgency did not arise simply due to the lack of development. Rather, the relationship between the Kumam and Iteso on the one hand, and the Museveni government on the other, was characterised by mutual mistrust and led to the interpretation of each other's actions through a perspective in which the other was rendered a threat. Yet, once this picture of the enemy was created it was legitimised in terms of the lack of development. The violent conflict was justified, and thus maintained, with development becoming the symbol for struggle. Social, political and economic progress was what the Iteso and Kumam

were fighting for. The gesture of the NRM government through the Teso Commission, in which it offered development if the rebels surrendered, was therefore successful in appeasing the people of Teso. In the words of the PCT Commissioner Akello

> Then PCT realised that there were some people who wanted to listen to what we wanted to say, that was to support them economically. Some kind of hope that they have to start all over again. ... We wanted them to feel that they had a stake in the economical future of Teso. Instead of fighting they now concentrated on development.[141]

Therefore, although development was not the cause it was nevertheless a part of the solution to the violent conflict. In Teso, 'development' changed from being the 'symbol for struggle' to being the 'symbol for trust' in the new government. In this sense the future anticipation of wealth and prosperity functioned as 'the image', as introduced with reference to Galtung in Chapter 3. The promise of development served as an incentive to reinterpret the past which allowed for this image potentially to be realised, paving the way for peace and reconciliation in the future.

Fused Horizons

Regarding Gadamer's notion of fusing horizons we can therefore ask whether in Teso, in the early 1990s, a process of fusion did indeed take place.

As argued in Chapter 3, in order to conceive of and appreciate the Other, Gadamer argues, we refer to our own preconceptions and prejudices which result from our own historical situatedness. Only through them are we able to understand the issue at stake; they are the basic requirements of hermeneutics. In the process of hermeneutics we question our historical situatedness, that is our *Vor-urteile* (prejudices and prejudgement) which leads to potentially amending or even discarding them.

In particular, the work of the Teso Commission led the civilian population to challenge their prejudices and prejudgements about the Museveni government. Since development had turned into the central issue,

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[141] Interview with Grace Akello.

they re-evaluated their critique of the NRM and changed the prevailing narrative of Museveni being their enemy to him being their provider. In doing so, the people of Teso altered the past they retrieved and recalled, and which defined their present. In their recollection, the motivation which drove the insurgency was no longer defined in political terms, but on the basis of struggling for development. Changing the past, however, was only possible in light of anticipating 'the image' of a particular future, the future of prosperity and peace in a wider Uganda, so that the promise of development through the PCT facilitated the resolution. This entailed an identity shift as the people no longer conceived of themselves as marginalised and thus no longer made their true identity reliant upon the scapegoating false difference.[142] Both, the NRM government and the Teso community, through a process of dialogue, entered into a communion in which they remained not who they were. Their identity changed from aggressor to patron, in the case of Museveni, and from excluded to stakeholder, in the case of the people of Teso.

Only through casting themselves into a future horizon of prosperity and security safeguarded by the government were the Iteso and Kumam able to amend their *Vor-urteile* about Museveni, manifested in the stories they told about him, and thus open their horizon for reconciliation — the fusion of horizons. The backwards and forwards movement hermeneutics was successfully at play.

Culture of Violence

The question remains whether the mediation process in Teso was successful in reducing the culture of violence. As discussed in Chapter 7 the application of violence at the beginning of the insurgency was, to an extent, legitimate and widely accepted.

Regarding the introduction of non-violent means of social interaction, the mediation process was in this respect rather a failure. Towards the end of the insurgency, due to the individual experience of combat, the use of

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[142] Connolly (1991): 67.

violence had even increased. As Nordstrom suggests, people had 'learned violence'.[143] The prevalence of force and firearms lingered over Teso for some time and manifested itself in aggression and crime in the public and private realm. To this day people in Teso suggest that they live in a rather aggressive environment and that workshops to promote non-violent conflict resolution or peace clubs in schools should be encouraged in order to give people the opportunity to 'unlearn' violence.[144]

However, despite the initial success of the mediation efforts in Teso, the atmosphere today is rather negative. The following chapter shall explore the process of post-conflict reconstruction and its failure to consolidate the initial success of the mediation and to turn it into a process of reconciliation.

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[143] Nordstrom (1997): 217.
[144] TIP (2000): *Activities and Strategies*. Soroti: TIP.

POST-CONFLICT RECONSTRUCTION
AND RECONCILIATION

"Ever since the insurgency" people say, "Teso has changed." Despite the difficulties of identifying change in hindsight, the present chapter shall attempt to sketch how the way of life for the Kumam and Iteso has been affected, and changed, as a result of the insurgency. Or, to put this into the language of hermeneutics: how has the flux been arrested?

In Teso, nine years after the end of the insurgency, resentment is again very high. A general feeling of betrayal by the Museveni government prevails - the promise of development, which encouraged the end of the violent conflict, was never fulfilled. Post-conflict reconstruction was absent in Teso. As a result, there is peace in Teso now, but it remains very shallow.

Beginning by painting a picture of the *status quo* in Teso today this chapter will investigate the long-term success of the mediation initiative and the process of reconciliation. Since development has played such a significant role in the mediation process I shall start with showing how little it has improved in the region, and how poor the people still are. Following this, I shall provide an account of two different ways of responding to the past of the insurgency.[1] In order to understand the ontology of the actual, I shall firstly sketch ways of remembering with reference to the only war memorial to commemorate the insurgency, a mausoleum close to the trading centre of Mukura, Kumi district, and secondly I shall describe the invention of the new cultural leader of the Iteso, Papa Emorimor, in order to highlight an innovative way of changing the role of the Iteso in the wider Uganda. Being central to the hermeneutic process of retrieving the past and casting oneself forward into the future, both examples, albeit different in scope, shall provide insights into how the people of Teso are dealing with

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[1] Unfortunately, due to space constraints, what cannot be discussed in this section are issues related to social healing, justice and forgiving.

their past today, and how this shapes their prospects for the future. The examples chosen are of vastly different character, which reflects the plurality of perspectives and opinions in communities *per se*.

The Failure of Post-Conflict Reconstruction in Teso

Poverty in Teso

Today, Teso is one of the poorest regions in Uganda. Since the end of the insurgency the districts have endured two famines.[2] According to the 1998 UNDP Development Report, the degree of development in Uganda is still very low. At first sight, there has been some general improvement; and in reference to the eastern regions of Uganda the UNDP report states that this economic rebound is

> largely a product of relative peace and security in that part of the country after years of conflict. The restoration of peace has been ensued by re-stocking of cattle and modest revival in other forms of private investment.[3]

However, the figures for Teso provided in the report contradict this argument.[4] According to a graphic in the text, based on figures from 1995, 16 of the 39 districts of Uganda recorded a decline in the Human Development Index (HDI).[5] Of these 16 districts the (then only) two districts of Teso (Soroti and Kumi) came third and fourth last. Soroti has lost 0.016, Kumi 0.017 HDI points. Pallisa, an area closely related to Teso and also affected by the insurgency lost the most (0.019 HDI points), and the two districts of Karamoja, Kotido and Moroto, came 15th and 2nd last, with a decrease of 0.003 and 0.018 HDI points. In the overall HDI ranking

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[2] *"17 Die of Hunger in Eastern Uganda"*. Xinhua News Agency: Kampala, 24 January 1994; *"Famine Threatening Eastern Uganda"*. Xinhua News Agency: Kampala, 14 March 1995.

[3] UNDP (1998): *Uganda Development Report*. New York: UNDP, p. 11.

[4] Please refer to the appendix for graphics.

[5] "The human development index (HDI) measures human progress on the basis of human achievement in three broad indicators namely: longevity, educational attainment, and standard of living. Longevity is measured by life expectancy at birth, educational attainment by a combination of adult literacy and school enrolment ratio, and standard of living by real GDP per capita. The HDI is an aggregation of these key indicators of human progress. In numerical terms, the index ranges from 0 to 1 where 0 indicates total absence of human development and 1 indicates the highest level of human development." (UNDP (1998): 21.)

by district for 1996, Kotido and Moroto were on the bottom of the graph, Kumi was position five and Soroti ten.[6] As for the 1996 Human Poverty Index (HPI),[7] again Kotido and Moroto ranked lowest, Soroti was ninth, and Kumi eleventh worst.

Poverty is a highly contested concept and different definitions are on offer. UNDP suggests an inclusive notion, which not only focuses on material well being, an economic perspective, but also on personal development:

> [P]overty involves the lack, deficiency and loss of social, economic, cultural, political and other entitlements that individuals, households and communities should enjoy in order to exist and survive in well-being and with dignity.[8]

Taking this definition as a guideline, Teso is considered very poor. Especially in rural areas many people are without access to water and sanitation, health care or sufficient nutrition. They lack in self-esteem and prospects for the future.[9]

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[6] Unfortunately more up-to-date figures are not available. See appendix for graphics.

[7] "The [HPI] index is based on the proportion of a population that is deprived in three respects, namely: longevity, knowledge, and decent standard of living. These are the same factors on which the computation of the human development index is based. While the HDI places emphasis on achievement, the HPI concentrates on deprivation or exclusion in these three broad areas of human life." (UNDP (1998): 24.)

[8] UNDP (1998): 27.

[9] This impression based on a series of interviews with rural peasants in Kamuda, as well as group discussions with LC3 chairpeople during a consultation organised by NURP (Northern Uganda Reconstruction Project, Office of the Prime Minister) in conjunction with the Swedish Government: *Peace, Conflict Resolution and Development*, Soroti 21.-26.03.2000.
One reason for the poor standard of living is the failure of the World Bank's Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP, 1987-1992) from which only a particular section of Uganda's rural and urban population benefited. In a liberal market economy, as promoted by SAP, the main links between the macro-economy of a state and the individual households are markets, as well as economic and social infrastructures. Liberal Structural Adjustment Programmes tend to favour those market participants who have access to capital, who can respond to market changes by adjusting production, create operating efficiencies and/or implement flexible work practices (i.e. change staff numbers, conditions, wages or move production elsewhere). Small participants are often unable to adjust in this way leading to a reduction in their incomes. In Teso, the small-scale producers do not have the resource capacity to expand their production and to compete successfully in a free market structure. Especially Katakwi district, but also Soroti and Kumi, are physically far away from marketing infrastructures so that local farmers and entrepreneurs are unable to fully benefit from price liberalisation. (CDRN (1996): *A Study of Poverty in Selected Districts of Uganda: Apac, Kampala, Kapchorwa, Kibaale, Kisoro, Kumi and Nebbi*. Kampala: CDRN Report, March 1996, p.4. For a critical self-evaluation see Alcira Kreimer/John Eriksson et. al. (1998): The World Bank's Experience with Post-Conflict Reconstruction. Washington: World Bank report, p. 65.)

As discussed in the previous chapter, towards the end of the insurgency the hopes and aspirations for development in Teso were high. Yet over the course of time the momentum was lost and gave way to disillusion and apathy in the community. What were the reasons for this reversion of sentiment?

Initial Success? Presidential Elections in 1996

Only 4 years after the end of the insurgency Presidential Elections were held in Uganda. In Teso, Museveni received about 60% of the votes.[10] Considering recent history in the region the result seems surprising. How can people, who had risked their lives in a violent struggle, turn around in such a short space of time and show their appreciation for the President so overwhelmingly?

The impression drawn while conducting fieldwork was that Museveni and his entourage were successful in buying votes. Shortly before the election, former rebels, still well respected in their home region but meanwhile part of the Movement system, distributed bags with sugar and salt to the Iteso and Kumam. In the words of a journalist:

> The catchphrase is "eat widely, vote wisely." That means that voters in Thursday's election for Uganda's new parliament should take all the beer, meat, money, salt and other inducements being offered by the 809 contestants, but vote their conscience.
> The bribery is indiscriminate and open, but analysts believe it will have little effect on the voting, which will seal Uganda's return to democracy after a succession of coups and dictatorships since independence from Britain in 1962.[11]

However, from my experience in Teso, the bribery had a positive outcome on Museveni's election success. Considering the poverty in Teso, but also more importantly the system of patronage that is in place in Uganda, buying votes is not a difficult endeavour. This is however not to suggest that handing out food to a constituency renders the electorate genuinely supportive. Rather, patronage establishes a system of reciprocity

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[10] "Museveni Wins Presidential Elections with 74.2 Per Cent of Vote". Radio Uganda: Kampala, 11 May 1996.

[11] Hugh Nevill (1996): "Eat Widely, Vote Wisely". Agence France Press: Paris, 25 June 1996.

in which certain demands have to be fulfilled. Taking food in an election campaign subjects, in its literal sense, the Iteso and Kumam to the President. Whether they agree with his politics or not, they commit themselves to supporting him.

In June 2000, a referendum on the future of the political system of Uganda was held. The electorate was given the opportunity to vote for either the continuation of the non-party system in form of the National Resistance Movement, or to change to a multiparty system of representative democracy. In the course of the campaign the people in Teso increasingly interpreted the referendum to be less about political systems and more about the degree of support for Museveni. The Chairman of the National Movement Conference, who led the campaign for the Movement system, was Museveni himself. In June 2000 the Kumam and Iteso thus 'voted with their feet': in Soroti district municipality merely 28% participated in the Referendum out of which 4,333 voted for the Movement system and 1,354 for the Multipartists.[12] This suggests a low degree of support for Museveni at the time.

Not Keeping the Promise of Development

A number of different factors contributed to the peace in Teso remaining shallow. The Teso Commission, as well as the Museveni government, had the potential to provide the people of Teso with confidence and trust, and yet they failed.

The Presidential Commission for Teso

As explained above the mandate of the PCT was to encourage economic and social development in Teso. One major task was the restocking of cattle lost during the insurgency. In the formerly cattle herding culture, only 7% of the previous cattle herd remained.[13] In a society were cattle means not only food but also political power and social welfare, this was a considerable shock. The degree of frustration is apparent in this remark by an informant:

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[12] New Vision 8.7.2000.
[13] Interview with James Eceret.

Akello delivered Teso to NRM, and NRM to Teso. The NRM has gained more then the Iteso: the conflict ended but there were few economic improvements.[14]

It is impossible to evaluate in detail how much money was spent on restocking cattle in Teso. The Commission received very generous funds from DANIDA[15] as well as from other international donors. Simultaneously, a number of international NGOs financed the reconstruction process outside of the PCT framework. Yet, as in other areas of Uganda, corruption reduced the budget drastically,[16] and difficult demands and monitoring systems established by international donors proved to further consume large amounts of funding.[17]

All in all, the restocking of cattle in Teso was of little success, and has left the population, once more, with the bitter feeling of neglect. As a result, the good reputation of the Teso Commission has suffered significantly, and individual members are sometimes accused of 'eating money', or at least of using their positions as Commissioners as spring-boards for their personal career development. The former chairman Epelu-Opio is now Deputy Vice-Chancellor of Makerere University, while the former Commission Secretary Grace Akello is now Minister of State for *Entandikwa*.

Today, when asked about the Teso Commission the response of most Kumam and Iteso is immediately negative. Only when questioned about its role in the period from 1991 to 1992 do people begin to acknowledge the positive impact the Commission had.

Museveni's Government

In a post-conflict environment, according to E. A. Brett, national integration depends on

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[14] Conversation with Iteso at Cafe Amigos, Soroti town 29.04.2000.
[15] Interview with John Olweny, Kampala 08.02.2000.
[16] On 18.1.2000, the MP for Kabremaido (Soroti district), former Attorney General and Minister of Justice Joseph Ekemu was convicted to a prison sentence of 2 years for embezzling 113 Million Ush. meant for restocking. The Monitor 17.6.2000.
[17] Interview with Moses Omiat, Soroti 21.03.2000.

the existence of an institutional system which protects the civil rights of all the major civil groups and ensures that their claims on resources will not be excluded through the arbitrary exercise of the monopoly of power. ... Civil wars are best ended through a process of reconciliation and reconstruction designed to restore faith in the representativeness and equity of the political and economic system. Several countries are now attempting to do this in Africa, but there is little doubt that Uganda has now produced the most successful record of sustained progress.[18]

The background to Uganda's success-story, Brett argues, is based on Museveni systematically attempting to overcome jealousy and mistrust through incorporating opponents into a 'broad-based' government, constitutional and administrative reform, and a programme of economic liberalisation and reconstruction which aims at addressing the needs of marginalised regions of the country.[19]

From my personal experience in Teso, none of the three strategies mentioned by Brett can be verified. Firstly the Kumam and Iteso feel that there is little space for them in the 'broad-based' government. Although the Iteso provide two ministers, Akello and Omeda, people argue that they are merely ministers of state, and not cabinet ministers, and that their influence is very limited. Furthermore, it is argued frequently that the present Iteso NRA Major General, Jeje Odongo is only a placeholder. The real decisions, people say, are made by the army personnel close to Museveni.

As for Brett's second point, constitutional and administrative reform, the process of decentralisation introduced to Uganda by Museveni is difficult to assess without a detailed economic and social study.[20] Subjectively, however, many people in Teso lament the disappearance of state organised market structures and guaranteed crop prices, such as those in place during the Obote government. Many farmers in Teso cannot afford to transport their goods to the large markets of Kampala where they could achieve higher prices so that farming has become less lucrative.

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[18] E. A. Brett (1996): *Rebuilding War Damaged Communities in Uganda*. Allen, Tim (ed.): In Search of Cool Ground. War, Flight and Homecoming in Northeast Africa. London/Trenton: James Curry/Africa World Press, p. 205.
[19] Brett (1996): 209
[20] For a critical assessment see Fumihiko Saito (2001/forthcoming): "Decentralisation Theories Revisited: Lessons from Uganda." *Ryukoku RISS Bulletin*(31).

One of the major concerns in Teso today is that the government's district support is allocated on a per capita basis. [21] Yet, when the last census was held in 1991 Teso found itself in the middle of an insurgency war so that many people did not register for fear of being arrested. As a result, people argue that today they receive disproportionally little support from central government so that the three Teso districts incur very high budget deficits.

Thirdly, people in Teso argue that the economic changes introduced by Museveni's government have been beneficial for some areas of the country, yet not for Teso or Karamoja. According to the UNDP figures provided above, in both regions development actually declined in recent years. Already marginalised regions, the people contest they have become even more marginalised.

Uganda's decentralisation was encouraged by the World Banks liberal market politics through its Structural Adjustment Programme, which had devastating effects on many African communities, including Teso, to the point that even the World Bank today recognises its mistakes.[22] The major points of self-criticism are

- poor performance in social sector, esp. health and education: too much dependency placed on existing democracies, not enough on use of NGOs.
- project design did not adequately reflect Uganda's need for a flexible, process oriented project design, which is particularly evident in the social sector where ministries where too weak to accommodate spending.
- Bank staff were not familiar with working in conflict areas.
- staff resources and time were mainly concentrated on Kampala, which led to little understanding of the concerns of local and international NGOs.
- insufficient attention was paid to consensus building. There was an excessive use of conditionalities; dysfunctional emphasis on raising taxation.

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[21] Interview with demographer Stephen Esunget, Soroti 21.02.2000.
[22] Kreimer/Eriksson et. al. (1998): 65.

It is in response to these mistakes that the World Bank is currently revising its post-conflict reconstruction policies as referred to above.

The Impact of the International Community

The reference to the World Bank shows that despite the local approach taken in the present thesis, Uganda in general, and Teso in particular, do not exist in isolation from the rest of the world. This is also manifested in the negative impact the international development community has on the imbalance of prosperity in the country. If one was to assume that the central government supports all the districts in Uganda equally one cannot but focus on other, additional sources of funds and development. The most resourceful groups, in this respect, are international organisations. Looking at a map of Uganda it is obvious that the vast majority of these organisations offer their services in western Uganda, as well as in the greater Kampala region. There is a very strong imbalance between the amount of foreign investment that flows into central and west Uganda on one side, and eastern and northern on the other. In a country where, for instance, 50% of the health sector is funded by international donors,[23] as well as 80% of the total government development budget,[24] this asymmetry accounts for an extremely uneven distribution of practical, technical and financial assistance. When asked why they favour the central and western areas international organisations commonly refer to the already existing network of donor organisations which facilitates logistical support, as well as the proximity to the capital and the level of security.

Security, in particular, proves to be paradoxical. Insecurity arises in regions where people harbour resentment against the authorities. The subjective feeling of neglect and exclusion might lead to drastic actions like terrorist or rebel attacks. Yet neglect, or privileging, is not only provoked by central authorities. In areas such as Teso people do not differentiate if the funds flowing into west and central Uganda are provided by the government

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[23] Nicolas de Torrente/Frederick Mwesigye (1999): The Evolving Roles of the State, Donors, and NGOs Providing Health Services in a Liberal Environment: Some Insights form Uganda. Kampala: CBR report.

or by external donors. They only focus on the disparity of money available, and blame the government. In addition, there is a general understanding that the government is responsible for the distribution of international assistance; that the donors themselves have preferences is not considered.

Consequently, considering the security risk deriving from the asymmetric distribution of international funds, one has to attribute a degree of responsibility to donors. As evident in Teso, the unequal distribution of assistance creates a sense of injustice amongst the affected people. This may potentially lead to strong resentment against the government. In an already fragile political situation, the widening of the gap between rich and poor by international donors potentially enhances the antagonism towards the government and increases the security risk. Paradoxically, the resulting insecurity would further prevent international donors from becoming active in a particular region, and set a spiral process in motion in which the fear of violent conflict enhances the possibility of its occurrence.

The Relation Between the People of Teso and the Wider Uganda Today

Nevertheless, experiences of exclusion are potentially subjective. In Teso, it is difficult to draw a line between the personal feeling (or rather collective, for it is true for the vast majority of the population) of being disfavoured by the government, and the actual neglect based on a deliberate, unequal distribution of government resources. However, the number of Iteso and Kumam in public offices and private enterprises suggests that there is no general, national policy of discrimination against people from Teso. Yet some people are concerned, as expressed by Father Pius:

> The people think that the present government is mainly pro west and that we have been economically discriminated. Could it [the insurgency] happen again? I am worried.[25]

Therefore, in the present study I would like to suggest that it does not matter what the 'reality' is, that is whether Teso is treated unjustly by

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[24] Private conversation with Nicolas de Torrente, Kampala 11.02.2000.
[25] Interview with Pius Okiria.

the Ugandan government, but merely how the people interpret the situation. If they subjectively feel deprived of what they think is their right as a people of Uganda, then efforts should be made to gain their trust and confidence, and convince them of the opposite.

Transforming Identities - Between Past and Future

Considering the degree of exclusion and the lack of development in Teso today the question is whether the Kumam and Iteso have to some extent managed to dissent from the hierarchical relations that tied them to the Museveni government, and which they sought to challenge through the insurgency. Has challenging led to changing? Changing, or transforming, identities is central to the hermeneutic process of evaluating past, future, and the Other. In Chapter 3 we discussed that the way we conceive of our past is determined by the way we anticipate the future, and *vice versa*, and that present identities are determined by this circular movement. The following two examples shall therefore illustrate if and how the relationship to the Museveni government has changed.

Remembering the Past: The Mukura Memorial

Bernard Lewis suggests differentiating three types of history: remembered, recovered and invented.[26] Here, 'remembered' refers to the collective memory of a community, 'recovered' to the reconstruction of past events after they had sunk into oblivion, whereas 'invention' designates a new interpretation of the past, either as derivative or fabrication. In particular, the categories of recovering and inventing draw attention to the potential for manipulation inherent in the process of remembering.

This section takes issue with *remembered* history, specifically the way people in Mukura remember a particular event, and it will thus focus on collective memory and its impact on the present Teso identity. Identity, self, and personhood are strategic targets in violent conflicts.[27] This does not

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[26] Bernard Lewis (1975): History. Remembered, Recovered, Invented. Princeton: Princeton University Press, pp. 11-12.
[27] Nordstrom (1997): 178.

only relate to the individual but also to the society as a whole. Deprived of material goods and belongings, casualties of assaults and attacks, people suffer hardship and pain. The argument that runs through this thesis suggests that in the aftermath of a violent conflict what has to be (re)created are thus individual as well as social bodies. Identities have to be newly considered – on the basis of their reflection of past events.

Mukura

On 11 June 1989, 47 people suffocated in a railway wagon in Mukura, Kumi district. In the preceding days, about 300 Kumam and Iteso civilians were rounded up by NRA soldiers on the suspicion of being rebels.[28] After being kept under very poor conditions, tortured and abused, they were incarcerated in the railway wagon where most of them died from the lack of oxygen. According to an eyewitness:

> That was Tuesday, the 11th. These people were locked up there [in the railway wagon]. Over 100 according to my estimate, they were over 100. Commotion broke out, inside the coach. They stayed there for almost one and a half hours. Then commotion was fading, fading, fading, fading, till eventually everything cooled down. Then I was again picked, that "okay, you come". They were by then making porridge. The soldiers were making porridge. They told me to come out. They opened the coach and I found bodies doing what?, lying there ... inside the coach.
> Then they asked me to go and pick ... to pick some more people to come and carry out the what?, carry outside the bodies. Some had not died in fact. Some were apparently dead. Those who were found apparently dead ... as they were trying to recover they could be trampled upon, at the necks here. They just step on you [making a snap with the fingers].
> And they died. More than half. Only some few, I don't know how lucky they were, I picked some and helped them to enter the what?, the goods shed now. Very late ... it was already dark now even, I am sure that some recovered during the night, but then they were finished by the soldiers.
> ...those who were apparently dead, when they recovered they were finished.[29]

Amongst the abuses committed by the NRA during the insurgency the Mukura railway incident stands out not only as a manifestation of brutal violence against a group of potentially innocent civilians, but also as the

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[28] Conversation with three young men, Mukura, 10.4.2000.
[29] Testimony of survivor recorded by Heriques (2000): 245-6.

only case where the Ugandan government took responsibility for what happened and apologised to the people.[30] Yet, the government and army maintain that the incident was not a planed assault but rather an accident, a misjudgement, by the local NRA officers.[31] Nevertheless, in order to compensate for the loss of human life and suffering endured, Museveni promised the people of Mukura financial support and free education for the orphans of the dead, as well as a memorial for the victims.

Reparations, as offered by the Museveni government, are potentially strong symbolic acts for they recognise individual and collective suffering.[32] From the viewpoint of restorative justice, restitution payment by the perpetrator can also symbolise the perpetrator's commitment to apologising and taking responsibility. Due to the strong symbolic value, disputes over reparations are therefore particularly revealing of the social and political current, as well as the attitudes the former parties to the conflict have towards one another at present. The Mukura memorial thus provides valuable insights into how the people from Mukura relate to the Museveni government.

In Mukura today, local people believe that much of the financial compensation promised as reparation was 'eaten' by politicians.[33] The promise of free education, which eventually turned into the promise to build a secondary school, was not fulfilled when I visited the site in April 2000, 11 years after the incident. The resentment of the people in Mukura was high and led to the threat of local politicians not to support the Referendum 2000

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[30] "Uganda: Museveni Promise Compensation for Mukura Deaths." Kampala: Radio Uganda, 25 August 1989.

[31] The explanation commonly referred to is that the local NRA officers misjudged the danger of suffocation in the wagon, they were simply unaware of the implications of locking a large group of people into a railway wagon. As such the incident becomes an accident which disperses responsibility. "*Uganda: 47 Dead Due to 'Gross Negligence' After Rebel Round-up*". BBC Summary of World Broadcast: London, 24 July 1989.

[32] Brandon Hamber (1998a): *Repairing the Irreparable: Dealing with Double-binds of Making Reparations for Crimes of the Past*. Johannesburg: Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation Report, p. 4.

[33] Conversation with three young men, Mukura 10.4.2000.

about the future of the no-party (or Movement) system.[34] Meanwhile, Museveni has reasserted his promise.[35]

The memorial, nevertheless, was built. It has the shape of a small house with windows on each side. Inside, a plaque is inscribed with the 47 names of the people who suffocated in the wagon. Surprisingly though, the list is incorrect. Some of the people are still alive and live in Mukura trading centre, only a few yards away.[36]

Today, people in Mukura interpret the installation of the memorial as a sign of the government feeling ashamed of its actions, as well as an attempt to give a decent burial to the victims.[37] And yet, the memorial has provoked strong, albeit subdued, controversy. Although, in a highly Christianised society like Teso, mourning and commemoration is practised over graves, to have relatives and family members buried in a public mass grave offends many cultural traditions. In Teso, as well as in most of Uganda, family members are buried at home in the homestead. Although not physically present the deceased remain a substantial part of the family and are thus placed among their loved-ones. Their souls, and by proxy their family, does not find rest until they have returned home to their ancestors' ground where they can be commemorated and mourned over. The dead remain alive by continued participation in the social structure of the home.[38] As for the casualties of the Mukura incident, people told me that "their grave was missing"; they wanted to take their loved-ones home yet "they were not allowed".[39]

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[34] Rodger Mulindwa (2000): *"Kumi to Deny Movt Votes Over Schools"*. The Monitor: Kampala, 9 January 2000.

[35] *"Museveni Commissions Schools"*. New Vision: Kampala, 26 February 2001.

[36] Conversation with three young men, Mukura, 10.4.2000.

[37] The points raised in this section derive from the impressions I gained when spending an afternoon at the memorial. I had the chance to talk to a number of different people including former rebels and former NRA soldiers who are now again integrated into their communities.

[38] I had the privilege of attending the memorial service of the anniversary of the death of Father Pius' mother and his brother in his homestead in Kumi district in May 2000. The brother had been assassinated during the insurgency. It was very apparent that the commemoration of the deceased, who were buried in the centre of the homestead, was an opportunity for family members to gather, to solve family matters as well as to eat, drink and dance together.

[39] Conversation with people in Mukura.

Barbara Harell-Bond refers to similar comments made by Ugandan refugees based in Sudan.[40] According to the custom of some people, the failure to perform burial rites is subject to supernatural sanctions.

> A proper burial is the most important act of respect which can be paid to the deceased. There is probably no greater disgrace to a family than to have failed to observe funeral customs.[41]

This lack of respect and the humiliation was also expressed by my contacts in Mukura. In addition, although in Uganda relatives are accustomed to preparing dead bodies of deceased family members, as well as conducting funerals without the aid of a commercial burial services (such as e.g. in Europe), seeing and dealing with the *bones* of family members is highly offensive. Bones are interpreted as signs of abuse, as testimonies that 'something went wrong'. The knowledge that only bones remain of their loved ones, buried in the Mukura mass grave, leaves the remaining families ill at ease. They miss the reconciling experience of bringing the dead home, of making the physical and communal bodies whole again.

Memorials

If one walks from Mukura trading centre towards the site of the incident one first sees two abandoned railway wagons, and one immediately assumes that this is the scene of crime.[42] Emotional reactions are stirred; the massacre is pictured in the mind of the onlooker. Only when coming closer one detects the new, white mausoleum – the true memorial.

Asked what a memorial signifies, as a symbol, people I interviewed replied that it testifies to the atrocities committed, and even if people start forgetting, the memorial will remind them of the incident – memorials mark the 'presence of the absent'.[43] As for the Mukura memorial, local people

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[40] Barbara Harell-Bond (1986): Imposing Aid. Emergency Assistance to Refugees. Oxford: Oxford University Press, p. 293.

[41] Harell-Bond (1986): 293.

[42] The wagons are not the remainders of the Mukura incident, they have been left behind much later. And yet their representation is much more powerful than that of the white house with the list of (incorrect) names.

[43] Richard P. Werbner (1998): Smoke from the Barrel of a Gun: Postwars of the Dead, Memory and Reinscription in Zimbabwe. in: Werbner, Richard P. (ed.): Memory and the

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therefore wish the mausoleum would not have the shape of a house, but that of the actual railway wagon that has been left behind. What the Iteso and Kumam want to be reminded of is not the private pain of losing a loved-one, but rather the public crime of the killings committed by the NRA officers and soldiers. My contacts told me that the place was not frequently visited by relatives.

It has been argued that "[c]ommemoration silences the contrary interpretations of the past."[44] It introduces a sense of closure which does not allow for re-interpreting an event. In Teso, however, the past of the insurgency is still very alive and vibrant for it is subject to constant debates over interpretations of events as well as their representation in form of memorials.[45] The tension between constant contestation and closure is well expressed in a contradictory comment by one informant that people resent the memorial yet do appreciate it, but only because they have learned to appreciate.

On a more general note, it is important to recognise that the use and style of memorials is not beyond cultural contestation.[46] Many cultures, and I would like to suggest that this is also true for the Iteso and Kumam, have no tradition of erecting and visiting sites of remembrance and commemoration. And yet, in the specific case of Teso, a highly Christianised society, the dead are mourned over at graves. A culture of using graves as symbols for loss, and bridges to the hereafter, is practised. The mausoleum, erected by the Museveni government, resembles a grave and as such has some legitimacy as a symbol. The railway wagon, however, as wished by the people of Mukura, encourages a very different form of remembrance.

Postcolonial. African Anthropology and the Critique of Power. London/New York: Zed Publications, p. 78.

[44] David Middleton/Derek Edwards (1990): *Introduction.* in: Middleton, David/Edwards, Derek (eds.): Collective Remembering. London/Newbury Park/New Delhi: Sage, p. 8.

[45] Leo SSebwezze (2001): *"Uganda Still Lives With Museveni's 12 Crimes".* The Monitor: Kampala, 3 January 2001; Odiya L'Pajule (2000): *"What Are These People Apologising About?".* The Monitor: Kampala, 21 January 2000; Obalell Omoding (1999): *"Mukura: Lessons after 10 Years".* The Monitor: Kampala, 11 July 2000; Obalell Omoding (1999): *"Uganda Dead Remembered in Canada, UK".* The Monitor: Kampala, 15 July 1999.

[46] Susanne Kuechler (1999): *The Place of Memory.* in: Forty, Adrian/Kuechler, Susanne (eds.): The Art of Forgetting. Oxford/New York: Berg, p.55.; Rowlands, M. (1999): *Remembering to Forget: Sublimation as Sacrifice in War Memorials.* in: Forty, Adrian/Kuechler, Susanne (eds.): The Art of Forgetting. Oxford/New York: Berg, p. 130

People say it would provoke emotions and pain, which, in the local context, is rather unconventional in style and use. Nevertheless, in neighbouring countries, most notably post-genocide Rwanda, sites with similar connotations are maintained. For instance, in Rwanda, the ruins of a Catholic church are kept as the site where 5,000 Tutsi and moderate Hutu were massacred by Hutu genocidaires. The remains of their bodies, clothes and belongings still cover the church floor. With the intention that the Tutsi have not died in vain, the sensation of 'never-again' is invoked. The meaning of the message is mediated to all visitors, Africans and Europeans alike.[47]

Remembering and Identity

Despite the government and the people of Mukura having different intentions regarding the memory of the mass killings, as manifested in the disagreement over how to symbolise the incident in form of a memorial, it can be argued that

> [s]ymbols [here: memorials as symbols for the past] are effective less because they communicate meaning (though this is also important) than because, through performance, meanings are formulated in a social rather than cognitive space, and the participants are engaged with the symbols in the interactional creation of a performance reality, rather than merely being informed by them as knowers.[48]

As suggested by Halbwachs in Chapter 3, memory depends on social environments and is thus collective.[49] The way the Kumam and Iteso remember their past is produced by, and productive of, their collective identity. What is significant in the case of Mukura, however, is that collective identity arises *in opposition* to the memorial. The interpretation of the mausoleum does not lead to shared commemoration for the deceased,

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[47] I am here drawing on my experience when visiting the site in October 1999. I was accompanied by a group of people from Africa and Europe. The point here is, however, not to suggest that a form of universal consent existed amongst us spectators, i.e. that we all read the same meaning into the site, but rather that we all appreciated the presence of the memorial, regardless whether we came from a memorial-practising culture or not.
[48] Nicolas Argenti (1999): *Ephemeral Monuments, Memory and Royal Sempiternity in a Grassfield Kingdom*. in: Forty, Adrian/Kuechler, Susanne (eds.): The Art of Forgetting. Oxford/New York: Berg, p. 23.
[49] Halbwachs (1992): 43.

as envisaged by the Museveni government, but rather to shared anger against the perpetrators of the crime. People define themselves in opposition, yet nevertheless in relation, to the memorial, and in doing so they produce and reproduce their identity in opposition to the government.

Hermeneutic Interpretation

At this point I would like to suggest a hermeneutic reading of the Mukura memorial in order to establish what it can tell us about the present and future of the Iteso and Kumam.

As for the notion of interpretation in general, it is important to recognise that despite potentially different interpretations, events are not entirely free of meaning and thus cannot lead to any interpretation.[50] Not 'anything goes' in the act of remembrance, for actual events frame what is possible.[51] Biographic experience confines the scope of remembrance.

What is true for the interpretation of events is equally true for their representation in form of monuments. As for the mausoleum in Mukura, both parties understand it as a place to commemorate the victims. However, they differ widely in their opinion whether it is an adequate representation of the massacre, or whether leaving the actual railway wagons behind would have been more appropriate.

In their selective interpretation of the past, the people of Mukura and the Museveni government chose to remember some things yet to forget others. The Mukura example thus illustrates what has been argued in Chapter 3: with reference to collective memory the process of forgetting is not to sink into oblivion but rather 'to remember differently'. In the process of remembering, communities are re-membered, are re-shaped, according to the preferred interpretation of the past.

The Mukura insidence is interpreted differently by different communities. As discussed previously, interpreting the past takes place in

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[50] Kuechler (1999): 55

[51] Iona Irwin-Zarecka (1994): Frames of Remembrance. The Dynamics of Collective Memory. London/New Brunswick: Transaction Publisher, p. 5.

anticipation of a particular future. Past, present and future are not linear sequences, rather the present is determined by both the way we understand our past as well as how we cast ourselves forward into the future. In Gadamer's words: "*Zukunft ist Herkunft*" (Future is origin.)[52]

For the Museveni government the future aspired to is that of keeping Teso calm. With an insurgency war in Acholi in north Uganda, as well as sporadic fighting by the ADF in the west of the country, keeping the Iteso and Kumam inactive seems like a good policy. Of course, one could question the benign intention of appeasing the region.

For the Iteso and Kumam, on the other hand, peaceful co-existence is much more contested. Their interpretation of the past, like the Mukura killings, does not allow much room for envisaging a positive future. As shown in Chapter 6, they very much see themselves as innocent victims who were violated by Museveni. The memorial in Mukura, instead of leading to social healing through commemoration, produces and reproduces anger and resentment against the government.

The memorial gives testimony of how much both the Museveni government and the Iteso are still debilitated by the different positions they occupy in an asymmetric relationship which bears strong traces of inequality and domination. The way the Iteso remember the Mukura killings prohibits them from dissenting from the power asymmetries which gave rise to the violent conflict in the first place. Through the performance of memory people produce and reproduce their position of feeling neglected, victimised, and at the mercy of Museveni's politics.

The Museveni government, to some extent, altered its position through the gesture of retributive justice. It established the monument and promised financial assistance. Yet since the pledged funds have not been allocated the government's action lost momentum and credibility.

In conclusion, the memorial in Mukura is today interpreted in a fashion which is indicative of the Iteso and Kumam attitude to the central government. Despite the intention of the Museveni government to

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[52] Present author's translation. Hans-Georg Gadamer (1997): Zukunft ist Herkunft. Jena: Universitaet Jena, p. 55.

contribute to social healing and reconciliation between the former parties to the conflict, albeit not necessarily in a genuine way, the memorial produces and re-produces antagonistic feelings amongst the people of the region and as such keeps the binary between us/them in place. It has failed to re-member the local community and kept the structural properties of inclusion and exclusion between Teso and the wider Uganda alive.

Perspectives for the Future – Papa Emorimor

While the discussion of the Mukura memorial was in the light of *remembered history* the following section will focus on an example of *invented history*. In 2000, the first cultural leader of the Iteso, Papa Emorimor, was inaugurated.

In what follows below, I shall first introduce the institution and discuss it against the backdrop of Hobsbawm and Ranger's concept of *invented traditions* in order to then question whether the invention of Papa Emorimor is a sign of a changing Teso identity.

Questions could be raised as to why it took the Iteso eight years following the insurgency to elect their Papa Emorimor. The delay between a traumatic event and the response to it is however rather common. Three reasons can be identified: firstly, a traumatic event requires temporal distanciation for the victims to be able to address it; secondly, accumulation of resources to commemorate an event requires time, particularly after an economically devastating experience like losing an insurgency war; and lastly, the socio-political repression that led to the event only loosens up over time so that the victims are able to act without being prosecuted. [53] All three reasons are applicable in the Teso context.

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[53] Junanjo Igartua/Dario Paez (1998): *Art and Remembering Traumatic Collective Events: The Case of the Spanish Civil War.* in: Pennebaker, James W./Paez, Dario/Rime, Bernard (eds.): Collective Memory of Political Events. Social Psychological Perspectives. New Jersey: Lawrence Erlabum Ass., p. 84.

Papa Emorimor

On 30 April 2000, the cultural leader for Teso, Papa Emorimor, was inaugurated in Soroti town. The idea of having an equivalent to the other kings of Uganda had been circulating for decades yet only materialised after the experience of the insurgency. The Emorimor is the figurehead of the Iteso Cultural Union (ICU), a democratic body which elects an individual as its representative. The ICU consists of two branches: the Council and the Executive.[54] The ICU Council sits four times per year to review the activities of the Executive. At present, the Council is headed by chairman Mzee Y.Y. Ocuuka, and the deputy chairman Brigadier Sam Opolot, who was Uganda's 1st army commander after Independence in 1962. The over all authority of ICU lies with the Council whose members are drawn from sub-counties and selected according to the different clans.

The Executive constitutes the administrative body of ICU. It is divided into 15 departments called Ministries, covering areas such as health, gender, research and documentation. It is headed by its Prime Minister, Prof. Geffro Ariko Opolot, yet each Ministry has its own secretaries who are responsible for the operation and performance.

Papa Emorimor acts as a consultant to all of the Ministries. He/she is elected for five years, with a maximum of two terms in succession. The first ever Papa Emorimor, Augustin Osuban Lemukol, was a civil servant under Obote and a commissioner of agriculture under Museveni. He received his university education in agriculture in the UK and is now retired. Considering the poverty and poor development in Teso, his expertise in agriculture and development can be of significant benefit to the region.

The Emorimor's *raison d'être* is to fill the void of non-representation in the wider Uganda. To this end the duty and mandate of the Emorimor is to:[55]

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[54] Interview with Alfred Aruo, Soroti 01.06.2000.
[55] The mandate coincides with the stated aims and objectives of the ICU Steering Committee of the Iteso Cultural Union in ICU (1997): *Iteso Cultural Union. A Cultural Union Development.* Soroti: ICU.

- promote the unity of Teso.
- preserve and promote culture, music, dance and poetry of the Iteso.
- promote and develop the Ateso language.
- promote and research into the history of the Iteso and to publish the findings of any such research.
- set up or support cultural centres or museums for the promotion and preservation of Iteso culture and history.
- encourage the Iteso clans to organise themselves and to appoint or elect their clan leaders.
- establish and support the office of the Emorimor, as a symbol of Unity in Teso.
- encourage and promote socio-economic development in Teso.

The present Emorimor plans to establish a forum for all cultural leaders of Uganda to discuss current issues of development. In addition, he will hold meetings with Karamojong elders and leaders to find solutions for the seasonal cattle rustling. Informal contacts with the government will be kept and the Iteso culture promoted.

Many people agree that the Iteso need a strong figurehead to culturally represent and unite them. Especially after the insurgency, confidence and self-esteem are low, cultural values are slowly fading and people are disunited. Some supporters of the Emorimor even go as far as suggesting that if he had already been in place in 1986/7 he would have prevented the insurgency through disciplining the youth and communicating the plight of the Iteso people to the President.

And yet, the Iteso are not the only residents in Soroti, Kumi and Katakwi district. Apart from ethnic groups from other areas of Uganda, the indigenous Kumam form a considerably large group. There have always been tensions between the Kumam and the Iteso, which were enforced by the insurgency where inter-ethnic assaults were frequent. With the Iteso having a cultural leader, and thus gaining strength inside and outside of Teso, the potential for conflict with the Kumam is increasing.

Invention of Tradition

Invented traditions are occasions which allow for analysing wider social currents, and especially social engineering. The basic concept of an Emorimor is inherent in the Iteso clan system. Traditionally, every individual clan appoints a representative who reconciles internal conflicts and holds his people together. However, especially due to the insurgency, Iteso cultural attributes are steadily declining. In recognition of the fading cultural practices the tradition was altered from one Emorimor per clan to one Emorimor for all clans. The new, elected Emorimor has become a modern super-Emorimor for all Iteso in Uganda and abroad. As such he embodies a tension between modernity, for he is democratically elected, and the conservatism of returning to traditional customs. His main function is to unite the Iteso, his title translates as 'Father of Unity', and to represent the people towards the outside world.

Historically, in contrast to the southern and western kingdoms of Uganda, Teso has always been proud of its egalitarian social structure. No super-leader governed the Iteso, no royal elite held exclusive rights. Nevertheless, on economic grounds, prior to the insurgency, the people were divided along class lines: land and large herds of cattle were in the hands of a few who rented out their oxen to their neighbours for ploughing. Training and education in Europe, business connections and trade throughout the whole country as well as strong political influence was existent amongst a small community of Iteso only.[56]

With respect to egalitarianism the insurgency was a leveller. In the post-conflict days everybody was equally poor and deprived. So even if the Teso society was previously marked by class differences, after the insurgency most people were of equal status. And yet, regardless of whether it is accurate or not, in the past the Iteso and Kumam were proud of their spirit of egalitarianism. The establishment of Papa Emorimor thus constitutes a rupture in this self-perception.

In order to be truthful to their culture of egalitarianism, the Iteso Cultural Union therefore invented a sophisticated election process for their

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[56] Conversation with Joanna de Berry, London 9.8.2000.

cultural leader, which marries modern notions of democracy with traditions of kingships. As such it provides an adequate example for Eric Hobsbawm's term of

> [i]nvented traditions' [which] is taken to mean a set of practices, normally governed by overtly or tacitly accepted rules and of a ritual or symbolic nature, which seek to inculcate certain values and norms of behaviour by repetition, which automatically implies continuity with the past. In fact, where possible, they normally attempt to establish continuity with a suitable historic past.[57]

In many aspects, in particular regarding the egalitarian spirit in Teso, the invention of Papa Emorimor provides a break with the past. Nevertheless, since on a much more local clan level the concept of Emorimor has a longstanding tradition the elevation of this tradition to a super level can be interpreted as a historical continuation. Thus

> insofar as there is such reference to a historic past, the peculiarity of 'invented traditions' is that the continuity with it is largely factious. ... [T]hey are responses to novel situations which take the form of references to old situations, or which establish their own past by quasi-obligatory repetition.[58]

In Hobsbawm's application, traditions, and in particular invented traditions, are dissimilar to custom. Invented or not, traditions, he suggests, are invariant, they require repetition by fixed and formalised practise. Inventing traditions is thus an act of imposing repetition.[59] Customs, on the other hand, are much more fluid in their being. Although being perpetuated over space and time through repetition they are nevertheless susceptible to change. Customs are what Giddens would refer to as social continuities in which agency and structure mutually enable and constrain each other, they constitute the routinised practise that prevails in a particular social environment.

When invented traditions become realities they distort the past through making reference and harking back to what was not there.[60] Once

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[57] Eric Hobsbawm (2000): *Inventing Traditions.* in: Hobsbawm, Eric/Ranger, Terence (eds.): The Invention of Tradition. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 1.
[58] Hobsbawm (2000): 2.
[59] Hobsbawm (2000): 4.
[60] Ranger (2000): 213.

taken for granted, their existence is legitimated through narratives about an immemorial time. As such they constitute a part of the present identity.

The invention of a tradition is indicative of the spatio-temporal predicament of a society, which spurs the necessity to fill a void. In post-insurgency Teso, there was a strong call for unity and representation towards the rest of Uganda. The Iteso felt intimidated and excluded by the national discourse and thus longed for a figurehead to speak on their behalf.[61] As such, it could be argued that the community of the Iteso, as promoted by the institution of Papa Emorimor, is *imagined* in the sense Anderson explains when he writes that regardless of actual inequality and exploitation that may prevail the community is conceived as a horizontal, deep fraternity.[62]

Despite the explicit obligation of the institution of the Emorimor being merely traditional, it nevertheless serves the political function of promoting the needs and aspiration of the Iteso in the wider Uganda. As apparent in the following extract from a newspaper article:

> The Iteso cultural leader, Emorimor Augustin Lemukol Osuban, has urged the Iteso to uphold their culture and language. He said some Iteso had abandoned their mother tongue.
>
> "We have reached a point, whereby if you find two or three people in Teso speaking in English, then you know that they are Iteso, " he said.
>
> Speaking after his installation on Sunday, Osuban said the human and material resources the Iteso have been blessed with could make them realise tremendous development.
>
> "I am sure that if the over 2.5 million Iteso within Uganda and outside come together, we would do something remarkable," he said.[63]

The return to history, albeit partly invented, is immediately interlocked with ambitions for the future. This continuity between past, present and future is however not a necessity for forging the identity of a community. Mamdani, for instance, refers to the identity formation amongst Rwandan immigrants and the NRA in western Uganda during the early days

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[61] Bishop Illukor had been playing this role informally for decades, yet he retired from all public functions in 2000.
[62] Anderson (1991): 7.

of Museveni's insurgency against Obote II, and argues that the people coalesced into a community in full awareness of their different histories, and even ethnicities and nationalities. Mamadani argues that the effect was to distinguish political community from cultural community, and the future from the past. "If the cultural community was an outcome of historical processes, the political community was defined more with an eye to the future."[64] The future was forged based on the recognition that people had the same political interests, that is removing Obote from power.[65]

What is significant if compared with the Kumam and Iteso is that, despite having similar desires and aspirations for the future, the institution of the Emorimor does not unite the different ethnic groups living in Teso. The ICU is for the Iteso, and everybody who is willing to adapt their life style, language and traditions. Yet the collective aspirations for the future, shared by the Kumam, are not sufficient to forge a collective Teso identity. On the contrary, the institution of the Emorimor has the potential to widen the gap between Iteso and Kumam.

It will take some time for the Papa Emorimor institution to be 'naturalised' in Teso. To date, the invention is still too new and somewhat awkward, and many Iteso have difficulties in identifying themselves with the concept. Criticism of the Emorimor institution also comes from inside the Teso community. Some Iteso suggest that the artificial installation of a super-Emorimor is redundant and that people should return to the cultural traits that are already inherent in the traditions – a case of *recovered tradition* in the above sense. Moreover, the rural youth in particular are resentful towards the institution for they feel excluded from the election process and not represented by the 'old, traditional men who want to drink blood and wear hides.'[66] They have little sympathy with what they see as

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[63] *"Promote Iteso Culture - Emorimor".* New Vision: Kampala, 2 May 2000.
[64] Mahmood Mamdani (2001): When Victims Become Killers. Colonialism, Nativism, and the Genocide in Rwanda. Kampala/Oxford: Fountain/James Curry, p. 170.
[65] The shared identity between Rwandan immigrants and the NRA did however not survive beyond the seizure of power by Museveni. Devoid of the shared motive of struggle, it seems, the awareness of the different histories and tradition was too strong. Mamdani (2001): p. 172.
[66] As stated during a workshop with rural youth in Serere district, 8.5.2000.

anachronism and conservatism - they are much more interested in crops and seeds and new developments in agriculture.

Papa Emorimor faces many challenges, not least because so far the financial backing is not guaranteed. In contrast to the other kings of Uganda the Emorimor has no assets. In future, the institution will rely on income-generating projects, fundraising and membership subscription. As an artificially invented attribute of Iteso culture it will take some time for the Emorimor to become widely accepted, and to gain the support of his people. Only then will his primary role, to be the Father of Unity, be feasible.

Kingdoms in Uganda

Despite Papa Emorimor being a very recent invention other regions of Uganda look back at a substantial history and culture of kingship. All five existing Ugandan monarchies are located in the Bantu regions of Buganda, Bunyoro, Ankole, Toro and Busoga. Based on a social hierarchical system of superordination and subordination, the *abalangira* (royals) and *bakopi* (peasants), the kingdoms are again of significance in today's Uganda.[67] As described in Chapter 5, in 1966, as a result of political turmoil and power struggles during the Obote I regime, the kingdoms were dissolved. Almost two decades later, while fighting against the Obote II government in the Luwero Triangle Museveni, in order to increase his support amongst the people, promised that he would reinstall the kingdoms when he became President of Uganda. In 1993, seven years after his victory, he eventually kept his promise and passed a law to annul Obote's enactment that abrogated the kingdoms. He reinstalled kings as cultural representatives – albeit without any political power. The Traditional Rulers Statute of 1993 included the return of 14 items to the Buganda kingdom, including assets and properties.[68] Whilst the reinstalled king of Buganda, Kabaka Mutebi,

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[67] Spectrum (1998): Guide to Uganda. Nairobi: Camperapix, p. 294.

[68] Apolo Nsibambi (1995): *The Restoration of Traditional Rulers*. in: Hansen, Holger Berndt/Twaddle, Michael (eds.): From Chaos to Order. The Politics of Constitution Making in Uganda. Kampala/London: Fountain/James Curry, p. 47.

allegedly has political ambitions beyond his present role, the king of Ankole, Toro and Bunyoro do not challenge the present state system.[69]

Even though Museveni reinstated the Ugandan kings he did not welcome the Iteso initiative at first. In 1999, after a series of controversies a meeting of the Iteso Cultural Union was disbanded by the police.[70] The meeting was held to appoint the candidate for the Emorimor election, and since the Iteso were prevented from conducting their meeting, they went to the public Independence Square in Soroti and spontaneously chose one person out of their midst, lifted him up and called him 'Emorimor'. They hence resisted Museveni's constraints successfully. The random nomination was later withdrawn and the initially selected person appointed.

Inauguration

Museveni was the guest of honour at the inauguration in Soroti on 30 April 2000.[71] In the course of the ceremony, Museveni donated a car (in his own words: "My office is very poor at the moment but in three or four months' time, it will be rich. I will then avail the Emorimor the shoes which fits modern times so that he can tour his kingdom"[72]), and even danced with the people of the ICU and the traditional dancers.[73] And yet, the celebration ceremony ultimately turned into a campaign for the June 2000 Referendum about the future of the political system of Uganda. Speakers like the Hon. Min. Grace Akello (the former Teso Commission secretary) seized the occasion to promote the Movement system.

In his speech, Museveni drew on the existence of the different ethnic groups in Russia and the importance of a superior person to hold them together. He accounted for the necessity to have a strong leader to guide the country out of underdevelopment and 'backwardness'.[74] Implicit in his analogy was a clear warning towards the Iteso not to separate themselves

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[69] Doornbos, Martin/Mwesigye, Frederick (1995): *The New Politics of Kingmaking.* in: Hansen, Holger Berndt/Twaddle, Michael (eds.): From Order to Chaos. The Politics of Constitution-Making in Uganda. Kampala/London: Fountain/James Curry, p. 64.

[70] Interview with Alfred Aruo, Soroti 7.5.2000.

[71] I had the pleasure and honour to personally attend the ceremony.

[72] *"Teso Crowns Emorimor".* New Vision: Kampala, 1 May 2000,

[73] In this period Museveni danced repeatedly all over Uganda. His public appearances were mostly related to his Movement referendum campaign.

from the nation at large, and him as the President. As quoted in a newspaper

"Women who carry babies on their backs should not engage in throwing stones. If you do so, you risk your child being hit with a stone."
He [Museveni] said he had given the message in a joking way but was serious.
"For me I have already placed my baby down, so if you are interested, let us start throwing stones," Museveni said.[75]

From my experience during fieldwork, people in Teso will not engage in throwing stones again. For them, the inauguration of the Emorimor does not signify an act of aggression but the opening of possibilities to have their identity represented, guarded and asserted in the wider Uganda.

The Future?

To return to the question set out at the beginning of this chapter, it remains to be seen whether the institution of the Emorimor has the potential to challenge the structural continuities of domination and exclusion between the people of Teso (specifically the Iteso) and the Museveni government. Will it change the way central government and Teso relate to each other?

Despite the difficulties of foreseeing the future I would like to suggest that the Emorimor does indeed hold the possibility of transforming the way the people from Teso relate to the Museveni government. In line with Giddens' structuration theory, it seems fair to argue that the agency of the institution potentially *challenges and changes* the prevailing structural continuities of inclusion and exclusion. This, however, will require time and patience. Nevertheless, the invention marks a proactive step towards future transformations and the enlargement of the space for the Iteso to act.

The Odd Time In-Between

The Iteso are looking forward to the future. We tried to make the Iteso see life as just a matter of changes and seasons. One of the favourite quotes that they now use is that you should go with the wind, you

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[74] Museveni's speech, Soroti 30 June 2000.
[75] "*Teso Crowns Emorimor*". New Vision: Kampala, 1 May 2000.

should blow as the wind blows. Have you ever seen grass in the storm. When there is a really, really heavy storm with huge winds the grass blows on one side and it falls downs. You see it almost completely down. It just lies peacefully on itself. When the storm goes, one or two or three days later it stands up again. But look at the trees, some of the big, great trees. Because they are out there they are standing in the storm and they think they are big and strong and so on. Many of them, when the storm comes, you find them down on the ground. So why don't you go as the grass and come up again.
Other people say this is an imagery of cowardliness.[76]

Nine years after the end of the end of the insurgency, Teso still has not reconciled with the Museveni government. Teso has a 'peace without reconciliation'.[77]

In the discussion above, I have tried to illustrate two different ways of coming to terms with the past. Whilst the first example, the collective memory of the Mukura killings, seems to produce and reproduce the antagonism between the Iteso and the government, and thus to maintain the prevailing relations, the second example bears the promise of transforming the structural proclivities that gave rise to the violence in 1986. Only time will tell whether it is successful.

Despite the current discontent in Teso people generally agree that they will not 'go back to the bush.' After having endured widespread suffering and distress, a new insurgency war seems to offer no solution. Moreover, the Museveni government might be arrogant and ignorant towards the Kumam and Iteso, yet there are no apparent traces of explicit policies of exclusion, discrimination and prosecution. On the bases of rather vague and ambiguous reasons to take up arms, as illustrated in Chapter 6, the costs of fighting are too high compared with the feeling of being unappreciated. Peace in Teso might be shallow but it will remain peace – and this is a great achievement considering the violence in many regions in Africa.

While the previous chapter closed with a rather positive outlook on the future of Teso, in a wider Uganda the above analysis of the post-conflict

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[76] Interview with Grace Akello.
[77] Heriques (2000).

scenario is less encouraging. From what can be interpreted in hindsight, people at the end of the insurgency had high hopes that they would start living in prosperity and security again. And yet, the developments in the past nine years since the cessation of fighting strongly contradict these aspirations.

So why did the reconciliation process fail? I will turn to this and other issues in the following, concluding chapter.

CONCLUSIONS

The fusion of horizons, it has been argued in this thesis, produces shared meaning amongst parties to a conflict and opens the path for peaceful coexistence. Different perspectives are mediated and exclusive identities transformed into less antagonistic relationships. In this hermeneutic process, former parties reconcile their disputes.

So what went wrong on Teso? By way of conclusion I shall now turn to highlighting the weakness in both the mediation of the Teso insurgency and the use of hermeneutics.

Power in Mediation

Coercion or Cohesion?

The reason for the failure of the reconciliation process lies in the asymmetric power relations which were worked in the process of the Teso mediation. On a general note, mediation as dispute resolution has been fiercely criticised by Joseph Folgner and Robert Bush:

> [W]hen conflicts are mediated, social justice issues can be suppressed, power imbalances can be ignored and out-comes can be determined by covertly imposed third-party values.[1]

In Teso, the mediation process was marked by stark power-asymmetries between the people of Teso and the Ugandan government. Due to their weak military position, coupled with the erosion of support amongst the population, the insurgents had little bargaining power. Although there was never a formal process of mediation, but merely workshops, meetings and conferences organised by the PCT and predominantly addressed to civilians, as well as informal talks with rebels, the imbalance of power relations manifested itself in the outcome of the process. This chapter shall discuss

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[1] Joseph P. Folgner/Robert A. Baruch Bush (1994): *Ideology, Orientations, and Discourse.* Folgner, Joseph P./Jones, Tricia S. (eds.): New Directions in Mediation. Communication Research and Perspectives. Thousenoaks/London/New Delhi: Sage, p. 5.

the notion of power and its impact on how understanding is brought about in the hermeneutic encounter of a mediation process.

The role of power and coercion in mediation is a widely studied subject.[2] In order to escape the grip of power asymmetries, according to Joseph A. Folgner and Robert Bush, the objectives of 'transformative mediation', that is mediation that challenges the prevailing structural continuities, requires the empowerment of the parties in conflict. Since their notion of transformation seems very similar to the project of this thesis it is worth investigating their argument more closely. Folgner and Bush suggest that a party is empowered when[3]

- it reaches a clear realisation of what issues matter and why, coupled with a realisation that their importance is legitimate;
- it realises more clearly what goals and interests are aspired to, why they are pursued, and that they are important and in need of consideration;
- it becomes aware of the range of options available to secure these goals;
- it realises that it can choose as to how to pursue these goals;
- it acquires skills in conflict resolution;
- it has a mandate to make conscious decisions about what actions to take.

All these points taken together, Folgner and Bush argue, provide the party with a greater sense of self-worth, security, self-determination and

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[2] Anne Griffiths (1998): "Mediation, Gender and Justice in Botswana." *Mediation Quarterly* **15**(4): 335-44; Heinz Waelchli/Dhavan Shah (1994): "Crisis Negotiation Between Unequals: Lessons from a Classic Dialogue." *Negotiation Journal* **10**(2): 129-41; Nadim N. Rouhana/Susan H. Korper (1996): "Dealing with the Dilemmas Posed by Power Asymmetry in Intergroup Conflict." *Negotiation Journal* **12**(4): 353-66; Lloyed Jensen (1997): "Negotiations and Power Asymmetries: The Case of Bosnia, Northern Ireland and Sri Lanka." *International Negotiation* **2**(2): 21-41; Michael Roloff/Gaylen Paulson/Jennifer Vollbrecht (1998): "The Interpretation of Coercive Communication: The Effects of Mode of Influence, Powerful Speech and Speaker Authority." *International Journal of Conflict Management* **9**(2): 139-61; Margaret Wetherell (1998): "Positioning and Interpretative Repertoires: Conversation Analysis and Post-Structuralism in Dialogue." *Discourse & Society* **9**(3): 387-415; Vivienne Jabri (1995): "Agency, Structure and the Question of Power in Conflict Resolution." *Paradigms* **9**(2): 53-71.
[3] Bush/Folgner (1994): 84-6.

autonomy necessary to finding an equitable, long-term resolution to the conflict.[4]

At first sight, if we look at the situation of the Iteso and Kumam in 1991-2 we see that, according to Bush and Folgner's requirements, people were indeed empowered. In light of the workshops and seminars organised by the Teso Commission they had the opportunity to reflect upon their goals and interests, why they were important and how they could be pursued: the people of Teso opted for economic and personal security as their priorities, and for the government of Uganda, through the Teso Commission, to attend to their demands. According to Folgner and Bush's categories this should have had positive implications for the peace-building process and on the transformation of the prevailing structural properties of inclusion and exclusion. In reality, however, the reconciliation process was dissatisfying and, as the figures in the previous chapter indicate, economically Teso remained on the margin of the wider Uganda. Asymmetrical power structures led to a shallow peace.

A Hermeneutic Critique

A hermeneutic analysis of power asymmetries in mediation or dialogue reveals that to transcend inequality requires more then merely empowering the weaker party. The following shall therefore challenge the notion of power underlying Folgner's and Bush's argument.

If one looks at the outcome of the Teso mediation process, one has to acknowledge the clear wish of the Kumam and Iteso for a return to security and stability in the region. It was this immediate demand that people were pursuing; it informed how they framed their arguments and articulated their aspirations. Yet, how has their perception of the situation come about?

The Kumam and Iteso interpretation of their situation was very much informed by the mediators. The workshops of the Teso Commission are a

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[4] Bush/Folgner (1994): 87.

very good example of how discourses order realities.[5] Through their constant reference to the development of Teso, the PCT workshops were instrumental in shaping people's view of the insurgency. It has been suggested that the use of a particular language to represent 'reality' influences the meaning and interpretation of a situation "in order to impose a particular perspective from which events are expected to be perceived by the targeted audience."[6] As a result, some perceptions of reality are organised *into* discourse and practice, whilst others are organised *out* – "discourse ... simultaneously negates and affirms different conceptual ... possibilities."[7] In the workshops and conferences organised by the PCT, to discuss the appeasement merely in terms of economic and personal security created a particular discourse according to which the Teso struggle was mainly fought along these lines. In consequence it allowed the promise of development to be the bargaining chip in the course of the mediation process.

The acceptance by the people of Teso to discuss and solve the insurgency to be cast in terms of 'development' and 'security' allows for valuable insights into identity formation. Although, as we have seen in Chapter 6 on the causes of conflict, it is futile to establish why the Kumam and Iteso 'really' went into the bush; the reasons were more complex than a mere lack of food and fear for their lives. During the course of the mediation process as a hermeneutic encounter the people from Teso came to see themselves in a different light. In line with the notion of temporality, as discussed previously, people had a particular 'image' of the future, that is, the cessation of fighting and the emergence of peace and prosperity. Thus, by consequence, they adapted their past in the process of aspiring to their outlook for the future. By way of a simultaneous (hermeneutic) movement, the anticipation of a particular future led the people to re-interpret their past, and thus to modify their identity in the present. The sessions conducted as part of the mediation process were a profound

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[5] The ordering of discourses is central to the work of Foucault. See for instance Michel Foucault (1994b): Die Ordnung des Diskurses. Frankfurt: Fisher.
[6] Ilie (1998): 76.
[7] Dennis Mumby/Cynthia Stohl (1991): "Power and Discourse in Organization Studies: Absence and the Dialectic of Control." *Discourse & Society* 2(3), p. 319.

ontological experience for the participants which changed their identity in relation to the government.

Structural Asymmetries

To return to Folgner and Bush, their quest for empowerment only takes issue with apparent forms of power exercised in the process of mediation. What they leave unchallenged, despite their emphasis on 'transformation', are the structural asymmetries that enable one party to define 'reality' at the expenses of the other. Because

> ....the experience of powerlessness does not necessarily disappear with the introduction of consensus-based informally constituted dispute management programs .. [I]ndividuals operate as social actors who form parts of networks that shape their identity in a multiplicity of ways that impinge on their ability to negotiate with others in both social and legal arenas.[8]

It has been demanded that scholarship should "make explicit the ways in which apparently egalitarian decision-making processes persistently reflect and recreate inequalities among constituents."[9] Without critical engagement, power cannot be challenged and thus emancipation and dissent cannot be achieved.

As we have seen in Chapter 2, in order to discuss the impact of power, critical approaches to conflict studies have recently introduced the writing of Jürgen Habermas to IR.[10] His notion of critique and emancipation suggests a theoretical framework to challenge authority and domination with the aim of changing the structural properties of inclusion and exclusion.

As explained in Chapter 2, Habermas' writing originally developed out of Gadamer's hermeneutics. However, his suspicion of the negative impact of power in the process of fusing horizons, as illustrated by the outcomes of the PCT mediation, and Gadamer's reluctance to acknowledge the potential

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[8] Griffiths (1998): 340.
[9] Griffiths (1998); see also: John Winslade/Gerald Monk/Alison Cotter (1998): "A Narrative Approach to the Practice of Mediation." *Negotiation Journal* **14**(1): 21-41.
[10] Teun A. van Dijk (1989): *Structures of Discourse and Structures of Power.* in: Anderson, James A. (ed.): Communication Yearbook 12. London/Delhi: Sage, 18-59; Dennis

danger it entails, led him to a critical response to *Truth and Method*. To illustrate his main objections against mediating horizons in communication it is worth citing Habermas at length:

> It makes good sense to conceive of language as a kind of metainstitution on which all social institutions depend: for social action is constituted only in ordinary language communication. But his [Gadamer's] metainstitution of language as tradition is evidently dependent on social processes that are not reducible to normative relationships. Language is *also* a medium of domination and social power: it serves to legitimate relations of organised force. Insofar as the legitimations do not articulate the power relations whose institutionalisation they make possible, insofar as these relations merely manifest themselves in the legitimating, language is *also* ideological. Here it is a question not of deceptions within a language but of deceptions of language as such. Hermeneutic experience that encounters this dependency of the symbolic framework on actual conditions changes into critique of ideology.[11]

The system of language, labour and domination, Habermas continues, constitutes the objective framework through which social action becomes unintelligible.[12] Differential access to various genres, contents, and styles of discourse manifest themselves in material (re)production, articulation, distribution, and influence.[13] Certain forms of discourses are sanctioned by hidden forms of power, they run silently through discursive and institutional practices.[14]

Therefore, according to Habermas, the authority of the superior party to the conflict cannot be acknowledged through critical reflection in post-conflict mediation, for any dominant and superior position influences the understanding of the inferior party to the extent that the outcome of a dialogue, or mediation, will be distorted and manipulated. The resolution of the conflict might simply reflect the superiority of one narrative which stifles

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Mumby/Cynthia Stohl (1991): "Power and Discourse in Organization Studies: Absence and the Dialectic of Control." *Discourse & Society* 2(3): 313-32.

[11] Jürgen Habermas (1977): *A Review of Gadamer's Truth and Method.* in: Dallmayr, Fred/McCarthy, Thomas A. (eds.): Understanding and Social Inquiry. Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, p. 360.

[12] Jürgen Habermas (1978): Knowledge and Human Interest. London: Heinemann, p. 361. It is important to note that Habermas' current focus is no longer on the mode of production and class struggle in Western societies, but that he recognises that an evolution has taken place and that Marxism provides insufficient potential for explaining exclusionist continuities in today's societies. For a discussion see Love (1996).

[13] Van Dijk (1989): 22.

[14] Jabri (1995): 61.

the telling of the other. The structural properties of inclusion and exclusion that run trough a conflict ridden society might even prevent the excluded from realising the scope of their marginality, for them it would be a feature of their day-to-day lives. The problem with authority for Habermas is not only that it could be unjustifiably authoritarian, but rather that it holds a monopoly of power which influences discourses to an extent that the outcome of this discourse always only reflects the authorities interests - they remain the sole authors of the peace to come. Authority, be it true or false, prevents *Ideologienkritik*.

In *Rhetorik, Hermeneutik und Ideologienkritik,* a piece written in response to Habermas' critique, Gadamer admits that authority has the potential to exercise dogmatic power.[15] Yet he emphasises that a notion of authority which relies on blind obedience is very different to his notion which relies on acknowledgement. In drawing on the loss and the decline of authority he suggests that what reveals the actual content of true authority is not dogmatic force but acknowledgement, that is, free acceptance of the superiority of the other. This however, is not to suggest that acknowledgement cannot be refused or withdrawn as the result of critical reflection, in the same way Habermas suggests. The point of dispute with Habermas is, however, whether reflection always leads to refusal, or if it can also lead to acceptance.[16]

In Teso, and in line with Gadamer's argument, the mediation efforts led people to accept the authority of the Museveni government. In the years to come the acceptance of authority was infringed by the critical evaluation of the government's failure to keep their promise of development.

Acceptance of Domination

An alternative account of domination, which addresses the tension between Habermas and Gadamer, is offered by Michel Foucault whose interest in dialogue is not based on mediation and understanding, but rather on the power practices amongst the participants it reveals. Foucault's

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[15] Gadamer (1993g): 268.
[16] Gadamer (1993a): 243-5.

interpretation of being-together, and thus of understanding, is based on his is notion of *episteme*:

> By *episteme,* we mean ... the total set of relations that unite, at a given period, the discursive practises that give rise to epistemological figures, sciences, and possibly formalized systems ... The episteme is not a form of knowledge *(connaissance)* or type of rationality which, crossing the boundaries of the most varied sciences, manifests the sovereign unity of a subject, or a period; it is the totality of relations that can be discovered, for a given period, between the sciences when one analyses them at the level of discursive regularities.[17]

In line with Wittgenstein's language games and hermeneutics, Foucault's emphasis is on the systematic relationship, the network, between different elements of a discourse which allow for meaningful communication.[18] Foucault calls these networks 'discursive practises':

> When one speaks of a system of formation, one does not mean the juxtaposition, coexistence, or interaction of heterogeneous elements (institutions, techniques, social groups, perceptual organisations, relations between various discourses), but also the relation that is established between them – and in a well determined form – by discursive practice.[19]

Foucault argues that one cannot study individual statements in isolation from each other – that they are only meaningful in the context of a structure produced by social co-existence. However, Foucault stresses that the systems that enable the making of statements, or communication, can be studied in isolation or absence of a background practice which is common to all discourses and whose true and universal meaning can be discovered through investigation. For Foucault, communication is located in a particular context which in itself does not require a prediscursive, universal foundation. Rather, communication is situated in a *network of discursive practises,* as opposed to a *background of intelligibility,* and it is here were systems of cohabitation are formed.[20]

Episteme are hence the structures along which the social world is ordered, and which decide what statements are possible and which ones are

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[17] Foucault (1972): 191.
[18] Dreyfus/Rabinow (1982): 57-8.
[19] Foucault (1972) 72.

excluded from conversation. As argued in Chapter 8, this was apparent in the PCT workshops in which notions of development were included in the discussion, yet controversial political debates were absent. Statements, however, are here not simply understood in terms of utterance but rather in a much wider sense which includes perceptions and opinions. "The episteme represent the symbolic horizon within which a certain statement is first formed and subsequently is able to be classified and evaluated as true or false."[21] In other words, certain ontological premises function as rules for what is right and what is wrong.

If Foucault's *episteme*, or the way a discourse is ordered, determines what is right or wrong it follows that they are the true locus of power. For him power

> is never localised here or there, never in any body's hands, never appropriated as a commodity or piece of wealth. Power is embodied and exercised through a netlike organisation.[22]

As a consequence Foucault's power relations can never be "above" a society, they never provide a separate or supplementary structure, and can thus never be dissolved.

> [P]ower is exercised rather than possessed; it is not the 'privilege', acquired or preserved, of a dominant class, but the over all effect of its strategic position - an effect that is manifested and sometimes extended by those who are dominated.[23]

Foucault suggests an alternative to analysing power in a negative way, in the forms of exclusion, repression, obstruction (in the way Habermas and Gadamer do), and acknowledges that power produces.[24] Power is productive of our coexistence.

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[20] Dreyfus/Rabinow (1982): 57-8. Dreyfus and Rabinow however emphasise that Foucault takes this position in the *Archaeology of Knowledge*, yet that he later moves away from this rather structuralist view-point in which 'truth' is only a matter of systems and networks.
[21] Koehler (1999): 95.
[22] Foucault (1994a): 36.
[23] Foucault (1991a): 26.
[24] Foucault (1991a): 194; see also Tarja Vayrynen (1998): "Ethnic Community and Conflict Resolution." *Nordic Journal of International Studies* **33**(1): 67.

Politics, for Foucault, is the continuation of war by other means,[25] and he suggests that domination can be understood as a long-term strategic situation.[26] This implies that there is somehow a consensus between dominating and dominated parties to a conflict which allows for the consolidation of their relationship. However, this form of consensus is far from Gadamer's notion of consensus through conscious, voluntary acknowledgement; for Foucault's consensus is the effect of a sequence of successfully exercised local struggles between the opponents. Through the repetition of this event the result becomes consolidated so that at a particular point in time the leadership of the stronger party is accepted; the structural properties of inclusion and exclusion become solidified. The importance of Foucault is thus to understand that both oppressor and oppressed are entangled in a structure which allows for domination: the 'consent' of the dominated is as important as that of the dominating.

In the case of Teso, Foucault allows us to interpret the relationship between the Museveni government and the people from Teso as a consolidation of previous struggles, and the time after the insurgency as a continuation of 'war by other means' in which the conditions of the struggle are maintained, albeit without the violence. In addition, if one agrees with Foucault, in post-war Teso the relationship is maintained not only by the force and power of the government but also by the Kumam and Iteso who continue playing the submissive and inferior role. Power relations exist between people, and they require both parties to comply.

How to dissent?

At this stage I would like to return to the question of dissent introduced in Chapter 1. To accept Foucault's understanding of power relations seems to lead to a significant insight in relation to the hermeneutic encounter: if both parties are entangled in power relations neither of them is able to step out of this network, to critically reflect upon domination, and to dissent from the given structures. How, then, can a party to the conflict,

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[25] Foucault (1994a): 28.

like the Kumam and Iteso, *challenge and change* their position in the process of mediation?

Essential to realising one's entanglement in power relations is to be a free agent. What seems to contradict Foucault's notion of power relations at first is, however, merely a part of his argument. For only a free agent can become the object of the exercise of power. If the agent had no (potential) freedom of choice, power could not be effective.[27]

The agent's potential to be critical is then based on Foucault's account of freedom. In an attempt to answer the question 'why fight' David Campbell argues that it is "[b]ecause relations of power are possible only in the context of freedom, because they are inescapable, and because they will inescapably impinge on the autonomy of the free subject, the practices of the self that bring the subject into being *must* involve resistance."[28] He follows Paul Patton when he suggests that, for Foucault, resistance is integral to 'life'. Identities are shaped over space and time through the constant resisting and dissenting from prevailing structural continuities. Returning to Deleuze (as discussed in Chapter 8) mediation is everywhere, as is resistance. As the 'flip-side' of mediation, resistance always disrupts harmony and continuity, opens up new possibilities and creates new alliances.

Thus, in order to break out of power relations that are suppressive in character, Foucault encourages resistance. Resistance, however, must not be equated with revolution. For Foucault, revolution, understood in its literal sense of turning over, is merely a different codification of the same power relations, an inversion of the present reality.[29] The overthrow of the dominating party would not dissolve domination but only shift it in favour of those who had been inferior before. In order to bring about change, Foucault argues, the very nature of power relations has to be transformed.

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[26] Michel Foucault (1982): *The Subject of Power*. in: Dreyfus, Hubert/Rabinow, Paul (eds.): Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics. New York/London: Harvester Wheatsheaf, p. 266.

[27] David Couzens Hoy (1986): *Power, Repression and Progress: Foucault, Lukes and the Frankfurt School.* in: Hoy, David Couzens: Foucault. A Critical Reader. Oxford: Blackwell, 138.

[28] Campbell (1998c): 513.

[29] Foucault (1980): 122-3.

Therefore, for Foucault, resistance is not the mirror image of power but rather a force that is equally inventive and productive.[30]

As already suggested in Chapter 1, the insurgency in Teso, had it been successful, would have been exactly this: an inversion of the power dynamics that could potentially have changed the whole power asymmetry of Uganda. One outcome of this inversion may have returned Uganda to the status quo before Museveni's seizure of power in 1986. Undoubtedly, this would have put the people from Teso in a stronger position, and yet it would not have resolved the conflict.

If we follow the Foucault's argument that power relations are the result of long-term strategic relationships, based on an implicit consent between the parties (about who plays what role), dissent has to start with questioning these roles. This requires the agency of at least one party, most likely the inferior one, and its determination to undo the prevailing structures. Revolutionary fighting, or an insurgency war, has been dismissed in the above, and in the reality of Teso it did not produce any lasting advantages. Yet many other options remain open. In our case it is therefore important to wonder how the power relations between the Museveni government and the Kumam and Iteso could be transformed to remove Teso from its marginal position in Uganda, and to contribute to the development of social, cultural and economic prosperity.

Lack of Repetition

One way of transforming structural properties is through repetition, that is repeated agency. Chapter 8 concluded with the question of how to measure success in the process of mediation. Based on Gadamer's 'fusion of horizons' it has been argued that in Teso, during 1992, the insurgents indeed altered their view of the NRM government, and changed their perception of Museveni from enemy to patron. They changed their motivation for 'going into the bush' as discussed in Chapter 6, that is the past they recalled, into a struggle for development – which could then be

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[30] Campbell (1998c): 502.

resolved through development promised by the government and the Teso Commission.

In Chapter 3, we saw that the backward and forwards movement of remembering the past and aspiring to a particular future has at its core the constitution of the present identity. In the Teso case, the mediation process was successful for it led the Iteso and Kumam to see themselves in a different light in relation to the wider Uganda. However, identity shifts, based on routinised practice which render them 'normal', as we have seen in Chapter 3, require consolidation through repetition. Only through repeating what constitutes the shift does this new 'reality' become routinised and normalised, and a permanent feature.

The NRM government's promise of development and care for the people of Teso, despite being convincing during the mediation process, failed eventually to consolidate the amicable relationship because it was not repeated, and thus consolidated, according to the hopes of the people from Teso. As shown in the previous chapter, the government has failed to deliver its promise. For the people in Teso this meant a return to 'old' interpretations of themselves and the NRM government – and thus a return to the pre-conflict resentment.

The Need for Poetic Imagination in Post-Conflict Reconstruction

According to John Paul Lederach, the cessation of fighting is often considered to be the cumulating point of a peace process, although this event marks nothing more then the beginning. "In reality ... [the endings of violent conflicts] are nothing more than opening a door into a whole labyrinth of rooms that invite us to continue in the process of redefining our relationships."[31] In Chapter 6 we saw that, after being exposed to a violent conflict, the social structures that had previously made up the world and provided meaning to its inhabitants, lay in shambles. Nordstrom argues that worlds cannot be simply recreated, they have to be created anew, for recreation would simply reproduce the tensions that led to the violent

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[31] John Paul Lederach (1999): *Just Peace - The Challenge of the 21st Century*. in: European Platform for Conflict Prevention: People Building Peace. Utrecht: European Platform for Conflict Prevention, p. 33.

conflict.[32] Between the old and the new worlds, she contends, lies an abyss, a discontinuity, or what Arendt calls 'the gap' which calls for bridging. A major point raised in this thesis is precisely the missed opportunity for Teso at the juncture between fighting and reconciling – the time in-between.

So what Teso has missed in the aftermath of the insurgency is to successfully introduce positive changes into its society. In the 'time-in-between', or the gap, in which the future is established, the Iteso and the Kumam, as well as the central authorities and the international community, missed the chance of establishing channels through which to facilitate communication between the former protagonists, to promote non-violent conflict resolution or to foster understanding between communities.

The exercise of providing for a peaceful future in the odd-time in-between requires an act of creative imagination,[33] a poetic process as I suggested in Chapter 8. The post-conflict society, together with the former enemy, has to establish new ways of communicating with each other, ways that do not re-create the tensions of the past. In the case of Teso one could think of Papa Emorimor, but also the Teso Commission, as being institutions which provide new channels for Iteso (and Kumam?) representation towards the Ugandan government. In addition, civil society institutions like peace initiatives, churches and youth clubs among others, could provide frameworks through which not only the relation to the former enemy could be redefined, but also the social continuities inside the own community such as a culture of violence. Non-violent means of conflict resolution could be promoted, which would gradually and over time impact on the ways people relate to each other.

A Critical Process of Hermeneutics?

Drawn together, the strands of argument through this thesis suggest that mediation processes are heavily influenced by power asymmetries which determine the outcome of the process. However, it is helpful to

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[32] Nordstrom (1997): 190.
[33] Nordstrom (1997): 190.

understand power not as a commodity that can be possessed and applied, but rather in terms of power relations between agents that produce the way people relate to each other. The existing freedom, which is a condition of the existence of power relations, always keeps a door open for the possibility of dissent. And yet, since power relations do not merely reside with one party, but are based on a consensus between the stronger *and* the weaker party, it is also in the hands of the weaker party to opt out of the relation. Dissent begins with recognising one's own impact in the asymmetry, and with inventing alternative ways of being which allow for the transformation of the structural properties of domination.

At this point I would therefore like to turn to the poem by Rainer Maria Rilke that provides the exergue at the outset of this thesis. Rilke beautifully expresses the possibility of the Self to undo the antagonistic relationship with the Other. The enemy, the phenomenon, only exists because we allow it to, because we respond to it in a way which enables her/him to play this role. Our recognition of an enemy creates the space for something or somebody to become our enemy. And yet, if we 'starve it with not knowing' we deprive it of the power to hold us inside of what Foucault calls power relations. It is here where the poetic imagination allows us to dissolve the binary opposition between friend/enemy, where it enables us to dissent and for the enemy to 'whither way'.

Admittedly, this is a rather ambitious proposition, which attributes a great potential, and responsibility, to agency. Within the constraints of particular structures, however, it might encourage people concerned with reducing the occurrence of violent conflicts to think of new avenues to bring about peace. How can parties to a conflict be encouraged to think their relationship to their enemy in less exclusive terms?

Significantly, the 'starving with not knowing' does not address questions of justice and revenge, which might be the primary concern of people who have suffered at the hands of others. Rather, it seeks to reduce the antagonisms inside of a community towards an external Other. As a first step, this demands to abandon the dichotomy between victims and perpetrator. Instead, questions about the own role and responsibility have to be asked, and hence one's own exclusive identity redefined. It is here

where poetic imagination 'matters'. Since we cannot step out of power relations, how can we change them from within?

The process of poetic imagination, of course, is heavily dependent on the attitude and actions of the particular Other, in our case the Museveni government, to which this study has paid only limited attention. Further research should thus be encouraged which evaluates the possible interplay of redefining selves.

Closure

The shared meaning accomplished in the process of mediation in Teso found a solution to the antagonism between the Museveni government and the Iteso and Kumam but, and here lies the problem, it remained static. Despite the fusion of horizons in the hermeneutic encounter during the PCT session, horizons were not progressively opened up towards a 'better' future, but rather they introduced a sense of closure amongst the parties involved. For instance, agreement on terms like restocking had been achieved, yet they have not been open to a public debate ever since. The hermeneutic encounter has therefore kept its promise of bringing about understanding, and yet it at the same time obstructed future negotiations about the issue at stake. Here, then, we can return to the discussion of the different interpretations of hermeneutics in Chapter 3. It becomes apparent that in Teso, the hermeneutic process led to a degree of closure and authenticity. In Chapter 3 we suggested that in order to avoid the pitfalls of authenticity, hermeneutics has to be understood as both – the finding of shared meaning and the opening of this meaning. This, we argued, makes hermeneutics *critical.* In Teso, the challenging of power asymmetries did not lead to their changing.

The Project of Critical Hermeneutics

Critical hermeneutics, it has been argued in the present study, is a valuable framework through which to analyse the transition from conflict to peace. Through combining contingency with identity formation it presents a new perspective to post-structuralist IR theory, adding important insights to the analysis of the causes of conflict and peace. The recognition of the backwards and forwards movement in the encounter with the Other, the

enemy, enables us to understand how shared meaning is produced, or obstructed. In the case of Teso, due to prevailing asymmetric power relations, which manifested themselves in the mediation process, the peace achieved remained shallow, leaving the people of Teso with resentment and bitterness towards the Museveni government. Today, through drawing on a particular interpretation of the past, which narrates the Museveni government as perpetrator and the people of Teso as victims, the Teso horizon is interpreted in a way which obstructs reconciliation. The hermeneutic process of retrieving the past in light of an anticipated future has led to a writing of local Teso history which stands as a solid monument, to return to Foucault's term. Today, this obstructs attempts to establish a more rewarding relationship with the government. A sense of closure limits what is possible in the future.

This is a thesis about *challenging and changing* the structures that give way to violent conflicts. It is a first attempt to link hermeneutics and peace and conflict studies, marking the beginning of a wider research agenda. As such it responds to recent, post-positivist contributions to conflict analysis which —amongst other objectives—use deconstruction as a framework to draw attention to excluded voices. Despite being in broad agreement with these approaches this thesis argues, nevertheless, that the challenging of boundaries as suggested by scholars such as Ashley, Walker and Campbell is not sufficient to interpret the time after a violent conflict in which peace is invented. In order to push current debates forward it therefore moves from the discursive analysis of conflict to the discursive analysis of the peace-building process. The dynamics involved in the transition from conflict to peace are the ontological processes of changing identities in the fusion of horizons with the Other. The significance for peace analysis is that in the process of building peace identities need to be defined in less exclusive terms to difference. While the work of scholars such as Campbell discusses how enemies are constructed in discourse and practice this thesis has turned the argument around to analyse how peace is invented in discourse. This is given expression through the framework of hermeneutics which, through its notion of fusing horizons, at the same time provides a metaphor for the ontology of peace. Importantly, however,

peace in this study is not understood as a *telos* but as an interactive process of fusing horizons—a fusion which is, and should be, challenged in the very moment of its accomplishment.

The approach taken in this thesis is to focus on the local level. It does not seek to make wider empirical claims which reach beyond the Teso boundaries. The Teso insurgency, like any other case, has particular characteristics which prevent generalised findings. This includes the fact that the Teso insurgency was never very strong and did not have an explicit political agenda. In addition, despite the claims made by the people of Teso, it is hard to establish a strong, discriminatory policy by the Museveni government or a strong degree of repression or persecution. A case for structural and institutional exclusion can however be made to an extent. As a consequence, the mediation process, or the fusion of horizons, was facilitated by a relatively low level of domination from the government which enabled the application of the metaphor of fusing horizons. Had the frontiers between the Museveni government and Teso been fiercer, the outcome of this study might have been different.

So, is the introduction of hermeneutics into peace and conflict analysis only valuable if domination is limited? Or can it be applied more widely? As stated above, this thesis is intended to lay the foundations for a wider research agenda. A possible follow-on project could be to compare a number of peace-building and reconciliation projects in a war-torn society to understand how different agents contribute to either maintaining conflict or inventing peace. For instance, post-genocide Rwanda would lend itself to such a project. In Rwanda, a number of organisations seek to contribute to the process of reconciliation. They include the Government of Rwanda's National Unity and Reconciliation Commission, numerous churches and indigenous organisation as well as peace-building projects by the international community. Through analysing the work of these different agents, and the impact they have on the prevailing structures of inclusion and exclusion, the process of reconciliation in Rwanda could be assessed. Here, the analysis through the framework of hermeneutics would turn into a critical project in which various mediation efforts are compared and

evaluated. This could reveal that some agents (possibly the Government of Rwanda) perpetuate discord rather then trying to reconcile it, standing in the way of peace-building in Rwanda. As an extension to the case study on Teso this would then specifically address notions of domination and exclusion.

This thesis seeks to contribute three aspects to the prevailing body of IR literature.

Firstly, it provides the only political analysis of the Teso insurgency and thus records a piece of Ugandan history. Generally, there has been very little academic interest in the region. In 2000, two anthropological doctoral theses were published on the process of social healing, yet neither addresses the political background of the insurgency.[34] The mediation process marks an exception in the way the Ugandan government, in particular, and many governments in Africa more widely respond to insurgents. Since conflict prevention is high on the agenda of many western donors and NGOs documenting a rare, relatively successful case was important.[35]

Secondly, as laid out above, the thesis seeks to push the current, post-positivist contributions to peace and conflict studies one step further beyond mere deconstruction to incorporate peace-building into the research agenda. It hence contributes to the development of a particular trajectory in the discipline of International Relations.

And thirdly, this thesis offers a case study analysed through a post-positivist framework. This is significant since, so far, IR scholars working on post-positivist peace and conflict studies have been occupied with making (relevant) philosophical and theoretical claims, but the illustration and application though fieldwork has been limited.[36] In order to make these approaches more applicable for policy analysis, and hence to convince more people of their relevance, post-positivist research should not be confined to

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[34] De Berry (2000) and Heriques (2000).
[35] See also Susanne Zistel (2000): Successful Mediation in Armed Conflict. Learning Lessons from a Case Study in Teso, Uganda. Kampala: GTZ report.
[36] With the exception of scholar such as David Campbell.

the ivory towers of academies alone, it should also demonstrate its practical use and potential. This thesis is a step in this direction.

The Ethics of Hermeneutics

Famously it has been argued that theory is always for somebody and for some purpose,[37] and the promotion of critical hermeneutics over, for instance, Derridian deconstruction cannot be free from this allegation either. Hermeneutics promotes a particular ethical attitude towards otherness, which has not been discussed in the present study.[38] In contrast to deconstruction, which seeks to liberate difference, hermeneutics (especially in Gadamer's tradition) calls for an engagement with difference. Gadamer contends that the Other is most appreciated when engaged with in conversation (in the widest sense). In other words, for Gadamer's hermeneutics it is a sign of respect for otherness to expose oneself to the new and unfamiliar, and to learn to understand her/him in all her/his manifold difference. However, similar to deconstruction, this call for engagement is not derived from a normative framework but rather from the recognition of an always already present process which occurs when people engage with each other. However, different from deconstruction, hermeneutics emphasises not what is unrepresented, that is what is 'other' and in need of liberating, but rather it recognises the Other yet stresses the process of the production of shared meaning. In Gadamer's words: "Whoever wants me to take deconstruction to heart and insists on difference stands at the beginning of a conversation, not its end."[39] Gadamer thus sees hermeneutics as being complementary to deconstruction. The important difference is the spin, or perspective, which ultimately leads to different ethical attitudes: liberating difference or

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[37] Robert Cox/Timothy Sinclair (1996): Approaches to World Order. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 67.
[38] Despite recognising the relevance of ethics for IR in this thesis I have consciously decided to concentrate on other issues which I consider equally important like linking post-positivist approaches to conflict studies to field research. As a result, out of respect for the people this project is about, I have tried not to discuss any theoretical aspects which exceed the scope of the case study in order to make sure that the people of Teso always remain present. On the level of ownership, after all, it is *their* conflict and *their* peace, and not simply an intellectual exercise for the advancement of a PhD degree in the UK.
[39] Hans-Georg Gadamer (1993h): *Destruktion und Dekonstruktion*. in: Wahrheit und Methode II. Ergaenzungen. Tuebingen: Mohr Siebeck, p. 372. (translated in Gadamer, Hans-

engaging with it. The significance for this thesis is that hermeneutics allows for conceptualising peace, as in the end of conversation, and not simply the opening up of space for the Other, as I have tried to illustrate in the chapters 1-3.

And yet, it is important to remember that introducing critical hermeneutics to conflict studies does not create a new 'method' to bring about peace and co-existence. Hermeneutics is simply a way of seeing and interpreting the world, not an action-plan to change it. All attempts to reduce hermeneutics to a praxeological impulse would run the risk of turning it into a method, which would destroy its openness and emphasis on contingency. Again, the parallels with the ethics of Derridian deconstruction are apparent: in both cases ethics does not lead to a clearly defined set of politics.[40] However, the insights gleaned through hermeneutic interpretation might allow for discussing politics in a particular light. With reference to efforts to reduce the occurrence of violent conflicts these politics would include a participatory approach (based on the notion of conversation and dialogue), a respect for difference (based on the acknowledgement that meaning is produced in the evaluation of the own as well as the Other's horizon), an open, process orientated structure (based on the fusion of horizons being a process), as well as an appreciation of, and a willingness to, change. Political decisions taken against the backdrop of hermeneutics would not rely on a foundation - but also not be arbitrary. Rather they would derive out of consultation and consensus amongst the parties involved.

Georg (1989): *Destruction and Deconstruction.* in: Michelfelder, Diane P./Palmer, Richard E. (eds.): Dialogue and Deconstruction. Albany: State University of New York, p. 113.)
[40] For a discussion of the politics in Derrida's deconstruction see for instance Simon Critchley (2000): "An Agenda for Discussion." *Constellations* **7**(4): 455-65.

Hence, finally, in analogy to critical hermeneutics, this thesis does not attempt to provide definite answers but encourages the constant contestation of its arguments. Arresting the flux is all it can do.

Human Development Index Ranking by District, Uganda 1996.

UNDP (1998): *Uganda Development Report*. New York: UNDP.

GRAPH 7: HDI RANKING BY DISTRICT 1996

Source: Statistics Bureau/ UNDP

Human Poverty Index by District, Uganda 1996.

UNDP (1998): *Uganda Development Report*. New York: UNDP

GRAPH 10: HUMAN POVERTY INDEX BY DISTRICT 1996

KOTIDO
MOROTO
KITGUM
GULU
KABAROLE
KAMULI
KIBOGA
BUNDUBUGYO
SOROTI
KISORO
LIRA
KUMI
KIBAALE
ARUA
NEBBI
MOYO
MBARARA
IGANGA
MUBENDE
RUKUNGIRI
KALANGALA
TORORO
NTUGAMO
APAC
MASINDI
BUSHENYI
RAKAI
PALLISA
LUWERO
MASAKA
MUKONO
HOIMA
KASESE
KAPCHORWA
UGANDA
KABALE
MBALE
MPIGI
JINJA
KAMPALA

0   10   20   30   40   50   60   70   80

Source: Statistics Bureau MFPED/ UNDP

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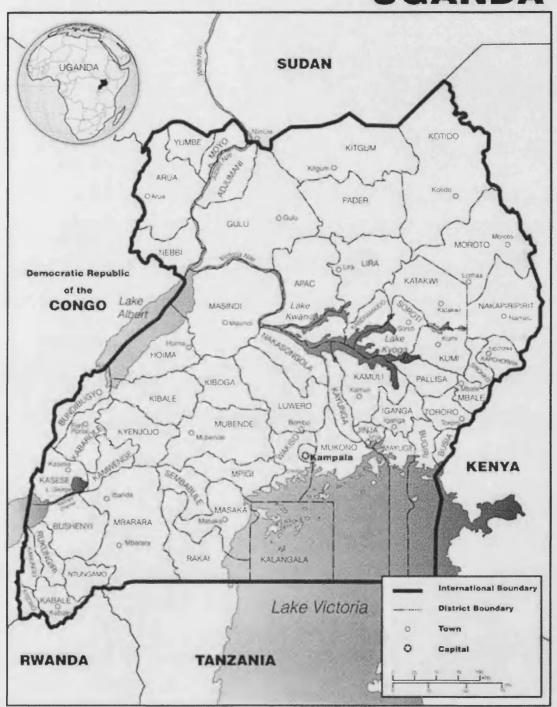| Interviewee	Date	Place	Organisation	Position
Alibai	17.03.2000	Soroti	Soroti Flying School	Pilot/trainer
Janet Abaru	24.03.2000	Kamuda, Soroti district		Peasant
Max Acharu	10.04.2000	Kumi		Elder, former LC4 chairman
Terence Achia	14.04.2000	Moroto town	Local Council Moroto district (LC5)	Chairman
Edegu Adiolo	22.03.2000	Arapai, Soroti district	Local Council (LC3) for Arapai	Chairwoman
Mary Adongo	24.03.2000	Kamuda, Soroti district		Peasant
Basil Ajotu	10.04.2000	Kumi		Elder
Grace Akello	06.01.2000	Portsmouth	Government of Uganda	Minster of State for Entandikwa; MP for Wera, Katakwi district; former Secretary of PCT
Nico Akwang	22.03.2000	Arapai, Soroti district	Local Council (LC3) for Duburo, Soroti district sub-county	Chairman
Lakere Alamo	24.03.2000	Kamuda, Soroti district		Peasant
Ruth Aliu	05.04.2000	Kampala	Parliament of Uganda	MP, member of Teso Parliamentary Group
Peter Ayopo Amodoi	13.04.2000	Moroto town	Karamoja Resource Centre	Researcher/policy advisor
Amudo Areni	24.03.2000	Kamuda, Soroti district		Peasant
Alfred Aruo	16.03.2000 + 01.05.2000	Soroti	Teso Cultural Union	Officer
Georg William Ayora	24.03.2000	Kamuda, Soroti district		Peasant
E. A. Brett	21.02.2000	London	DESTIN, London School of Economics	Lecturer

Aidan Colours	13.04.2000	Moroto town	Lutheran World Foundation	Project director
Joanna de Berry	09.08.2000	London	London School of Economics	Former PhD candidate
Nicolas de Torrente	11.02.2000	Kampala	London School of Economics	Former PhD candidate
James Eceret	09.02.2000	Kampala	PCT	Economist
Musa Echweru	26.03.2000	Soroti	Government of Uganda	RDC Nebbi district; former youth organiser in Teso insurgency and responsible for international relations and supply of arms.
Frida Ediamo	25.02.2000	Soroti		Elder; former UPC politician
Simon Peter Egadu	13.04.2000	Moroto town	Karamoja Projects Implementation Unit	Deputy co-ordinator
Ateker Ejalu	05.04.2000	Kampala	New Vision	Chairman; former Minister of State for Special Duties responsible for Teso insurgency
John Ekanu	09.04.2000	Soroti	Pentecostal Church	Reverent
Janet Ekere	07.04.2000	Kalaki, Soroti district		Business women
Mary Epechu	24.02.2000	Soroti	Teso Initiative for Peace	Youth and Gender Officer
Stephen O. Esunget	21.03.2000	Soroti	District Population Officer	Demographer
Paul Etjan	05.04.2000	Kampala	Parliament of Uganda	MP for Tororo; former Deputy Prime Minister under Museveni; former UN delegate; Minister under Obote II and Amin
Michael Griffith	12.01.2000	London	Index on Censorship	Writer; former OXFAM Karamoja
Mzee Guidon	10.04.2000	Kumi		Retired civil servant, father to Kenneth Olumia
Betty Ikarit	19.04.2000	Soroti	CBS	Social worker, youth officer

Name	Date	Place	Organization	Role
Lucy Ikomu	10.04.2000	Kumi		Elder, former teacher
Geresom Illukor	08.04.2000	Kumi	Church of Uganda	Retired Bishop of Teso
Peter Kalagala	23.02.2000	Soroti	Government of Uganda	RDC Soroti district
Ian Legett	11.01.2000	Oxford	Oxfam	Emergency programme officer
Teko Lokeris	14.04.2000	Moroto	Karamoja Projects Implementation Unit	Conflict resolution programme officer; son of present Minister for Karamoja Peter Lokeris
David Mafabi	05.04.2000	Kampala	Pan African Movement/ Pan African Development, Education and Advocacy Programme (PADEAP)	Policy advisor; former rebel SPLA commander, Sudan; former communication officer under Obote II
John Maitland	15.01.2000 + 20.05.2000	London + Kampala	Uganda Development Trust	Co-Director; former Teso Relief Committee; former director of Ngora hospital, Kumi district, Teso.
Andy Morton	13.01.2000	London	Christian Aid	Researcher; Amnesty International Uganda researcher during Teso insurgency
Moses Mudong	13.04.2000	Moroto	KISP (Karamoja Initiative for Sustainable Peace)	Elder; father of former Minister for Karamoja David Pulkol
Issah Musulo	17.04.2000	Soroti	World Vision	Programme manager
Edith Naser	01.05.2000	Soroti	GTZ/PCY	Project manager
Michael Obwaatum	28.03.2000	Kumi town, Teso	Government of Uganda	Deputy RDC, Kumi; former Head of Communications, Rebel High Command, Teso
Patrick Oguang	28.03.2000	Kumi town, Teso	Red Cross	Field officer
George Oguli	24.02.2000	Soroti	PCT	Commissioner, Soroti district
George Ojamunge	28.03.2000	Kumi town, Teso	Red Barnet	Kumi Children's Project

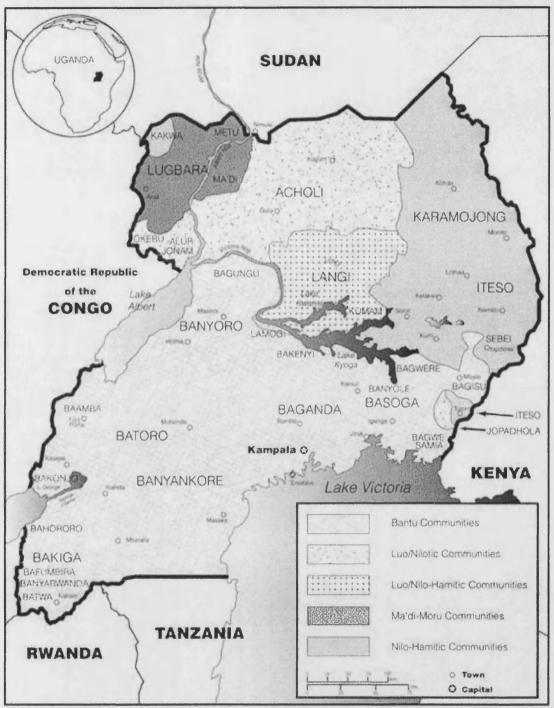| Name	Date	Place	Organisation	Position
Edmund Okella	20.03.2000	Soroti	Teso College, Aloet	Teacher
Joseph Okello	02.05.2000	Serere, Soroti district	Local Council, Soroti district	Youth Counsellor
Francis Okello	17.04.2000	Soroti	Teso Initiative for Peace	Project manager, retired teacher
Pius Richard Okiria	24.02.2000 + 15.03.2000	Soroti	Teso Initiative for Peace + Catholic Dioceses, Teso	Director of TIP + priest
Thomas Okoth	14.04.2000	Moroto	Government of Uganda	RDC Moroto district
Peter Okwi	22.03.2000	Arapai, Soroti district	Local Council (LC3) for Tuburu, Soroti district sub-county	Chairman
Kenneth Olumia	24.02.2000	Soroti	ETOP (Teso Weekly Newspaper)	Editor-in-Chief
Egoing James Peter Olupot	01.05.2000	Kumi town, Teso	CARE	Security guard, former rebel and amongst the last four to continue the struggle until 1994
John Olweny	08.02.2000	Soroti	DANIDA	PCT programme officer
Omeda Omax	13.03.2000	Kampala	Government of Uganda	Minister of State for Transport, Labour and Environment; former rebel commander Serere district, Teso.
Moses Omiat	21.03.2000	Soroti	SODANN	Programme manager
Fidel Omunyokol	20.03.2000	Soroti		Journalist
John Oryokot	16.03.2000	Soroti	Parliament of Uganda	MP for Kaplebyong, Katakwi district
Sam Otai	27.03.2000	Soroti	UPDF	Military officer; former 2nd Commander in Rebel High Command
John Emilly Oteka	24.02.2000	Soroti	Soroti District Local Council (LC5)	Chairman
Peter Otim	14.03.2000	Kampala	Centre for Basic Research	PhD student
Owmony Owjok	20.03.2000	Arapai, Soroti district	Government of Uganda	Minister of State for Northern Uganda Reconstruction Programme (NURP)

Moses Owor	28.03.2000	Kumi	Care International	Monitoring and evaluation specialist
Dennis Pain	13.01.2000	London	Department for International Development	Africa advisor; author of 'Bending of Spears'; former resident of Uganda
Okwir Rabwoni	04.05.2000 + 16.05.2001	Kampala + London	Pan African Movement/ Pan African Development, Education and Advocacy Programme (PADEAP)	In exile in UK, former MP for Youth of West Uganda (until early 2001)
Stella Sabiiti	09.02.2000	Kampala	CECORE (Centre for Conflict Resolution)	Director

Maps

UGANDA

ETHNOGRAPHIC UGANDA

SUDAN

KAKWA
METU
LUGBARA
MA'DI
ACHOLI
OKEBU ALUR JONAM
KARAMOJONG

Democratic Republic
of the
CONGO

BAGUNGU
LANGI
ITESO
Lake Albert
BANYORO
LAMOGI
KUMAM
SEBEI
BAKENYI
Lake Kyoga
BAGWERE
BAAMBA
BANYOLE
BAGISU
BATORO
BAGANDA
BASOGA
ITESO
JOPADHOLA
Kampala O
BAKONJO
BANYANKORE
Lake Victoria
BAGWE SAMIA
KENYA

BAHORORO
BAKIGA
BAFUMBIRA
BANYARWANDA
BATWA

TANZANIA

RWANDA

	Bantu Communities
	Luo/Nilotic Communities
	Luo/Nilo-Hamitic Communities
	Ma'di-Moru Communities
	Nilo-Hamitic Communities

O Town
O Capital

Based on Minority Rights Group International's 'Ethnic Groups and Tribes of Uganda', Uganda: The Marginalization of Minorities (2001).
Boundaries are not definitive but are intended to show traditionally inhabited areas.

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